

# AEMERA

## CAMPAIGN SETTING



## FIELD GUIDE I



**D&D**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE



ENCOUNTER TABLE  
PUBLISHING

The background of the cover features a large, imposing figure in a grey suit and red tie, with a dark, horned headpiece. In front of him is a smaller, armored warrior with a crown and glowing blue eyes, holding a glowing blue lightning bolt in his right hand. In the foreground, a white wolf is walking towards the left. The entire scene is set within a futuristic, metallic corridor with blue and orange lighting.

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## FIELD GUIDE I



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## SPECIAL ELECTRONIC FEATURES

We've hyperlinked this product internally from the Table of Contents and externally with links to the official [Pathfinder Reference Document](#) as well as [d20PFSRD](#). If it is in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, we generally didn't link to it unless the rule is an obscure one. The point is not to supersede the game books, but rather to help support you, the player, in accessing the rules, especially those from newer books or that you may not have memorized.

## ABOUT LEGENDARY GAMES

Legendary Games is an all star team of authors and designers, founded by Clark Peterson of Necromancer Games, Inc. and headed up by Jason Nelson. Legendary Games uses a cooperative, team-based approach to bring you, the Pathfinder fan, the best expansion material for your game. We are gamers and storytellers first, and we believe that passion shows in our products. Check us out, and **Make Your Game Legendary!**

Visit us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), and check out our website at [www.makeyourgamelegendary.com](http://www.makeyourgamelegendary.com).

## INTRODUCTION

You hold in your hands a labor of love a long time coming!

The *Aethera Campaign Setting Field Guide, Volume I* is the first major foray into exploring the inhabitants of the Aethera System. Within its pages you'll find a collection of creatures from under a specific umbrella of classification: Animal, Plant, Humanoid, and Vermin. Collectively known as "Organics" when viewed from an in-universe perspective.

Each creature in this book is presented not only with its stat block, but often times rules for using it as a familiar, an animal companion, or with unique alchemical reagents you can harvest from its body.

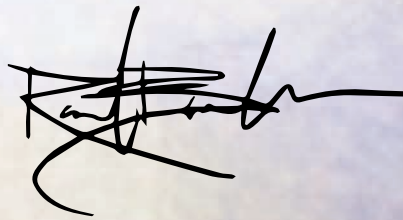
## OGL MATERIAL

The following notations are used to indicate sources for rules outside the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*.

|      |       |                                                               |
|------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| AB   | ..... | <i>Advanced Bestiary</i>                                      |
| ACG  | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Class Guide</i>       |
| ACS  | ..... | <i>Aethera Campaign Setting</i>                               |
| APG  | ...   | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide</i>    |
| ARG  | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Race Guide</i>        |
| B1   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary</i>                   |
| B2   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2</i>                 |
| B3   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3</i>                 |
| B4   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4</i>                 |
| B5   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 5</i>                 |
| B6   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 6</i>                 |
| HA   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Horror Adventures</i>          |
| MC   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Monster Codex</i>              |
| NLFS | ..... | <i>Official Pathfinder guide to the land of super-science</i> |
| OA   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Occult Adventures</i>          |
| UC   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat</i>            |
| UE   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Equipment</i>         |
| UM   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic</i>             |
| VC   | ..... | <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Villain Codex</i>              |

Furthermore, this book contains unique alchemical items made from components of the creature, magic items made from their body parts, or in some cases legendary artifacts forged for their use. We've also managed to pack in new spells, new feats, new playable races, and new alchemist discoveries!

I hope you enjoy the creatures presented in this book and that they make a fine addition at your tables!



Robert Brookes  
*Aethera Creator*

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AKASAAT

# AKASAAT FAUNA

Few things define the ecology of Akasaat more than water. The creatures that live here have adapted to the harsh environment. Carnivores often survive just on the water provided by prey. Piercing winds and sand storms, lightning strikes, strong sunlight, and salts in the soil offer additional challenges to survival. Thick armor, camouflage, and poisons are common adaptations. Great striding giants walk the wastes singing counterpoint to radio signals only they can hear as they leave damp footsteps behind, and silent skyfishers drift in the wake of sandstorms to pluck unwary survivors into the sky.

Reptiles and other cold blooded animals retreat from low temperatures and their range is limited to areas that experience warm days nearer to the equator. Warm blooded creatures find it easier to survive the cold at the cost of finding enough food to maintain their body temperature and have an extended range, allowing feline predators to stalk the higher elevation badlands and mountains.

