

STARFINDER



ATTACK OF THE SWARM!

ADVENTURE PATH

HUSKWORLD

BY LYZ LIDDELL



SDF D-127 DEFENSIVE CARRIER

TIER 7

Large heavy freighter

Speed 8; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2); **Drift** 2

AC 20; **TL** 20

HP 140; **DT** –; **CT** 28

Shields medium 100 (forward 25, port 25, starboard 25, aft 25)

Attack (Forward) mining laser (2d6; 5 hexes; *Starfinder Pact Worlds* 153), plasma cannon (5d12; 10 hexes)

Attack (Port) heavy laser cannon (4d8; 10 hexes)

Attack (Starboard) heavy laser cannon (4d8; 10 hexes)

Power Core Arcus Maximum (200 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Booster; **Systems** advanced mid-range sensors, basic computer, crew quarters (common), mk 4 armor, mk 4 defenses; **Expansion Bays** cargo holds (6), escape pods (2)

Modifiers +4 Computers (sensors only); **Complement** 8 (minimum 6, maximum 20)

CREW

Captain Diplomacy +15 (7 ranks), Engineering +14 (7 ranks), gunnery +10 (7th level), Intimidate +15 (7 ranks)

Engineers (2) Engineering +15 (7 ranks)

Gunners (3) gunnery +12 (7th level)

Pilot Piloting +15 (7 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +15 (7 ranks)

When the Swarm attacked the Suskillon system, the Suskillon Defense Force was hard pressed to assemble a naval force suitable for the defense efforts. The process ultimately entailed commandeering starships across the system, ranging from luxury yachts to industrial vessels. The D-127 Defensive Carriers arose as a conversion of a fleet of mining ships donated by the Cragton Mining Corporation early in the war effort. The Suskillon Defense Force fitted them with extra weaponry to better withstand the Swarm's forces and put them to use.

The D-127 Defensive Carrier is a clunky, piecemeal starship. It remains true to its excavator origins, from the massive cargo holds—each with its own pair of huge doors—to its high-quality sensor systems and even an integrated mining laser in its forward arc, left in place as a perfectly functional, if somewhat unorthodox, weapon. Tacked on to this basic structure are additional armaments, including a pair of heavy laser cannons and a plasma cannon haphazardly bolted onto the sides. Upgraded shields and armor round out the retrofit, making for a clumsy but powerful vessel. Crews assigned to a D-127 often complain about the facilities, as the original quarters for mining teams leave much to be desired in the way of comfort and amenities, and the addition of gunnery stations makes for a cramped bridge—though many crew members joke that they should just be glad the SDF bothered to install escape pods.

STARFINDER

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This book refers to other Starfinder products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Starfinder hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at sfrd.info.

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ON THE COVER

In addition to Hescamu, the bolida commander of Clade Company, artist Setiawan Fajareka illustrates Altronus and Quig making their way through a Swarm-occupied city on the ravaged world of Ilemchuua.



ATTACK OF THE SWARM!

ADVENTURE PATH

HUSKWORLD

PART 1: SCRATCHING THE SURFACE 9

The PCs travel to the planet of Ilemchuva to uncover a professor's research on the Forever Reliquary, only to find that the Swarm hasn't left the planet as expected! After fighting off a Swarm patrol, the heroes meet a group of resistance fighters called Clade Company.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Huskworld" is designed for four characters.



The PCs begin this adventure at 5th level.



The PCs should reach 6th level before traveling to Zessh University.



The PCs should be 7th level at the end of this adventure.

PART 2: EXTRACTOR DISTRACTION 12

A giant Swarm extraction imago on the outskirts of the city of Uudz has made the university too unstable to enter. Before they can investigate the professor's research, the PCs must first disable this titanic creature—from within!

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The PCs explore Zessh University to find what Professor Galchak knew about the Forever Reliquary, only to find that the Swarm wants the same information!

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Ilemchuuya was a world like many others in the Vast: habitable and the site of a thriving ecosystem of nonsentient life, visited by colonists in the centuries since the advent of Drift travel, and becoming home to an ever more diverse aggregation of species looking to make a home on the galaxy's frontier. The first settlers here were shirrens, passing from one system to another during their exodus from the Swarm, leaving communities on several of the various worlds they visited in between. This particular colony not only persisted but thrived. Though originally home only to shirrens, in the ensuing decades, the growing community accepted others into the community—other insectile races, many species native to the Pact Worlds, vesk, and more. Each newcomer was welcomed for the skills, resources, and perspectives they brought. Yet, throughout it all, the shirren influence remained a vital cornerstone of Ilemchuuya culture, and while not a theocracy, worship of Hylax has always been the world's most popular religion.

Professor Galchak was a host shirren in a tenured post at Ilemchuuya's prestigious Zessh University, who had spent their life studying the shirren's flight from the Swarm. They pieced together the aspects of their species' history, striving to pin down the moment that allowed their people to break free of Swarm's control. Only a few years ago, Galchak hit upon a remarkable breakthrough, identifying the location of a site known as the Forever Reliquary previously thought to have been only metaphorical. Galchak's research suggested the site was a physical place, where the shirren people were granted the strength to continue their escape from the all-encompassing psychic draw of the Swarm. Though elated at this discovery, Professor Galchak kept their findings quiet, even as they began to seek funding for an expedition to this holy site—after all, a groundbreaking discovery is only groundbreaking if it can be verified.

But professor Galchak's research, along with Ilemchuuya itself, has come to an end.

The Swarm invasion of the Chuuya system was unforeseen and unstoppable. Massive Swarm starships appeared in the skies with no warning, and the ravenous legions tore across Ilemchuuya like locusts over a wheat field, slaughtering the planet's residents and native fauna alike. They devoured every scrap of vegetation to be found, siphoned off the world's water, extracted most of its petrochemical resources, and even placed huge, tick-like components called extractor imagoes across the landscape to capture the world's latent geothermic power and further fuel the Swarm's ongoing engine of total destruction.

The Ilemchuuyaan landscape was transformed virtually overnight, from a world of plains and oceans to a dusty, barren wasteland of parched earth, studded with immense structures resembling termite mounds. The savaged land now cracks and crumbles, magma fissures slicing across the surface to belch ash and caustic fumes into the atmosphere. As a result, the once-mild climate has been wracked with storms, raining harsh acid down upon the ruined world, and the only signs of life are the towering, bloated extractor imagoes, their abdomens swelling as their proboscises suck the last remnants of life from the planet's core. Ilemchuuya today is a shadow of what it once was—a discarded husk of a world.

When the majority of the Swarm departed after the attack—as the Swarm always has, moving on to find other worlds to sate its endless hunger—only a smattering of components remained behind to oversee Ilemchuuya's final moments: a handful of their chitinous living starships patrolling the skies overhead, the technicians who maintain the gigantic extractor imagoes, and a detachment of brawny brutes to protect these last valuable resources.

Professor Galchak stood no chance when the Swarm targeted Zessh University. However, armed with a considerable paranoia given their body of research, the professor spent their last few minutes not scrambling for safety like many Ilemchuuvans, but hiding their research away from the Swarm's prying eyes, for if the devouring maw of the Swarm were to learn of the Forever Reliquary, it would certainly put that knowledge to dreadful use. The professor wiped a lifetime of precious data from their computer terminals and personal datapads, consigning that knowledge to the void so as to protect others throughout the galaxy—but the university's information management systems have kept the professor's research from being lost entirely.

Pockets of resistance yet remain on Ilemchuuya. A few canny residents were able to fight back long enough to flee into hiding, while others resided far enough underground that they were spared the worst of the Swarm's initial devastation. Some of these survivors have banded together into freedom-fighting groups, while others huddle in desperate refugee camps scattered along the fringes of the world's shattered cities. These survivors either live as quietly as they can, hoping to avoid the notice of those Swarm agents left behind on the planet, or else fight back in an effort to drive away these last marauders and reclaim their devastated home.

PART 1: SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

In the caves beneath New Grakka, the PCs found references to something called "the Forever Reliquary" within a shrine to Hylax. While the shirren priest Xelanon had heard the

HUSKWORLD

PART 1: SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

PART 2: EXTRACTOR DISTRACTION

PART 3: UNIVERSITY VISITORS

RELICS OF CHUUYA

SURVIVORS OF THE SWARM

ALIEN ARCHIVES

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ILEMCHUUVA

Diameter: ×1; **Mass:** ×1

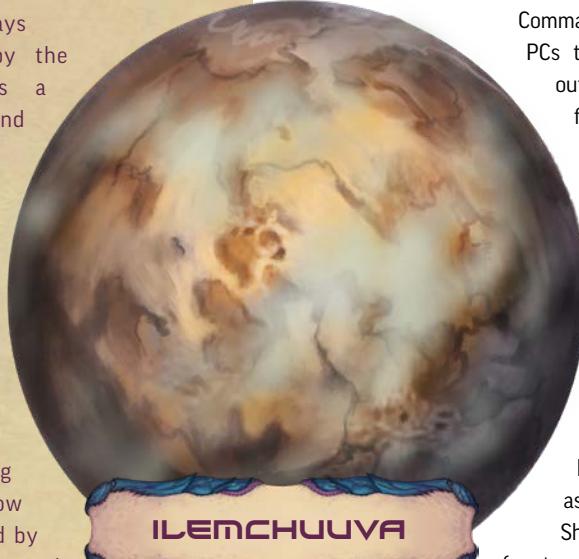
Gravity: ×1

Location: The Vast

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 27 hours; **Year:** 412 days

Until it was attacked by the Swarm, Ilemchuua was a planet of flat plains and gently rolling hills, with only few small mountain ranges. It once had a generally temperate climate (except at the poles) and several unique species of both flora and fauna. It was colonized by shirrens several centuries ago and eventually became a thriving cosmopolitan world. Now that it has been devastated by the Swarm, Ilemchuua is mostly a wasteland strewn with dangerous fissures and pelted with regular storms of acid rain. The planet has a single barren moon named Chatchamiq.



ILEMCHUUVA

As a special assignment, Commander Najiri orders the PCs to travel to the Chuuva system and find Professor Galchak's research or any clues that will lead to the Forever Reliquary. Time is of the essence in this investigation, as if there is information to be found, the Swarm has had a several-months' head start in finding it.

Commander Najiri encourages the PCs to resupply quickly, pointing out that they can't count on finding any opportunities to purchase equipment in the Chuuva system given the utter devastation the Swarm leaves behind after an attack. She also advises PCs who want to be particularly prepared to stock up on UPBs rather than credits, as the utilitarian components can be crafted into requisite items as needed.

She also grants the squad use of a starship that will be up to the task ahead of them. If you like, the SDF can provide PCs with a custom-made vessel of tier 5, but if the players don't want to build their own starship, the PCs can take command of a Suskillon Whip (see the inside front cover of *Starfinder Adventure Path #20: The Last Refuge*) named *Flash Viper*. The *Flash Viper*'s advanced Drift engines will buy the PCs a few extra days as they race to make up for lost time.

TRAVELING TO THE CHUUVA SYSTEM

Once the PCs have made the necessary preparations, they can depart for the Chuuva system. Despite Suskillon and Chuuva being relatively close to one another in physical space, there are few Drift beacons near either system, placing them both in the Vast. A character must succeed at a DC 25 Piloting check to astrogate a course to Chuuva without complications. The PCs' journey through the Drift takes 5d6 days (divided by the Drift rating of their starship), but if the above Piloting check is failed by 10 or more, add 1d6 days to this time.

This may be the PCs' first journey through the Drift, a distorted plane of pink-purple energy that seems to surround their starship like a cloud of fog while simultaneously appearing as an incredibly distant backdrop. From time to time, PCs observing their surroundings might glimpse bits of those other planar fragments subsumed by the Drift, such as a mass of roiling lava floating suspended in space, the warped reflection of a distant starship also traveling through the plane, a perfect sphere of stone the size of a city, or a flat disc of fetid ooze occasionally churned by some great

name before, he believed it to be only a metaphorical state of ultimate peace and friendship. The PCs' findings, however, suggest that there might be something more substantial than mere allegory.

At the end of the previous adventure, Xelanon informed Commander Najiri and the PCs about an article written by a shirren professor named Galchak that hinted at their theories on the location of the Forever Reliquary. The piece didn't make much of splash on Suskillon, even among the Hylaxian community—possibly because it contains mostly speculation—but it did allow Commander Najiri to track down the professor. Unfortunately, there's a serious complication: the Chuuva system—which contains Ilemchuua, the planet where Galchak's employer Zessh University is located—was attacked by the Swarm several months before the Suskillon system was hit. Suskillon Defense Force analysts believe that the Swarm subcolony that their own system is currently facing is the same one that devoured Ilemchuua. Given the references the PCs found beneath New Grakka regarding the Forever Reliquary and the locations of the Swarm's attacks, the possibility that the Swarm is trying to seek out the Forever Reliquary is too dangerous to ignore.

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creature stirring within. More information about the Drift can be found on pages 46–53 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #4: The Ruined Clouds*.

As the starship's computer system includes an autopilot feature that requires only minimal attention once the course has been established, the PCs are free to spend their time during the journey as they'd like. Drift travel is an ideal time to recover from wounds and afflictions, craft or repair items, and other similar activities. This journey through the Drift is relatively uneventful—likely a welcome reprieve after the last few weeks of incessant combat—but you can add a random encounter or two along the way if the PCs need more XP to reach 5th level.

The PCs' ship exits the Drift some distance from the Chuva system's third planet, Ilemchuva, but long-distance scans can make out the distinctive features of Swarm starships in orbit around the planet. Fortunately for the PCs, the Swarm vessels don't notice them right away, but they will still need to plan their approach carefully.

The fact that the Swarm has maintained a presence here in the Chuva system might alarm the PCs. A PC who succeeds at a DC 17 Culture check, or a check using a relevant Profession skill such as Profession (soldier), knows that the Swarm typically abandons planets within a few days, or weeks at most. Given the reports that the Swarm had targeted the Chuva system several months before Suskillon, this continued presence suggests that the Swarm has a particular interest in this system—in Ilemchuva in particular—beyond its primary drive to consume.

Though the PCs should feel pressure to beat the Swarm to Galchak's information about the Forever Reliquary, they may also want to spend some time scanning or even traveling through the rest of the Chuva system before they approach Ilemchuva. The Chuva system has six planets orbiting a relatively small yellow-orange star, all detailed further in "Lost Relics of Chuva," beginning on page 38. It quickly becomes clear that the Swarm's interest in the system is in fact focused on Ilemchuva, as there is no remaining Swarm presence on any of the other planets—though the rampant devastation left in its wake is obvious on all of these worlds.

EVENT 1: ENTERING ORBIT (CR 7)

The PCs can use Ilemchuva's moon, Chatchamiq, to slip closer to the planet without attracting notice. Even if they approach directly, however, the Swarm doesn't give their relatively small starship much attention until the PCs approach within long-range scanner distance (20 hexes) of the Swarm's orbital defense line of starships.

From this closer vantage, the PCs gain their first real glimpse of what has become of Ilemchuva. Read or paraphrase the following.

An assortment of insectile ships occupies the space around Ilemchuva. A massive Swarm battleship anchors

the flotilla, while smaller picket ships dart back and forth along regular patrol paths. Beneath this flurry of activity, the surface of the planet bears scars of devastation obvious even from orbit. Visible lava flows and fissures glow on the planet's nighttime side, while the sun's gentle light reveals fast-moving storm fronts roiling across vast expanses of desolate land colored a single, unbroken shade of dusty gray.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Culture, Engineering, or Piloting check (or an appropriate Profession skill) recognizes the battleship as a dreadlancer, an incredibly dangerous vessel that would likely destroy the PCs' vessel, and the smaller ships as altipherons, used primarily as patrol and escort ships. A PC using their ship's sensors who succeeds at a DC 22 Computers check can spot a few gaps in the Swarm's circuit when the dreadlancer is on the far side of the planet. With careful maneuvering, the PCs might be able to slip past the patrol and stealthily land on Ilemchuva's surface.

By observing the paths of the Swarm vessels and powering down their starship at just the right moment, the PCs might be able to slip past the blockade without being noticed. This is a risky maneuver, as it could end up with the PCs entering starship combat flying a ship without power! The ship's engineer can place their vessel in emergency-power mode with a successful DC 20 Engineering check, leaving only artificial gravity, life support, scanners, and rudimentary thrusters active. As the PCs glide from the moon to Ilemchuva's orbit over the next few hours, they must attempt three DC 26 Life Science, Sense Motive, or relevant Profession (such as soldier) checks. Up to two PCs can aid the character attempting one of these skill checks. If at least two of these checks are successful, the PCs predict the Swarm ships' flight patterns and stealthily enter orbit; otherwise, a pair of Swarm altipherons notices the PCs' ship and closes in to attack.

Alternatively, the PCs can attempt to speed through the line of picket ships at its weakest point. If they do so, they are attacked by two altipherons.

Starship Combat: Two Swarm altipherons begin starship combat 20 hexes away from the PCs' ship. If the PCs were caught with their ship powered down, they need to first bring their systems back online before they can perform most crew actions—doing so requires a special engineer action and a successful DC 27 Engineering check. The captain can use the demand or encourage action to grant a bonus to this check. Until a PC succeeds at this check, the PCs can't take other actions, and their ship doesn't benefit from any shields it may have.

SWARM ALTIIPHERONS (2)

HP 70 each (see page 56)

TACTICS

During Combat The altipherons position themselves on

TIER 3



opposite sides of the PCs' vessel. They use their forward particle beams when possible but rely primarily on their turrets.

Morale These picket ships are devoted to their task of maintaining security around Ilemchuua and do not flee. Each fights until reduced to 0 Hull Points or fewer.

Development: If the PCs' ship is disabled, it is caught in Ilemchuua's gravity well and begins plummeting through the atmosphere. The Swarm altipherons assume the PCs will crash on the surface and continue on their patrol, considering their mission complete. Instead of the skill checks presented in *A Tricky Landing* (see below), the ship's pilot must attempt three DC 27 Piloting checks to mitigate the worst part of the crash-landing. If at least two of these checks are successful, the controlled crash-landing bumps the PCs around a bit, dealing 4d6 bludgeoning damage to each PC; otherwise each PC takes 8d6 bludgeoning damage as the ship hits the ground hard. A successful DC 15 Reflex save halves the damage in either case.

If the PCs avoid or triumph against the altipherons, they can land on Ilemchuua on their own terms, but they will need to deal with the planet's instability (see *A Tricky Landing* below).

Story Award: If the PCs either evade or defeat the Swarm patrol, award them 3,200 XP.

A TRICKY LANDING

Once the PCs enter Ilemchuua's atmosphere, they must navigate to the city of Uudz, where Zessh University is located. Along the way, they get a closer look at the blasted surface of this Swarm-devastated planet.

The rolling terrain below has been stripped of virtually all vegetation, leaving only dry, powdery soil drained of nutrients and moisture. Cracks and crevasses slice across the landscape, some bubbling with fuming lava and others reaching deep within the earth, the land between these ravines is pitted and scarred from acidic rain and erosion. Standing in sharp contrast are tall, lumpy spires of hardened clay that poke up from the desolated ground like gnarled fingers, as well as the bloated abdomens of colossal Swarm creatures half-buried in the earth and belching clouds of dark, greasy smoke into the stormy atmosphere.

Using information provided by Commander Najiri, the PCs can locate Uudz on one of the planet's larger continents, south of a massive depression that was once a lake. The city bears the scars of intense fighting, in addition to the damage wrought upon the planet's surface as a whole. Few buildings are left standing: some show signs of direct fire, and others have crumbled as though their foundations had given way. A massive chasm separates the western third of the city from the remainder, the ground to the east now somewhat higher than the rest. Even from the air, it becomes clear that

the Swarm ships patrolling the planet's airspace are not the only guardians remaining—a casual glance at the city shows Swarm patrols in the fragmented remnants of the streets. The city's spaceport has taken particularly harsh fire, and its landing pads are now utterly unusable piles of rubble—the Swarm targeted this location to prevent the city's residents from fleeing or fighting from the air.

With nowhere to land in the city, the PCs will need to find another place to set their ship down, but the tectonic instability that has caused the fissures and crevasses across the planet makes it difficult. A PC acting as science officer must succeed at a DC 22 Computers check using the ship's sensors to find a site stable enough to land, several dozen miles southwest of the city. As the PCs search, a sudden storm of acid rain rolls in, buffeting the ship with caustic precipitation and unpredictable winds. The ship takes 4d10 damage in each quadrant as the acid depletes the shields and possibly pits the hull. The storm passes as quickly as it begins, leaving the PCs free to land. The ground threatens to crumble under the weight of the ship, however, and the pilot must succeed at a DC 24 Piloting check to set the ship down gently. On a failure, the ship takes 2d10 damage that bypasses shields as the earth shifts under the landing gear and the ship scrapes against the crumbling stone.

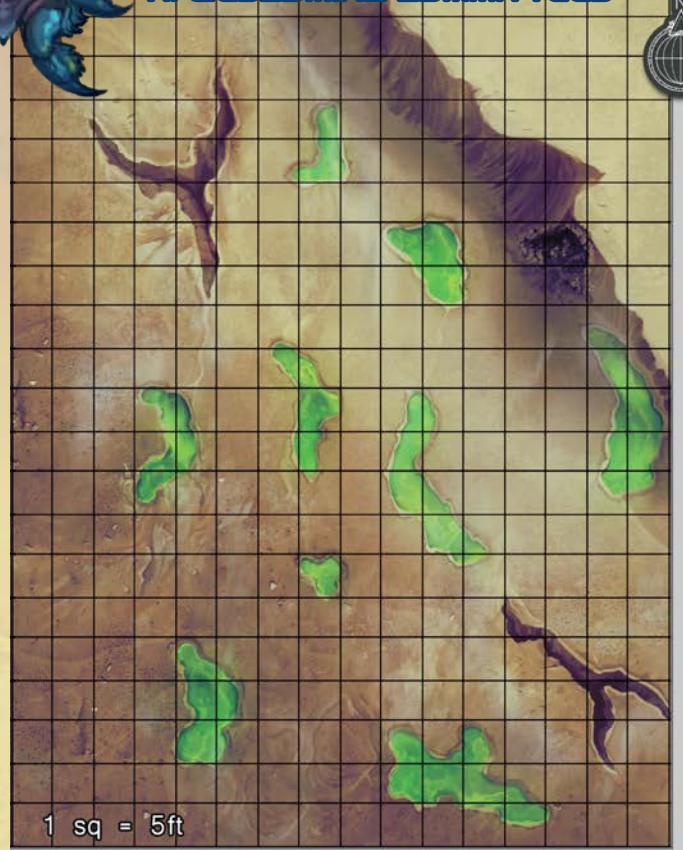
A. WELCOMING COMMITTEES (CR 8)

The PCs' landing does not go unnoticed. Two groups travel to intercept these newcomers as they begin the long march toward Uudz. Whether or not the PCs flew through the acid storm or crash-landed, the PCs end up setting down at the edge of a wide field where recent caustic rainfall has left puddles of acid (see Hazards on page 7) and a faint, hazy mist in the air. Use the map on page 7 for this encounter.

Creatures: A Swarm patrol consisting of a troop of dredgers and a pair of escutchedes reaches the PCs' ship only a few moments after the PCs arrive at this spot. The Swarm components care only that outsiders have approached the area they've been instructed to guard, and attack without warning and fight without mercy. Fortunately for the PCs, this location is far enough from the city and other Swarm troops that the members of this patrol are unable to warn others with their Swarm mind ability.

After the second round of combat, if there are any Swarm enemies remaining, another unidentified group makes its presence known about 200 feet away atop a low ridge. The hazy air makes it difficult to identify any of the individuals, but it's immediately clear that these newcomers are on the PCs' side in the fight as they open fire on the Swarm. This effect provides the benefits of harrying or covering fire each round against one of the troops (your choice based on the PCs' tactics, though PCs who signal or otherwise communicate requests for one or the other should find their requests granted). If the PCs break off from their confrontation with the Swarm to approach the location of their benefactors,

A. WELCOMING COMMITTEES



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they encounter a trio of ragged humanoid fighters; see Development below. In any case, these members of Clade Company (see page 9) don't play any larger role in this battle than the harrying or covering fire described previously.

SWARM DREDGER TROOP CR 5

XP 1,600

HP 70 (see page 60)

TACTICS

During Combat The dredger troop engulfs as many PCs as possible, trying to keep them constantly flat-footed and off-target.

Morale Though this Swarm patrol has orders to guard this area, if the dredger troop is reduced to 10 or fewer Hit Points, the remaining components attempt to flee so they can alert the rest of the Swarm. At your discretion, Clade Company can use their sniper rifles to pick off any fleeing dredgers that look likely to escape.

SWARM ESCUTCHIDES (2) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 66 each (see page 58)

TACTICS

During Combat The escutchedes engage the PCs in melee combat and try to keep them from moving as the dredger

troop moves in. If possible, the escutchedes knock PCs back into puddles of acid (see Hazards below).

Morale The escutchedes don't flee from combat.

Hazards: A recent storm has left pools of acid scattered across the terrain. Each pool is only about a foot deep, but the acid runoff is quite concentrated. A character who touches a puddle of acid takes 2d6 acid damage each round she is in contact with it and for 1d3 rounds thereafter. The pools are difficult terrain.

In addition, the tectonic instability of the region has opened fissures across the area. A character who falls into a fissure (such as from a bull rush combat maneuver) falls $1d4 \times 10$ feet and takes the corresponding amount of falling damage. The sides of the fissures and sinkhole are rough stone, requiring a successful DC 15 Athletics check to scale.

Development: Once the Swarm assault has been dealt with, the helpful newcomers cautiously approach. The leader of this trio is a female shirren who holds a hand up to greet the PCs, as described below.

"Seems obvious you're not with the Swarm," says the shirren woman, slinging her rifle over her shoulder and raising the visor of her dusty, acid-scarred armor. Behind her, the haze clears enough to reveal a centipede-like

creature and a heavily augmented android, both similarly armed and armored. "That makes you friends of ours. I'm Etchiax. Who are you lot, and what brings you to this wreck of a rock?"

Unless the PCs are openly antagonistic, **Etchiax** (NG female shirren mechanic) introduces the trio as members of a group of freedom fighters named Clade Company. The other two members accompanying her are **Kokan** (CG agender bolida^{AA2} operative) and **Queue** (CN male android soldier), but she explains that they're only a small group of the larger company, sent out to investigate the approaching ship that was so obviously not part of the Swarm.

After introductions have been exchanged, Etchiax suggests the group move underground and head to the



Clade Company base. Not only is there is strength in numbers, but as she points out, "an enemy of the Swarm is a friend of Clade Company," and they can all use all the help they can get. She also notes that whatever brings the PCs to Ilemchuua, Clade Company can probably help, as they've been monitoring Swarm activity on the planet since the first attack. Etchiax knows and shares that the Clade Company's leader, Hescamu, will also want to meet the PCs, and can do a better job of answering questions than she can.

The PCs might worry that the Swarm will attack their starship while they're gone. If they voice these concerns, Etchiax responds with the observation that the Swarm has ignored the vast majority of the technological components it has encountered on Ilemchuua. The creatures devour all organic matter, including the bodies of those they slay, and have been collecting natural resources, but unless the PCs are hauling significant amount of organic material on their vessel, Etchiax posits that it will very likely remain untouched.

GOING TO GROUND

Etchiax leads the PCs to a chasm a mile away, then down one side and through a series of winding underground tunnels. Before they head underground, the shirren warns the PCs to activate the environmental protections of their armor if they haven't already, mentioning that toxic heavy-metal fumes sometimes permeate the caverns. See the map on page 7 for an overview of the area between the PCs' landing spot and the city of Uudz.

The damage inflicted by the Swarm is clear even here; what appears to have originally been an extensive organic tunnel complex has been massively altered. Some tunnels have collapsed, while others have been filled with hardened lava. At one point, Etchiax halts the group's progress at an intersection as a fissure opens in the tunnel in front of them, spewing magma up from the floor. The shirren then backtracks a bit to take a different route. Further along, a deep, bone-aching thrum grows, shaking the stone and earth around them for nearly a half-mile of the journey before fading into the distance. Etchiax explains that their path brought them near one of the Swarm's extractor imagoes working to siphon resources, such as petrochemicals, from deep within the planet's crust.

During this 2-hour-long march, Etchiax is happy to talk about herself if the PCs ask about her history. Though she had some experience working as a security guard in her youth, she was working as a starship mechanic at the Uudz spaceport when the Swarm attacked. She collected a few dozen survivors (including Queue) and managed to dodge Swarm patrols by hiding in the city's sewers, where she modified her exocortex to better defend the group of survivors. Not long after, Hescamu's crew of bolidas stumbled across her ragtag band, and Clade Company grew out of that partnership.

Kokan is less forthcoming, largely reminiscing about the bolida settlement deep underground that became untenable once the extractor imagoes began their work. Queue outright refuses to discuss any personal details with the PCs; if they push, Etchiaz gently pulls the inquisitive PC aside and quietly informs them that Queue lost his entire family—a partner and three adopted children—in the Swarm attack.