Limited plant life also limits the number and size of animals that can be supported in an area. While smaller animals like lizards or mice are abundant,

larger predators like wolves or catamounts require a large territory to support themselves on smaller prey. The few megafauna are exclusively carnivorous and their needs far exceed the ability of most areas to support them. Only the rare forests of Akasaat are abundant enough to provide nutrition for the largest predators. Otherwise megafauna must be nomadic, spreading the demands of their belly across a wider area. The very largest beasts of Akasaat may leave a wake of silent destruction in their never ending hunt for the next meal.

## DEAD OCEANS

It is widely considered fact among residents of Akasaat that water was once far more plentiful in ancient times than in the present. While scholars both religious and secular debate the exact specifics of the timeline for the decline of Akasaat's waters and the true extent they may have covered, evidence of ocean life has existed on the planet's surface as long as written history has persisted. However, it has not been since the end of the Century War that natural philosophers and scholars have been able to truly interpret the fossils and petrified remains present on Akasaat's barren surface.

In the years following the end of the Century War, Hierarchy and independent scholars traveling to Orbis Aurea discovered similarities between ancient bones found in the Wasteland and the skeletal remains of deep sea creatures hunted in the oceans of Orbis Aurea: whales. For centuries, Akasaati scholars posited that the bones of great titans found across the salt flats below the Tablelands were land-dwelling behemoths, however contemporary comparisons, not only of these but other fossil records, have brought centuries of "contemporary wisdom" regarding the wildlife of Akasaat's past into question. Thousands of fossilized skeletons found in museums across Hierarchy territory are now being re-evaluated in light of this discovery.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Many species facing the same challenges may evolve the same survival tactics over generations. This allows us to make some general predictions about the species we may find in a given location. When it comes to warm-blooded animals, heavier examples with shorter and stockier extremities are found in colder environments and lighter ones with longer and thinner limbs in warmer ones. For example, a cat with ancestry from a cold northern region may have a stockier build and shorter legs, while a cat hailing from a tropical region may be all ears, leg, and tail.

## NESTING GROUNDS

Wasteland communities stake out the nesting grounds in this season for eggs and meat, using the opportunity to negotiate over omelets instead of knife point. Breaking the truce is a grave insult and can lead to destruction of a nesting ground threatening the survival of the birds and communities. When the Riders need a secure location to resolve conflicts between groups they will coordinate with the Riders based out of Haven to visit during nesting season knowing the locals will prevent any violent acts while they are there.

## FUR-CAKE HUNTS

Those new to the wilderness may encounter the story of a large pancake-shaped furry creature likely to smother the unwary in their sleep while seeking the water in their breath. It is just that: a legend. More experienced adventures get an evening's entertainment out of telling ever more wild stories of fur-cakes and watching their companions start awake throughout the night at skittering noises near camp. The Riders sometimes use staged cake-hunts to test the loyalty and capabilities of potential members.

With reliable travel between Akasaat and Orbis Aurea available to civilians in the wake of the war, a growing interest in comparative xenobiology is on the rise, especially among the generation of young adults who grew up at the tail end of the Century War; too young to serve during the fighting and only now coming into their adulthood. Academies of research across Hierarchy territory struggle to reconcile centuries of potential historic miscategorization. Equally intriguing is the fact that both Akasaat and Orbis Aurea (at least) appear to share some biodiversity, both historic and contemporary. This opens a curious question as to where life in the system originated and, perhaps more controversially, how.

The rise of young adults questioning the “accepted truth” they were taught all their lives has given rise to a movement of introspection and uncertainty among not only Hierarchy citizens but also Wastelanders. If scholars can be so mistaken about something as simple as whether a creature walked on land or swam in the sea, how many other historic “truths” may need a second look in a clear, new light.

## THE WASTELAND

The lands of Akasaat are roughly divided into two categories: controlled by the Hierarchy and not. Everything outside of the control of the Hierarchy is called the Wasteland. This name invokes

images of hot days, cold nights, and rocky badlands full of unpleasant threats and death, a useful bit of propaganda to control a rebellious population. In truth, the Wasteland contains a wide variety of desert environments. Temperatures vary between the bottom of deep ravines that have never felt the sun to the baked heat of dunes near the equator. Without rich forests to maintain a higher oxygen level in the air, the ozone layer of Akasaat is on the thin side and the atmosphere quickly loses warmth at night. The reduced ozone makes for stronger doses of radiation as well, and most wildlife have defenses to protect vulnerable skin against sunburn—thick fur, dark protective skin pigment, scales or even armor plates.

Native flux giants are often followed by birds and other animals too thirsty to be frightened and some larger giants may even allow them to nest on their person as they wade through sand dunes between the Tablelands. From mites and fleas to large scorpions and silk spinning worms, insects and arachnids scavenge the prey of larger predators and often become prey themselves. Reptiles enjoy the hot sand and many spend nights buried under the sand using captured warmth as protection from the cold. Massive ant hills provide semi-stable points for navigating the dunes, rarely shifting position even as the dunes shift around them revealing different sections of the nest over time. The ants make a thick goo from any water or protein

## MESSAGES ON WING

The Hierarchy used pigeons to carry messages when radio or magical means were too risky in the Century War. And recently, a popular radio play has renewed interest in raising the birds by delighting children with heavily sanitized adventures of Dearest, a pigeon responsible for carrying the message that saved a battalion of troops surrounded by the enemy nearly thirty years ago. As a result, pigeon racing is popular again and the Riders have considered using races for cover to send messages long distances.

source they encounter and store it in fist shaped chambers within the nest. The 'honey' is bitter and full of nutrients and enough water to buy a week or two of survival if a traveler is willing to risk being swarmed.

The Tablelands provide defensive positions for wildlife to escape the megafauna of the desert but there are other predators in the badlands in the center of the Tableland mesa. Large cats stalk prey often purring at exactly the right pitch to echo off rock formations and make it difficult for a victim to determine where the attack is coming from as they toy with dinner. Lizards of various sizes find refuge in the rough terrain, easily navigating the tight quarters to corner prey before darting back to safety. The badlands are easy to get lost in, the twisting canyons are a maze. Experienced travelers will use the circling hover of the skullcap vulture as a reference point to navigate during the day. A good solution so long as you aren't the soon-to-be-dead critter they're circling.

The Char Fields, a desiccated peat desert north of the Shangaraan near the pole is cold year round save for small pockets warmed by smoldering underground fires. At constant risk of death by chill or death by fire, the animals that live here tend to be quick on their feet with sharp senses to detect smoke or pockets of dangerous gas. Small birds are common and often seen picking through the dry peat for seeds or small

bugs. Long range migratory birds use the peat deserts as nesting grounds, relying on the heat near the peat fires to keep their eggs or chicks warm while they search for food.

Nomadic groups in the Wastelands roam with their goats or hardy sheep from one grazing land to the next, often migrating from badlands to sandy dunes and back. The livestock are able to thrive on otherwise inedible plants and limited resources. Faster barbarian raiding parties or the Wave move too quickly for traditional herds to keep up, so animals that can be kept in pens or ride with a human are preferred by those groups. The occasional lizard can be found sharing living spaces with herding dogs or cats perched daintily on a shoulder. A chicken squawking indignant protest from a pen tied to the back of a speeder in a Wasteland raiding party is not uncommon either. Chickens are popular with all communities in the Wastelands as effective egg and meat producers that can survive on desert beetles, though roosters less appreciated when trying to hide from Vanguard patrols. The desert residents also use the available insect life as food. Grasshoppers, large fatty worms, and crickets are useful snacks and can also be dried for long term storage.

## THE HIERARCHY

Conservation of resources is key to understanding the Hierarchy policy on domestic animals within the arcologies. Like the Slot system, every animal must fulfill a role in the community. The animal policy does not tolerate unproductive wastes of resources. The Marshal of an arcology, or more likely an assigned committee of Slotted Professionals, determines a list of permitted animals by Slot and tier based on water, food, and housing needs. Exceptions to this list can be requested but are often rejected unless the request is made by a high Slot individual.

Large grass-eaters such as cattle are uncommon even among the wealthiest of private owners and the arcologies rely on more efficient goats or sheep for

community herds, preferring to use the animals for milk and textiles. Bees are tolerant of dry conditions so long as the land isn't entirely barren and are willing to fly long distances to gather pollen, making them a popular choice in the Hierarchy and the Wastelands alike. Other insects that produce high value products in limited space are also popular, such as silk worms or wist beetles whose shells are used to make a rich green-purple dye in high demand.

The animal policy also applies to companion animals. Exotic companion animals are a luxury reserved for high Slotted individuals and songbirds are popular with the elite or spiritual. All Slots may keep cats and working dogs and these animals are expected to serve pest-control purposes by hunting rodents in living quarters. All Slotted individual who can provide suitable housing are also allowed to raise chickens and pigeons for personal use. For obvious reason, waterfowl are unheard of. Then there are the pigeons. One of the first domesticated birds, they are easily trained to perform tricks. They are less aggressive than larger birds, content with smaller living spaces, and provide high quality meat.