INTRODUCING CLADE COMPANY

After the difficult but not particularly dangerous journey, the party emerges into a series of larger caverns. These chambers are obviously inhabited; a backup generator thrums quietly, powering a few LED strips, above which the chatter of people and the clatter of boxes and equipment being moved around can be heard. This bustling encampment resembles nothing so much as a military outpost combined with a refugee camp. The inhabitants are a motley crew—mostly shirrens and bolidas, but also a handful of formians, a few large haans, and a smattering of others, including several humans, a pair of vesk, a korasha lashunta, and a half-orc. Nearly everyone wears armor and carries a backpack and some sort of weapon, even those engaged in tasks as seemingly innocuous as preparing a meal. The overall tone of the encampment is fairly grim—not so different from what the PCs themselves faced when they first arrived at Fort Gallant on Suskillon.

A murmur of activity goes up as Etchiaz leads the party into the cavern, turning into enthusiastic greetings and surprised exclamations directed toward the PCs. A few minutes later, a bolida wearing a scuffed suit of segmented armor scuttles toward the group, gesturing with several pairs of limbs and twitching their antennae—one broken off to be shorter than the other—with enthusiasm. This is **Hescamu** (CG agender bolida^{AA2} operative), the leader of Clade Company. The bolida welcomes Etchiaz, Kokan, and Queue by name, clearly relieved that they've returned safely, and then turns their attention to the PCs.

"You're either foolhardy or hells-bent on something to have come to this planet. But it's pretty clear you don't like the Swarm any more than we do, and you've proven you're competent folks. My name's Hescamu, and we're Clade Company." The bolida gestures around the cavern. "What's your business here on Ilemchuua? Maybe we can help each other out."



HESCAMU

A retired military officer who has now found themselves returned to very active duty, Hescamu tends to be blunt, as leading a resistance effort leaves little time or energy for niceties. That said, the bolida is genuinely interested in the PCs. The company leader guesses from their bearing and equipment that they have their own military experience, and considers the possibility of collaborating to be a win-win situation. Hescamu also realizes the PCs probably have plenty of questions and is more than happy to get them up to speed on the planet's current situation. The bolida intersperses their own questions with the PCs' inquiries, trying to learn where the PCs came from and why they're interested in Ilemchuua.

Some sample PC questions and Hescamu's answers are presented below.

How did you know we'd be friendly to you? Why do you trust us? The bolida harrumphs. "Have you seen it out there? You're

not Swarm. You fought the Swarm, and we fight the Swarm. That puts us on the same side, and we're probably going to do better working together than fighting one another." After a moment's pause, they shrug. "Besides, Etchiaz's a pretty good judge of character, so if she trusts you, so do I."

Why is the Swarm still here? "Good question!" Hescamu's secondary and tertiary arms gesticulate furiously. "They attacked months ago and still haven't left. There are an awful lot of the creatures over in Uudz, especially along the northwestern edge. Not really sure why. We've been thinking about doing a scouting mission there to learn more, but between the Swarm patrols and the tremors from the extractor imago on the western edge of the city, it's too dangerous."

What is Clade Company, and what are you doing here? "Well... we're surviving, and that's a start. We're pretty much everyone who's still alive on this part of the continent. We're hoping we can keep ourselves safe until the Swarm leave, and then we'll be able to rebuild..." Hescamu trails off, and Etchiaz picks up the explanation. "There's more damage than we thought at first. Rebuilding is going to be tough, and we can't even start until the Swarm leaves. So for now, we're hoping to fight back enough to become a stinger in their shell and encourage them to leave sooner. Besides, we don't have any ships, so we don't have a way to get off-world." The bolida perks up at this last observation and shakes their head. "No, no," they say. "We're prepared to wait, so we'll wait 'em out."

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How did you survive the Swarm attack? With a glance around the room, Hescamu chuckles. "Depends who you ask. Most of us bolidas were so far underground we didn't realize what'd happened until communications cut off. When we came up to find out what went wrong... well, this is what we found, and then the extractor imagos made it too dangerous for us to go back down. But lots of the rest of us just got lucky. Some hid, some ran. Etchiah had a whole lot of folks holed up underneath Uudz, with plenty of weapons but nothing to eat or drink. We'd find a few more here and there almost every day, but it's been a while since we've had newcomers. As far as this region is concerned, I think we're it."

What are those really big bugs on the surface? Why is the planet so damaged? Hescamu explains that the Swarm extractor imagos across the planet's surface are siphoning resources from deep within the planet. The extraction causes quite a few problems underground—aside from the obvious issue of resource depletion—most notably a significant degree of tectonic instability that results in lava flows and eruptions, fumaroles and gas vents, tremors, and similar problems. Their drilling also releases tremendous amounts of sulfuric exhaust, leading to the frequent acid rainstorms that have further ravaged the surface.

Do you know anything about Professor Galchak at Zessh University? Hescamu admits that the area around the university, in the northwest section of Uudz, has been a hotbed of Swarm activity, but they aren't sure why. They don't know anything about the professor, though they suggest asking around, as someone in Clade Company might know more.

PCs who ask around about Professor Galchak and succeed at a DC 22 Diplomacy check meet a young host shirren named Jadvata, who graduated from Zessh University a few years ago. Jadvata reveals they'd had an anthropology class with Galchak and can describe where the professor's office is in the main academic building. While Jadvata admits they were not particularly fond of that class, they recount admiring the collection of relics in the professor's office, including one particularly impressive weapon that seemed like it might have been blessed by Hylax.

Do you know anything about the Forever Reliquary? Hescamu hasn't heard this term before. If the PCs ask around, the handful of Clade Company shirrens who recognize the phrase know it only as a mythological place of perfected peace and friendship.

Have you ever heard of something called "the God-Host"? If the PCs ask Hescamu about this phrase or mention Xelanon's strange psychic episode on Suskillon, the bolida frowns and gestures to Etchiah. The shirren relates that she was friends with a few shirrens that experienced strange dreams during the Swarm invasion, each centered around faint telepathic whispers from something they described as "the God-Host." Unfortunately, these shirrens ultimately

perished in the attacks, and Etchiah knows little about the God-Host, except for what her friends described as a "vortex within the psychic landscape, dragging down all caught in its wake." Neither Etchiah nor the other Clade Company shirrens have experienced such a vision.

Do you have anything that can help us? "Depends on what you need," Hescamu replies, and goes on to explain that Clade Company has been scavenging technological equipment, which the Swarm seems to have no interest in. They are happy to trade for the PCs' equipment or UPBs, but they don't have much interest in credits (see Trading with Clade Company on page 11).

PCs who ask for supplies for free find Hescamu less accommodating, but a character who succeeds at a DC 27 Diplomacy check can convince the bolida to relinquish their personal cache, consisting of two filtered rebreather armor upgrades and three doses of sprayflesh. The DC of this check is reduced by 5 if the PCs agree to take on the mission to disable the extractor imago (see below).

THE IMAGO MISSION

Once the PCs have made clear their intent to investigate Zessh University and seek out Professor Galchak's research about the Forever Reliquary (even with the Swarm presence), Hescamu brings the party to a side chamber of the company headquarters and brings up a holographic map of the city. Much of the Swarm contingent left on Ilemchuuvu is crawling all over Zessh University, which makes the PCs' proposition a dangerous one. Furthermore, the western side of the city has been plagued by severe instability as a result of a nearby extractor imago's excavations. Sinkholes have been appearing across the area, and Hescamu is fairly certain it's only a matter of time before the entire area collapses, likely destroying any information the PCs are looking for.

To tackle both problems at once, Hescamu proposes a daring plan: an attack on the nearby extractor imago, drawing the Swarm's attention away from the university and making the PCs' mission easier. Even better, disabling or destroying the imago would reduce the tremors and instability of the area, which would also make a strike mission into the university safer and quicker—to say nothing of limiting the ongoing destruction of one of the only cities left standing on Ilemchuuvu. The extractor imagos are extremely large, however, and attacking one externally would likely have little effect. To truly take down one of these behemoths, a strike force would have to infiltrate the creature itself, using the access pathways Swarm components use to control the things, and disable it from within. Hescamu builds upon the plan by proposing members of Clade Company guard the exterior of the extractor imago while the PCs conduct their raid, ensuring that the party won't get overwhelmed when the imago starts calling other Swarm components to its defense. Hescamu rubs their secondary arms together enthusiastically as they talk, clearly excited by the



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opportunities the PCs' presence and skills have provided for the freedom fighters.

Despite this excitement, Hescamu won't pressure the PCs to participate. The leader of Clade Company encourages them to remain among the freedom fighters for as long as they'd like so they can rest, plan their next moves, craft and repair gear, and trade for supplies. Clade Company has collected a significant stash of equipment, between what they've been able to scavenge from the surface and the supplies brought up from the bolidas' settlement deeper underground. See Trading with Clade Company below for more information about the supplies the Clade Company has available.

Eventually, however, the PCs will need to finalize their plans and put them into action. Frequent reminders of the Swarm's ongoing presence make it clear that a clock is ticking: nearly constant rumbling and groaning as the planet's crust grinds against the strain placed upon it, trickles of acid running down the walls from rainstorms on the surface, occasional fumaroles of toxic gases erupting within the caverns, and even the company members' conversations about the lifespan of their power generator and supply of rations can help encourage the PCs not to dawdle.

When they're ready to depart, Hescamu assigns a Clade detachment to accompany them, with Etchias as the lead. The shirren woman approaches the assignment with enthusiasm,

glad to have the PCs working alongside the company and excited about the upcoming mission.

TRADING WITH CLADE COMPANY

While Clade Company is happy to engage in mutually beneficial trade with the PCs, the ruined state of the planet means that standard credits don't hold much value here. The PCs must trade either equipment (which has a value of 10% of its purchase price, as normal) or UPBs and other trade goods (so long as those trade goods are of a type useful to a group of refugees and freedom fighters; artwork, for example, is unlikely to gain much traction here). Clade Company sells the equipment they have available at standard prices.

Clade Company's current stores of equipment are somewhat limited, consisting primarily of goods the freedom fighters have been able to scavenge from the ruined settlements on Ilemchuua. For trade purposes, the company has substantial stockpiles of standard and high-capacity batteries, standard ammunition (those types listed in the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*), basic medkits, medpatches, and *mk 1* serums of healing. A cache of supplies gathered from a local military base includes several cases of frag grenades I (22 in total), five autotarget rifles, two suits of officer ceremonial plate, and three suits of business stationwear.



DECLINING THE EXTRACTION MISSION

The PCs might decide Hescamu's plan of attacking the extractor imago isn't worth the risk. Clade Company won't force the party to take part in a mission they aren't comfortable with, and so the PCs could plausibly skip Part 2 of this adventure entirely and move directly into Part 3.

In this case, the PCs have a much harder time at the university, facing substantially more Swarm components outside and inside the building (including an additional dredger troop, as well several corroxes, escutched, and revulsors), while the mindreaper continues its efforts at learning what Professor Galchak knew about the Forever Reliquary. Furthermore, the terrain itself is more hazardous, with frequent tremors potentially collapsing less-used portions of the building (or causing debris to fall on the PCs within), broken floors creating difficult terrain through more of the building, increased acid rain leaking through damaged ceilings to rain down on the PCs and pool on the uneven floors, and perhaps vents of toxic or corrosive gases or even lava to threaten the PCs' progress.

All in all, characters who skip Part 2 should gain enough additional XP from hazards and additional encounters in Part 3 that they still reach 7th level by the adventure's end, but it should be a harrowing mission. Furthermore, Clade Company's work is much harder (perhaps making the freedom fighters less eager to help the PCs), and the extractor imago eventually causes much of Uudz—the last city truly standing on Ilemchuua—to collapse entirely.

There are a number of crafters among the company as well, and the PCs can commission custom-built equipment if they supply the necessary UPBs or scavenged parts. These individuals are all professionals with 5 ranks in the appropriate skills. Producing these items takes the typical crafting times listed on page 235 of the *Core Rulebook*, but due to the makeshift workspaces in the company's base, these items do not provide any of the advantages that custom-built equipment usually offers, instead functioning as the standard, mass-produced version of the item.

PART 2: EXTRACTOR DISTRACTION

The extractor imago Hescamu has targeted is located south of Uudz. While it isn't particularly far from Clade Company's headquarters, overland travel is exceptionally

dangerous and all but guaranteed to attract the attention of the Swarm patrols near the city. Instead, Etchiaz plans to lead the PCs through an extensive series of underground tunnels, which will avoid the Swarm's direct attention but makes the journey significantly longer. She advises the PCs to ensure they're prepared to be gone for at least 2 days, plus however long they might need to take within the imago, including not only rations and water, but also fully charged environmental protections. The PCs can recharge their armor's environmental protections at the company base, but they'll either need to sleep in their armor (which, while uncomfortable, does not interfere with sleeping) or carry and make use of a device such as a mobile hotelier.

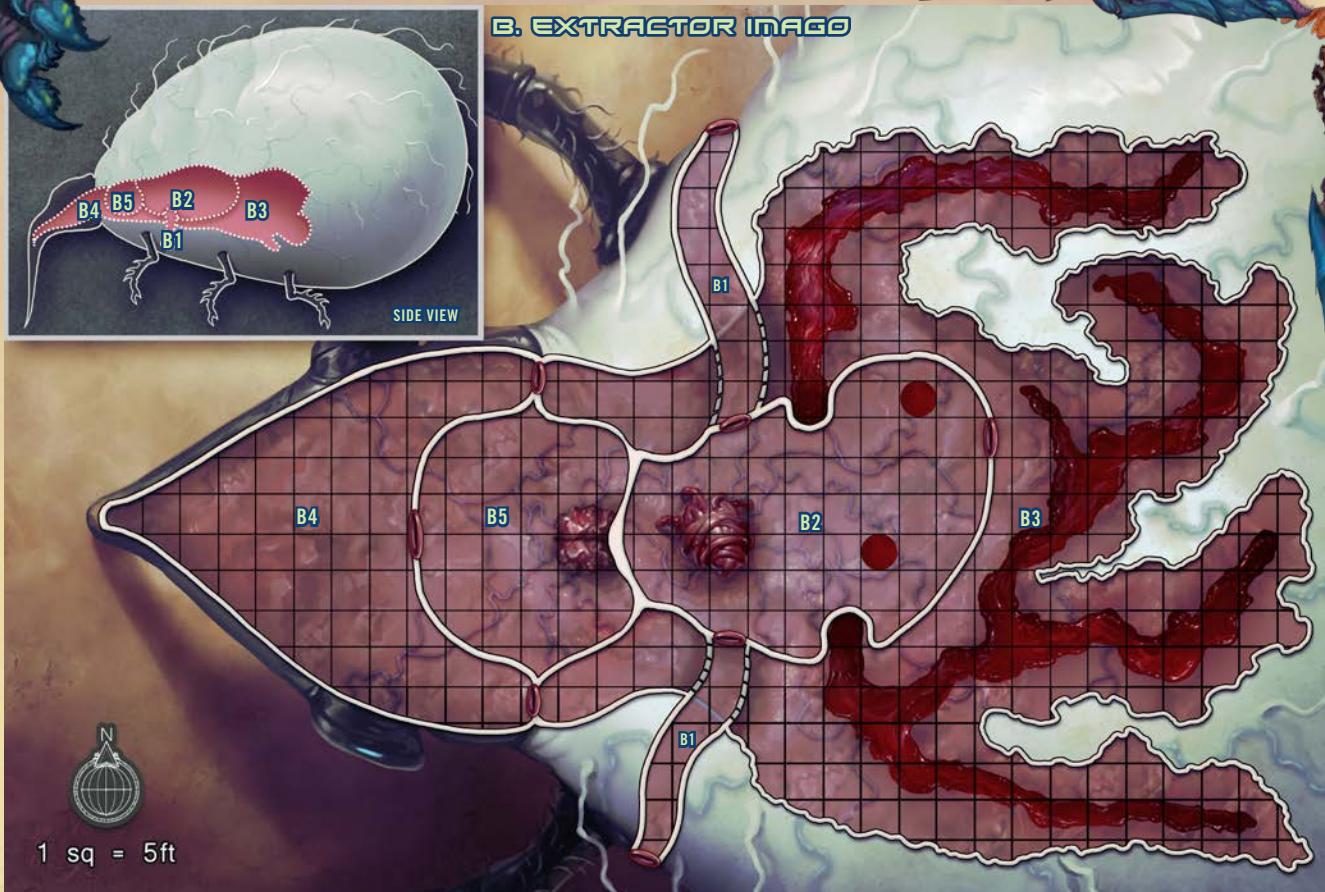
The Clade Company strike force consists of Etchiaz, Kokan, and Queue, along with four other Clade members (three shirrens and one bolida). During the journey, these freedom fighters help keep watch and navigate, as well as converse with the PCs—sharing and comparing war stories between Ilemchuua and Suskillon being a favored topic. Etchiaz explains that once they reach the extractor imago, the Clade fighters will create a distraction to allow the PCs to access the creature. While the PCs are carrying out their mission in the imago's interior, the strike force will keep any additional Swarm components from helping the extractor, while also scavenging equipment and supplies from the region. As soon as the imago is disabled or destroyed, the PCs and the freedom fighters can beat a hasty retreat back to the tunnels and the company base.

The tunnels the party travels through are largely vacant but still far from safe. Fumaroles, tremors causing cave-ins, and the occasional magma leak combine to make the journey to Uudz take a full day of marching. While there aren't any major threats in the tunnels, feel free to nudge sluggish or distracted PCs with an encounter with a thermophilic ooze (see page 16) or a nest of khefaks (Alien Archive 2 78). Sulfuric exhaust from the extractor imago's drilling have permeated these tunnels, making much of the air similar to a toxic atmosphere (*Core Rulebook* 396) and requiring PCs who breathe to keep the environmental protections of their armor active at all times. At the end of the first day, Etchiaz informs the PCs that the group should rest up, as they are nearing their destination.

B. EXTRACTOR IMAGO

The PCs get their first up-close view of the extractor imago as they emerge onto the surface early the next morning. Read or paraphrase the following.

Only a few hundred yards away, a massive insectile carapace rises into the smoggy sky. The thing resembles a starship-sized tick, its head plunged into the cracked earth and its abdomen so swollen with the planet's petrochemical resources that its spindly, spine-covered legs hardly graze the ground. Plumes of caustic smoke spew from vents along



its back, coalescing into a heavy haze that obscures detail even at this close distance. The creature shudders and waggles its appendages, glutonously shoving its narrow head deeper into the ground as the terrain underfoot heaves and an immense gout of odd-smelling exhaust churns into the sky. Even at this distance, the temperature is noticeably warmer.

Etchiaz points out a series of small openings on the extractor imago's abdomen and explains in a matter-of-fact tone that these spiracles are what allow the creature to breathe, and as such provide access into the imago's interior. A character who succeeds at a DC 22 Life Science check (shirrens and other insectile PCs gain a +4 circumstance bonus on this check) recognize that most insects clench these valves shut in times of distress. This means that damaging the extractor will likely lock down these entrances, but that killing it entirely will cause the valves to relax and allow egress.

The Clade Company strike force plans to enact their distraction at a semi-intact building approximately half a mile away from the extractor imago, drawing the Swarm's attention. Unless the PCs have other ideas, Etchiaz executes this plan as soon as the PCs indicate they're ready, launching an explosive missile at the designated building

and accompanying her team as they confront the Swarm components that come to investigate. The PCs have plenty of time to close the distance to the imago, and as long as they don't do anything outrageously egregious along the way, they can make their way to area B1 without having to overcome any enemies.

EXTRACTOR IMAGO FEATURES

The extractor imago is nearly 250 feet long from where its head is embedded into the ground to the end of its swollen abdomen, and its bulk soars nearly 100 feet into the air. Most of this immensity is simply storage for the various resources it has been sucking out of the planet, but the creature's major organs are accessible and traversable to allow Swarm effigines to maintain it and manage its functions.

The imago's spiracles—valve-like openings akin to enormous pores—are located close to the ground so as to limit the amount of exhaust the creature breathes in; this also allows easier access for those Swarm that need to get to the imago's inner workings. A Medium or smaller creature can fit through a spiracle with no difficulty, but Large creatures must squeeze, and Huge creatures find this means of entry impossible.

The spiracle valves close the first time the extractor imago takes any damage (either inside or out). If the damage

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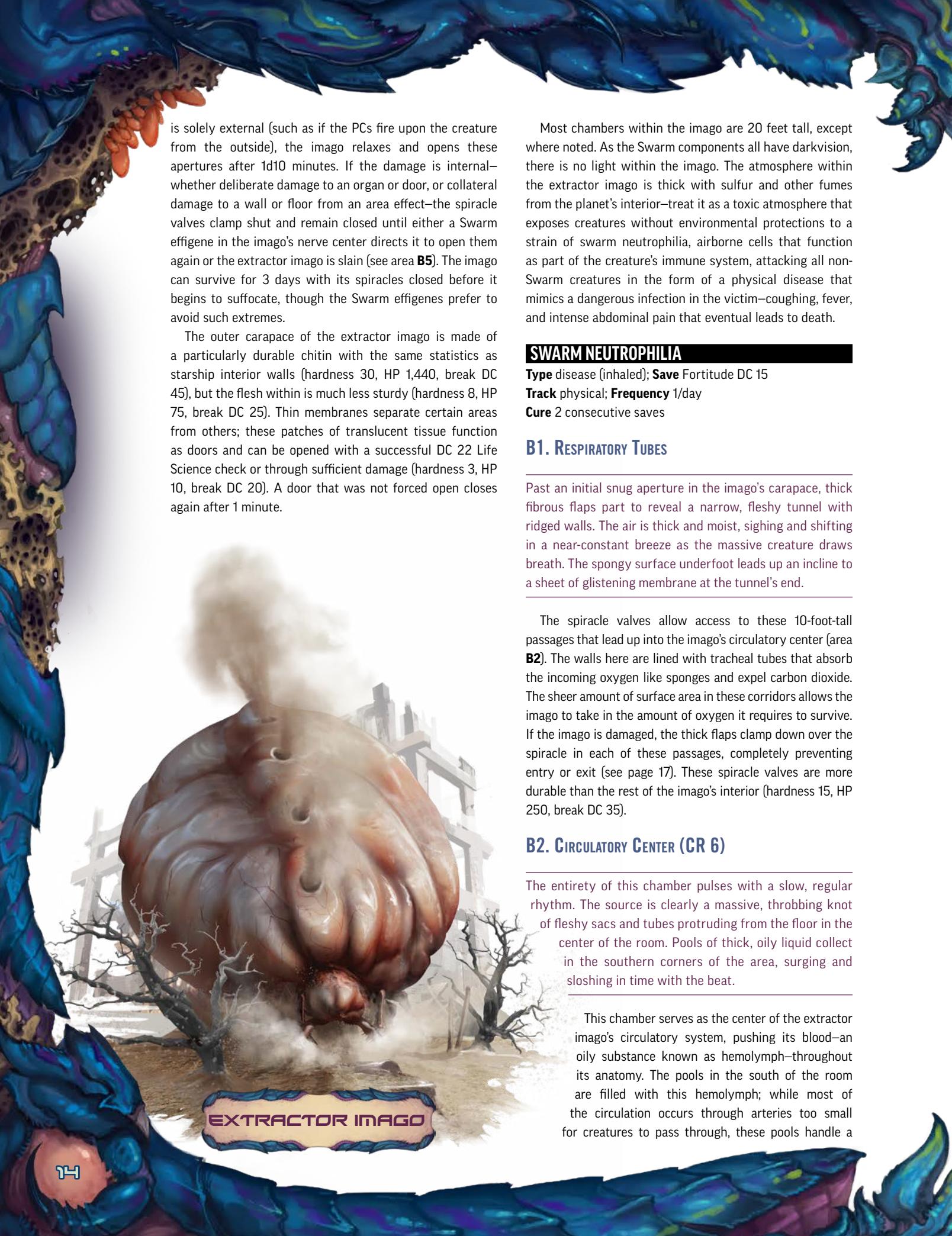
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is solely external (such as if the PCs fire upon the creature from the outside), the imago relaxes and opens these apertures after 1d10 minutes. If the damage is internal—whether deliberate damage to an organ or door, or collateral damage to a wall or floor from an area effect—the spiracle valves clamp shut and remain closed until either a Swarm effigene in the imago's nerve center directs it to open them again or the extractor imago is slain (see area **B5**). The imago can survive for 3 days with its spiracles closed before it begins to suffocate, though the Swarm effigines prefer to avoid such extremes.

The outer carapace of the extractor imago is made of a particularly durable chitin with the same statistics as starship interior walls (hardness 30, HP 1,440, break DC 45), but the flesh within is much less sturdy (hardness 8, HP 75, break DC 25). Thin membranes separate certain areas from others; these patches of translucent tissue function as doors and can be opened with a successful DC 22 Life Science check or through sufficient damage (hardness 3, HP 10, break DC 20). A door that was not forced open closes again after 1 minute.

Most chambers within the imago are 20 feet tall, except where noted. As the Swarm components all have darkvision, there is no light within the imago. The atmosphere within the extractor imago is thick with sulfur and other fumes from the planet's interior—treat it as a toxic atmosphere that exposes creatures without environmental protections to a strain of swarm neutrophilia, airborne cells that function as part of the creature's immune system, attacking all non-Swarm creatures in the form of a physical disease that mimics a dangerous infection in the victim—coughing, fever, and intense abdominal pain that eventually leads to death.

SWARM NEUTROPHILIA

Type disease (inhaled); **Save** Fortitude DC 15

Track physical; **Frequency** 1/day

Cure 2 consecutive saves

B1. RESPIRATORY TUBES

Past an initial snug aperture in the imago's carapace, thick fibrous flaps part to reveal a narrow, fleshy tunnel with ridged walls. The air is thick and moist, sighing and shifting in a near-constant breeze as the massive creature draws breath. The spongy surface underfoot leads up an incline to a sheet of glistening membrane at the tunnel's end.

The spiracle valves allow access to these 10-foot-tall passages that lead up into the imago's circulatory center (area **B2**). The walls here are lined with tracheal tubes that absorb the incoming oxygen like sponges and expel carbon dioxide. The sheer amount of surface area in these corridors allows the imago to take in the amount of oxygen it requires to survive. If the imago is damaged, the thick flaps clamp down over the spiracle in each of these passages, completely preventing entry or exit (see page 17). These spiracle valves are more durable than the rest of the imago's interior (hardness 15, HP 250, break DC 35).

B2. CIRCULATORY CENTER (CR 6)

The entirety of this chamber pulses with a slow, regular rhythm. The source is clearly a massive, throbbing knot of fleshy sacs and tubes protruding from the floor in the center of the room. Pools of thick, oily liquid collect in the southern corners of the area, surging and sloshing in time with the beat.

This chamber serves as the center of the extractor imago's circulatory system, pushing its blood—an oily substance known as hemolymph—throughout its anatomy. The pools in the south of the room are filled with this hemolymph; while most of the circulation occurs through arteries too small for creatures to pass through, these pools handle a

substantial transfer of nutrients from the extractor's lower gut and are therefore much larger (see Hazard below).

The fleshy mass in the center of the room is the imago's heart, and the squares containing it is difficult terrain. Though the actual organ extends through the floor and into areas the PCs cannot reach, this protrusion allows for observation and repair, if necessary. A character who succeeds at a DC 22 Life Science check realizes that if this portion of the heart (hardness 8, Hit Points 60) is severely damaged, the imago won't be instantly killed, though it will slow down the creature's extractions (thus alleviating the seismic tremors in the area). If the result of the check exceeds the DC by 5 or more, the PC realizes that when the damage causes the spiracles to clamp shut, the PCs will be trapped within the imago until they find and destroy the creature's brain.

Creatures: A Swarm effigene in this chamber has been performing basic maintenance on the heart, accompanied by a corrovox to handle heavy lifting and other menial tasks. Both stop their work and attack non-Swarm creatures entering the chamber.

If any PCs are pulled through the pools to area **B3** (see Hazards below), the Swarm here notify the escutchedes in that area using their Swarm mind ability. In this case, the escutchedes move to attack any creatures emerging from the pools, then move to guard the passageways from the circulatory center to the upper gut (area **B4**) to prevent the PCs from passing farther into the imago. In any case, the effigene in this area notifies the effigene in area **B5** of the intruders.

SWARM CORROVOX

CR 3

XP 800

HP 40 (Starfinder Alien Archive 110)

TACTICS

Before Combat The corrovox stands adjacent to the effigene.

During Combat The corrovox considers the effigene substantially more valuable than itself and targets whoever has been the most effective against the effigene, even moving into melee to help deter spells and ranged attacks if it can.

Morale If the effigene dies, the corrovox flees the room as quickly as possible, trying to draw intruders to the nearest area where there are still surviving Swarm components.

SWARM EFFIGENE

CR 5

XP 1,600

HP 63 (see page 57)

TACTICS

Before Combat If the effigene hears the PCs coming through the respiratory tubes, it positions itself on the far side of one of the heart's circulatory pools.

During Combat As long as the corrovox is alive, the effigene uses its invigorate Swarm ability to grant extra move

actions to the corrovox. When alone or pressed, it resorts to its physical attacks.

Morale The effigene defends the heart at any cost, and fights to the death.

Hazards: The pools of hemolymph in this area are pushed between this area and the imago's lower gut (area **B3**) each round as the extractor imago circulates vital nutrients from its digestive system to the rest of its organs. These pools are difficult terrain. A Medium or smaller creature in one of these pools at initiative count 0 is subjected to a special combat maneuver (with a total of +14 to the attack) as the valves circulate the fluid. If the result of the attack exceeds the creature's KAC + 4, the creature is pulled down into the pool and deposited in a similar pool in area **B3** right before the beginning of their next turn. From the lower gut, a character can wait for the next round's circulatory cycle to get pulled back (with a similar combat maneuver), or they can make their way to the door to the circulatory center and reenter the chamber. Being pulled from one pool to another does no damage to a character, and the trip isn't long enough to risk drowning (though the whole process is quite disgusting). Fluid stops circulating between these pools if the exposed section of the imago's heart is destroyed.