Pests in the arcologies are a natural result of close living in poor conditions. Bugs may seek moisture in living quarters endangering the health of those who live there. Scorpions and spiders seeking an escape from the sun may hide in shoes on the floor or tuck themselves into closets or drawers. Residents of lower tiers are smart to always look before reaching a hand into any nook or cranny. Rodents, mice and rats, sneak their way into undefended food stores. Glowtail mice are an exception and are welcomed by residents wanting to use the mouse to detect snakes and spiders. That said, it is not considered an approved animal and will be confiscated by the Vanguard if detected.

## THE UNDERWORLD

The extensive caverns of Akasaat provide shelter from the sandstorms and winds of the surface. Like the surface, water conservation is a concern. Where vast

underground rivers once ran there are now massive mile-wide caverns below ground, interconnected by honeycomb complexes of smaller caves. Travel between cave systems is limited by the small dangerous passages or the systems don't connect at all. As a result many of the caverns have unique species or subspecies that have evolved in a closed system. Most variations are cosmetic, as simple as a different set of markings or different sensitivity to light. But in some cases the isolation has accelerated the process of evolution leading to unique and truly bizarre adaptations.

Most of the caves are pitch black, so animals rely on other senses such as echolocation, tremor sense, or darkvision to navigate. Partial cave dwellers include bats, snakes, and other small mammals that use caves near the surface as sanctuary or hunting grounds, spending part of their time at the surface. Exclusively cave dwelling species lack pigmentation because they don't need the protection from the sun. Under real light, they are a pale-pink with visible veins beneath translucent skin. Some have undeveloped eyes or have converted them to alternate sensory organs.

Not all cave systems are dark though, some run close to lava tubes and the dull glow of magma is as bright as day for dark adapted eyes. Other caverns are lit by bioluminescence where the flashes of shifting light used for courtship or other mating rituals. Travelers should be wary as some light displays are hunting lures for larger creatures waiting for an opportunity for a good meal.

Subterranean deposits of raw aetherite, while rare, often lead to the development of local wildlife suffering from aetherite radiation poisoning, which ultimately leads to caverns of aetherwarped animals (*Aethera Campaign Setting*, 476). Though these hazards remain exclusive to subterranean settlements, such as those of goblins and ratfolk, extensive post-war Hierarchy mining operations in the Wasteland threaten to drill into these dangerous places and expose the surface to unspeakable danger.

# AETHERLEECH

*This creature is a deep violet-colored slug-like invertebrate with luminous blue veins.*

## AETHERLEECH

CR 1

XP 400

N Diminutive vermin (aether)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., aethersense 120 ft.

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 size)

**HP** 10 (3d8-3)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

**Immune** disease, mind-affecting effects, poison

**Weakness** vulnerability to electricity

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 5 ft., climb 5 ft., swim 5 ft.

**Melee** bite +2 (1d3–1 plus attach)

**Ranged** corrosive spit +7 (1d6 acid plus aetherite poison)

**Space** 1 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** corrosive spit, leech

### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 8, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +1 (+8 when attached); **CMD** +6  
(cannot be tripped)

**Feats** Agile Maneuvers<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Stealth +18

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** Any temperate underground or urban

**Organization** Solitary, pairs, or intrusions (3–20 swarms)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Aethersense (Ex)** An aetherleech can detect refined and raw aetherite and creatures with the aether subtype out to a range of 120 feet as blindsight.

**Corrosive Spit (Ex)** An aetherleech may project a glob of corrosive spit out to a range of 30 feet as a ranged touch attack. An aetherleech's corrosive spit ignores metal objects' hardness and living creatures damaged by the acid are exposed to a weak form of aetherite poison (injury; save Fort DC 10; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1 Con damage and 1 Cha damage;

cure 2 consecutive saves). This otherwise functions as [aetherite poison](#) (Aethera Campaign Setting page 10).

**Leech (Ex)** If an aetherleech attaches to a living creature with the aether subtype it automatically begins replenishing its health, gaining fast healing 1 and dealing point of 1 Con damage each round to its victim. If, instead, the aetherleech uses its attach ability on an object containing aetheric units it drains 1 AU from the object per round and regains 1 hit point. An aetherleech that attaches to the hull of an aethership drains AU directly from the ship's engines without needing contact.

Aetherleeches are worm-like invertebrates that seek out and feed off of aetherite, wherever it may be. Native to Akasaat, they may have once evolved from more aquatic lifeforms. Their slimy black bodies glow with aetherite pulsing through their veins.