B3. LOWER GUT (CR 7)

This area branches off into several cavernous tunnels, the walls and ceiling lined with countless pulpy nubs. A foul liquid trickles along these protrusions, collecting in a channel at the center of each tunnel's floor.

This sprawling cavern system is where the imago digests what organic material it extracts from the planet, fueling itself to continue its resource-collection efforts. The walls and ceiling are covered in cilia to absorb nutrients from material broken down by the digestive acid flowing down the walls and pooling on the floor (see Hazards on page 16). Membrane-doors connect this area to the circulatory center (area **B2**) and the upper gut (area **B4**).

Creatures: Two Swarm escutchedes patrol this area, as the extractor imago occasionally siphons up living creatures that might pose a risk to the creature from within. They assume the PCs are such an anomaly and attack with the intent of destroying the intruders.

SWARM ESCUTCHIDES (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 66 each (see page 58)

TACTICS

Before Combat If alerted by a Swarm creature in the circulatory center (area **B2**), the escutchedes position themselves near the pools that connect with the imago's circulatory system. Creatures appearing from these

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pools are their primary targets.

During Combat These components use their bulk to batter foes into the channels of acid in the center of the tunnels (see Hazards below). They endeavor to prevent anyone from moving close to the pools that connect to the imago's circulatory system.

Morale With the sole orders of protecting this area of the extractor imago's anatomy, the escutchedes fight until killed.

Hazards: While only a few inches deep, the liquid pooling in the center of each branch of this area is a strong digestive acid. A creature who touches this acid takes 1d6 acid damage each round they are in contact with it and for 1 round thereafter.

The pools adjacent to area **B2** are a component of the extractor imago's circulatory system, conveying life-giving hemolymph between the heart and here. See area **B2** for details on these hazards.

B4. UPPER GUT (CR 7)

The hard, chitin-reinforced walls of this chamber narrow to the west, eventually tapering to a series of impassably small ducts. Still more narrow apertures open in orderly rows across the walls and ceiling, with the largest being a series of membrane-covered panels in the fleshy eastern wall. The atmosphere in this area is thick with swirling fumes and is far hotter than the rest of the creature's interior.

The extractor imago's upper gut is where the creature collects and sorts the material it siphons up from the planet's crust and mantle. Once processed, the resources are channeled out through the various apertures throughout this chamber. In addition to the direct hazards of this process (see Trap below), the superheated material raises the temperature of this entire area to extreme heat (Core Rulebook 403).

This area has access to the lower gut (area **B3**) and the nerve center (area **B5**). The Swarm effigines in the nerve center must pass through this chamber to enter or exit the imago, but they can't stand the high temperatures here for very long. While they can temporarily suspend the imago's operations to allow passage, such an interruption both makes the extractor imago quite grumpy and delays the planetary resource extraction schedule, and so the effigines refrain from doing so unless absolutely necessary.

Creatures: This extractor imago has recently siphoned up a few heat-resistant creatures, giving it the insectile equivalent of a sinus infection. These three thermophilic oozes, which

have taken up residence here, are specimens of a local species of ooze typically found in deep-sea gas vents, and they find the hot, caustic environment of the upper gut a quite comfortable living space. As they haven't caused any problems other than mild discomfort to the extractor imago, and the heat of this chamber prevents the Swarm from easily entering to deal with the oozes, the effigines have left the oozes here for the time being.

THERMOPHILIC OOZES (3) CR 3

XP 800 each
HP 41 each (see page 59)

TACTICS

During Combat The oozes approach large collections of organic material, such as humanoid characters, and attempt to eat them.

Morale Although their intellect is limited, an ooze instinctively flees toward the intake aperture after taking any amount of cold damage. An ooze can easily squeeze through this aperture and escape.

Trap: The extractor imago's ongoing extraction efforts make this room a fairly dangerous area. Every 1d3 rounds, the imago draws in a new batch of superheated gases from deep beneath Illemchuua's surface. This intake bathes the entire area in superheated, acidified particulate matter. While the PCs can temporarily suspend the intake, shutting the process down can be done only by commands from the imago's nerve center (area **B5**) or by disabling or killing the extractor imago (see areas **B2** and **B5**).

EXTRACTOR IMAGO INTAKE

CR 3

XP 800

Type analog; **Perception** DC 10; **Disable** Life Science DC 19 (spoof neural commands to disable intake for 1 round) or Engineering DC 21 (block intake valve to disable the next intake blast)

Trigger none (constant effect); **Init** +8 (acts every 1d3 rounds); **Reset** automatic

Effect intake blast (3d6 A & F); DC 14 Fort half; multiple targets (all creatures in area **B4**)

B5. NERVE CENTER (CR 8)

The confines of this claustrophobic chamber are cooler, quieter, and less moist than the rest of the creature's interior. At the rear of the space to the east, a bulbous gray mass extends upward from the floor, extending threadlike feelers into the walls behind it.

Entry to this area is only possible from the upper gut (area **B4**). The bulbous mass in this chamber is the extractor imago's simplistic brain (see Trap below).

Creatures: Two Swarm effigines stay in this chamber to control and regulate the extractor imago's functions.

SWARM EFFIGINES (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 63 each (see page 58)

TACTICS

Before Combat If alerted to the presence of intruders by the other Swarm components within the imago, one effigine positions itself at the entrance to the chamber, while the other remains between the entrance and the imago's brain. If they are not alerted, they can both be found near the brain, but they immediately call out to other Swarm within range if attacked.

During Combat One effigine focuses on killing the intruders closest to the brain with ranged attacks while the other harasses the other PCs with melee attacks. Either effigine uses its invigorate Swarm ability to help the other get out of trouble if necessary.

Morale Both effigines will sacrifice themselves if necessary to protect the extractor imago's nervous system.

Trap: The extractor imago's brain is protected by a complex system that automatically lashes out with waves of psychic force if a creature without the Swarm mind ability approaches within 10 feet of it. While PCs can temporarily halt this defense mechanism, the only way to entirely disable it is to destroy the brain itself.

NEURAL AUTODEFENSE SYSTEM

CR 5

XP 1,600

Type hybrid; **Perception** DC 10; **Disable** Life Science DC 24 (interfere with neural reuptake to disable mind blast for 1d4 rounds) or **Mysticism** DC 22 (befuddle the brain and cause the mind blast to also affect Swarm creatures)

EAC 16; **KAC** 20; **HP** 80; **SR** 16; **Fort/Ref** +5; **Will** +8; susceptible to effects such as *daze monster* and other mind-affecting effects that target a monstrous humanoid but has the Swarm mind ability (which allows it to roll twice when attempting a save against a mind-affecting effect once per day as long as there are other Swarm within 30 feet of the brain)

Trigger proximity (Swarm mind, 10 feet); **Init** +10; **Reset** immediate

Effect mind blast (3d10); DC 15 Will half; multiple targets (all non-Swarm creatures within 10 feet of brain)

Development: Destroying the brain not only disables its neural autodefense system but kills the extractor imago entirely. Without the brain to control it, the imago's nervous system can no longer maintain any functions.

The intake process in the upper gut (area **B4**) ceases, and the hemolymph transfer between the circulatory system and the lower gut (see area **B2**) also stops. The membranous panels serving as doors no longer respond to Life Science checks; a door that is open remains open, but any that are closed must now be destroyed to allow passage. The spiracle valves, if they are closed, open immediately—without the creature's brain, they cannot close again even if the imago takes further damage.

Unfortunately, the extractor imago also begins collapsing, as the loss of the constant inflow of gases and other resources means that it no longer has the ability to hold itself upright against the weight of its bulging abdomen (see Getting Out below).

GETTING OUT

Each PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check notices the shuddering and cracking sounds around them and realizes that the imago is collapsing and that the party has only a limited amount of time to exit the creature as it crumbles around them. Three rounds after the brain is destroyed, the collapse begins affecting the areas on the map as the imago—starting with its head—is slowly crushed under its own weight. Each round after the third, a 10-foot section of the imago collapses, starting with the western edge of area **B4** and moving east. A creature in an affected square takes 3d6 bludgeoning damage and is forcibly moved to the nearest intact space in the same chamber. If the creature gets pushed up against a wall, it becomes trapped until the imago explodes.

The PCs' egress has been somewhat complicated by the destruction of the brain. All closed, intact membrane-doors between the PCs and the spiracle valves (area **B1**) (including those which the PCs opened with successful Life Science checks) must be destroyed to allow passage. The digestive acid in the lower gut (area **B3**) has all been released from circulation, and the acidic hazard now covers the entire floor of this area. The circulatory center (area **B2**) no longer pulls or pushes creatures between the fluid pools; the PCs will have to use the door to move between this area and the lower gut (area **B3**).

PCs who remain in the imago after the segment with the spiracles collapses are trapped within, as the imago's unstable collected payload within its lower gut explodes from the pressure. This explosion deals 10d8 bludgeoning and fire damage to creatures remaining within the imago (Reflex DC 15 half) and half that amount to all creatures within 100 feet of the imago when it explodes (Reflex DC 15 half, with a success resulting in the character taking only one-quarter the total damage). As minor solace for those trapped within, this explosion is also enough to shatter the imago's carapace and allow escape.

The extractor imago's destruction is immediately obvious from the outside, as the massive creature begins deflating

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like a balloon. Clade Company has been busy while the PCs have been conducting their mission, both fighting off the Swarm elements that have come in an effort to protect the extractor imago and securing an effective escape route. When the imago begins to collapse, Etchiaz gives the order for the rest of her team to retreat into the same tunnels they used to reach the area and make their way back to the base. Etchiaz herself races to meet the PCs as they emerge from the collapsing imago, driving a newly commandeered all-terrain transport (*Core Rulebook* 229).

A cloud of dust kicks up behind the all-terrain vehicle as Etchiaz steps onto the accelerator. "Let's see how fast this thing can go!" she shouts—and it's clear why. Dozens of Swarm components pour out from the nearby city, some in a desperate pursuit while others look to the collapsing extractor imago. But their efforts are futile: as the vehicle tears across the scarred ground, the remnants of the massive creature erupt into a gout of flames and smoke, its pilfered payload fueling a glorious fireball.

The vehicle is large enough to accommodate the entire party and fast enough to outpace the handful of Swarm escutchides and corrovoxes that notice the explosion. Though their party is likely powerful enough to overcome these isolated units, Etchiaz points out that she is rather worse for the wear (and likely the PCs are as well). With the Swarm at large alerted to the extractor imago's destruction, confronting these individuals would lead to a fight against endless waves of the creatures. Better by far, she advises, to beat a retreat after their victory and plan out their next steps.

The vehicle is able to get a few hundred feet down the tunnel the PCs exited to reach the imago before the ground becomes too uneven. After ensuring the rest of the strike force successfully escaped, Etchiaz quickly rigs a few explosive charges onto the vehicle. The group then moves farther down the passageway before Etchiaz detonates her explosives, collapsing the tunnel to deter Swarm's pursuit. The group is another day's march away from the Clade Company base, and Etchiaz calls for a break a few hours in so that she, the rest of her strike force, and the PCs can tend to wounds and get a full night's rest.

REPORTING IN

The remainder of the journey is uneventful, and the PCs and the strike force are enthusiastically welcomed back when they arrive the next day. Etchiaz recruits a few company members to help her sort through the supplies the strike force scavenged during the distraction, encouraging the PCs to meet with Hescamu about their mission.

The bolida is delighted to hear the PCs' report, commiserating over any difficulties they had (especially if any members of the party were killed in the attempt) and celebrating their success. Shutting down the extractor imago has already had measurable effects in terms of

reduced tremors, and Hescamu expects to continue to see improvements in terms of underground air quality and stability over the coming days. These developments have likely affected the city as well, making Uudz and Zessh University in particular safer for the PCs' investigation. Moreover, if the PCs are willing to share what they learned about the extractor imago's operations, Clade Company might be able to conduct similar strikes against other extractor imagoes—which would allow the planet a chance to calm and eventually recover. But that, Hescamu says, is a task for another day. For now, they urge the PCs to rest and regain their strength before continuing their investigation into Professor Galchak's research and the Forever Reliquary.



PART 9: UNIVERSITY VISITORS

Whether or not the PCs destroyed the extractor imago (see the Declining the Extraction Mission sidebar on page 12 for advice on handling this outcome), Hescamu joins the PCs to strategize an approach to Uudz and the university. Clade Company has wanted to make an extended survey and scouting mission of the city since they began their freedom-fighting work, and the PCs' mission to Zessh University dovetails neatly with these plans—all the better if the extractor imago has been destroyed, drawing much of the Swarm's attention to that location and away from the rest of the city. The expedition also allows Clade Company to perform additional scavenging in an area they haven't been able to scour yet, which promises an abundance of supplies for the little community.

Conducting an in-depth survey of the state of Uudz is likely to take a few days, and so Hescamu decides to establish a temporary forward base in the city. If all goes well, the Clade team can also install some armaments that the company can use in a targeted strike against the Swarm in the city, perhaps even bringing down enough Swarm ships that they could allow other vessels to land here. The bolida points out that this forward base also gives the PCs a place to rest should they need to fall back during their own mission.

Hescamu provides the PCs with a holographic map of Uudz, though the cartography of course predates the Swarm's attack. The bolida adds quick annotations to show the location of the newly opened rift bisecting the city and highlights the location of Zessh University. After consulting with Etchiaz and the Zessh University graduate Jadvata (which gives the PCs another opportunity to learn what the shirren knows about Professor Galchak, if they haven't already; see page 19), Hescamu identifies an area ideal for

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establishing the forward base in a series of sturdy industrial facilities only a few blocks from the university.

The Clade Company leader ensures the PCs have made the necessary preparations before they depart, including recharging the environmental protections on their armor. The PCs have another opportunity here to trade for supplies and equipment; in addition to the gear listed on page 11, Etchiaz's team has brought back a fresh wave of supplies they'd be willing to trade to the PCs: a suit of elite stationwear, a mining jack II (*Starfinder Armory* 69), several corona laser pistols, a laser sight (*Armory* 61), five heavy seismic picks (*Armory* 13), a *digger stalkring* (see page 43), and a domestic mule drone (*Armory* 101). This equipment was brought back primarily due to its utility to Clade Company's ongoing efforts, but they're willing to trade it to the PCs after seeing their effectiveness in tackling the extractor imago. PCs who want to journey back to their starship to pick up equipment, materials, or other gear can do so before they travel to the university.

The PCs might also take this time to ask around Clade Company about Professor Galchak, the Forever Reliquary, or simply the university in general; see page 10 for what relevant information the freedom fighters can provide. PCs also have time to commission specific items from the Clade Company's artisans (see page 12), craft their own gear,

and repair broken equipment, but the fact that the Swarm might also be searching for information about the Forever Reliquary should discourage the PCs from taking on any extended projects.

THE ROAD TO UUDZ

The PCs' journey to Uudz is similar to the trek to the extractor imago. This time, however, assuming the extractor imago was destroyed, the tremors have lessened considerably, and the party encounters fewer instances of unexpected volcanic activity. A particularly scientific-minded PC can attempt a DC 17 Physical Science check to find reduced levels of toxic compounds in the air (though not enough that they can travel without the environmental protections of their armor).

The Clade Company detachment traveling with the PCs this time is roughly twice the size of their last strike force, though it contains several of the same members, including Etchiaz. The former graduate student Jadvata comes along as well. Hescamu accompanies the group this time, remarking that "leadership isn't worth anything from a leader who isn't willing to do what they're asking others to."

If the PCs talked to Jadvata about Professor Galchak prior to this journey, the host shirren approaches them along the way. They admit, a bit sheepishly, that as an engineering

student they were prone to pulling pranks using the fire extinguishers all over the campus buildings, such as making it snow in the atrium or freezing classroom doors shut to avoid lectures. Now, they explain, they know enough that they could probably make some useful supplies out of them, so long as the university still employs the old Gelugon model of fire extinguisher. Regrettably, the newer designs most commonly available in most places have more safety precautions and can't be used for the same purposes.

If the PCs return with the specified fire extinguishers, Jadvata can convert each one into a cryo grenade I, or they can convert three fire extinguishers into a makeshift gelid hail cannon (*Armory* 21). It takes the shirren 1 hour to create a single item.

The journey takes another full day of marching, with the team emerging from the Uudz sewer system at the site of the forward base early on the second day. Clade Company immediately begins converting one of the remaining structures into an outpost and planning their scouting missions, leaving the PCs to make their way to Zessh University alone.

This forward base remains an outpost where the PCs can retreat to rest. Furthermore, since Clade Company plans to scavenge alongside their scouting, the PCs can trade for basic medical supplies as described in *Trading with Clade Company* on page 11; Jadvata can also convert any Gelugon fire extinguishers the PCs retrieve as they see fit. Each night they stay at the base, the PCs will be asked to take part in regular watches. Unfortunately, the forward base does not have facilities for recharging the environmental protections of their armor. While the university's environment isn't as dangerous as the interior of the extractor imago, the party will still need to manage their resources carefully; Hescamu can advise the group of this precaution if they don't think of it themselves. PCs who spend too much time going back and forth between the university and the forward base may also encounter Swarm patrols, such as the one they encountered in area A, either en route or while on their overnight watches.

The PCs may notice a startling absence of bodies throughout the city of Uudz as they head to Zessh University. Signs of conflict are obvious, including abandoned vehicles, scattered belongings, and even discarded weapons and armor, most of it damaged beyond use. A character who succeeds at a DC 24 Culture check or a check with an applicable Profession skill (such as soldier) knows that the

Swarm consumes any and all organic material but has little use for conventional technology.

Ilemchuuya sees frequent, harsh acid rainstorms due to the volume of sulfur and other pollutants churned into the atmosphere by the extractor imagoes around the world. Every time the PCs travel between the university and the

Clade base or exit the academic building for any reason, there is a 30% chance that they're caught in one of these deluges.

These follow the typical rules for a storm presented on page 398 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*, but in addition to the normal effects of precipitation and wind, the acid rain functions as a corrosive atmosphere (*Core Rulebook* 395) that deals 3d6 acid damage each round for 10 rounds. Once the storm has begun, a character who succeeds at a DC 19 Survival check can find a place for the party to shelter after 1d4 rounds of searching, where the PCs can wait out the storm without taking further damage; a PC who exceeds

this DC by 5 or more halves the amount of time spent searching, to a minimum of 1 round.



ZESSH UNIVERSITY

Zessh University is located near the northwestern edge of Uudz, west of the large rift bisecting the city. Even at its peak, the university never had more than a few thousand students, and most of the academic activity took place in a single large facility, with student dormitories, a few research labs, and a separate administration building standing nearby. Of these, only the main academic building is still standing, and only its central and eastern portions seem to be intact; the rest of the university's structures (including much of the academic building's western wing) have collapsed due to the initial Swarm attack and the subsequent tremors and upheavals caused by the extractor imago.

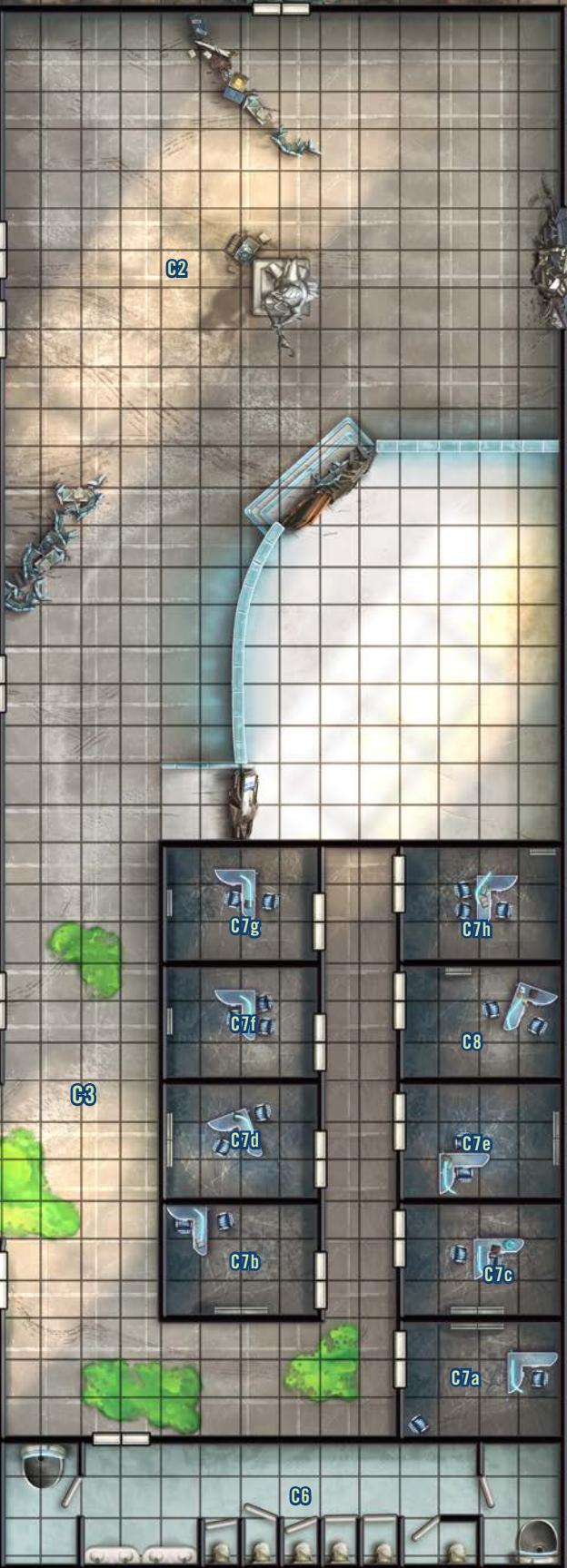
ZESSH UNIVERSITY FEATURES

The walls of the university buildings are made of concrete (hardness 15, HP 540 per 5-foot section, break DC 45). Like most of Uudz, the university no longer has power, leaving the interior of the structure in darkness other than areas **C1** (which is outdoors) and **C2** (which has large skylights and windows allowing in copious natural light). Unless noted otherwise, exterior doors are steel (hardness 20, HP 60, break DC 28), while interior doors are typically plastic (hardness 8, HP 30, break DC 22), and nearly all of them have windows of transparent aluminum (hardness 10, HP 15). The doors are outfitted with sophisticated magnetic

C. MAIN BUILDING FIRST FLOOR



1 SQUARE = 6 FEET



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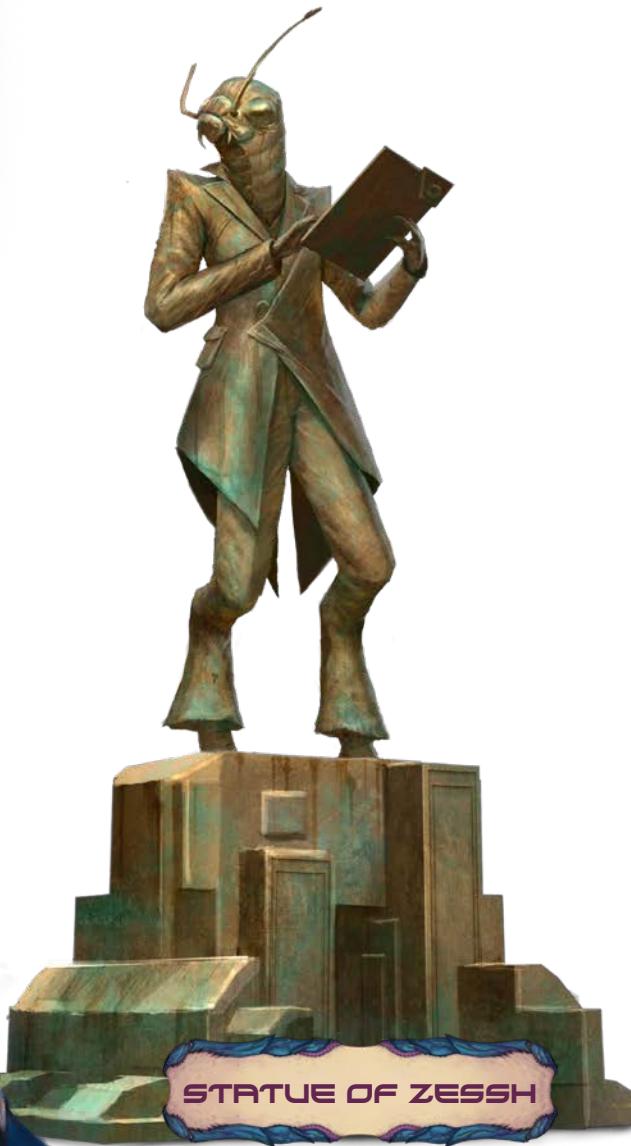
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locks and electronic keycard access; given the power failure, most of the doors have defaulted to an unlocked state so as to comply with fire and safety regulations. Ceilings in the hallways and smaller rooms are 10 feet high, though the larger spaces typically have higher ceilings. As the university counted a variety of species among its students, faculty, and staff, the structures are all carefully designed to accommodate individuals of differing sizes, mobility, vision, and other characteristics—a fact of which the university's admissions office was quite proud.

C. MAIN BUILDING FIRST FLOOR

Zessh University's main academic building once contained several lecture halls, as well as faculty offices and a central atrium that students used as an impromptu meeting place and occasional study hall. The western half of the building collapsed as the Swarm drained the planet of its resources, and what remains is in danger of eventually crumbling.



C1. THE QUAD

This open space might have once borne grass or gardens, but deep fissures now run across the surface, and the remaining soil is merely an ashy powder, pitted and crusted from the acid rains. The university's main academic facility still stands on the northern edge of this square space, cracked and scarred but largely intact. The other buildings lining this central square have not been so lucky; those on the east and south sides are no more than crumbled heaps of rubble, while a sinkhole has greedily swallowed anything that might have stood to the west. The paved paths that once connected the various facilities are cracked and uneven, lurching up from the broken ground.

From the Clade base, the PCs approach this area from the south.

Hazards: The PCs should be able to carefully make their way across the quad, avoiding the many fissures, each of which is $1d4 \times 10$ feet deep. The sides of the fissures are rough stone, requiring a successful DC 15 Athletics check to scale.

C2. ATRIUM (CR 6)

With a design suggesting it was once a bustling center of university activity, this atrium remains a spacious area despite the obvious signs of destruction. The graceful skylights overhead are cracked and look ready to shatter at any moment, and a sign dangles from an archway to the north, but whatever lay beyond has been reduced to rubble. A wide set of steps leads up to a raised portion of the room separated by a glass-block half-wall. To the west, a series of doors with large signs have been crushed under the weight of a collapsed second floor. All of the furniture from this space—formerly cozy sofas, tables, chairs, beanbag lounge furniture, and even a few overturned vending machines—has been piled along with chunks of broken concrete and reinforced with rebar to form makeshift barricades. Standing in the center of the room, with a peculiar expression of pride and achievement despite the surrounding devastation, is a bronze statue of a shirren woman carrying a datapad. A small plaque adorns the statue's base.

This atrium, once an airy entryway and gathering place where students, faculty, and staff at the university came together to study, eat, and socialize, was the site of a last stand against the Swarm by the university's occupants. Few of those present had any training in combat, however, and Swarm forces quickly overpowered them.

The ceiling of the atrium angles down from a 60-foot peak in the northeastern corner to 30 feet at the other sides. The skylights above allow in enough light to see

by during the day. Much of the original decor and signage (in Shirren, with tactile-language panels accompanying each sign) remains in this area, including a small directory mounted on the western wall. A character who can read Shirren can quickly find the number of Professor Galchak's office from this directory (room 1026), though the directory provides only room numbers and no map. The sign over the archway to the north declares the space beyond as the "Food Court," while the impassable doors to the west are labeled "Library," "Lecture Halls 101 & 102," "Offices 1010-1018," "Stairs to Second Floor," and "Student Services." The wide hallway to the east is labeled "Lecture Halls 103 & 104" and "Offices 1020-1028."

The barricades are well constructed (a result of several engineering students and faculty working together) and provide cover to creatures on the far side. The glass block wall is made of tempered alkali-aluminosilicate glass (hardness 5, HP 60 per 5-foot section, break DC 25) and also provides cover, but creatures behind this wall are easily visible and can still be targeted by effects that require only line of sight.

The statue in the center of the room is a tribute to the university's founder, a shirren woman named Zessh. The plaque, written in Shirren, gives her name and proclaims her as a pioneer of multi-species educational techniques.

Creatures: A trio of corroxes guards the atrium against intrusion.

SWARM CORROVOXES (3)

CR 3

XP 800 each

HP 40 each (Starfinder Alien Archive 110)

TACTICS

Before Combat Unless they are taken completely by surprise, the corroxes conceal themselves behind the barricades in an attempt to ambush the PCs. Otherwise, they can be found spread along the perimeter of the room.

During Combat The corroxes use the barricades for cover and fire at range.

Morale When one corrox is reduced to 0 Hit Points or fewer, or all the corroxes have been reduced to 10 Hit Points or fewer, one of the corroxes telepathically alerts the Swarm revulsors in area C4 of the PCs' presence. They then fight to the death.

Treasure: The handful of Ilemchuuvans who made their final stand used mostly improvised weapons and armor that were destroyed during the fighting. A shirren campus security officer was among the trapped resistance, however, and while her organic body was consumed like all the others, the Swarm has not yet found a use for her enforcer armor I (Armory 69) that has a damper shout projector (Armory 23) integrated into the torso, using two of its upgrade slots. With an uninterrupted hour of work,

the PCs can also salvage three suits of casual stationwear, a suit of thinplate, an advanced doshko, a tactical chitinblade (Armory 9), 60 small arm rounds, and 1,700 UPBs worth of scrap from the material the Swarm has yet to collect from behind the barricades.

Near the collapsed archway leading to the food court is a prominent wall-mounted fire extinguisher. This clunky device is one of the Gelugnon fire extinguishers that Jadvata can make use of (see page 20).

C3. EASTERN WING HALLWAY

The ceiling of this hallway is cracked and stained, and a foul liquid drips into pools on the uneven floor. Three double doors open along the southern walls, each labeled with a placard. Another double door leads east. To the south, a flight of stairs leads down, next to an elevator door, while the hallway continues to the north.

The placards are in Shirren and declare the western room to be "Lecture Hall 103" and the eastern room "Lecture Hall 104." The double door to Lecture Hall 104 (area C5) is hot to the touch as a side effect of the room's occupant. To the north, the hallway doubles back and provides access to a series of faculty offices. The staircase at the end of the south-leading segment leads down to the basement level, as did the elevator when it functioned.

The elevator has now become stuck at the bottom of its shaft; PCs who force the door here open (requiring a successful DC 19 Engineering or DC 15 Strength check) can clamber down on top of the carriage, break through the steel ceiling (hardness 20, HP 30, break DC 22), and then force the door open from the inside (using the same stats listed for the ground floor door above); this deposits them at the bottom of the unobstructed staircase. See area D1 for what the PCs might find in the elevator car if they take this particular route.

Hazards: The pools of foul liquid are only a few inches deep, but they hold concentrated runoff from the acid rain that falls several times each day across the city. A character who touches a puddle of acid takes 1d6 acid damage each round she is in contact with it.

C4. LECTURE HALL 103 (CR 6)

Two sloped walkways lead down into this room, flanking stepped tiers holding rows of student desks in various sizes and configurations, but both walkways are obstructed. To the west are the heaped carapaces of slain Swarm components, while the eastern ramp holds countless blocks of some dark, chalky substance.

This large lecture hall could hold over 80 students at a time, seated in rather comfortable auditorium-style seats

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with built-in foldaway desks. The ramps along each side allow easy access to the tiers of student seating and the instructor's table at the front of the room.

The size and the shape of this room allows for an assembly line of sorts, wherein the Swarm converts the bodies of its fallen component creatures into a raw material suitable for crafting new Swarm entities. This unappealing process involves breaking the Swarm bodies into bite-sized pieces, masticating them, and then regurgitating the mass, whereupon it rapidly solidifies into a crumbly substance, which the Swarm shapes into bricks for easy transport. As the university remains a somewhat stable structure, the Swarm workers have been dumping carapaces into the western edge of this room, while the components assigned to the conversion task work along the room's southern edge and pile their output along the eastern walkway. Normally other Swarm components regularly retrieve the processed blocks, but the destruction of the nearby extractor imago has drawn those resources to address that situation, and so the blocks have been piling up into an impassable wall. While quite valuable to the Swarm, this raw material has no utility to non-Swarm creatures, though a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Life Science check recognizes the blocks for what they are.

The ceiling in this room is 10 feet high at the northern edge but remains a fixed plane while the floor slopes down to the south, so the ceiling at the lower end of the room is 20 feet high. With the walkways obstructed, characters who wish to move to the south end of the room must clamber over the lecture hall's seating, which counts as difficult terrain. A PC must succeed at a DC 24 Acrobatics check to move at full speed over the seating, but on a failure, they move only one-quarter their speed (minimum 5 feet) as their limbs and equipment are caught up in the folding seats and armrests. If the PC fails the skill check by 10 or more, they also fall prone at the end of their movement. A character can climb the piled Swarm bodies or raw material with a

successful DC 24 Athletics check, moving half their speed on a success but making no progress on a failed check.

Creatures: A pair of Swarm revulsors in the southern end of the room have been slowly processing the heap of Swarm carapaces into blocks of material which the Swarm can consume and eventually convert into new Swarm components.

SWARM REVULSORS (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

HP 50 each (*Starfinder Adventure Path #20: The Last Refuge* 61)

TACTICS

Before Combat If they were warned of the PCs' presence by the corrovoxes in area **C2**, the revulsors position themselves in the third row of seating, each ready to unleash a cone of sonic energy at one of the hall's two entrances. Otherwise, they are behind the lab table at the front of the lecture hall.

During Combat The revulsors use their ear-splitting shriek abilities on any PCs in range until their foes get within 15 feet of them, at which time they close to fight in melee. If the PCs stay out of reach, the revulsors climb over the rows of seating to attack.

Morale The revulsors fight to the death.

C5. LECTURE HALL 104 (CR 7)

A gently descending walkway along the western wall allows access to several stepped tiers large enough to hold student desks, leveling out at the southern edge of the room. While the size and layout suggest this was once a classroom or lecture hall, the room's furnishings have been reduced to a fine ash. The air is hot and dry, and the fiery destruction managed to damage even the sturdy concrete wall at the southern end of the room.



HUGE FIRE ELEMENTAL

This smaller lecture hall used to hold up to 54 students at a time, seated in rather comfortable auditorium-style seats with built-in foldaway desks; these chairs and desks were destroyed by the room's resident (see below). The ramp along the western side of the room allow easy access to the tiers of student seating and the instructor's podium at the front of the room.

The ceiling in this room is 10 feet high at the northern edge, but as the floor slopes down to the south, the ceiling height at the southern wall is 20 feet.

Creature: During the Swarm assault on Ilemchuua, one of the university instructors, confronted with the reality of the oncoming destruction, brought a mystical relic to this room and blindly activated it in hopes of summoning some kind of ally that might aid in the university's defense. His efforts were only partially successful—the item summoned a Huge fire elemental, but it was unable to leave the room, and thus unable to provide any assistance to its summoner or the other civilians in the university. It has remained in this room since its summoning, perfectly happy to destroy anything that attacks it, including quite a few Swarm components. The Swarm quickly realized that the elemental wouldn't leave this room, and has since left it alone here. The bored elemental has taken to amusing itself by hurling flames at the furniture, floor, ceiling, and walls.

The elemental assumes that any organic creature entering the room is an enemy to be destroyed and attacks on sight, but if a PC addresses it in Ignan and succeeds at a DC 24 Diplomacy check, it momentarily pauses in its rampage. However, the months of being confined to this room have made the fire elemental quite agitated, and no matter what the PCs promise it, the outsider resumes its attack 1 round later, and can't be reasoned with again.

HUGE FIRE ELEMENTAL

CR 7

XP 3,200

N Huge outsider (elemental, extraplanar, fire)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

EAC 19; **KAC** 21

Fort +11; **Ref** +9; **Will** +6

DR 5/–; **Immunities** elemental immunities, fire

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee slam +18 (2d6+12 B & F; critical burn 2d4)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +4; **Con** +2; **Int** -3; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +14

Feats Mobility

Languages Ignan

TACTICS

During Combat The elemental prioritizes targets that have

successfully harmed it, particularly if its attackers used spells or weapons that deal cold damage, but it otherwise has trouble telling non-elemental creatures apart and attacks whoever is nearest.

Morale The elemental is bound to the room and cannot leave until it is destroyed.

Treasure: A character who casts *detect magic* or succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check while sifting through the ash in the southern half of the room finds a constantly glowing ember left over from the elemental's summoning. This ember functions as a *soulfire* (Armory 65) least photon crystal.

Development: Since the outsider wouldn't provide any sustenance, the Swarm avoided clearing out this chamber, believing it to be a waste of time and resources. Once the PCs have destroyed the fire elemental, they can use this lecture hall to rest if they don't want to make their way back to the Clade forward base.

In addition, the southeastern corner of the room has been badly enough damaged by the elemental's raging that a few cracks have formed in the thick concrete wall. While it retains hardness 15, this section of wall has only 50 Hit Points remaining, so the PCs could potentially carve a small exit from the building here. A PC can realize this opportunity with a successful DC 24 Engineering check, after which it takes only a few attacks to break through the wall.

The Swarm isn't aware of this weakness in the building, so as long as the PCs don't draw undue attention to themselves while entering or exiting via this new route, they can maintain a secret entrance in and out of the structure. At your discretion, this reduces the chance of the PCs running into random Swarm patrols while moving between the university and the Clade Company forward base.

C6. RESTROOM

This restroom has stalls of several different sizes, with highly adaptable facilities. Despite its elegant design, the air is damp, stagnant, and redolent of stale sewage.

Zessh University prided itself on its accessibility, being constructed to accommodate students, faculty, and staff in a variety of genders, sizes, modes of movement. This restroom is no exception, being a single all-gender facility suitable for species ranging from humans to haans. The water is no longer connected to a supply, however, and the broken sewer lines have left the room somewhat smelly.

C7. FACULTY OFFICES (CR 7)

These faculty offices aren't substantially different from any other faculty office at any university throughout the galaxy. Each has a large desk with a computer terminal, several chairs, and assorted knickknacks and decor belonging to the professor who used the space. Framed digital diplomas and

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certificates, holographic family photos, and physical books are the most common personal effects to be found here, although one office has a collection of empty planters (the Swarm having eaten the plants they once held), and another has an entire bookcase holding dozens of puzzle toys. Two of the offices (areas **C7a** and **C7b**) are arranged as shared workspaces for junior professors and teaching assistants and have significantly less in the way of personal effects. Each office door holds a placard with the office number, ranging from 1020 through 1028, as well as the occupant's name, save for the shared offices, which have only the office number.

An open shipping crate sits on the desk in office 1027 (area **C7g**). This crate is a case of *basic mindshield circlets* (see page 43), and several of the devices from the crate lie scattered across the desk in various stages of deconstruction and reconstruction. A PC who successfully identifies the items and succeeds at a DC 24 Engineering check recognizes that these devices have been altered from their original design to operate on more specific frequencies, while a character who succeeds at a DC 19 Medicine check realizes that they have been modified from their original design as a worn device to instead function as an implanted augmentation. A datapad to one side of the desk holds scattered notes, obviously intended as a supplement to a more thorough dataset elsewhere, including "formian hive A frequency consistent," "frequency isolated after 15 days," and "cadaver 3 not from hive A, hive frequency to be determined." While the name on the shipping crate matches that on the office door (Dr. Mlaakahat), the address specifies a laboratory in the building's basement. These items can serve to forewarn the PCs of the cybernetic zombie formians in the basement lab (area **D2**).

The door to office 1023 (area **C7d**) doesn't open easily; it's been barricaded from within. A PC can force the door open with a successful DC 18 Strength check, though if the PCs fail this check three times, the mindreaper in area **C8** comes out to investigate the disturbance. Once the door has been opened, the PCs find that the shirren professor inside had shoved the desk across the door before dying in this room. The remaining corpse is a rarity—one of the few bodies the PCs can find on Ilemchuuya. A PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Medicine check while examining

the body finds no significant injuries; it appears the trapped professor died of thirst.

Creature: Thunnyl, the shirren professor who died in area **C7d** is now a ghost, furious that he was able to avoid being killed by the Swarm only to die of something as prosaic as thirst. The ghost attacks anyone who enters the office, but once the door has been opened, he follows the PCs anywhere within the university. The professor's spirit can be put to rest by pouring at least 4 ounces of water over the desiccated body or by slipping a *ring of sustenance* (such as the one found in area **C8**) onto one of his fingers for 1 full day.

THUNNYL

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male shirren ghost mystic (*Starfinder Alien Archive 2* 58)

HP 90; RP 3

STATISTICS

Languages Common, Shirren

TACTICS

Before Combat Until disturbed by someone entering his office, Thunnyl hides within his corpse.

During Combat Thunnyl rises up from his corpse to confront intruders using his frightful moan. He uses his corrupting gaze and corrupting touch indiscriminately on whoever happens to be closest, but he avoids enemies that prove especially resistant to his abilities.

Morale Thunnyl isn't fully conscious of his immortality or what might be done to resolve that. Unless he has rejuvenated once, he flees when reduced below 30 Hit Points but returns to his office within 1d3 hours.

Treasure:

The body in area **C7d** is largely intact, if somewhat shriveled, and is wearing a set of lashunta ringwear III (donned incorrectly, as anyone proficient in heavy armor can tell) and a *mk 2 ring of resistance*. Thunnyl's desiccated hand still clutches a frostbite-class zero pistol.

Area **C7e** is decorated with an assortment of curios from rarely visited civilizations in the Vast. The whole collection is worth 2,000 credits and weighs 1 bulk. The PCs can also collect four functional *basic mindshield circlets* (see page 43) from area **C7g**.

Development: A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Mysticism check identifies

THUNNYL

Thunny's spirit as a ghost and knows that a specific action must be taken to put him to rest permanently, otherwise he will return in 2d4 days after being destroyed.

Enterprising PCs may seek to continue Dr. Mlaakahat's research, which can be downloaded using the same methods as accessing Professor Galchak's computer (see area **C8**) save that this computer and its data have not been wiped. (The PCs could alternatively collect this data from the server in area **D4**.) The professor sought to modify the *mindshield circlets* to allow an individual creature to gain independence from a larger hive while maintaining its telepathic functionality; the test subjects (now the zombies in the basement lab) are formian worker cadavers, each with clear documentation that they were willingly donated. Whether the theory can be put to work (and whether such knowledge would be used for good or for ill) is beyond the scope of this adventure and left for the GM to determine.

Story Award: If the PCs put Thunny's spirit to rest, award them 800 XP.

C8. PROFESSOR GALCHAK'S OFFICE (CR 7)

This office contains a desk with a computer terminal, three chairs, and a display case of insectile carapace segments on one wall. The objects' arrangement, however, is quite atypical: every item in the room has been meticulously arranged along the edge of the room from largest to smallest, starting with the desk itself down to individual styluses and data chips. Most notable among them is the unmoving shirren body placed between the desk and the three chairs.

In the final weeks before the Swarm attack on Ilemchuuya, Professor Galchak spent most of their waking hours here in their office, studying their notes on the Forever Reliquary and trying to find enough concrete evidence to justify funding an expedition. Galchak was in the process of hiding their investigations when the Swarm stormed this building. They did not survive, and their body has remained here until now.

Creature: Word of Professor Galchak's research into the shirren's exodus reached the Swarm and the God-Host during their invasion. Sensing in that information both a potential threat and an ultimate way to fulfill their desire for more power, the Swarm has focused a considerable portion of its resources in scouring Ilemchuuya for this data. While descending upon Zessh University, a Swarm mindreaper was able to confront the professor directly. The creature easily overpowered Professor Galchak and used its trepan and trepan analysis abilities in an effort to extract the information it wanted. Luckily, a final act of postmortem defiance on Galchak's behalf allowed them to succeed at the Will saving throw against the effect, preventing their complete memories from falling into the mindreaper's hands. The mindreaper hasn't left this room since, unwilling to admit

failure and meticulously sorting through the incoherent knowledge it gained—along with all the objects in the office itself—in hopes of piecing together enough memories to access the professor's research.

When the PCs enter, the mindreaper assumes they must be here for some reason related to Galchak's research, and takes the opportunity to wrest any potential knowledge on the subject from the party.

SWARM MINDREAPER

CR 7

XP 3,200

HP 90 (*Starfinder Alien Archive 2* 122)

TACTICS

Before Combat If warned of the PCs' presence, the mindreaper casts *mirror image*.

During Combat With empiricism being the best tool at its disposal, the mindreaper attacks immediately, telepathically demanding that the PCs "share what you know" and "relinquish the data." It focuses on one PC at a time, favoring shirren or other insectile PCs, hoping to use its trepan ability and gain the information it seeks.

Morale The mindreaper is elated that the PCs might prove a chance to redeem itself and doesn't consider fleeing, regardless of the odds, and fights to the death in an attempt to gather memories.

Treasure: Galchak was wearing a silver AbadarCorp travel suit when they perished; it is strangely rumpled, as it's been removed from the body and reapplied several times. One of their fingers is missing and can be found in the size-ordered assortment of items with a successful DC 17 Perception check, still wearing a *ring of sustenance*.

The largest segment of carapace from the display case (now placed between the computer terminal and a seat cushion) is an *axiomatic warrior talon* (Armory 11) that Galchak recovered from a dig site. Further examination reveals the holy symbol of Hylax and the cryptic phrase "Blade of the Sixth Molt" in Shirren worked into its grip. When wielded by a follower of Hylax, the warrior talon ignores the DR and energy resistance of creatures with the Swarm mind ability.

Development: In the unlikely event that the PCs defeat the mindreaper but keep it alive, it attempts to question its captors. The nature of its questions might reveal valuable information, but it does not respond to questions or intentionally volunteer any information.

The shirren body is that of Professor Galchak, easily identifiable by their university ID card—complete with photograph—which is laid out in the orderly assortment of items. A PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check while examining the body notices the narrow puncture wound in the professor's skull, which can be identified as the sign of the mindreaper's trepan ability with a successful DC 24 Life Science or Medicine check. The professor has been dead

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for several months (since a few days after the Swarm's initial attack).

The tier 3 computer terminal in Professor Galchak's office (once reunited with its keyboard and other necessary accessories) can't be accessed until power is restored to it in some manner. The characters have several means of achieving this: If the PCs located and activated the building's backup generator (see area **D6**), much of the building regains power, including the terminal in this office. Alternatively, a mechanic with the remote power mechanic hack can also use that ability to power the computer here, or a character can rig up a temporary power supply from a battery with a successful DC 19 Engineering check—once connected, the computer drains charges from the battery, effectively consuming 1 charge for every Computers check the PCs attempt.

Once the computer has power, a PC can access the system with a successful DC 25 Computers check. PCs who fail repeatedly receive the following error message after the third failed attempt: "Your account has been locked. Please contact the help desk. Note that the server team cannot reset your password."

If the PCs are able to access the computer, it is immediately clear that all local files were deleted on the date of the Swarm's attack. A character who succeeds at a DC 45 Computers check can restore the files, though the PCs are unlikely to be able to do so. After a few moments of examining the system, however, an automated message interrupts: "Warning: No automated backups for over 30 days. Server not found. Please notify the help desk or the server team." This indicates that the computer had been part of a regular automated backup program, and savvy characters will likely guess that they should check out the server room (area **D4**) to see if the data can be found there. If the players have trouble reaching this conclusion on their own, they can realize it with a successful DC 15 Computers check.

The PCs can go to the basement to retrieve the files if they aren't able to restore them from the wiped terminal here. Perhaps more importantly, however, they should realize that if Galchak's information still exists, the Swarm might eventually find it—and anything the Swarm wants this badly is probably dangerous enough to keep away from such a single-minded foe!

See Professor Galchak's Research on page 32 for what is contained in those files.

D. MAIN BUILDING BASEMENT

The foundation of the university has been subject to extreme strain due to the tectonic instability caused by the extractor imago's operations, and several load-bearing walls have been badly damaged. Since Swarm forces are still investigating the site, they have invested resources to keep the structure intact, constructing pillars and walls of

their odd chitinous architecture to reinforce areas where the damage is worst. The Swarm clearly held little regard for the original architecture of the space, building supporting structures without consideration for allowing passage, but non-integral walls that have crumbled have been left as open gaps between some rooms.

D1. BASEMENT HALLWAY

These hallways are dark and claustrophobic, with close walls and low ceilings. The structure of this level has been badly damaged, with several crumbling walls held in place only by strange pillars and struts of glossy chitin. A glistening organic wall blocks the corridor's continuation to the north.

Much of the corridor at the bottom of the stairs (which lead up to area **C3**) are fully obstructed with chitinous walls crafted by Swarm effigines to keep the basement from collapsing in on itself. The PCs can force open the elevator doors here with a successful DC 19 Engineering or DC 15 Strength check to reach the elevator car, which is stuck at the bottom of the shaft—see area **C3** for more information.

Treasure: PCs who force their way onto the elevator carriage (either from area **C3** or from this level) find within an emergency compartment marked with an icon of a flame. Inside is a large, clunky fire extinguisher. This is one of the Gelugon fire extinguishers that Jadvata can make use of (see page 20).

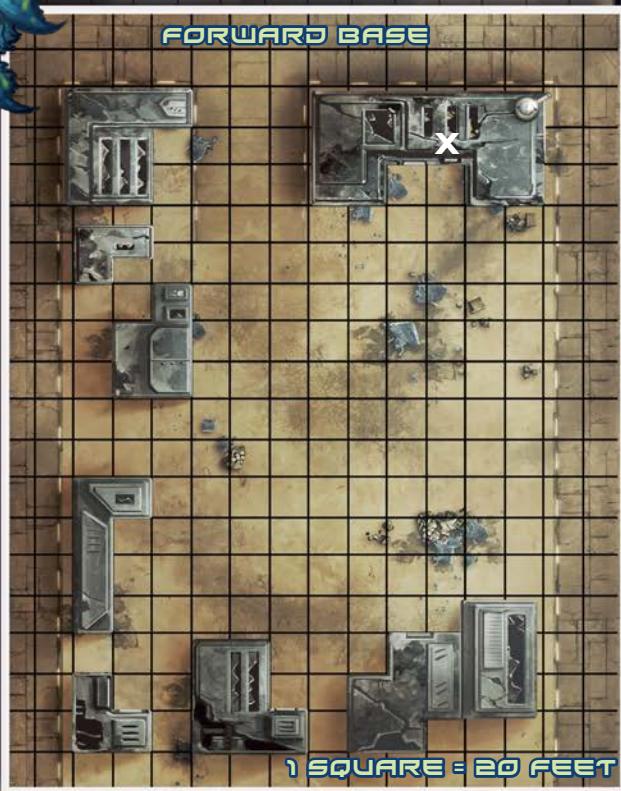
D2. BASEMENT LAB (CR 7)

Unlike most of the doors in the university, this lab's door defaulted to a locked state when the power went out. It has hardness 20, 60 Hit Points, and a break DC of 28; disabling the lock requires a successful DC 30 Engineering check. If power to the area is restored (see area **D6**), the keycard access terminal can be hacked with a successful DC 19 Computers check, or the PCs can spend 2d6 hours sorting through the abandoned equipment in the atrium (area **C2**) to find a keycard with the correct permissions to access this room.

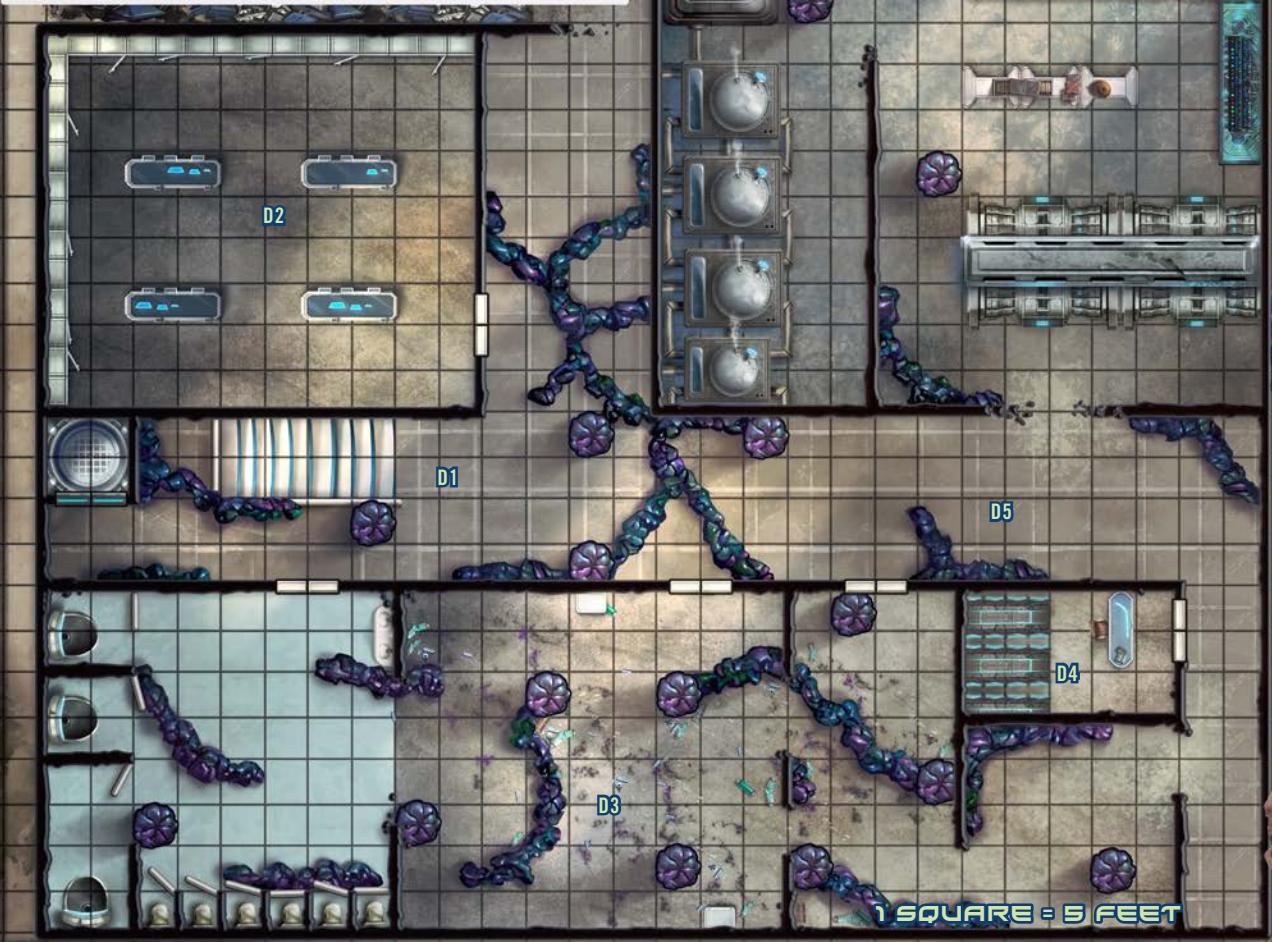
This whitewashed room seems to have been left untouched by the Swarm, though its walls are cracked and its floor uneven due to the seismic tremors that have undermined the university. Four steel tables are outfitted with high-tech medical research equipment: a combination of surgical tools, patient monitors, and complex technological devices near each. The southern wall is entirely filled with clear-fronted cabinets holding medical equipment and other supplies.

This is the laboratory where Dr. Mlaakahat conducted experiments on donated formian worker cadavers to test

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D. MAIN BUILDING BASEMENT



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her theories about limiting hive mind capacity in telepathic creatures (see area **C7g** for more information about this research). The Swarm has left this room intact for the time being, as the chemicals preserving the formian cadavers have been deemed unfit for Swarm consumption, and the city of Uudz provided plenty of easier, more delicious sustenance. Now, with the building's structural stability failing due to the extractor imago's excavation, the Swarm hasn't wanted to further weaken the building by breaking through the walls or locked doors, and thus the room hasn't been touched.

Creatures: The four cadavers in this room had all been implanted with augmentations crafted from modified *mindshield circlets* before the Swarm attacked Ilemchuuva. The massive wave of telepathic energy from a single hive mind overwhelmed these experimental devices and

attempted to incorporate the formian cadavers into the Swarm hive. As they were already dead, the phenomenon resulted in the formian cadavers animating into cybernetic zombies, which have been mindlessly trundling around the room since their creation. A trace of the Swarm hive direction lingers within their augmentation-powered mentality, however, and they attack any living intruders who lack the Swarm mind special ability.

FORMIAN CADAVERS (4)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Formian worker cybernetic zombies (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 50, 115)
LN Small undead

Init +2; **Senses** blindsense (scent) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;
Perception +8

DEFENSE

EAC 14; **KAC** 16

Fort +5; **Ref** +5; **Will** +4

Immunities undead immunities; **Resistances** sonic 10
Weaknesses vulnerability to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.

Melee bite +11 (1d6+7 P)

Offensive Abilities self-destruct (1d6+3 E, DC 12)

TACTICS

During Combat The cybernetic zombies are straightforward combatants, biting the nearest living creature.

Morale Having no innate awareness or sense of self-preservation, the cybernetic zombies fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str +4; **Dex** +2; **Con** –; **Int** –; **Wis** +0; **Cha** –1

Skills Athletics +13

Other Abilities mindless, unliving

Treasure: The cabinets contain a substantial amount of medical equipment, including enough to piece together an advanced medkit. Many of the supplies are intended for use only on cadavers, but a character succeeding at a DC 20 Medicine check can sort out those that can be safely used on the living, including two black nanite hypopens (Armory 106), an unused cardiac accelerator augmentation, a *mk 2 synergizing symbiote* in a refrigerated cylinder, an auto-injector armor upgrade (Armory 80), and five diagnostic lozenges (Armory 101).

In addition to the supplies, a dusty box labeled "Failures" in Shirren is shoved onto a back shelf, discoverable by anyone making a thorough search of the lab. The box contains a clear phrenic scrambler (Armory 106) and an electroplax neural lash (Armory 10). Despite the box's label, both of these are in perfect working order. A character who pursues the research conducted in this lab by succeeded at a DC 20 Life Science check or a DC 25 Perception check finds

FORMIAN CADAVER

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notes that Dr. Mlaakahat found these items lacking in her pursuit of hive mind isolation.