They prefer arid, dark environments but will settle for anywhere near large quantities of aetherite. They can sometimes spotted deep underground in pockets of aether mines. More commonly, they can be found in engines and machinery powered by aetheritech. An aetherleech is 1-foot long and weighs 2 lbs.

## Ecology

Aetherleeches store corrosive digestive fluids inside small sacs just behind their rows of tiny mandibles, mixed with undigested aetherite, creating a toxic slurry. Aetherleeches spew the turquoise substance as a means of self-defense, or to create entryways small enough to crawl through piping, or stowaway on aetherships. In urban environments an aetherleech's presence is typically marked by small, rusted holes on metal walls and surfaces. By the time they're discovered, they've already drained mass amounts of aetherite from the vessel.

These troublesome pests are a danger even in small numbers as infestations can quickly deplete a ship's

reserve of aetheric units and expose creatures to aetherite poisoning. These infestations have drained entire ships of power, leaving them adrift in the blackness of space with no means of rescue as their passengers suffocated and perished, rising later as aetherwarped undead.

Aetherleeches sometimes gather in mass around large sources of aetherite. As mindless creatures, they are not prone to herding, though display an unnerving hive-mind intelligence when gathered around enough aetherite. A swarm of aetherleeches pulse brighter and they attack and defend as one. Such swarms are particularly dangerous to phalanx and infused, dropping upon them in the dark to drain all the aetherite from their bodies, leaving naught but lifeless husks.

The Protectorate has successfully employed ambush tactics to dispatch aether leech swarms, though any aether-powered equipment has to be left behind to avoid detection. The only gear deployed are the leech-eaters ([see page 26](#)), creatures designed specifically to hunt the leeches down and destroy aetherleeches.

An aetherleeches' corrosive spit glands contain enough undigested aetherite to render the aetherleech vulnerable to electricity. Electricity-based spells and long-ranged aethertech have proven to be the most effective weapon when rooting out leech infestations. Though extra care must be taken upon killing an aetherleech not to come in contact with their blood, which is as toxic as aetherite slurry.

Some Hierarchy scientists theorize that the aetherleeches are drawn to aetherite due to a spiritual connection with the substance—most dismiss this theory. The hive-intelligence the leeches display when



surrounded by mass quantities of aetherite has yet to be explained. Attempts made to study and replicate this phenomenon have led to orbital science stations drained of power and hundreds of dead scientists. No further experiments of the sort have been funded. But the similarity between these hive-mind effects and those of the azaka on Orbis Aurea or the mindlink networks of the infused are impossible to ignore.

Freelancers in Akasaati arcologies are often able to find work as exterminators of these pests. Though aetherleech hunting is a dangerous job that pays very little, and often by those hoping to keep their leech problem secret in hopes of preserving their reputation, the rising number of these creatures in ground-level arcology settlements has made it reliable work. Hiring freelancers to take care of the problem under the table has its risks, but it's far less expensive than a damaged reputation of publicly acknowledging an aetherleech infestation.

# GIANT, FLUX

The battered-looking body of this giant is covered in cracked, rocky hide and weeps with the crystal clear waters of a fresh spring as its head tilts, listening for some unheard sound.

## FLUX GIANT

CR 6

XP 2,400

N Large humanoid (giant)

Init +1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +13

## DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +9 natural, –1 size)

hp 76 (9d8+36)



Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +6

Defensive Abilities countersong (13 rounds); Resist sonic 10; Immune [silence](#)

## OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 slams +14 (1d8+8)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +13)

Constant—[comprehend languages](#)

At will—[disrupt silence](#)<sup>UI</sup> (DC 16), [hydraulic torrent](#)<sup>APG</sup>

1/day—[greater thunderstomp](#)<sup>ACG</sup>, [stone shape](#), [wave shield](#)<sup>ACG</sup>

Special Attacks thunderous shout (DC 18)

## STATISTICS

Str 26, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 19

Base Atk +6; CMB +15 (+17 bull rush); CMD 26 (28 vs. bull rush)

Feats [Improved Bull Rush](#), [Iron Will](#), [Power Attack](#), [Skill Focus](#) (Survival), [Weapon Focus](#) (slam)

Skills Acrobatics +1 (+5 to jump), Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (geography) +3, Perception +13, Perform (sing) +21, Survival +10; Racial Bonus Perform (sing) +8

Languages Aquan, Giant, Hymnas, Terran

SQ natural transmitter, resonant voice, signal boost, subdermal aquifer

## ECOLOGY

Environment any (Akasaat)