Finally, hanging on the wall in the northwest corner of the room is a clunky, outdated fire extinguisher. This is one of the Gelugon fire extinguishers that Jadvata can make use of (see page 20).

D3. REINFORCED ROOM

This area was clearly once several chambers—a restroom, a pair of student laboratory spaces, and a small meeting room—whose interior walls have collapsed, merging them into a strange forest of dark chitin pillars with a spiky canopy overhead. Those few walls left standing have been reinforced with organic material stretched over and around sturdy lab tables and lavatory facilities. Piles of concrete rubble and rebar litter the floor.

These rooms suffered rather extensive damage from tremors caused by the nearby extractor imago's ongoing activities. Swarm effigines have reinforced many of its walls and braced the ceiling with new load-bearing walls and freestanding pillars, leading to a room that appears grotesque but is in fact quite structurally sound. The crumbled walls allow access to the northern portion of the basement hallways.

D4. SERVER ROOM

The door to this small room is locked (hardness 20, HP 60, break DC 28, Engineering DC 30 to disable).

This room is hardly more than a closet. Behind a tiny desk and a single chair is a series of floor-to-ceiling racks filled with computer equipment. A statuette on the otherwise barren desk displays a flickering holographic banner.

The university's extensive backup servers are in this room, but the PCs will have to restore power to the area (see area **D6**) before they can access the data stored here. Unfortunately, the server rack is too large to power with portable power (an attempt to do so powers only the access terminal, which boots up and cheerfully reports that there's no data available). The PCs might think to simply remove the physical storage drives and take them for later study; there are 32 of them, and each is roughly 1 bulk. Safely removing a single drive requires a successful DC 17 Computers check, and without restoring power to the server as a whole, there's no way to know which drive contains Galchak's data.

Once the servers are powered on, a PC must succeed at a DC 17 Computers check to hack the tier 1 access terminal. With access, the PCs can easily find the automated backups of the professor's data on the Forever Reliquary (as well as any other data from any of the various professors' computers), which can easily be downloaded to a personal comm unit

or other device (though downloading backups from multiple professors might require additional storage space). Wiping the data from the server—a prudent move to ensure the Swarm doesn't also gain access to this information—requires another successful DC 17 Computers check.

Treasure: The statuette on the desk depicts an adorable version of Hylax appropriate for children's programming. A holographic banner scrolls over her head displaying inspirational messages in Shirren like "You can do it!" and "The Forever Queen believes in you!" It functions as a *mk 2 computer idol* (Armory 120).

The lowest desk drawer contains a collection of items confiscated from various students. These include a harmonic vibrogarrote (Armory 13) disguised to look like a charging cable, a microwave scorchgun (Armory 14), an *obsidian electrovore figurine of wondrous power* (Armory 113), a spy drone, a set of thieves' tools (Armory 108), and two *spell gems of implant data*. The room also holds a clunky, outdated fire extinguisher. This is one of the Gelugon fire extinguishers that Jadvata can make use of (see page 20).

PCs who remove the storage drives from the server can sell them as large data modules (Core Rulebook 215) for 10 credits each, but they must do so offworld, as the Clade Company has no use for this equipment.

D5. OBSTRUCTED HALLWAY

This hallway originally ran directly north from the elevator and staircase, but the Swarm effigines' efforts at stabilizing the building have resulted in a thick wall of chitin blocking access to the south. A small section of the western wall has collapsed, allowing access to the mechanical room (area **D6**).

D6. MECHANICAL ROOM (CR 8)

This industrial room has bare concrete walls and floor. Much of the space is occupied by large machinery, fan units, pipes, and ductwork. The southwestern corner holds a mop sink and several shelves of janitorial supplies. A narrow section of the eastern concrete wall has crumbled to allow unconventional access, while the actual door to the space opens in the western wall. Tall, spindly pillars of chitin stretch up from the floor to the ceiling here and there throughout the space.

This mechanical room holds the majority of the building's facilities, including air filtration, heating and cooling, water heating and circulation, and several other systems. All of the equipment is clearly labeled in Shirren, including the janitorial supplies, and a sign on one wall proclaims in Shirren, "Tornado Shelter Area."

The PCs are likely most interested in the backup generator, which is a sizable piece of machinery along the room's northern wall. The university staff and students were too busy fighting during the attack to have any use for the backup generator,



and the Swarm has refrained from stripping the university's resources until it has gotten the information it seeks. Instructional placards in Shirren provide simple directions for activating the backup generator; doing so provides dim emergency lighting along the hallways and classrooms and powers all computer equipment throughout the university (including the servers in area **D4**). It also attracts the attention of any surviving Swarm elements in the building, who quickly make their way to this room.

Creatures: While most of the Swarm components who were assigned to this building departed when the PCs destroyed the extractor imago, a single Swarm effigene remained behind to maintain the organic structures that keep the building stable. This effigene has kept a retinue of a pair of revulsors and a corrovox by its side as it patrols the basement, searching for any physical flaws in its handiwork. It is in the process of extruding some reinforcing material on a pillar in the western half of the room when the PCs enter, while its bodyguards stand nearby.

SWARM CORROVOX

CR 3

XP 800

HP 40 (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 110)

TACTICS

During Combat The corrovox takes cover behind the fan unit in the center of the room and fires at the PCs with its acid cannon.

Morale The corrovox fights to the death.

SWARM REVULSORS (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

HP 50 each (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #20: *The Last Refuge* 61)

TACTICS

During Combat One revulsor damages as many PCs as possible with its ear-splitting shriek as early as it can in the fight, while the other saves it for later on, in the hopes of taking down at least one weakened PC. Both engage the PCs in melee to protect the corrovox and the effigene.

Morale The revulsors don't retreat from battle, and fight to the death.

SWARM EFFIGENE

CR 5

XP 1,600

HP 63 (see page 57)

TACTICS

During Combat The effigene uses its invigorate Swarm ability to allow the revulsors to get as close to the PCs as possible. It then blasts at the PCs with its bioelectric arc.

Morale Realizing the PCs have the components trapped in this part of the basement, the effigene fights until killed.

Treasure: The tools in the room include an engineering tool kit, an industrial welder (*Armory* 10) with a fully charged high-capacity battery, and a small box with a note reading, "For emergency use only," in Shirren, which contains a *viridian balbis aeon stone* (*Armory* 110). The repair supplies include two cases (2 bulk each) next to the welder, holding a total of 4,000 UPBs.

Attached to the backup generator is an emergency battery pack. Although they're long drained, the six ultra-capacity batteries that make up the unit can be salvaged with 10 minutes of work and a successful DC 22 Engineering check. Each failed check destroys one of the batteries.

The wall near the boilers holds a clunky, outdated fire extinguisher. This is one of the Gelugon fire extinguishers that Jadvata can make use of (see page 20).

D7. COLLAPSED HALLWAY

This hallway once continued on to the west, but rubble and crumbled concrete, held in place with a shining black latticework, blocks the passage entirely. To the south, a wall of gleaming chitin also impedes passage.

This section of the basement's corridors is essentially a dead-end. The double door in the western hall cannot be opened as it is blocked from behind by rubble and debris that has jammed it shut.

Treasure: A glass panel inset into the north wall of the hallway holds a clunky, outdated fire extinguisher. This is one of the Gelugon fire extinguishers that Jadvata can make use of (see page 20).

PROFESSOR GALCHAK'S RESEARCH

The PCs are likely curious about the specifics of Professor Galchak's research. Upon examining the retrieved data, the characters find an extensive, detailed reconstruction of the route of the shirrens' exodus from the Swarm at the end of the Gap, pieced together from archaeological evidence, primary and secondary source documents, and conjecture based on the existing evidence. Information on the route and the colonies the shirrens established in the Suskillon and Chuuva systems can be found in "The Shirren Exodus" in *Starfinder Adventure Path* #20: *The Last Refuge*. Much of this portion of the research has already been published—and canny players may realize that the Swarm's recent attacks have been following this path backward, almost as if the Swarm were retracing the shirren exodus.

The more recent additions to the data, collected over the course of about a year before the Swarm invaded Ilemchuuva, focus on the portion of the route prior to the shirren's arrival in the Suskillon system. Fragmentary records indicate that by the time they reached Suskillon, the fleeing shirrens had recently experienced a

tremendous transformative event. The goddess Hylax is mentioned frequently and with marked reverence, despite an absence of any religious references in earlier sources, and the professor highlights a marked change in the tone of mentions of the Swarm: while records prior to 4 AG referred to the Swarm in terms and tone bordering on terror and fatalism, records after that time carry less desperation and convey persistent optimism about the shirrens' future as free entities. Accompanying this timeline is a compilation of several dozens of primary and secondary sources mentioning the Forever Reliquary, with dates corresponding to the shift in the discussions of Hylax and the Swarm. Galchak's notes theorize that the Forever Reliquary might hold some kind of relic that sparked a significant change in the shirren race.

A separate file contains complex astrogational calculations relative to the Suskillon system, extrapolating a set of coordinates which the professor has marked "comet known as the Prodigal Stone, site of the Forever Reliquary [conjecture]." In a separate directory accompanying the research itself is a copious collection of grant applications, as Galchak sought funding to travel to the extrapolated coordinates, verify the existence of the Forever Reliquary, and better understand the nature and significance of the site to the shirren exodus.

RETURN TO THE FORWARD BASE

Once the PCs have recovered Professor Galchak's research, they likely return to Clade Company's forward base (perhaps encountering one of Ilemchuuya's torrential acid rainstorms along the way; see page 20).

Hescamu and the other Clade Company members are delighted to hear about the PCs' success. Their own scouting mission has gone better than expected, and they have not only compiled an updated map of the city but also begun planning their next large-scale operation to retake and restore the spaceport. Even better, several Clade members brag about how they've begun construction on a hidden anti-aircraft gun within the building, which they plan to use on future missions. Hescamu suggests they all rest for the night before heading back to the Clade Company headquarters, as the journey will be easier if they all have a fresh start.

During the downtime, the freedom fighters share stories of their own skirmishes with Swarm patrols in the city and ask the PCs to relate their own stories from the university. Several are interested in Galchak's research, since word has spread through Clade Company that this research might have been what caused the extended Swarm occupation of the planet. All in all, it should feel like a somewhat celebratory reunion.

The Clade Company members insist that the PCs are exempt from watches overnight so they can better recover

from the dangers they faced in the university. The freedom fighters keep two-person watches the entire night. If the PCs returned with fire extinguishers for Jadvata (see page 20), the shirren gets to work immediately converting them. They are able to have the completed item (or items) ready by the time the PCs awaken in the morning.

The evening passes uneventfully, an unusual occurrence given the level of Swarm activity they've all faced in the last few weeks, and one odd enough that in the morning, the company is discussing the potential implications of the respite as they prepare to pack down the forward base and travel back to the headquarters. Unfortunately, the peace is to be short-lived.

ATTACK AT DAWN

The PCs' activity at Zessh University has not gone unnoticed by the Swarm. With a mindreaper's ability to extract memories from a recently deceased body, the occupying force on Ilemchuuya is by now aware that the PCs were responsible for the attack on its extractor imago. However, the Swarm is far more interested in the fact that the characters were spotted investigating Zessh University. The PCs present both a threat and an opportunity, as far as the Swarm is concerned, both of which can be dealt with in the same way. Hoping the PCs were able to uncover the details of Galchak's research, the Swarm has sent a strike force including a mindreaper to collect the information it's been seeking since it first came to Ilemchuuya. The Swarm purposefully held back during the night before in hopes that the PCs would share what they had learned with others at the Clade Company forward base, who could also be subjected to the mindreaper's trepan analysis, giving the Swarm a multitude of resources for tracking down the information it seeks.

EVENT 2: FIRST WAVE (CR 9)

As the PCs prepare in the morning, read or paraphrase the following.

As dawn breaks, the members of Clade Company have already moved most of the supplies from the forward base into the nearby sewers for safekeeping, chattering amongst themselves about the strangely quiet night. The usual pall of clouds above has cleared, and the sun makes a rare appearance in the hazy sky, the light glimmering on lingering puddles of acid. A faint hum underlies the murmur of covert activity, like a far-off air carrier—but as soon as the sound becomes evident, it also begins growing louder. The freedom fighters begin shouting in alarm, scurrying to find cover as the source of the noise comes into view above the ravaged city's skyline: a large Swarm vessel making a beeline for the Clade outpost. Within the base, Etchiaz begins shouting, "Everyone out! It's heading straight for us!"

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Clade Company reacts swiftly to Etchiaz's warning, fleeing the forward base and scattering into the rubble of the surrounding buildings. Two rounds later, a Swarm altipheron passes over the forward base and delivers a payload of explosive ordnance. Much of the forward base's building collapses under the assault, and while Etchiaz and most of the Clade Company fighters are able to clear the building just in time, Hescamu was focused on getting everyone else out and was caught in the collapse, along with any PCs who elected not to follow Etchiaz's warnings to get out of the building.

Creatures remaining within the structure when it collapses take 8d6 bludgeoning and fire damage from the blast and are buried in the rubble, where they run the risk of suffocation (Core Rulebook 404). A character who succeeds at a DC 17 Reflex reduces the damage by half and avoids being buried. A buried creature can escape with a successful DC 22 Strength check, or another creature can dig a buried creature out of the rubble by spending 1d4 rounds digging. At your discretion, a character with an appropriate tool or ability can reduce this time by 1 round (minimum 1 round). This effort may be complicated, however, as in the round immediately following the explosion, the Swarm vessel drops its secondary payload: individual Swarm components (see Creatures below).

Hescamu takes enough damage from the collapsing building that it knocks the bolida unconscious. Bolidas can normally burrow through rock, and the Clade Company fighters who notice their leader's absence assume Hescamu can just dig their way to freedom. Unfortunately, Hescamu is at risk of suffocation. A PC can notice the company leader is trapped with a successful DC 20 Perception check—each PC should attempt this check at the end of their turn each round until they spot Hescamu. If the PCs aren't able to dig Hescamu out within 12 rounds, the bolida suffocates and perishes in the rubble. Alternatively, any ability that catches the bolida in its area of effect (such as a mystic's healing channel connection power) returns Hescamu to consciousness, allowing them to burrow their way out of the collapsed building and get to safety.

Use the map of the forward base on page 29 for this encounter; Hescamu's unconscious form is marked on the map. The remains of the forward base are difficult terrain, as are the interiors of the damaged buildings in the area. The partial walls of the damaged structures are between 3 and 10 feet tall and can be used for cover.

Creatures: A small Swarm strike team consisting of a pair of escutchedes and a mindreaper is dropped in the clear area in front of the forward base. Other forces pour in via ground routes from the rest of the city, occupying the rest of Clade Company while the PCs fight off this contingent that has sought them out specifically.

SWARM ESCUTCHIDES (2)

XP 1,600 each

HP 66 each (see page 58)

CR 5

TACTICS

During Combat One of the Swarm escutchedes pairs up with the mindreaper to target the weakest-looking PC, hoping to subdue them so the mindreaper can use its trepan ability. The other escutchede attempts to control the remaining PCs, starting with those who appear the most dangerous. It strives to keep foes away from the mindreaper and works to incapacitate targets rather than slaying them outright, preferring to have more opportunities for later interrogation.

Morale The escutchedes do not flee, and fight until it's killed.

SWARM MINDREAPER

CR 7

XP 3,200

HP 90 (Starfinder Alien Archive 2 122)

TACTICS

Before Combat The mindreaper casts *mirror image* and *haste* as its team approaches the drop point.

During Combat Hoping to capture as many subjects as possible, the mindreaper first casts *slow*, then works to beat its victims into unconsciousness. If the escutchedes seem to have the situation under control and the mindreaper is concerned about a subject bleeding out, it may even cast *mystic cure* to stabilize the prisoner, rather than risk losing their precious knowledge.

Morale The mindreaper understands the importance of its mission and will not back down. It fights to the death.

Development: Once the PCs have eliminated all but one of the above foes, proceed with **Event 3**.

EVENT 3: SECOND WAVE (CR 8)

Read or paraphrase the following to transition the PCs into the second wave.

As the fighting continues, a Clade Company fighter shouts another warning: the Swarm ship is returning for another bombing run! Etchiaz scrambles through the rubble of the forward base as everyone else prepares to take on another wave of the Swarm. The vessel draws closer, and as it begins to extrude its explosive artillery, a blast of fire from the forward base's big anti-aircraft gun—damaged and half-buried in rubble—explodes against the ship's carapace, sending it crashing to the ground only a few hundred feet from the base. A cheer goes up from the assembled soldiers.

However, this victory is only temporary. Another onslaught of Swarm approaches, and a dot in the sky above them resolves into a large winged Swarm creature with deadly looking blades for arms. As it touches down in the clearing south of the former forward base, Etchiaz clammers down from the sizzling and sparking control panel for the

big gun and shouts, "We've got the little ones under control if you can take that monster down!"

Continue to use the same map for the forward base on page 29 for this encounter.

Creature: Over the course of the night, the nearby Swarm attempted to birth a thresher lord, one of the Swarm's more dangerous components. Fortunately for the PCs, due to the limited time and interrupted flow of resources caused by the extractor imago's destruction, the Swarm was able to only produce a weakened version of that creature. This "thresher prince" is by no means harmless, however, and attacks the PCs with what seems like the ferocity of the entire Swarm.

SWARM THRESHER PRINCE

CR 8

XP 4,800

CE Large monstrous humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

EAC 20; **KAC** 22

HP 125

Fort +12; **Ref** +10; **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities Swarm mind; **Immunities** acid, fear effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (Ex, average)

Melee arm blade +20 (3d4+14 S; critical bleed 1d6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Offensive Abilities blade storm

STATISTICS

Str +6; **Dex** +4; **Con** +2; **Int** -2; **Wis** +0; **Cha** -3

Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +16 (+24 when climbing), Stealth +21

Languages Shirren; telepathy 100 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat The thresher prince focuses on the toughest-looking combatant and attempts to take them down with multiple attacks of its arm blades.

Morale The thresher prince fights to the death.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Arm Blade (Ex) A thresher prince has massive blades grafted onto its forearms, replacing its normal hands. It can't wield any other weapons, but neither can it be disarmed.

Blade Storm (Ex) When making a full attack entirely with melee weapons, a thresher prince takes a -3 penalty to each attack roll instead of the normal -4 penalty. In addition, a thresher prince can make up to 3 melee attacks

instead of two attacks when making a full attack. If it does so, it takes a -5 penalty to these attacks.

Swarm Mind (Ex)

Members of the Swarm are bound together into a singular hive mind by a blend of exuded pheromones, imperceptible movements of antennae and limbs, electrostatic fields, and telepathic communication. All Swarm creatures with 30 feet of each other are in constant communication; if one is aware of a threat, all are. (Such awareness can spread along a "chain" of Swarm creatures under appropriate circumstances, potentially alerting distant Swarm creatures). In addition, once per round when within 30 feet of another Swarm creature, a Swarm creature can roll twice and take the better result on a saving throw against a mind-affecting effect.

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Once the PCs have defeated the Swarm's thresher prince, the dust settles. Clade Company, having fought back the other Swarm components, uses the respite to beat a hasty retreat into the sewers. Etchiaz encourages the PCs to return with them to the Clade Company headquarters so they can rest and tend to their injuries before deciding their next steps, then looks to regroup with Hescamu to lead Clade Company underground. If Hescamu survived being caught in the collapsing building, they thank the PCs profusely for the characters' aid. If the bolida perished, Etchiaz discovered the bolida's body in the debris as she operated the anti-aircraft gun and spreads the sad news among the rest of Clade Company's members, who now look to the shirren woman to lead them.

The journey back takes an uneventful full day's march, and as the company gets further from Uudz, the threat of Swarm activity decreases.

The remaining members of Clade Company at the headquarters welcome the returning forward operations team with cheers and celebration (along with sounds of mourning if Hescamu didn't survive the attack). News quickly spreads of the battle at the forward base, including Etchiaz's brilliant shot against the altipheron and the PCs' tenacious takedown of the hulking thresher prince (and their daring rescue of Clade Company's leader, depending on the PCs' actions). If the PCs shared any of the research from Professor Galchak's files with other members of the company, word quickly spreads about the importance of the Forever Reliquary, and rumors begin flying almost immediately about the Swarm's interest in it.

Hescamu (if they survived) and Etchiaz meet with the PCs shortly after their return, allowing enough time for the characters to tend their injuries and settle in to discuss the professor's research and its implications more thoroughly. If the PCs haven't looked into the data or shared their findings, their hosts encourage them to do so now. "After all," they observe, "Anything the Swarm was so interested in must be valuable indeed, and could perhaps be a tool in the war against them." They ask questions to clarify and help the PCs piece together any elements they might not have realized on their own. See Professor Galchak's Research on page 32 for details on the shirren's findings.

Once they've reviewed the data, with assistance from Etchiaz and Hescamu where necessary, the PCs should be confident that the Forever Reliquary is very likely a real place. They have a set of extrapolated coordinates for its supposed location, and they have clues that it might hold a relic that provided a key to the shirrens' independence from the Swarm. They also know that the Swarm has apparently been tracing the path of the shirrens' exodus and was searching for information from Professor Galchak in particular. It doesn't take a tremendous leap of logic to guess that the Swarm feels threatened by this site, which should encourage the PCs to

propose seeking it out. If they don't reach the conclusion on their own, Hescamu or Etchiaz might suggest it, as does Xelanon if the PCs consult with their ally back in the Suskillon system.

Clade Company makes it clear that the PCs are welcome to stay for as long as they'd like before they set off on their next journey. The company is more than happy to repair and upgrade the PCs' starship (as they have an array of salvaged starship components but no ships to apply them to) and assist the PCs in crafting or repairing items. The forward operations team also brought another wave of scavenged gear back from the city, allowing the PCs to trade for new items and supplies. These items include two advanced semi-auto pistols, an aurora shock pad (Armory 10), two snub breaching guns (Armory 20), a tactical seeker rifle, four flash grenades II, 11 riot grenades II (Armory 26), a suit of commander ceremonial plate, a mk 2 dermal plating augmentation (which the PCs can have installed at the Clade Company headquarters), two spy drones, six whisper comms (Armory 109), and three doses of peace of the void (Armory 132) from a local security office.

If the PCs brought back the fire extinguishers for Jadvata to convert into weapons and haven't yet asked the shirren to do so, there is plenty of time to do so now.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

As the PCs prepare to depart from Ilemchuuya, Clade Company as a whole bids them an enthusiastic and heartfelt farewell, thanking them for their assistance in the fight against the Swarm here on their home world and wishing them luck in their search for the Forever Reliquary. This is especially true for those individuals with whom the PCs developed stronger relationships, potentially including Etchiaz, Hescamu, Jadvata, and others. Clade Company declines any offers by the PCs to evacuate them, restating their intent to remain on the planet and continue their fight to reclaim the world. They assure the PCs that should their situation ever become untenable, they'll reach out to the Suskillon Defense Force to arrange an evacuation, but with the tactics they've learned from the PCs and the resources they've gained with the PCs' assistance, the company is in a much stronger position.

The PCs have the option to return to the Suskillon system to meet with Commander Najiri and Xelanon before embarking on their quest to find the Forever Reliquary. This might be particularly appealing to PCs who need specialized equipment they were unable to obtain on Ilemchuuya. The party may also want to hand over their findings and obtain formal orders as to their next steps, or simply meet with

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Xelanon to further discuss the implications of Professor Galchak's research and the existence of the Forever Reliquary. In this case, the NPCs can help fill in any gaps the PCs might have missed in piecing together what they've found, and Commander Najiri agrees that their next steps should be to travel to the proposed coordinates for the Prodigal Stone. As soon as the PCs have resupplied, she urges them to hurry onward.

A return to the Suskillon system also provides the PCs with a chance to assess the Swarm's position there. The Swarm hasn't continued its onslaught to Utraneus, which is itself strange, but the occupation of Suskillon continues. Commander Najiri remarks on the unusual behavior and says in no uncertain terms that the deviation is making everyone increasingly nervous about the Swarm's plans. On the other hand, she notes, it does give the Suskillon Defense Force an opportunity to come up with a plan for a counterattack—which is precisely what the PCs are doing.

Finally, returning to New Grakka allows the PCs to swap out their current starship for a more powerful model, if they'd rather exchange the entire vessel rather than rely on the Clade Company's improvements to their existing ship. If asked, Commander Najiri recommends the SDF D-127 Defensive Carrier (see the inside covers) as an ideal vessel for their mission to the Forever Reliquary

due to its extensive armaments and powerful sensors. The commander agrees to send two SDF soldiers with them to help fill out the crew. Unless the PCs have formed close relationships with other NPCs, assume that Quartermaster Janxer (*Starfinder Adventure Path #19: Fate of the Fifth* 16) volunteers to serve as an engineer and reserve soldier Mose (*Starfinder Adventure Path #20: The Last Refuge* 16) signs on to be a gunner. Use the bonuses listed on the inside front cover for their respective roles during starship combat. The following volume will give you some advice on how to handle the ultimate fate of these NPCs as the adventure progresses.

Should the PCs instead decide to proceed directly to the Prodigal Stone's coordinates, Commander Najiri doesn't forbid it. If the PCs inform their commander of their plans, they receive a response in 10d6 days supporting this decision and asking them to send updates as they can regarding their findings. Indeed, even if the PCs simply travel onward, they risk no reprimand from their chain of command (though they have no way of knowing this).

In any case, the heroes' next mission is clear: they must seek out the comet known as the Prodigal Stone and discover why the Swarm is so desperately interested in it. This journey continues in the next adventure in the Attack of the Swarm! Adventure Path, "The Forever Reliquary."



RELICS OF CHUUVA

"The exact date of arrival in the Chuuva system can be extrapolated from the records of Captain Kherkamoth of the *Lacewing*, which document the progression among the system's planets. Assuming the exodus proceeded from one world to the next closest, we can use the relative position of the Chuuvan planets during 15 AG to pinpoint their arrival at Tarchuuva during the first half of Desnus during that year. The fleet proceeded from there to Quandali, touched upon Atachuua while skirting the sun, and finally established the first colony on Ilemchuuva."

—from *Retracing the Shirren Exodus*, by Galchak, anthropology professor, Zessh University, Uudz, Ilemchuuva

The Chuuva system consists of six planets orbiting a yellow-orange dwarf star in the Vast. What follows is a survey of those planets.

QUANDALI

Molten Planet of Mineral Wealth

Diameter: ×1-1/5; **Mass:** ×1-1/2

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: None

Day: 40 days; **Year:** 20 days

The first planet in the Chuuva system is a mineral-rich world rendered largely molten by its proximity to the sun. While the equatorial regions are seas of lava, the poles are cooler and have solid ground. On these metallic landmasses, minerals are abundant, forming enormous homogenous deposits of crystals.

Quandali has never had native life. When the Shirrens first arrived in the Chuuva system, they dismissed this world as too inhospitable. However, decades after the Shirrens had established themselves, they reached out to other systems and welcomed in a contingent of Quorlus (among others) to the area. The Quorlu gravitated to Quandali and built a settlement at the planet's south pole. By the time the Swarm attacked the system, Quandali's Quorlu population numbered in the low thousands, spread across several settlements on both poles. Due to the Quorlus, the planet sees small-scale mining, but the heat deters extensive operations.

When the Swarm attacked, its components focused their attention on Quandali's mineral resources. Resident Quorlus escaped attention by virtue of their silicon-based anatomy, which rendered them of little interest to the voracious carbon-based predators. The planet still suffered substantial devastation, however, as the Swarm stripped the world's mineral resources in a process that has since disrupted the delicate equatorial-polar stability. The Quorlu population is diminished due to attempts to fight off the Swarm before retreating into hiding.

Of all the planets in the Chuuva system, Quandali is likely to see the best recovery in the shortest time frame. Here are a few events and sites of interest on Quandali.

Elemental Reavers: On Quandali's north pole, the leaders of the Quorlu settlement known as Danloric responded to the Swarm invasion by permanently conjuring fire elementals to fight on the Quorlus' behalf. The fire elementals ravaged the Swarm on this portion of the planet, allowing the town to survive the attack. However, the fire elementals have found Quandali to their liking, and much to the Quorlus' chagrin, the numerous extraplanar creatures have proven resistant to banishment. Roving bands of fire elementals now pose nearly as much threat to the local residents as the Swarm did. They seem to be multiplying, as well, leading the Quorlus to guess a breach between the Material Plane and the Plane of Fire must now exist somewhere near Danloric. They are seeking solutions, permanent and temporary.

The Old Place: When the Quorlus first colonized Quandali, they found indications they were not the first people to reside on this world. The most significant of these sites is a location they have dubbed "The Old Place," a series of ruined structures built of extremely heat-resistant composites approximately halfway between the equator and the south pole. The structures withstand the intense heat, but they are slowly sinking. Only a few spires still poke up from the surging magma, and experts project the entire site might submerge in only a few Pact Standard years. The Quorlus hope to survey the remaining sites and retrieve any relics before that time comes.

Quilordem: This city is the original Quorlu settlement on Quandali, standing on the planet's southern pole. It was constructed as a mining colony, and the resident Quorlus have been steadily digging over the centuries. Unfortunately for the Quorlus, the Swarm found this mineral deposit to be of interest and extracted a massive chunk of the crust, leaving a crater that has since become a lake of lava. Quilordem now stands abandoned. The Quorlus left much behind in their hasty evacuation, from technological gear to stockpiles of minerals to abandoned research projects. Despite the Swarm's activity in the area, some of these valuables still remain, and more than one patron might underwrite a recovery mission.

ATACHUUVA

A World of Massive Arthropods

Diameter: ×1; **Mass:** ×1

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 1 day; **Year:** 2/3 year

Though habitable, Atachuuga is unpleasant by most species' standards. The planet has a climate that borders on severe heat, a thick atmosphere, and very little solid ground. Most of the planet's surface consisted of saltwater bogs and swamps overgrown with dense vegetation. Abundant arthropods inhabited most of those swamps, and many of those creatures were enormous.

The Swarm stripped most of the organic matter from Atachuuga, leaving a toxic mire covering most of the planet's surface. Despite this steep decline in the environment's habitability, a few particularly tough native creatures survived. Adapting to their polluted surroundings, they now roam in search of increasingly scarce food.

Here are a few points of note on Atachuuga.

Emerging Sapience: Since the bulk of the Swarm departed the Chuuva system, a small colony of giant aquatic arthropods started building geometric mounds of silt. These structures are clearly artificial and regular in design. Evidence suggests the builders are an emerging sapient species, but nobody in the system has had an opportunity to study this development or understand how and why the species has changed so suddenly.

Prison Colony: The Ilemchuuvan government occasionally offered criminals the option of exile on Atachuuga, where they

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could live their lives in whatever manner they wanted without disrupting the broader society. The Swarm attack wiped out most of the small, chaotic settlements these colonists created. However, some survivors have cobbled together water vehicles and *instant ground* (see page 42) in a makeshift village. They're looking for a way off world, so they're likely to be antagonistic toward any visitors to Atachuua.

Site Z: Few ever knew of the top-secret shirren bioweapons outpost now referred to as Site Z. The Swarm cracked the facility open and consumed most of the research samples, but containment was not among the Swarm's priorities. Their meddling released at least one of the bioweapons from the facility, and this aberrant flora spread across one of the seas, forming colossal fungal mats, choking out remaining native life. The fact that one sample leaked suggests that others might have as well. Various researchers could be interested in sampling these weapons, their effects on Atachuua, and the records that could remain at Site Z. Few of these scholars would have noble motives, however.



ILEMCHUUVA

Paradise Turned Wasteland

Diameter: ×9/10; **Mass:** ×4/5

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 1 day; **Year:** 1 year

When the shirrens surveyed the Chuuva system, they recognized Ilemchuua as an ideal planet for a permanent settlement. The world has stable flat plains along with cool and consistent weather. These factors made for easy agriculture. Over the centuries since, shirrens built huge cities on Ilemchuua, each with a substantial population of other species, particularly humans and hive-independent formians.

After the Swarm's devastating attack, Ilemchuua has become a desert planet with acidic rain, extensive heavy metal contamination, and unprecedented levels of tectonic activity. The Swarm harvested the plentiful resources of the planet with no concern for the repercussions. This devastation exceeded the destruction the Swarm wreaks on most planets. The predators have taken advantage of the once mild surroundings to make an extended occupation and wring everything possible from Ilemchuua. What they will one day leave is a changed world that can never truly recover.

Ilemchuua bears the following sites.

Chatchamiq Station: Ilemchuua's silicate moon, Chatchamiq, hosted a small settlement called Chatchamiq Station. While the outpost wasn't destroyed during the Swarm attack, its inhabitants joined the war effort. Now, the station sits abandoned, except for a handful of mindless robots repeating their preprogrammed tasks without pause. The outpost could be a source of plentiful unused gear if a brave group could bypass the building's security and convince the robots they are supposed to be there.

Swarm Resource Mound: A massive structure resembling a city-sized termite mound marks the site where the Swarm has stockpiled resources extracted from Ilemchuua until Swarm starships can come to retrieve them. The resources are categorized and compartmentalized, so finding valuable deposits is only a matter of surveying the site. Even a portion of this stash could be worth a staggering sum if someone were willing to stage such a daring heist. Someone from Chatchamiq Station might be the source of this bizarre plan, especially if the station is running low on a vital resource.

Zessh University: This academic facility in the city of Uudz hosts a disproportionate amount of Swarm activity. For more information, see page 20.

TARCHUUVA

Electrostatic Gas Giant

Diameter: ×2; **Mass:** ×4

Gravity: ×1 (at the surface)

Atmosphere: Special

Day: 17 hours; **Year:** 150 years

Tarchuua is a gas giant, relatively small compared to other gas giants, but still the largest planet of the Chuuva system. It sports six moons and faint rings, most of which are visible only from the moons. The composition of the planet is typical for a gas giant. Its depths boast exotic gases, but the Swarm didn't need to bother with harvesting this rare air and therefore largely passed this planet over.

Tarchuua's depths are home to intense ion storms, some of which create lightning visible from the surface of Tarchuua at night. These storms have broken the barrier between the Plane of Air and the Material Plane in several areas, allowing a sizable population of air and lightning elementals to enter the planet's atmosphere. An invasive population of electrovores, which were accidentally introduced by some travelers, hunt the elementals in Tarchuua's upper atmosphere.

Adventurers might find themselves drawn to the following Tarchuuan locations.

Contested Mine: Based on one of Tarchuua's moons, AH Mining was lucky enough to avoid the worst of the Swarm's brush of Tarchuua. However, the operation isn't self-sufficient. Most of the miners want to barter ownership of the mine for passage to virtually anywhere else, but the mine's overseer isn't willing to back the plan. The growing tensions here are likely to explode into violence as soon as any visitors arrive, whether they're sent by the mine's owner or a concerned relative of one of the miners.

Sentient Moon: The smallest of Tarchuua's moons, which cruises just inside the atmosphere, survived the Swarm attack without incident, its "icy" surface unmarred. This facade is a complex illusion projected by the moon itself, which in actuality is a simple but telepathic fungal being. It awoke when the highly telepathic Swarm came near and stimulated it out of an eons-long slumber. The moon tried to communicate with the components but couldn't break into their complex hive mind. Anyone who comes near the moon now feels an attraction to it but, upon landing, finds an environment unlike the outward visual. Animate extensions of the moon attack interlopers, the intention being to infect them with the moon's spores to carry elsewhere in the system or galaxy.

GLUUN AND RAKMOS

Double Dwarf Planets

Diameter: $\times 1/5$ (each); **Mass:** $\times 1/100$ (total)

Gravity: $\times 1/10$ (each)

Atmosphere: Normal (Gluun) and none (Rakmos)

Day: 6 days; **Year:** 200 years

The world of Gluun is a small, rocky mass that, in a galactic stroke of luck, captured a passing ice ball in its orbit. The two bodies are close enough in mass

that they have formed a binary orbit with one another as they journey around the Chuuva system's sun. The tidal forces between the two satellites changed both. Tectonic stress on the rocky planet has led to geothermal heating enough to support a variety of simple life, while the ice ball developed liquid caverns beneath the surface.

Gluun's life has adapted to the intermittent periods of extreme cold, with flora spending much of its time in hibernation between the brief periods of warmth. Rakmos had a species of sapient, eel-like creatures—calling themselves rakmodois—in the liquid methane and carbon monoxide seas within the ice-clad world, where they built an isolated, magic-fueled civilization. The Swarm extracted much of Rakmos's liquid ocean, including most of the life in it, for use as biomass, food, and fuel. Rakmodois perished in multitudes, although some survived by using magical means to escape to other planes or change into other forms.

Gluun and Rakmos might attract attention for the following reasons, among others.



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Elemental End: The largest community of rakmodois leveraged their mystical prowess to open portals to a frigid part of the Elemental Plane of Water in an attempt to siphon water from the plane and create a new ocean to live in. Instead, strange, icy elemental creatures journeyed through the portals and killed many of the survivors. The icy elemental environment is spreading within Rakmos, threatening to destroy the relics of rakmodoi civilization.

Soul Defenders: A cabal of rakmodoi mages transitioned their souls into constructs in a last-ditch effort at survival. These constructs, with the aid of other magical automatons, crawl around the inside of the crumbling planet. They defend what's left of Rakmos with a single-minded determination that might set them against any visitors seeking to recover rakmodoi relics.

Twin Ends: Rakmos is a doomed world. So much of its mass has been siphoned off that the tidal forces keeping it in a dance with its twin have begun to deteriorate. One day, Rakmos will crumble under the strain, raining ruin on Gluun. Anyone who takes an interest in the simple life still enduring on rocky Gluun might seek to prevent this coming disaster.

RELICS OF CHUUVA

The Chuuva system had little sapient life before the shirrens' arrival in 15 AG. Various species that live in the system in the centuries since have developed a variety of tools peculiar to their needs and environments. Several of these items follow.

RELICS OF CHUUVA

ITEM	LEVEL	PRICE	BULK
HYBRID ITEMS			
Instant ground	1	25	1
Mindshield circlet, basic	3	1,350	L
Deoxy pellet	3	250	L
Lightning gatherer	4	2,250	2
Static glider	4	1,800	1
Mindshield circlet, mk 1	7	6,250	L
Mindshield circlet, mk 2	11	24,500	L
Mindshield circlet, mk 3	15	107,000	L
Mindshield circlet, mk 4	19	550,000	L
MAGIC ITEMS			
Serum of hibernation, diluted	1	80	—
Quorlu heat gem	2	125	—
Queen's meal	3	215	L
Serum of hibernation, potent	5	400	—
Stalkring, digger	7	6,500	—
Stalkring, obsidian	9	13,000	—

DEOXY PELLET

LEVEL 3

This fist-sized pellet was developed on the swampy world of Atachuua as a dual-purpose safety measure. Methane vents and peat bogs are common amid the planet's swamps, the risk of fire remains high, and the oversized insect life on the

planet poses a threat to any settlement. A deoxy pellet offers some protection against these risks, and has gained some fame through the system due to a lighthearted marketing campaign based on the slogan, "Break in case of fire or giant bug!"

You can crush a deoxy pellet as a full action that provokes attacks of opportunity. The magically enhanced chemical mixture within makes it so oxygen within a 30-foot radius of the point you break the pellet doesn't easily diffuse to feed fire or flow into the spiracles of insects and other creatures that lack active breathing mechanisms. Natural fire goes out, and the burning condition deals half damage. In addition, vermin larger than Tiny are sickened while in the area (no saving throw). The change in oxygen persists for 5 rounds, but a light or moderate wind lowers the duration to 3 rounds, and a strong or stronger wind lowers the duration to 1 round.

INSTANT GROUND

LEVEL 1

Exiles on Atachuua developed *instant ground* to expand their land. Following the Swarm's attack on Atachuua, survivors use *instant ground* to create patches of land to serve as new homes. *Instant ground* is water resistant but still somewhat biodegradable as a few of Atachuua's oversized insect species have developed a taste for it.

Each container holds a biochemical powder mixed with magically charged particles from the Plane of Earth. When poured into water as a full action that provokes attacks of opportunity, the components react swiftly to form a stable, buoyant platform in a 5-foot radius, provided the amount of water large enough to allow this expansion. If the body of water is smaller than the resulting ground area, *instant ground* consumes the available water and fills the available space. Any remaining powder is rendered inert. The landmass is a hemisphere with its dome pointed downward, so the ground is flat and stays upright on rough water.

LIGHTNING GATHERER

LEVEL 4

The gas giant Tarchuua has much to offer in terms of rare gases and other unique items. The *lightning gatherer*, a metallic canister containing charged gases harvested from Tarchuua, is one such item. Prongs and clamps on the canister's bottom allow you to attach the *lightning gatherer* to a stationary object, provided that object is larger than the *lightning gatherer*. Deploying or recovering the canister is a full action that provokes attacks of opportunity. While deployed, creatures within 20 feet of the gatherer have cover against ranged attacks and area effects that deal only electricity damage, such as *arcing surge* or an attack from an arc pistol. Such effects bend toward the *lightning gatherer*. The bonus from saving throws due to this cover applies to any save against a critical hit effect from a weapon that deals only electricity damage.

MINDSHIELD CIRCLET (WORN)

LEVELS 3-19

When shirrens first arrived in the Chuuva system, they were still plagued by fears that despite the protection of

Hylax, they might be forced back into the Swarm, losing all the individuality and freedom of choice they had come to embrace. Researchers explored ways to further insulate the empathic race from the Swarm's psychic call, ranging from the ineffective to the distasteful to some outright unethical practices. The *mindshield circlet* is in the center of this gamut, although it has retained some utility beyond the potential it has to prevent Swarm manipulation.

While wearing a *mindshield circlet*, you can't use limited telepathy and telepathy, and those using such abilities can't contact you. In addition, you can cast no spells and use no spell-like abilities that are mind-affecting. Furthermore, it is more difficult to affect you with such abilities, even beneficial ones. The *mindshield circlet*'s model determines a DC, providing protection against such effects. The creator of an effect must make a check, rolling 1d20 + caster level or CR against the DC to overcome your circlet's protection and affect you normally.

Even at the height of the shirrens' collective fear of the Swarm, *mindshield circlets* were a poor solution, as most shirren found the loss of their telepathic abilities to be too isolating to bear for long. The items retain utility, especially by species that don't rely on telepathy. Such species have copied the technology and make more use of these protective devices.

- **Basic (Level 3):** DC 14.
- **Mk 1 (Level 7):** DC 18.
- **Mk 2 (Level 11):** DC 22.
- **Mk 3 (Level 15):** DC 26.
- **Mk 4 (Level 19):** DC 30.

QUEEN'S MEAL

LEVEL 3

This sacred meal, typically consumed in celebration of or on religious holidays dedicated to Hylax, was popularized on Illechuuya. Temples there normally produce large quantities of this meal on feast days, often at a discounted price. A *queen's meal* is not only a day's worth of food and water, but it also makes coordination and collaboration more effective and discourages hostility for 24 hours. While benefiting from a *queen's meal*, you take a -1 penalty to your attack rolls, but you gain a +1 divine bonus to your EAC, KAC, Perception checks, and Sense Motive checks. In addition, if you attempt to aid another creature that has also eaten a *queen's meal* that day, you apply a +2 circumstance bonus to your check. If you succeed, the highest result between you and the creature you're aiding can be used to determine the aided check's outcome.

These cooperative effects have led to a tradition among followers of Hylax who work as diplomats or negotiators. They consume a *queen's meal* at the start of talks to encourage peace. This practice was an element of the famous

shirren-led peace negotiations between Castrovel's formians and lashuntas.

QUORLU HEAT GEM

LEVEL 2

Quorlus can find temperatures that are comfortable for most humanoids to be intolerably cold. Lower temperatures than that are even less to their liking. To remain comfortable in such environments, quorlus developed fiery-hearted gems using magic harnessed from the Plane of Fire to provide themselves with temporary resistance to cold.

As a standard action, you can swallow a *quorlu heat gem*.

Quorlus find them tasty. However, most carbon-based species find the experience unpleasant but harmless. For 24 hours after swallowing a *quorlu heat gem*, you gain cold resistance 5. If any lethal cold damage penetrates this cold resistance, the effect ends.



SERUM OF HIBERNATION

LEVELS 1-5

Scientists studying the hibernation-adapted flora native to Gluun isolated enzymes and compounds that aided in the species' long sleep. Further refinement led to this serum, which is typically available only through medical professionals or military groups, accompanied by warnings and waivers. Most who use this serum do so to make long-distance spaceflight more tolerable or efficient, especially when moving large groups with limited space and resources.

Upon drinking a *serum of hibernation*, you can allow yourself to fall into a deathlike trance for a time that depends on the potency of the serum. While in this hibernation, you need not eat, drink, or breathe. You awaken if you take damage or if anyone uses a medkit or more advanced medical technology to rouse you and succeeds at a DC 15 Medicine check. If roused before the duration ends, unless the Medicine check to rouse you succeeds by 10 or more, you suffer 1 temporary negative level and are exhausted. Anyone interacting with your hibernating body can tell you are alive with a successful DC 25 Perception check, but someone performing a medical exam can determine your condition with a successful DC 15 Medicine check.

- **Diluted (Level 1):** 2d4 days.
- **Potent (Level 5):** 2d4 × 3 days.

STALKRING (WORN)

LEVELS 7-9

The quorlus of Chuuya continue their species' tradition of personal adornment. The most common of these is a stalkring, a band of stone or metal sized to be worn around a quorlu's eyestalk. Creatures lacking such extremities can wear similar rings on a similarly slender appendage. Most stalkrings are

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decorative in nature, though the ever-pragmatic quorlus have also imbued some stalkrings with beneficial qualities.

Digger (Level 7): When you wear a *digger stalkring*, you gain a burrow speed equal to half your base speed and you can burrow through earth and stone that have a hardness up to 15. As a full action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to step into an adjacent area of such material that can enclose a creature of your size. When you do so, you can sense any open area within 30 feet that is large enough for you to enter and adjacent to an area of solid rock big enough to enclose a creature of your size. You can choose to move into one of the open areas you sense. If you don't or can't move to such an open space, you emerge where you started, having still used the action and Resolve Point.

Obsidian (Level 9): An *obsidian stalkring* is wrought from volcanic glass, resulting in a complex intertwined design that faintly shimmers as though surrounded by an aura of extreme heat. While wearing an *obsidian stalkring*, you can communicate with creatures with the fire subtype as though you had telepathy with a range of 60 feet. You gain a +2 insight bonus to Charisma-based checks and Sense Motive checks against such creatures. In addition, an *obsidian stalkring* allows you to spend 1 Resolve Point to cast *charm monster* on a creature with the fire subtype (Will DC 18 negates). Once you have done so, you cannot use another *obsidian stalkring* to do so for 24 hours, and the *obsidian stalkring* you used to do so can't allow the spell to be cast from it again for 24 hours.

STATIC GLIDER

LEVEL 4

The static charge prevalent throughout Tarchuuva's upper atmosphere has given rise to a recreational activity called static gliding. This leisure activity is restrictive due to the costs of the equipment and travel to Tarchuuva, but competitive static gliding was one of the most widely viewed sporting activities on Llelchuuvuva.

A *static glider* is a thin metallic sheet incorporated onto a minimal nanocarbon frame roughly 10 feet across. You can strap into a harness on the glider's underside, taking a full action. The glider's surface is designed with a microtexture that allows it to build up an electromagnetic charge and use that energy to produce lift. A glider requires no power source on Tarchuuva or during electromagnetic storms, but otherwise, the device requires a battery and consumes 1 charge per minute. While using a *static glider*, you gain a fly speed of 30 feet with poor maneuverability. You are flat-footed while using the glider to fly unless you dedicate two hands to steering it.

RAKMODOI COMPUTERS

The supercooled liquid environment within Rakmos's interior caverns precluded conventional computer technology, and so the native rakmodois developed magical alternatives. A *rakmodoi computer* is a durable, semi-living organic computer that houses elemental forces that serve as a computational and

informative assistant. Rakmodoi mystics could adjust the size and modes of these devices to create computer modules and countermeasures. With modification, these apparatuses could be attached to any computer, but the base cost is 10% higher than a normal computer and has the following traits.

Magically Charged: A rakmodoi computer functions without a power source. This ability functions as a free self-charging upgrade (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 216).

Magical Interface: A rakmodoi computer is designed to be used by someone trained in Mysticism, working its holographic controls through subtle magical manipulation, although the Computers skill is still used to accomplish tasks associated with that skill. This magic has a telepathic element, so any user that understands any language can use a rakmodoi computer and understand the information stored on it. A hacking kit can access a rakmodoi computer, but otherwise, a typical computer with a complex control module (*Core Rulebook* 215) must be purchased separately and installed to provide a digital interface for the computer.

Rakmodoi Mobile Machines: Each round after you act, if your *rakmodoi computer* has arms or a mobility unit, the computer can take a move action. For it to do so, you must be able to issue commands to the computer from a place the computer can see or hear you, or using a comm unit within the comm's range. You don't have to spend actions to issue these commands, but you must be able to take actions to do so.

The rakmodois have magical automatons like robots, drones, and other constructs, as well. Many of these systems, from domestic drones (*Starfinder Armory* 101) to robots and golem-like creatures (like those found in Alien Archive volumes, but with the magical subtype), endure on Rakmos.

RAKMODOI COMPUTERS

FEATURE	PRICE
MODULE	
Skill	10% of computer's base price
UPGRADE	
Arms	500
Mobility unit, claws	100 × computer's bulk
Mobility unit, legs	100 × computer's bulk
Mobility unit, tail	100 × computer's bulk
Mystic comm	4,000

ARMS

This upgrade adds arms to a *rakmodoi computer*. These limbs can perform most simple functions that humanoid arms and hands perform, such as opening doors and manipulating objects. However, the arms can't use skills or make attacks.

MOBILITY UNIT

A typical *rakmodoi computer* is a stationary object, but the rakmodois invented mobility units to grant some machines the ability to move alongside a user. A tail attachment gives the *rakmodoi computer* a land speed of 10 feet and a swim speed

of 30 feet. Insectile legs mobility units grant the computer a land speed of 30 feet and a climb speed of 30 feet. A claw unit grants the machine a land speed of 20 feet and a burrow speed (through soil and ice) of 20 feet. A *rakmodoi* computer of up to 20 bulk can be fitted with these units, so high-tier computers must be miniaturized to use them. Multiple attachments grant the highest speed in each movement type. A *rakmodoi* computer with a mobility unit has Athletics as a good skill as if it were a creature of a CR equal to twice its tier.

MYSTIC COMM

This comm upgrade imparts a mystical modification to the computer that allows it to telepathically communicate using the Astral Plane in a radius of several thousand miles. The upgrade allows the *rakmodoi* computer to function as a comm unit with a planetary range, but it can connect only with other computers that have this upgrade. A *rakmodoi* computer that has this upgrade on Rakmos can access other systems on that planet, forming an infosphere the *rakmodois* once used.

SKILL MODULE

A *rakmodoi* skill module allows a computer to analyze information and make rapid correlations, so the computer can perform the aid another action for one user with the skill the module provides. The computer has a bonus to the aid another check equal to its tier -2 (minimum +1). A skill module can have one of the following skills (with tasks the computer can aid noted in parentheses): Computers (craft computer, create or detect forgery), Culture (decipher writing, recall knowledge), Life Science (craft drug, poison, or medicinal; craft food or drink; identify creature; recall knowledge), Mysticism (craft item, identify creature, identify technology, repair item), Physical Science (craft drug, poison, or medicinal; recall knowledge), and a variety of Profession skills (recall knowledge). Similar technological modules allow Engineering (assess stability, craft device, identify creature, identify magic item, repair item).

ARTIFACT

The following item is an artifact. Parameters for artifacts are described on page 118 of *Starfinder Armory*.

VESSEL OF HYLAX

A *vessel of Hylax* is a bowl fashioned from carved chitin. Two are known to exist, both originating on the Liavaran moon Nchak. The vessels are ancient holy relics, their creation



ARTIFACT

said to have occurred during the reign of a Forever Queen who ruled Nchak before the Gap. When the shirrens arrived in the Pact Worlds and showed great devotion to Hylax, the philosopher worms of Nchak, due to portents they and their queen had seen, sent one vessel to the shirren colony

on Ilemchuuya. The relic was a gift intended to make Ilemchuuya another great center of Hylax worship.

Oral tradition and recent academic research uphold each vessel's most famous power. A creature that willingly drinks water from this vessel, with full knowledge of the outcome, immediately and irrevocably transforms into a new insectile form. The exact form manifested follows some obscure criteria that

neither priests nor researchers understand. Most sapient creatures become shirrens or trox, with a rare few becoming another sapient insectile species, such as bolidas, dessamars, or formians. Other creatures transform into

a variety of insectile forms, some closely resembling their former body shape. Elementals, outsiders, and undead creatures can't be transformed, nor can any creature that can't benefit from the *mystic cure* spell.

A transformed creature recalls its former life and body. It retains any class features, feats, and skill ranks it formerly had. Its class, base attack bonus, and base save bonuses are also unchanged. The creature loses the traits of its former species and gains those of the new one, including recalculating ability scores and base Hit Points as a member of its new species. Abilities reliant upon features the new species lacks are retrained as part of the transformation. Any gear the creature carries or wears at the time of transformation adapts to the creature's new form.

A *vessel of Hylax* can also be used to cast the *reincarnate* spell on a sapient creature, acting as the soul beacon that spell requires without being consumed during the spell. The *reincarnate* becomes a shirren or trox, or more rarely, some other sapient insectile species. When returned to life with a *vessel of Hylax*, a person suffers none of the drawbacks of the *reincarnate* spell, reviving with full vigor.

A *vessel of Hylax* can be destroyed only if a sapient creature the bowl has transformed fills the bowl with its blood, then uses a *wish* or *miracle* to reverse the transformation while simultaneously wishing the bowl polluted. The polluted bowl must then be destroyed (AC 11; immune to cold, electricity, and piercing; hardness 25; 55 HP). If the polluted vessel remains undestroyed, it can be reconsecrated with a ritual that requires the *remove affliction* spell (DC 31). A *vessel of Hylax* is 1 bulk.

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SURVIVORS OF THE SWARM

"This Swarm, this living calamity, is said to be unlike all other predators. They exist not in the balance of one world's life, but as a threat to the galaxy. They consume all and leave next to nothing. Yet even from this ruin, life can rise again and rebuild. It should. Worlds reduced to barrenness can be reseeded. They should. People who have lost a home they once took for granted might find it and themselves anew in the rebuilding. They must. Perhaps this plague of consumption is not so far outside the truth of nature as one might think—even where all has been devoured, life finds a way to return and to thrive."

—Koralai, ramiyel mystic

The Swarm is comprehensive in its destruction, through callousness and voraciousness. A plague of consumption, the Swarm harvests everything it can before moving on. Despite this efficient stripping of worlds, the Swarm can leave behind survivors such as the following.

AMRAN

Machine Paradise

Diameter: $\times 1$; **Mass:** $\times 1/5$

Gravity: $\times 1/5$

Location: Near Space

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 40 hours; **Year:** 530 days

Amran is a world in interstellar proximity to the original home planet of the kucharn, the species that became the Swarm, and it was one of the first worlds to fall to the unrelenting menace. No records remain of what Amran was like before the coming of the Swarm. What is known is limited to what can be surmised from its present environment. Even its history is enigmatic, distorted by the Gap's effects on its inhabitants and their unique genesis. According to the most prominent theories, the people of Amran fought the Swarm, but when it became clear that defeat was inevitable, they settled on a bold tactic.

Frontline forces bought time against the Swarm while Amran's great minds built machines, so-called "ghost forges," imbued with artificial intelligence and the entire library of Amran's knowledge. These machines were mystically engineered to collect souls as they passed from Amran, then technomancers sent these machines to the Ethereal Plane. As the people of Amran fell to the Swarm's inexorable assault, these ghost forges gathered their willing souls, storing them safely while the Swarm consumed the physical planet. An indeterminate time after the Swarm's departure, the ghost forges phased back to the Material Plane and manufactured living robot bodies for the stored souls, infusing them with the accumulated knowledge of their civilization. The reborn then set about re-creating their world's devoured ecology and infrastructure in mechanical form.

These living machines had escaped annihilation, but they could not have predicted the Gap, which wiped the mystic records from the

ghost forges as it twisted records across time. After the Gap, the reborn reawakened in their mechanical paradise with little of the scientific or magical knowledge they had possessed, no understanding of how their society functioned, and little idea of who they were individually, much less as a people. Even their original name for themselves was lost. They had a rudimentary understanding of their origins and the machines that had saved them, leading them to adopt the name "amrantah," as they were the sole people on the world of Amran.

In the centuries since, Amran received the Signal, built numerous Drift beacons (having forgotten the Swarm), and has become famous as a destination for artistry, entertainment, innovation, and pleasure. The ghost forges maintain and control the cities and environment, while the amrantahs maintain a light hand in governance, focusing on diversion and invention. They have created a new culture and, over time, regained some of their prior technomagical prowess. Amrantah manufactured technology is increasingly synonymous with bleeding-edge design.

The following locations are well known on Amran.

Chromium Coliseum: One of the few massive structures the ghost forges did not build, this gigantic arena is among the great gladiatorial experiences in known space. With a vast degree of customization both physical and magical, including gravity, lovers of battle converge from innumerable systems to watch and compete in the stadium's regular games. The ghost forges offer healing and other rewards for competitors, making participation easy. Amrantah gladiators also test new techniques regularly, making this battleground a great place to learn and practice the art of combat. Events from this coliseum are broadcast across the galaxy, so a warrior who wants to make a name can do so here.

Diastrega: The most famous (or infamous) of Amran's cities, Diastrega is as well known for its lighthearted, morally lax atmosphere as for its stunning variety of diversions. Nearly any socially acceptable experience is available, from immersive holographic roleplaying games to amrantah-staffed brothels. As is usual on Amran, Diastrega's amrantah council rules with a light hand, being more interested in their own affairs. Establishments maintain private security to keep order among visitors. Unfortunately for all pleasure-seekers, the lack of oversight gives criminals and other ne'er-do-wells opportunities for mischief and worse. Private investigators are as likely to make a good living in Diastrega, as are professional entertainers.



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RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Con, +2 Cha, -2 Wis

Hit Points: 6

Size and Type: Amrantahs are Medium constructs with the magical and technological subtypes.