Organization solitary, ensemble (2–3), choir (4–6 plus 1 bard or skald of 2nd or 3rd level), symphony (7–10 plus 1 bard or skald of 4th or 5th level), coalition (11–20 plus 35% noncombatants; 1 druid or oracle of 4th or 5th level; 1 bard or skald of 6th–8th level; and 20–30 allies)

Treasure standard

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Resonant Voice (Su)** Flux giants possess hauntingly beautiful singing voices that echo as though called up from a great, cavernous depth. By calling on this powerful voice as a move action, a flux giant may use the countersong bardic performance for a number of rounds equal to their hit dice plus their Charisma bonus. Additionally, flux giants can always speak or sing within the area of a *silence* spell, though they may not otherwise make noise (such as percussion or the sound of combat).

**Natural Transmitter (Su)** Flux giants can hear *farcaster*<sup>ACS</sup> transmissions within a radius equal to 10 miles times the flux giant's HD (typically 90 miles). By concentrating as a full-round action, a flux giant can send *farcaster* transmissions, as a *farcaster* with a type equal to 1/4 the flux giant's Hit Dice, rounded down (*MK II* for a typical flux giant).

**Signal Boost (Su)** Multiple flux giants can work together to facilitate radio and mystical transmissions. Signal boost targets another flux giant within 120 feet, and is a full-round action that requires concentration. For every 3 flux giants using signal boost on the same target, that target's natural transmitter ability is treated as one *farcaster* type better, and divination spells or effects cast within 120 feet of the target have their save DCs increased by 1, and are treated as one caster level higher.

**Subdermal Aquifer (Su)** Flux giants do not need to drink, and fresh water seeps from their shoulders at a rate of 1 gallon per hour.

**Thunderous Shout (Sp)** Once every 1d4 rounds a flux giant can generate a 60-foot cone of discordant sound. This deals 9d4 sonic and dazes the target; a successful DC 18 Fortitude save halves the damage and negates the dazed effect. This is a sonic effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Flux giants are imposing beings with earth-tone skin covered in patches of slate scales that run with water their bodies constantly produce. Their intimidating presence masks quiet wisdom, and an immense affinity and respect for art and communication. Flux giants can both perceive and transmit *farcaster* signals, ease divinations, and produce booming sonic assaults.

A typical flux giant stands 15 feet tall, weighs approximately 3,000 pounds, and live to be hundreds of years old.

Flux giants are caught between pre- and post-Collapse natures: rocky skin and heavy physique speak to their present, while their bodies' interior connection to the Plane of Water links them to their past. They once dwelled within pre-Collapse Akasaat's oceans, afloat in what they called the Breath, a metaphysical current they plumbed for guidance and truth. Once Akasaat's seas turned to desert, flux giants could no longer perceive this current. While searching for the Breath they experienced a sonorous hum resonating in every stone and rock of the Wasteland, and within it found a resonant harmony—the Score.

It would be many years before the giants' ritualized, extrasensory quest perceived the Riders' *farcaster* transmissions, learned of the Hierarchy and their interpretation of the Score, and unfortunately attracted the Hierarchy's attention. Persecuted as apocryphal heretics, angered by the gulf between their remembered Breath's promise of truth and personal freedom and Scorism's stifling rigidity, flux giants have banded together with Riders, desert exiles, goblins, and other Wastelanders for protection. Such allies appreciate the giants' measured attitude, potable water, and communication abilities. Not all are content with desert life, however. Clandestine *farcaster* transmissions point towards these unlikely coalitions' possible mobilization against the Hierarchy, and some devices detect the crackling rage of renegade giants.

# GLOWTAIL MOUSE

*This tiny rodent has sandy colored fur tinged with iridescent blue and a bioluminescent tail.*

## GLOWTAIL MOUSE

CR 1/2

XP 200

N Tiny animal

**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +2 (+10 on olfactory-based checks)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 size)

**hp** 3 (1d8-1 HD)

**Fort** +1 (+5 vs. poisons), **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** poison resistance

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

**Melee** bite +2 (1d3-4), 2 claws -3 (1d2-4)

**Space** 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 2, **Dex** 14, **Con** 8, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** -6; **CMD** 6 (10 vs. trip)

**Feats** [Weapon Finesse](#)

**Skills** Acrobatics +2, Climb +4, Perception +2 (+10 on olfactory-based checks), Stealth +10, Survival +6; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb (climb speed), +8 Perception (Scent ability), +8 Stealth (size modifier)

**SQ** escape, glowtail, poison resistance

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** warm deserts or urban

**Organization** solitary, pair, or pack (3–8)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Escape (Ex):** A glowtail mouse has the ability to separate from their glowtail as part of a withdraw action. The tail begins flashing quickly to act as a lure to draw attention away from them as they escape. This allows a glowtail mouse to withdraw as a move action, rather than a full-round action, and still move up to double their speed. If a glowtail mouse does this, it loses its glowtail and

escape abilities until its tail regrows, which takes one week.