Constructed Body: An amrantah's body is made of magically and technologically enhanced metal housing a technomagical substance like ectoplasm that holds the soul, glowing with this spiritual energy. An amrantah has an internal, integrated standard datajack and personal comm unit. If an amrantah is helpless, these items can be removed or destroyed without damaging the amrantah. They can be replaced or upgraded for the normal price of this equipment. This gear doesn't count against the systems in which an amrantah can install augmentations. In addition, an amrantah can install two extra augmentations overall, provided no one system has more than two.

Exposed Soul: Amrantahs' souls are less protected than those of other creatures, and they take a -2 penalty to saving throws against necromancy effects. Additionally, amrantahs are as susceptible to mind-affecting effects as humanoids.

Living Machine: Amrantahs are living creatures. Amrantahs have a Constitution score, benefit from natural and magical healing, and can be raised from the dead. They lack the construct immunities trait, are immune only to disease—their internal fluid can be disrupted by poison and affected by drugs and medicinals. Amrantahs replenish internal energy and fluid by eating and drinking, and they must rest and can dream. However, amrantahs don't breathe or suffer the environmental effects of being in a vacuum.

Shapeable Hold: An amrantah's plating is slightly shapeable via the influence of the underlying fluid, allowing a better grip on or integration with objects. When wearing armor with which they have proficiency, amrantahs can integrate with the armor, reducing its armor check penalty by 1 and its speed penalty by 5 feet. In addition, amrantahs gain a +2 racial bonus to KAC against disarm combat maneuvers.

AMRANTAHs

Amrantahs are living machines made from highly advanced magitech and imbued with the soul of a long-dead person from Amran. These artificial beings are humanoid in appearance and most often resemble humans made of metal, with bluish energy visible from within their bodies. Amrantahs can easily modify their bodies with access to a ghost forge, and many take full advantage of this fact. Some take on appearances resembling draconic or bestial humanoids, while others adopt a blank-

faced, enigmatic appearance. Amrantahs often choose a gender fitting the soul's identity. These amrantahs shape their bodies to reflect their gender, while others experiment with or reject gendered traits.

All amrantahs emerge from the ghost forges with the default imprint left behind by the machines' Gap-shattered programming. Originally meant to grant the amrantah a portion of their people's knowledge, this process instead causes amrantahs to emerge with naive, innocent, and somewhat undeveloped personalities, though each is still influenced by their preimprint personalities. Amrantahs tend toward chaotic good or chaotic neutral alignment as a result, with a whimsical, fun-loving bent. Amrantahs and gnomes get along very well.

Amrantah culture, such as it is, is largely defined by their environment. The pleasure-cities of Amran offer amrantahs an endless array of distractions, and many have short attention spans, though engrossing tasks can hold them rapt for as long as necessary. Even when away from their cities, amrantahs use their internal systems to play games or otherwise entertain themselves while performing other tasks. Accustomed to having their way, amrantahs can become petulant when a desire is denied, though most are too good natured to really make a fuss—another pleasure is around the corner, after all.

Given their origins, amrantahs have a casual relationship with religion. When an amrantah dies, regardless of their distance from a ghost forge, the soul travels back to be reborn. While this offers immortality of a sort, the amrantahs no longer have the mastery of magitech necessary to reprogram the ghost forges. Thus, souls reborn this way are inevitably reimprinted, emerging with a blank mind and personality. Most amrantahs have a healthy respect for death, if not quite the same fear other species possess. Most amrantahs see the process of reincarnation as the doorway to new adventures, so after living a full life, an amrantah sees death as little to fear.

Amrantahs vary from 5 to 7 feet tall, and they weigh from 120 to 350 pounds. The physical components of an amrantah degenerate over time, meaning each individual usually lives a bit more than a century.

DINA III

Petrified Colony World

Diameter: ×1; **Mass:** ×1

Gravity: ×1

Location: Near Space

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 26 hours; **Year:** 390 days

When explorers from the Pact Worlds discovered Dina III, the planet was a settler's dream, with abundant natural resources and a mild climate. Although evidence existed of a sapient species, it seems these people had long vanished. Within months, a bustling colony had been established on the verdant world. Most settlers left the crumbling, many-pillared stone ruins they discovered largely undisturbed. A few brave

souls, however, delved into their depths to return with tales of eerie statue gardens, piles of crushed stone and dust, and bizarre stone machines. But before further explorations could be conducted, Dina III's abundance proved irresistible to the Swarm, which fell upon the world without warning.

With few options, the desperate colonists fled into the ruins, ravenous Swarm components close behind. The ruins, however, were not as dead as they appeared. Ancient, quasi-magical machines sprang to life, spurred into action by the presence of hostile life. Acting on the same corrupted programming that destroyed their extinct creators, the machines released a countermeasure: calcifying nanites that spread a wave of petrification across the planet. Within hours, the vibrant world's life, including colonists and Swarm components alike, was nothing more than cold stone. Left with little more than worthless stone, the Swarm departed, reclaiming only some of its transformed components.

Yet this was not the end. The magic that spread the petrifying plague faded in some cases, especially in simpler life-forms, leaving only all technology turned to stone. Some of the settlers awoke to find the Swarm mostly gone. Remaining Swarm, most of them vicious soldier components deployed in the first attack waves, awakened to find that something about the affliction had not only destroyed all aspects of their biotechnology, but also rendered many of them unable to rejoin in a hive mind. Most of the Swarm components on Dina III are now little more than vicious monsters that attack anything else they find.

Possessing no way to communicate with galactic civilization or leave the planet, the settlers could only construct crude warnings for would-be visitors and carve out a simpler life for themselves. Diminished but still extant nanites, which the colonists named "Medusa nanites," can petrify new arrivals, but previously affected life is now immune. In the years since this calamity, the settlers of Dina III have persisted. Swarm components still stalk across the landscape, forcing the colonists to stay on the move. While some have fallen to despair or the Swarm, many still dare to hope.

Dina III has numerous sites of interest, such as the following.

Oceanside Palace: This palatial villa stands both above and below the shoreline of Dina III's northern ocean, its lower chambers flooded. The nomadic colonists periodically seek refuge within the palace, residing until Swarm components or other beasts drive them out again. The palace's carvings depict a great city in caverns underneath the seafloor, but the colonists have not yet discovered a route to reach these caverns.

Dina Alpha: The former Pact Worlds colony Dina Alpha is a stony husk of what it once was. With everything from plastic to nanocarbon transmuted to stone, the technology here is nonfunctional and every structure bears scars of the Swarm's attack. Those descending upon the ruins from space can see a crude message spelled out in piles of stone: "Turn Back Now!"

Around Dina Alpha are the remains of two missions to the colony world. These investigators came to determine why Dina III lost contact with the wider galaxy. The first expedition was a

total loss, although some of its members remain stranded here after recovering from Medusa nanites. However, members of the second team made it away from the planet with reports of the nanite infection and unusual Swarm components. A third mission to Dina III might seek to discover what happened or recover the remains of someone lost in the earlier missions.

Shapeless City: A grand ruin easily visible from Dina Alpha, the Shapeless City's vast colonnades and inverted rooftops tower above the treetops surrounding it, some of which are still stone themselves. Over three-quarters of the vast ruin lie underground, with labyrinthine corridors stretching off into subterranean darkness and tremendous chambers containing entire districts of vertically arranged buildings. The Euryalium, the vault from which Dina III's disaster was unleashed, is one of many such treasures within the ruins. Technology within these vaults, manufactured entirely from stone through refined nanotech techniques, is the only source of advanced weaponry or technological protection on Dina III.

Since the calamity that befell them, the colonists have avoided the Shapeless City, which is home to the wildest and most numerous Swarm components remaining on the planet. In so doing, the survivors have yet to discover a possible source of their salvation: located within is *Persid*, a sapient, magical computer-construct with the power to deactivate the Medusa nanites. For it to do so, however, it must be subdued or convinced it should do so.

GRASCHA

Shattered Fey Protectorate

Diameter: ×3; **Mass:** ×1/3

Gravity: ×1

Location: Near Space

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: Varies by shard; **Year:** 600 days

Grascha was a geological and magical anomaly—a hollow planet of dense, partly fused stony and crystalline masses full of eldritch energy and strong connections to the First World. Long before the Gap, some power seeded the world with humans, orcs, and various fey, including countless tricksters such as goblins and satyrs and a small species of fey embodiments of goodwill called gerbies. The humans and orcs never knew the culture of their counterparts in the nearby galaxy. They established their society in an environment that required cooperation, encouraged by the fey around them in various ways. Rather than becoming enemies, the orcs and humans of Grascha formed a unified society that flourished with magic and technological advancement, isolated from the wider galaxy. Then came the Gap, which dealt relatively little damage to Graschani society compared to that caused by the Signal.

Graschani had plied space in their system, and they began to research the Drift. They built a Drift beacon—and their first interstellar visitor was the Swarm.

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The Swarm's assault shattered the planet in an event now known as the Fracturing, leaving the surviving inhabitants of Grascha clinging to fragments of their world. However, the massive death toll spawned a calecor (*Starfinder Alien Archive 2* 24) named Kograscha. Using the cosmological energy of the Fracturing, Kograscha opened a gate to the First World, calling forth a fey crusade known as a wild hunt and driving the Swarm back. Kograscha was unable to repair the broken planet, so the calecor instead brought nurturing fey from the First World who set to the task of preserving and reseeding the shattered world.

Today, the "world" of Grascha is a verdant, fertile paradise. Fey magic and First World physical laws preserve the pieces of the planet and bind them together in a vast bubble of atmosphere like a sky full of islands. The Graschani, mostly half-orcs, with a smaller population of humans and orcs, hop from one island to another in vehicles or via magic. Fey custodians remain as honored beings, although the wild hunt long ago departed in victory. Residents live in harmony and prosperity, trading for offworld resources with surplus food from their lush farms and minerals mined from the undersides of the sky islands.

People of Grascha are peaceful and welcoming, but they and their fey allies are very protective of their world and its culture.

They rebuff attempts to establish colonies or develop corporate interests on their resource-rich world. Graschani resort to force only if diplomacy fails or invaders are found working illegally in or around the system. Would-be conquerors must contend with not only Graschani resistance, but also the fey, including Kograscha, who still watch over the partially healed world.

Below are some points of interest on Grascha.

Orakkaiem: Grascha's largest city, Orakkaiem, was the grand capital of Grascha. Before the Fracturing, Orakkaiem stood within the hollow world, which sheltered it from the Swarm's assault and the worst effects of the Fracturing. Now surrounded by rich farmland rather than caverns, Orakkaiem is the seat of Grascha's planetary government and trade. The planet's only public spaceports, seven towers on the city outskirts, stand in Orakkaiem. Kograscha lives in a temple-city within Orakkaiem, keeping watch and aiding the population.

AbadarCorp regularly attempts to involve itself in Grascha's affairs. Frustrated with the planet's firm stance, an ambitious director has deployed covert agents to sabotage spaceport operations, hoping to coerce the Graschani into opening up to corporate involvement, but a few well-informed Graschani and sympathetic elements within AbadarCorp now seek help in stopping the corporate agents from achieving their aims.

Placid: A small, idyllic settlement of rolling hills, vineyards, and lakes, Placid is unlikely to attract much notice from wider galactic society on its own. However, after a familial misunderstanding, Verg, a son of Nel Klask, owner of a verthani ice-mining firm called GlaceTek, moved to Placid with his husbands. Nel wants her son to come home with his family, but she knows only that he fled to Grascha. She seeks those willing to find Verg and convince him and his husbands to return to Verces. GlaceTek's fiercest competitor, Vorceaux Incorporated, has other plans: influence Verg to sell his interest in GlaceTek by any means. The Graschani of Placid are deeply protective of the new family, and they and their fey allies have little tolerance for violence. No one knows Verg also recently gained the right to move to Rimeshard (described below), where he could flee if pressed.

Rimeshard: Most of Grascha's islands have a temperate climate well suited to growth and life, but Rimeshard remains shrouded with winter. The nymph Auriana took the isle as a reward for her part in restoring and preserving the world, making herself queen of the island, and the beautiful snow-clad realm reflects her love of the cold season. Numerous hot springs warm Rimeshard's settlements, while its icebound orchards are heavy with glitter-fruit, a rare First World delicacy. Although Rimeshard is a popular destination for offworlders, only a few are permitted to visit each year. Auriana personally reviews applications, a process that can take months or more.

RAMIYA

Regrowing Planet of Life

Diameter: x2; **Mass:** x4

Gravity: x1

Location: The Vast

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 52 hours; **Year:** 309 days

Blessed with uncanny abundance, Ramiya had a surface smothered with layered rain forests, dominated by skyscraping trees, and nourished by the planet's two suns. The planet's ophidian natives, ramiyels, shepherded its biodiversity. For ramiyels, spiritual reverence for life was as natural as breathing. With Ramiya's abundance providing all their needs, only a rare few ramiyels spared thought for what might lie beyond their world. Still, they heeded Triune's Signal and built spacefaring vessels not unlike Xenowarden bioships.

Decades thereafter, a great vision shared among ramiyel mystics foretold the coming of the Swarm. These mystics spread word to their people so they could prepare. Knowing themselves incapable of repelling the coming menace, ramiyels instead gathered biosamples of the planet's native species before sequestering themselves and their precious cargo deep within secret, sealed refuges, hoping to reseed Ramiya after the Swarm's departure.

However, the main body of the invading Swarm departed before completely consuming the world's life, for reasons not entirely known. Thus, when the ramiyels emerged from their caverns, they discovered a world only somewhat barren. Much had been reduced to dead rock, but the devastation was far from complete. Waterfalls thundered down cleared cliffsides, thickets and flowers grew among the broken roots of devoured trees, and seas once choked by greenery shimmered under the suns. The greatest surprises, though, were strange ruins previously hidden deep within formerly impenetrable jungles. Little could be gleaned from the structures' exteriors, but the ramiyels were able to match the ruins to their own legends: these abandoned places must have been the homes of the lamyros, the ramiyels' mythical ancestors.

In the time since, ramiyels have striven to rebuild and reseed their world's dead zones. Some have ventured beyond Ramiya's twin-sunned system for the first time, whether in search of resources or in service to the insatiable curiosity sparked by the strange invaders from beyond the skies. The mystery of the Swarm's premature departure also remains. Many ramiyels believe that Ramiya's stunning density of life was too much to devour at once, or perhaps the overwhelming power of so much life repelled the invaders. Others wonder if something in the ruins of the lamyros might hold the key to the Swarm's mysterious departure.

Below are a couple locations of note on Ramiya.

The Fangs: The Swarm devoured the vegetation that once shrouded these lamyros ruins, long thought to be a pair of close-set mountain peaks. Preserved from nature's crushing

grasp by ancient magic, the tall, sharp towers bear an abundance of bestial imagery and mystical runes on their outer surfaces. While the ramiyels have been too dedicated to reseeding to mount an expedition into the Fangs, scouting reports speak of coldly opulent chambers and artistic depictions of ancient ramiyel-like beings performing acts of unfathomable cruelty.

Ramiyels want to explore the ruins now that Ramiya is on the road to recovery, but they place great value in expertise. As they make connections in wider galactic society with individuals and organizations that could provide considerable skill in the investigation of the lamyros ruins, ramiyel archaeologists are increasingly looking to invite or employ them to do so.

Yaillan: Built amid the crown of a remaining old-growth cloudtree, Yaillan is the largest city on Ramiya. Each of its numerous districts occupies a branch of the great tree and functions as a self-contained village. Like much of ramiyel culture, Yaillan is built on living technology and architecture. Visiting ships land upon cultivated ironwood platforms, starship fuel is manufactured from cultivated fengar fruit, and vast, leaflike solar panels and the flow of the cloudtree's sap provide power to ramiyel workshops and factories, elevators that descend to the distant surface, and other necessities. The ramiyels welcome visitors, but they keep a close eye on outsiders, having learned that few cultures share their own deep reverence for life.

RAMIYELS

Ramiyels, which are half-ophidian, half-mammalian humanoids, are Ramiya's sole sapient species. All ramiyels are female. A ramiyel has an upper body like that of a female human, with brightly or darkly hued hair and eyes, and a muscular, colorfully scaled serpent body below the waist. Scales also mark a ramiyel's upper body and face. When deeply connected emotionally, ramiyels can also psychically bond, causing any willing participant to conceive if she so wishes. The mother then gives birth about 7 months later.

Ramiyel culture is communal. Individual ramiyels specialize in tasks for the betterment of the community, pooling resources and efforts to accomplish great feats. Ramiyels are deeply in tune with their surroundings, and their adaptation to their communal culture causes them to struggle to develop more diverse skill sets. Most are more comfortable focusing on personal interests. Whether settled or nomadic, ramiyel communities remain small by other cultures' standards, as they rely on Ramiya's abundant resources for their needs and sunlight for power. However, multiple such groups work in concert, as with Yaillan or the reseeding of Ramiya.

The defining trait of ramiyel culture is their great reverence for life and nature. Ramiyels seek to live in harmony with the life around them, abhorring pollution, waste, and wanton disregard for other living beings. This preference does not equate to pacifism—predation is integral in ramiyel understanding of nature's cycle. Huntresses are a vital element of their culture, which is rooted in a hunter-gatherer past. This respect for life

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RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Wis

Hit Points: 5

Size and Type: Ramiyels are Medium monstrous humanoids.

Climber: Ramiyels have a climb speed of 15 feet.

Constrictor's Grasp: A ramiel can use her serpentine lower body to grapple foes, allowing her to grapple without needing a free hand.

Darkvision: Ramiyels have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Life Instinct: Ramiyels have an innate knack for understanding life-forms and their function. They have a +2 racial bonus to Life Science and Medicine skills.

Personal Focus: Each ramiel has a personal focus. This inclination not only manifests as a talent that grants an extra class skill, but it also affects the ramiel's relationship with her environment and other beings. Commonly, a ramiel is born as what her culture calls a creator, and her extra class skill is a Profession skill. Some ramiyels have a nurturer focus, and can choose Diplomacy or Sense Motive as her extra class skill. A ramiel who has a huntress focus can choose Perception or Survival as her extra class skill.

extends beyond Ramiya. Even the most hardened ramiel operative might spend a few moments after a pitched firefight to honor fallen foes and respect loss of life. Despite their spiritual proclivities, from which their mystical traditions arise, ramiyels worship no deities. They have deep cultural taboos against even trusting, much less revering, such entities. If another reason for this tradition ever existed, it was lost to the Gap.

Individual ramiyels are most often good-aligned, with a focus on balance between the personal and communal. Even ramiyels who grow up outside their culture retain an innate sense of communalism and an understanding of and respect for life. Xenoanthropologists debate the cause of these traits, which would normally be attributed to nurture rather than nature. While ramiyels can find it difficult to break away from their communities, their curiosity can drive

them to strike out among the stars. An adventurous ramiel adopts her companions, whether the crew of her starship or a cadre of fellow explorers, as her community. She does her best to fulfill her duties within this group, although greedy or aggressively individualistic associates might clash with a ramiel's communal tendencies.

Typically a ramiel is about 5 feet tall, from top of the head to where the tail meets the ground, but the tail extends another 5-15 feet. Therefore, a ramiel weighs upwards of 220 pounds. A ramiel can also raise her body up another foot or so, shortening her tail, but doing so is uncomfortable for extended periods of time. When at rest or pausing in movement, a ramiel typically coils her tail under her. Ramiyels live about as long as humans.

VATHORI

Planet of the Swarm-Born

Diameter: ×1; **Mass:** ×1-1/2

Gravity: ×1-1/2

Location: The Vast

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 32 hours; **Year:** 196 days

Before the arrival of the Swarm, Vathori was a world of reclusive humanoids and few indigenous threats. After dealing with predictable raids from another planet in their system, Vathorians pooled their resources to create the Aegis. This massive planetary force shield could be raised when their systems detected incoming invasion forces. Unfortunately for the Vathorians, when the Swarm attacked—mere years after the Signal allowed the Vathorians' bellicose neighbors to build Drift engines—the hordes came from an unexpected direction and offered no such warning.

The insectile horde devoured the raiders who had long plagued Vathori, annihilating that civilization utterly. It then fell upon Vathori in massive waves before the Aegis could be raised. Yet raised it was, severing the Swarm's vanguard components from the bulk of the interstellar menace. After crashing upon the shield, to no avail, and unable to sense its missing components through the psychically impenetrable Aegis, the Swarm turned its attention to other planets and other systems, leaving the

RAMIYEL

Swarm trapped on Vathori to clash in a war of attrition against the Vathorians.

Scientists among the Vathorians came to believe the Swarm would eventually win. But rather than give in, they devised a genetic weapon to use against their biotechnological foes and unleashed it as a virus. However, this pathogen had unforeseen consequences as the Swarm adapted and the virus mutated in response, possibly spurred or assisted by an external influence such as errant magic or an extraplanar force. Whatever the case, the virus started rewriting the genetics of all living creatures on Vathori, merging Swarm with indigenous species.

Today, all fauna and some flora on Vathori possess insectile features, from herd beasts scuttling up green cliffsides to millipede-like serpents slithering through the planet's saline megarivers. The Vathorians of old are no more. Their descendants honor the statues of their precursors and fossilized carapaces of mighty Swarm components alike, and their forms are those of anthropomorphic insects. A drive for exploration sometimes verging on the desire for conquest reflects their Swarm heritage, and many Vathorians now look to the stars with a burning hunger instead of trepidation. Internal-threat assessors shut down the Aegis long ago, and within the past decade, other systems have made first contact with the Vathorians.

Some xenobiologists studying the planet's unique Swarm-born life-forms have raised concerns over the volatility of these creatures' DNA, wondering if they could somehow become "activated" by the Swarm hive mind. On the other hand, some shirren priests of Hylax claim the events of Vathori were a miracle, perhaps even indicating the Swarm might yet be assimilated into galactic society.

Vathori has the following notable sites.

The Great Ancestor: The remains of a tremendous Swarm component rest upon a mountain's steep slopes. Many Vathorians make pilgrimages to the mountain's base every 20 years. No taboos against delving into the titanic corpse exist, but most prefer to pay their respects from below it. Inside this corpse is a trove of Swarm technology, which could provide the wider galaxy yet more advantages against the Swarm. Would-be explorers must tread carefully, though, since unmutated Swarm components slumber in suspended animation within, and interlopers risk unleashing a tide of ravenous members of the Swarm upon their devout descendants.

Throkha: A metropolis that stretches across the breadth of a great plateau, Throkha has numerous facilities, structures, and entire districts carved into the plateau itself. Vast landing bays open in the plateau's walls, allowing Throkha to serve as the planet's primary spaceport. The city takes its name

from the most honored ancestor of the Vathorians, one of the chief scientists who created the virus that changed the world.

THROKHA

LG metropolis

Population 509,616 (98% Vathorians, 2% other)

Government council

Qualities devout (ancestral), technologically average

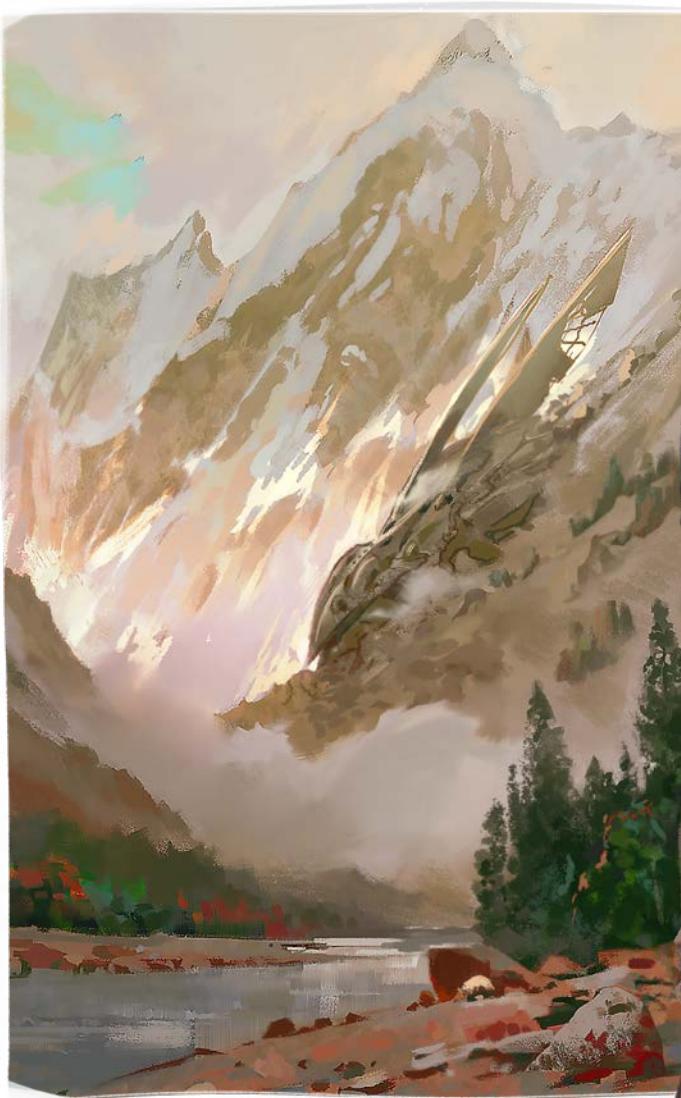
Maximum Item Level 14th

VATHORIAN TEMPLATE GRAFT

A mutated virus has caused all native creatures of Vathori to gain physical similarities to Swarm components.

Suggested Alignment: Chaotic.

Traits: Blindsight (vibration) 15 ft.; +4 racial bonus to saving throws against fear effects; resistance 5 to acid (increase to 10 at CR 6, to 15 at CR 12, and to 20 at CR 16); Culture and Sense Motive as master skills; limited telepathy 30 ft.



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"Professor Grisilis's broadcast of Vharrine's 'song,' as he called it, was supposed to originate from Grisilis Station in Vharrine's atmosphere late in the day, with the intent to record and upload the signal for wider release. Instead, a team of freebooters boarded the station and shot up the place, preventing the broadcast. Ultimately the battle on the station resulted in catastrophic decompression, and the platform fell into Vharrine. A holovid the raiders released after our investigation showed station personnel suffering from severe contamination that resulted in body- and mind-altering mutations and violent responses to unaffected creatures. But the only evidence we have is that video."

—excerpt of the report on the "Grisilis Incident"

SONGTWISTED

CR
5XP
1,600

Songtwisted host shirren mechanic

LE Medium humanoid (shirren)

Init +3; **Senses** blindsense (life or vibration) 30 ft.;**Perception** +11**DEFENSE**

EAC 17; KAC 18

Fort +6; **Ref** +6; **Will** +6**HP** 60**DR** 5/good and piercing**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft., spider climb**Melee** bite +10 (1d4+7 P)**Ranged** frostbite-class zero pistol +12 (1d6+5 C; critical staggered [DC 15])**Offensive Abilities** overload (DC 15), target tracking**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th)1/day—*mind thrust* (2nd level; DC 15)**STATISTICS****Str** +2; **Dex** +3; **Con** +1; **Int** +5; **Wis** -1; **Cha** +0**Skills** Acrobatics +11 (+17 to escape), Bluff +16, Computers +16, Disguise +11, Engineering +16**Languages** Common, Infernal, Shirren; limited telepathy 30 ft., song share 100 ft.**Other Abilities** artificial intelligence (exocortex), backward limbs, communalism, custom rig (armor upgrade), mechanic tricks (neural shunt, overload weapon) remote hack (DC 15)**Gear** d-suit I (custom rig), frostbite-class zero pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each)**ECOLOGY****Environment** Vharrine**Organization** solitary or incursion (2–7)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Backward Limbs (Su)** A songtwisted is able to bend its body in unusual ways, gaining a +6 racial bonus to Acrobatics checks to escape. However, any time a songtwisted isn't focusing on their movement, their limbs twist in unnatural arrangements on their own. Another creature can notice the effort required to keep the twisting in check with a successful Sense Motive check (DC = 10 + the songtwisted's Bluff modifier).**Song Share (Su)** A songtwisted can communicate to other songtwisted within 100 feet as if both have telepathy.

Vharrine (see page 62) is a planet with an internal signal, and those near it might start to hear that signal not only through monitoring devices, but also in their thoughts and dreams. The song has caused some to reconsider what might be possible without the limits of conventional morality. While heeding this dark muse, such listeners develop new magical abilities and learn how to reshape themselves. These "songtwisted" beings work together to spread Vharrine's song throughout the galaxy.

SONGTWISTED
TEMPLATE GRAFT

Any creature that remains near Vharrine for more than 90 days can become songtwisted. Creatures that have strong will or psychic defenses take longer to convert, but immunity to effects that warp the mind offers no benefit.

Required Alignment: Evil.

Traits: blindsense (life) 30 ft. if CR 10 or lower, and blindsight (life) 30 ft. if CR 11 or higher; DR/good and magic equal to CR; spider climb; bite (standard melee damage for CR; if Large or larger, add grab); spell-like abilities (*mind thrust* [level = 1 + CR/5] 1/day); Bluff as a master or good skill; backward limbs (see above); song share (see above).



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SWARM ALTIIPHERON

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CE Medium starship monstrous humanoid

Speed 10; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2)

AC 16; **TL** 14

HP 70; **DT** –; **CT** 14

Shields basic shields 30 (forward 9, port 7, starboard 7, aft 7)

Attack (Forward) particle beam (8d6; 20 hexes)

Attack (Aft) micromissile battery (2d6; 20 hexes)

Attack (Turret) light particle beam (3d6; 10 hexes), light particle beam (3d6; 10 hexes)

Power Core Pulse Red (175 PCU); **Drift Engine** none;

Systems budget short-range sensors, mk 1 defenses, mk 1 trinode computer, mk 3 armor; **Expansion Bays** cargo holds (5)

Modifiers +1 to any 3 checks per round

Other Abilities fleet mind, living starship, void adaptation

CREW ACTIONS

Engineer (1 action) Engineering +8 (3 ranks)

Gunner (2 actions) gunnery +7 (3rd level)

Pilot Piloting +10 (3 ranks)

ECOLOGY

Environment any vacuum

Organization solitary, pair, or clutch (3-8)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fleet Mind (Ex) Like individual Swarm components,

Swarm starships are bound together into a singular hive mind through a blend of radio, quantum, and telepathic communication. All Swarm starships within 10 hexes of each other are in constant communication; if one is aware of a threat, all are. (Such awareness can spread along a "chain" of Swarm starships under appropriate circumstances, potentially alerting distant Swarm vessels.) Swarm vessels can also communicate telepathically with all Swarm creatures within 10 hexes.

Living Starship (Ex) An altipheron is a colony of symbiotic creatures so immense that it functions as a starship (and thus engages in only starship combat). Three central brains (represented as a trinode computer) command a host of bioengineered Swarm components that act as a unified organism. These brains allow the altipheron to take crew actions using the skill bonuses, ranks, and level listed in Crew Actions above. Modifiers for the altipheron's size, speed, and maneuverability are already factored into its statistics. Critical damage to life support instead damages the central brains, with the listed effect applying to gunnery actions in addition to any penalties from weapons array critical damage. Critical damage to crew has no effect on an altipheron, due to the adaptability of its components.

Altipherons form a major component of many Swarm fleets. They are better armed and armored than Swarm fleetfuries, but smaller than the mighty dreadlancers. Altipherons are quick to construct and require a relatively small output of resources, allowing the Swarm to launch a large number of these starships in a brief period of time.

Altipherons are picket ships in function; they are often deployed in orbit around a planet the Swarm is devouring, repelling outsiders who might try to liberate the world before it can be consumed. Their fleet mind ability provides them unparalleled teamwork, meaning a detachment of altipherons is often as dangerous as a larger ship, if not more so. Occasionally, altipherons are used as troop transports, cramming many Swarm components into their cargo holds.

Altipherons lack any Drift capabilities of their own. When the Swarm prepares to move to a new system, altipherons are simply incorporated into larger vessels, ready to be deployed at the next target.

SWARM EFFIGENE

CR
5XP
1,600

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16**DEFENSE** **HP** 63**EAC** 17; **KAC** 18**Fort** +4; **Ref** +6; **Will** +10**Defensive Abilities** Swarm mind; **Immunities** acid, fear effects**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.**Melee** bioelectric talon +11 (1d4+7 E & S)**Ranged** bioelectric arc +13 (1d4+5 E; critical arc 1d4)**Offensive Abilities** invigorate Swarm**STATISTICS**

Str +2; Dex +3; Con +1; Int +5; Wis +1; Cha -1

Skills Engineering +11, Life Science +16, Medicine +16,

Mysticism +11, Physical Science +11

Languages Shirren (can't speak); telepathy 100 ft.

ECOLOGY**Environment** any**Organization** solitary, pair, or team (3-6)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Bioelectric Arc (Ex)** As a ranged attack, an effigene can unleash a blast of electrical energy with a range increment of 30 feet.**Invigorate Swarm (Ex)** As a standard action, an effigene can manipulate the bioelectrical energy of an allied Swarm creature within 30 feet to cause unexpected movement. That creature can immediately take a guarded step or move up to its speed.**Swarm Mind (Ex)** Members of the Swarm are bound together into a singular hive mind by a blend of exuded pheromones, imperceptible movements of antennae and limbs, electrostatic fields, and telepathic communication. All Swarm creatures within 30 feet of each other are in constant communication; if one is aware of a threat, all are. (Such awareness can spread along a "chain" of Swarm creatures under appropriate circumstances, potentially alerting distant Swarm creatures). In addition, once per round when within 30 feet of another Swarm creature, a Swarm creature can roll twice and take the better result on a saving throw against a mind-affecting effect.

The Swarm relies solely on biomechanical elements composed of living Swarm components, and these systems must be designed, constructed, and maintained. While individual components (including the larger Swarm structures and starships) seem to be fashioned through the will of the hive mind, effigenes are the Swarm's bioengineers and medics, tasked with repairing and preserving these components. Effigenes, who are among the most intelligent of Swarm

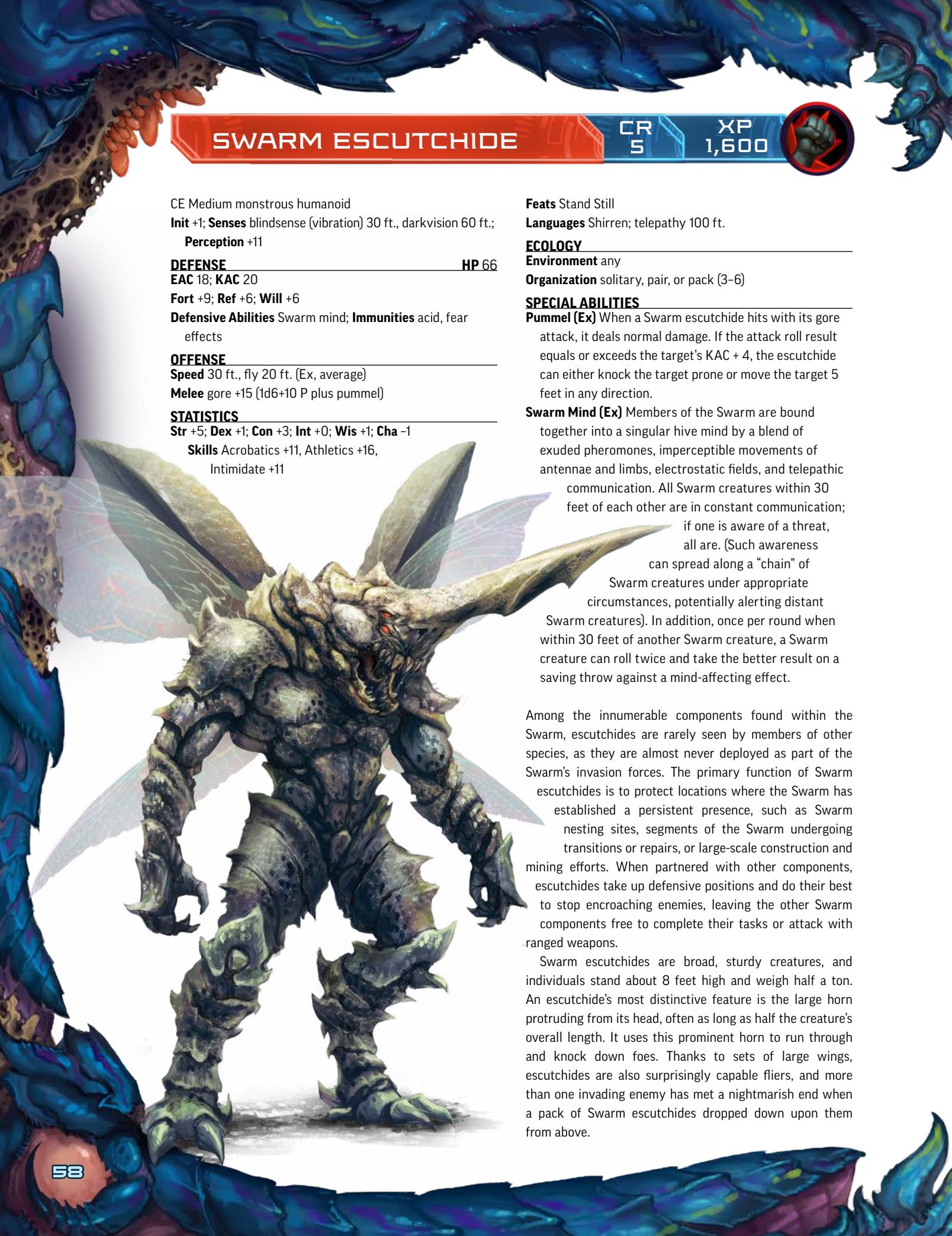
components, are stationed on worlds the Swarm have already conquered to oversee the biomachines used to drain a planet of its resources. Able to produce and manipulate bioelectric pulses, effigenes aren't helpless, and they can employ this electricity in combat to grant their allies bursts of speed or as a deadly weapon.

A Swarm effigene is taller and slighter of build than a corrovox, with dexterous, jointed talons that channel the bioelectric impulses they create. This monstrous humanoid also has four compound eyes spaced evenly across its face. Unlike most Swarm creatures, an effigene has no visible mouth and communicates solely through telepathy.



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SWARM ESCUTCHIDE

CR
5XP
1,600

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +1; Senses blindsense (vibration) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +11

DEFENSE

HP 66

EAC 18; KAC 20

Fort +9; Ref +6; Will +6

Defensive Abilities Swarm mind; **Immunities** acid, fear effects**OFFENSE**

Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (Ex, average)

Melee gore +15 (1d6+10 P plus pummel)

STATISTICS

Str +5; Dex +1; Con +3; Int +0; Wis +1; Cha -1

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +16, Intimidate +11**Feats** Stand Still**Languages** Shirren; telepathy 100 ft.**ECOLOGY****Environment** any**Organization** solitary, pair, or pack (3-6)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Pummel (Ex)** When a Swarm escutchide hits with its gore attack, it deals normal damage. If the attack roll result equals or exceeds the target's KAC + 4, the escutchide can either knock the target prone or move the target 5 feet in any direction.**Swarm Mind (Ex)** Members of the Swarm are bound together into a singular hive mind by a blend of exuded pheromones, imperceptible movements of antennae and limbs, electrostatic fields, and telepathic communication. All Swarm creatures within 30 feet of each other are in constant communication; if one is aware of a threat, all are. (Such awareness can spread along a "chain" of Swarm creatures under appropriate circumstances, potentially alerting distant Swarm creatures). In addition, once per round when within 30 feet of another Swarm creature, a Swarm creature can roll twice and take the better result on a saving throw against a mind-affecting effect.

Among the innumerable components found within the Swarm, escutchides are rarely seen by members of other species, as they are almost never deployed as part of the Swarm's invasion forces. The primary function of Swarm escutchides is to protect locations where the Swarm has established a persistent presence, such as Swarm nesting sites, segments of the Swarm undergoing transitions or repairs, or large-scale construction and mining efforts. When partnered with other components, escutchides take up defensive positions and do their best to stop encroaching enemies, leaving the other Swarm components free to complete their tasks or attack with ranged weapons.

Swarm escutchides are broad, sturdy creatures, and individuals stand about 8 feet high and weigh half a ton. An escutchide's most distinctive feature is the large horn protruding from its head, often as long as half the creature's overall length. It uses this prominent horn to run through and knock down foes. Thanks to sets of large wings, escutchides are also surprisingly capable fliers, and more than one invading enemy has met a nightmarish end when a pack of Swarm escutchides dropped down upon them from above.

THERMOPHILIC OOZE

CR
3XP
800

N Small ooze (fire)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 30 ft., sightless;**Perception** +8**DEFENSE****EAC** 14; **KAC** 16**Fort** +6; **Ref** +0; **Will** -1**Immunities** acid, fire, ooze immunities**Weaknesses** cold

HP 41

OFFENSE**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.**Melee** pseudopod +11 (1d6+4 B; critical corrode 1d6)**STATISTICS****Str** +1; **Dex** +2; **Con** +4; **Int** -; **Wis** +0; **Cha** -3**Other Abilities** compression, environmental reactivity, mindless, no breath**ECOLOGY****Environment** any warm**Organization** solitary, cluster (2-5), or colony (6-30)**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Environmental Reactivity (Ex) Though they aren't harmed by acid or fire, thermophilic oozes react to such energies. Whenever a thermophilic ooze's fire immunity prevents it from taking fire damage from an attack, it increases all of its speeds by 20 feet until the end of its next turn. Whenever a thermophilic ooze's acid immunity prevents it from taking acid damage from an attack, it briefly becomes more dangerous; its pseudopod attack deals an additional 1d6 acid damage until the end of its next turn.

Evolving from colonies of bacteria native to undersea volcanic vents, thermophilic oozes are adapted to some of nature's harshest and most inhospitable environments. On worlds with low amounts of tectonic movement and consistent volcanic activity, such bacteria can grow over the course of millennia, joining together into larger and larger forms. Eventually, these creatures gain enough cohesion to leave their fiery, corrosive homes, driven by a hunger for organic prey. With their amorphous bodies and immunity to fire and acid, thermophilic oozes have almost limitless access to places other creatures dare not tread, giving them zones of safety from which they can hunt. Thermophilic oozes can consume and gain sustenance from any organic matter, but many of them seem to prefer to chase down living creatures over immobile plants.

In addition to providing a safe haven, a thermophilic ooze's warm and corrosive home environments are necessary to the creature's long-term survival. When deprived of the acidity and heat of their homes for an

extended period of time, the creatures need to eat more and more with each passing day. This makes them more aggressive when encountered outside of their native environments—such as those that hitch an unintended ride on an excavator or deep-sea submarine.

Thermophilic oozes are a particular nuisance near the planet Ilemchuua's underwater volcanic vents and mining sites. Local bolidas take great pleasure in exterminating them en masse, considering them to be a form of dangerous vermin. Bolida miners pass around stories of thermophilic ooze infestations left unchecked, leading to the loss of valuable equipment and, far more importantly, fellow workers.

When outside of its preferred environment, a thermophilic ooze tends to take the shape of a flattened sphere roughly 3 feet across, though it can squeeze itself through quite small openings given enough time. A thermophilic ooze weighs approximately 300 pounds.



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TROOP, SWARM DREDGER

CR
5XP
1,600

CE Small monstrous humanoid (troop)
Init +4; Senses blindsense (vibration) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

DEFENSE

EAC 17; KAC 19

HP 70

Fort +7; Ref +9; Will +6

Defensive Abilities Swarm mind, troop defenses; **Immunities** acid, fear effects, troop immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Melee troop attack (1d4+8 S plus cling [DC 13])

Space 20 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str +5; Dex +4; Con +3; Int +0; Wis +1; Cha -2

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +11, Stealth +11

Languages Shirren (can't speak); telepathy 100 ft.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or throng (3-6)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cling (Ex) Each creature that takes damage from a dredger troop's troop attack must succeed at a DC 13 Reflex save or gain the flat-footed and off-target conditions until the end of the troop's next turn as dredgers cling to the target's body, throwing off their aim and balance.

Swarm Mind (Ex) Members of the Swarm are bound together into a singular hive mind by a blend of exuded pheromones, imperceptible movements of antennae and limbs, electrostatic fields, and telepathic communication. All Swarm creatures within 30 feet of each other are in constant communication; if one is aware of a threat, all are. (Such awareness can spread along a "chain" of Swarm creatures under appropriate circumstances, potentially alerting distant Swarm creatures). In addition, once per round when within 30 feet of another Swarm creature, a Swarm creature can roll twice and take the better result on a saving throw against a mind-affecting effect.

Troop Attack (Ex) See page 61.

Troop Defenses (Ex) See page 61.

Troop Immunities (Ex) See page 61.

Thanks to their hive-mind intelligence, Swarm components organize easily into troop formations, becoming all the deadlier. The above stat block represents a group of dredgers, which are used by the Swarm en masse for digging trenches and burrowing behind enemy lines to cause remarkable amounts of chaos. More information about Swarm dredgers can be found on page 59 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #19: Fate of the Fifth*.

TROOPS

A troop represents an organized group of creatures, often trained soldiers, who act as a unit rather than as individuals. Similar to swarms, troops are something of an abstraction, in that the troop's component creatures are mostly irrelevant; only the troop as a whole matters for the purposes of combat. With a troop, running an encounter against a large number of lower-CR foes becomes much more manageable.

Troops are created just like other creatures of their creature type, using the arrays for the appropriate CR in Appendix 1 of *Starfinder Alien Archive* and applying the troop subtype graft (see below). Troops are not meant as exact simulations of tactical warfare, and GMs should not be overly concerned with trying to emulate the compounded abilities of a troop's component individuals.

TROOP SUBTYPE GRAFT

This subtype is applied to a collection of sentient creatures that acts as a single creature (similar to a swarm, but usually as part of a military unit). A troop has a single pool of Hit Points, a single initiative modifier, and a single EAC and KAC. A troop attempts saving throws as a single creature.

A single troop usually occupies a square (if it is made up of nonflying creatures) or a cube (if it is made up of flying creatures) 20 feet on a side, equal in size to a Gargantuan creature, though the actual size of the troop is the same as that of the component creatures. The area occupied by a troop is shapable, though the troop must remain in contiguous squares to accurately reflect the teamwork of trained military units. A troop has reach equal to that of the component creatures based on size and gear. A troop can move through squares occupied by enemies without impediment and vice versa, though such movement provokes attacks of opportunity as normal for its component creatures. A troop can move through any area large enough for its component creatures.

Because of the chaos of combat, spellcasting or concentrating on spells within the area of a troop or within its reach requires a successful caster level check (DC = 20 + spell level). Using skills that involve patience and concentration, such as Computers, within the area of a troop or within its reach requires a successful DC 20 Will saving throw.

The exact number of a troop's component creatures varies, but in general, a troop of Small or Medium creatures consists of approximately 10 to 30 creatures. Larger creatures can form troops, but the area occupied by such a troop should increase proportionally according to the size of the component creatures (for example, a troop of Large creatures would occupy a 30-foot-square area, equal to a Colossal creature).

Although troops are composed of a number of individual creatures, not all of these creatures' gear will survive the rigors of combat. As a result, treat a troop as a single creature for the purposes of how much treasure is awarded for an encounter with the troop, as determined by the troop's CR on Table 11-4: Wealth Gains per Encounter on page 391 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*.

Traits: Troop attack, troop defenses, troop immunities.

TROOP UNIVERSAL CREATURE RULES

The following universal creature rules are common to troops.

TROOP ATTACK (EX)

The creature doesn't make standard melee attacks. Instead, it deals automatic damage to any creature within its reach or whose space it occupies at the end of its turn, with no attack roll needed. A troop threatens all creatures within its reach or within its area and resolves attacks of opportunity by dealing automatic troop damage to any foe in reach that provokes an attack of opportunity. A troop is still limited to making one such attack per round unless stated otherwise. A troop can perform grapple and sunder combat maneuvers, but no other combat maneuvers, unless the troop's description states otherwise.

Format: **Melee** troop attack (1d4+10 P).

Guidelines: To determine the amount of damage a troop of CR 6 or lower deals with its troop attack, use the dice value listed for CR 6 in the Melee Damage, Three Attacks column on its appropriate array table (see pages 129–132 of *Alien Archive*), lowering the additional damage added to the dice value to match the additional damage of its actual CR and adding its Strength modifier as normal. For creatures of all other CRs, use the damage listed in the Melee Damage, Four Attacks entry for its CR in the corresponding array table.

TROOP DEFENSES (EX)

Troops take damage from attacks differently depending on how the attack targets them.

A troop takes half damage from attacks that effect a single target (such as shot from a semi-auto pistol). A troop is immune to effects that target a specific number of creatures (including single-target spells and multiple-target spells such as *haste*).

A troop takes half again as much damage (+50%) from effects that affect all targets in an area, such

as grenades, blast and explode weapons, and many evocation spells.

A troop takes normal damage from an attack or effect that affects multiple targets (including lines and fully automatic mode attacks). For the purposes of the automatic weapon special property, a troop counts as five targets. For example, if an automatic attack is made using 12 rounds of ammunition, the attack affects a maximum of six targets, so it can damage a troop normally. However, if two other targets are closer to the attacker than the troop, they must be attacked first, leaving only four attacks to target the troop, so the troop takes no damage.

Format: **Defensive Abilities** troop defenses.

TROOP IMMUNITIES (EX)

Troops are immune to the following effects, unless the effect specifies it works against swarms or troops.

- ➊ Pinned, prone, staggered, and stunned.
- ➋ Combat maneuvers—a troop can't be subject to combat maneuvers, unless it's affected by area effects that include such effects or the troop's description says otherwise.
- ➌ Flanking—troops are unflankable.
- ➍ Dying—a troop reduced to 0 Hit Points breaks up and is effectively destroyed, though individual members of it might survive.

Format: **Immunities** troop immunities.

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VHARRINE

The Singing Giant

Diameter: ×6-1/3; **Mass:** ×80

Gravity: ×2 (at the “surface”)

Location: The Vast

Atmosphere: Special

Day: 11 hours; **Year:** 87 years

Vharrine is a gas giant that never rests. Its crimson surface shifts in massive tidal surges and never-ending tempests that make their way across the planet's upper atmosphere. The many moons orbiting Vharrine have their pull on the

endlessly shifting atmosphere, but the greatest contributor to the turbulence is Vharrine itself. Vharrine emits a powerful electromagnetic signal that can be detected far from the Suskillon system. Originally thought to be a distant pulsar, the signal has been identified as coming from Vharrine's core. This constant electromagnetic rhythm hurls metallic debris and particles through the planet's atmosphere, making Vharrine's skies far more turbulent than those of similar worlds.

Scientists have set up shielded research stations surrounding Vharrine, attempting to discover the nature of this unusual signal. The magnetic pulses are erratic, with an undercurrent of noise. This noise was initially thought to be interference from Vharrine's moons, but studies have shown it to instead be variance in the signal itself. Research teams rush to be the first to break the code of Vharrine and to find out why the planet's electromagnetic signal is so variable.

Shirren researchers from Vharrine Station D have had some success. They believe they have established contact with an unknown entity, “speaking” through pulses sent to the planet. However, the shirrens are unsure if this being dwells within Vharrine's core or simply uses the planet as a massive communications relay. Further, these communications have been clear but cryptic. When questioned, the creature identifies itself as the research team questioning it. At first the researchers assumed the entity was mimicking them, but it has since been able to disclose identifying codes and other secret information, suggesting some combination of telepathy, precognition, temporal displacement, or other advanced techniques.

Atmospheric turbulence, rather than scientific curiosity, attracted Vharrine's most recent settlers. A group of goblins and hobgoblins discovered that the intense air currents of Vharrine are perfect for a variety of gladiatorial aeronautic competitions. In these games, rival teams attempt to outdo each other in a quest for speed, glory, and destruction. The only firm rule in these races is that no Drift travel can be attempted while in the atmosphere—a restriction that came only after a section of atmosphere the size of Apostae disappeared into the Drift.

The goblinoids of Vharrine Aerobic Xenoracers (VAX) have begun broadcasting the races. The action streams live through the Drift, arriving on other worlds days or weeks after the event. The goblinoids incorporate regular traffic or buzzing research stations into their games. The few times someone has tried to stop the racers, the show just became that much more complicated and spectacular.

Some have noted these broadcasts carry with them elements of Vharrine's magnetic signal. Viewers elsewhere in the galaxy have noticed the strangeness of this underlying signal, and a discerning few have noticed that the signal has become clearer in recent broadcasts.



NEXT MONTH

THE FOREVER RELIQUARY

By Kate Baker

The heroes embark on a hunt for the Prodigal Stone, a comet rumored to be home to a hidden monastery dedicated to Hylax. If they can find it and earn the monks' trust, they can gain access to a powerful artifact that might turn the tide in the battle against the Swarm!

THE CHURCH OF HYLAX

By Eleanor Ferron

Known as the Forever Queen, Hylax is an ancient insectile goddess of diplomacy, first contact, friendship, and peace. Her followers travel throughout the galaxy, spreading her message of harmony.

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By Anthony Bono

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HUSKWORLD

PART 1: SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

PART 2: EXTRACTOR DISTRACTION

PART 3: UNIVERSITY VISITORS

RELICS OF CHUUVAA

SURVIVORS OF THE SWARM

ALIEN ARCHIVES

CODEX OF WORLDS

ALL SYSTEMS ARE GO!



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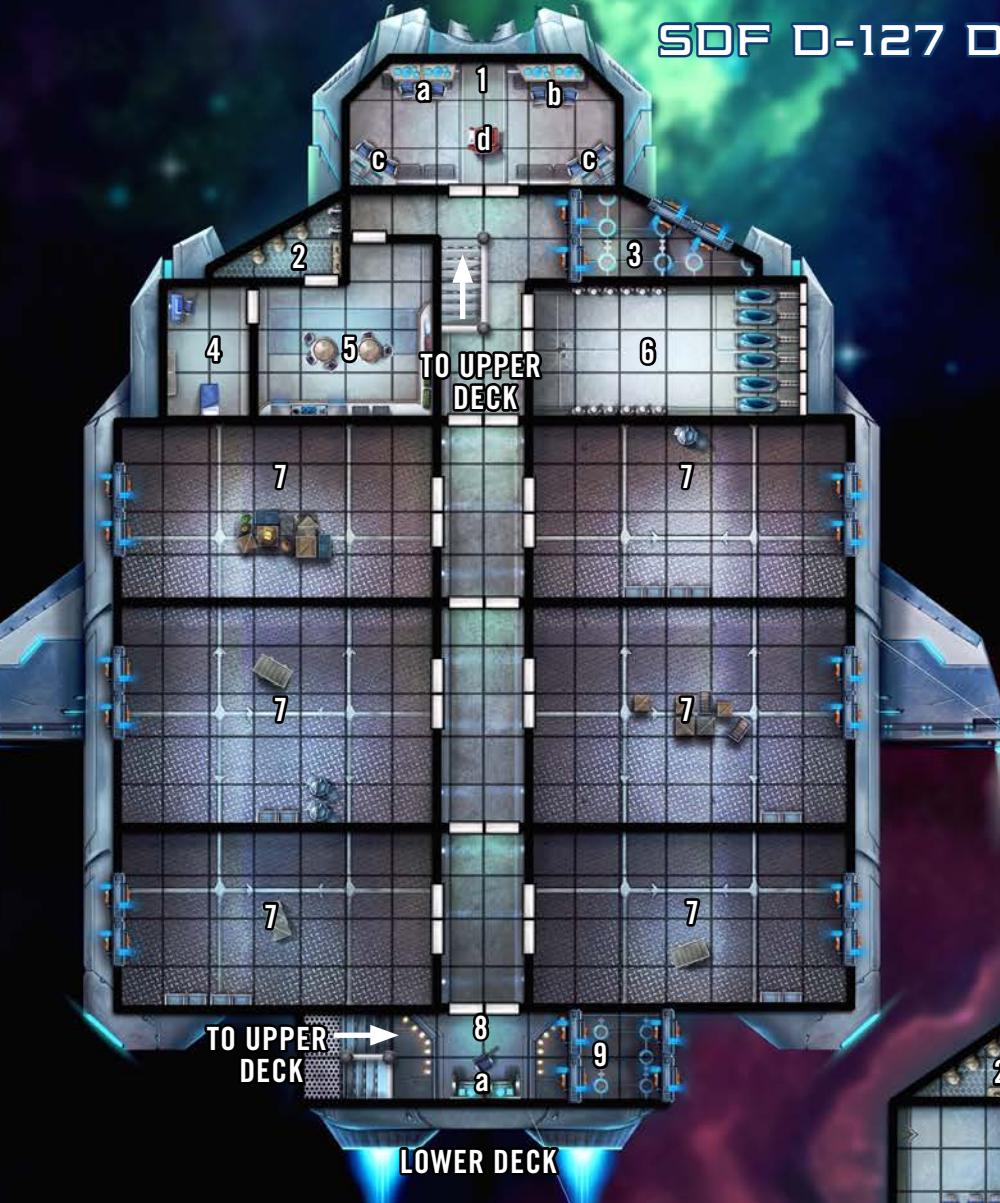
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SDF D-127 DEFENSIVE CARRIER



UPPER DECK



MAP KEY	
1. Bridge	5. Galley
a. Pilot's station	6. Escape pods
b. Science officer's	7. Cargo holds
station	8. Engineering
c. Gunnery stations	a. Engineering
d. Captain's chair	stations
2. Lavatory	9. Aft airlock
3. Forward airlock	10. Crew quarters
4. Captain's quarters	11. Power core



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Hoping to find a way to fight back against the Swarm, the heroes travel to a distant world already consumed by the deadly invaders. They soon discover they aren't alone in their struggles when they meet a handful of resistance fighters on the ravaged planet. With the group's help, the heroes strike against a massive Swarm creature that is draining the world's resources dry, then infiltrate an infested university to search for a dead professor's research. What they find could lead to a mythical holy site of the insect goddess Hylax and the secret to defeating the Swarm once and for all!

This volume of Starfinder Adventure Path continues the Attack of the Swarm! Adventure Path and includes:

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- A look at civilizations that have survived attacks from the Swarm, by Isabelle Thorne.
- An archive of alien creatures, including an ooze adapted to the harshest environmental conditions and several new Swarm creatures, by Kevin Bryan, Lyz Liddell, Robert G. McCreary, and Landon Winkler.
- Statistics and deck plans for a defensive carrier, by Lyz Liddell and Landon Winkler, plus a glimpse at a gas giant with a dangerous secret hidden at its core, by Kevin Bryan.



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