**Familiar:** The master of a glowtail mouse familiar gains a +4 bonus on fortitude saves vs. poison.

**Glowtail (Ex):** As a swift action glowtail mouse can produce a dim sapphire glow from within its long tail, creating dim light within a 10-foot cone. This light causes any poisonous creature (or substance) shed light like a candle when within the area of the glowtail light. This ability even outlines invisible poisonous creatures and objects as *faerie fire* so long as they remain within the area of effect. Containers holding poison do not glow, but the poison within will. Poison contained within opaque containers are immune to the effects of glowtail.

**Poison Resistance (Ex):** A glowtail mouse has a +4 racial bonus on Fortitude saves vs. poisons. Once per day, a glowtail mouse may choose to reroll a failed Fortitude save against poison.

A glowtail mouse is a tiny nocturnal rodent that is highly adapted to life on Akasaat. They are found across most surface regions of Akasaat, feeding on a wide variety of scrub vegetation and poisonous insects (especially scorpions) that thrive across the planet's surface. Glowtail mice have even found a home within the arcology-cities and smaller settlements as both a pest feeding on garbage and whatever they can scavenge and as pets in the homes of those who cherish their unique abilities and intelligence. They make good pets for miners and those seeking aetherite deposits. They have even found a place in politics of all places, being employed as poison detectors by the members of government who fear assassination. The average glowtail mouse is typically between 10 and 12 inches long (without measuring their long tail) and weighs between 2 and 5 pounds. They typically live about five to seven years, although they have been known to live to ten when domesticated.

## Ecology

Glowtail mice typically have sandy brown coat of fur, which blends well with their desert environment, but some have been known to have grey or black patterns too. They have long claws that make them skilled burrowers and sharp incisors in their mouth that constantly grow throughout their lives, which require near constant gnawing on objects to keep them from growing to an uncomfortable length. Unique to their species and their namesake, the glowtail mouse has a long thin tail that is a prehensile bioluminescent organs. Glowtail mice can discard their tail as a defensive mechanism, causing it to brightly flash in distress to lure predators away from themselves. These mice are prolific breeders, producing a litter of 10 to 20 babies, with a single female can having up to as many as ten litters per year.

## Habitat & Society

Glowtail mice are omnivores that typically subsist on insects in the wild, supplemented by food scraps and refuse in urban areas. Due to their fecundity, glowtail mice infestations are common in overcrowded and poor settlements. Due to their abundant numbers, glowtail mice are a food staple for less fortunate communities, especially in the Wasteland. Breeders can make a tidy sum of money on them if they are properly domesticated. They are also popular familiars for spellcasters native to Akasaat. Nesting glowtail mice will gnaw on fibrous objects to create bedding for their progeny and electrical conduits, wires, and power cords are often prime targets for their chewing in urban environments. Infestations of glowtail mice can cause power outages if they are allowed to run rampant. A glowtail mouse can chew through just about anything given enough time and it is common for them to even nibble on clay, salt, and small stones to aid in their digestion and to absorb any toxins from the food

they eat in the wild. Many a clay foundation has collapsed under the damage they wreak on buildings and bridges. Due to the damage they can deal to aethershops, many worlds have imposed strict travel restrictions on glowtail mice and merchants caught transporting them without a license to another world can face stiff fines or even incarceration.

## NEW MAGIC ITEM

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>GLOWTAIL CHARM</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>1,680 AU</b>                   |
| <b>Type</b> lesser talisman                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                   |
| <b>Slot</b> neck                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>CL</b> 7th <b>Weight</b> 1 lb. |
| <b>Aura</b> moderate conjuration (healing)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                   |
| This leathery talisman is fashioned from the tails of three glowtail mice. When the wearer fails a saving throw against a spell or effect that causes him to become poisoned, they immediately receive a second saving throw with a +4 bonus. If they succeed at the second saving throw, one of the three tails glows brightly and then crumbles to dust. A glowtail charm may be used three times before it ceases to function. |                                   |
| <b>CONSTRUCTION</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>840 AU</b>                     |
| Craft Wondrous Item, <i>neutralize poison</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                   |



# GOBLINS OF AETHERA

Goblins are a subtle yet pervasive presence in the Aethera system. Reclusive and isolationist, goblins hide from the eyes of others but inhabit nearly every corner of the planet. They flourish in forgotten corners that go largely unseen despite being right under the noses of other societies. To most, goblins seem sparse and spread out, begging for scraps in a world not their own. These casual observers fail to realize that where one goblin is seen, there are hundreds more unnoticed that carry on unseen agendas.

Commonly encountered goblins frequently fall into a few categories. Many are exiles and outcasts, outsiders who never felt at home in goblin society and prefer to scrape out an existence on the border between their homeland and other civilizations. This misfit group has done little for the reputation of goblins and in part is why the Hierarchy views them as pests and menaces. Goblins are also known for their mercantile expertise as tradesmen and appraisers, as well as their uncanny expertise with aethertech.

Beyond the outcasts are the goblins who see that times are changing, goblins who suspect that their way of life is unsustainable. Civilizations are growing, societies expanding and making alliances. With the advances of technology and government the world is shrinking by the day, while the forces in it loom larger than ever. These goblins are adventurers and diplomats, statesman and visionaries, a wave of goblin culture surging out into the world to make their mark on it. For if goblins are to thrive in the coming age, they cannot afford to be silent and hidden much longer and must reveal the hidden truth of their people.

## Ecology

In the lost history prior to the Collapse, goblins were primarily lived underground. Their eyes are adapted to subterranean darkness and they're small in order to fit through the frequently tight and cramped

spaces of natural caverns. To this day goblins shun the outdoors, preferring underground or sheltered communities. While they are capable of living in other areas, open sky and wide spaces provoke stress in most goblins, leading to numerous goblins experiencing agoraphobia. Those who venture beyond Akasaat into the Gulf do so with great trepidation and must possess a galvanized trust in their aethershops to protect them from the "great emptiness."

Aside from their ability to see in the dark, goblins possess an innate ability to sense the presence of magic. This adaptation has greatly influenced goblin society and outlook on the arcane arts: to them, magic is not a special study or archaic skill, but a constant part of life that is as basic as color or light. It is an overlay, one more filter and lens through which they understand the world. Sorcery and wizardry are rooted in the basic nature of goblins, and even goblins raised outside their society have strong ties to magic.

Magic sight and subterranean tendencies are the only major commonalities among goblins. Beyond these traits goblins are incredibly diverse, displaying a staggering array of shapes and qualities. A common theory is that goblins are the descendants of a several humanoid species that shared preferences in territory and allied for survival, eventually blending together into a single varied group. The distinct names that refer to certain goblin varieties are evidence of such a history, but the truth is unknown.

Goblins are a highly adaptive species, capable of rapidly changing their biology to fit the needs of their current environment within a single generation. This has allowed goblins to spread across the Aethera System in within one century and develop ecological adaptations that would normally have taken millennia. As migrants across the Gulf, most goblins traveled during the years prior to the Century War aboard the first Hierarchy aethershops to leave Akasaat. Goblins living in mining colonies in the Amrita Asteroid Belt,



particularly flourishing in the fringe, came along with first wave prospectors and have rapidly spread in the shadows of Belt society. Those who dwell on Orbis Aurea came with the first human ships as stowaways or contracted mechanics. Small communities of goblins even dwell on the island landmasses of Seraos or in colonies on its rings. Some even reside within the forests of Kir-Sharaat as technology advisors to the erahthi and come to serve as spies against the Hierarchy. Akasaat will always remain the goblin homeworld; it is here that they are spread wide below the wastes, clustering around aquifers and underground rivers. They have settlements hidden in the underside of major cities and webs of tunnels that spread further into the underworld than any human has ever explored.

## Habitat & Society

There is no unified goblin society. The cave systems that goblins favor are often disconnected, or only linked by twisted tunnels that are difficult to navigate. Even the largest cave systems cannot support an entire nation. Instead, goblin civilization is defined by generous scatterings of city-states with a complex network of alliances and trade agreements. This lack of an overarching system hindered goblins as the politics of Akasaat developed, leading to the formation of humanity's Hierarchy. The human-centric nature of the Hierarchy made it nearly impossible for goblins to have their voice and presence felt, despite their numbers. Some future-minded goblins have tried to unite the disparate city states of the underworld together into a cohesive nation, but they struggle to establish strong connections between settlements with a history of independence or convince the leaders of these small groups to work together rather than remain free to follow their own goals. This combination of a weak presence and internal disagreements have led to poor relations

with the Hierarchy and other governments, who tend to view goblins as squabbling and backwards.

Each goblin community is different, but most are strongly isolationist, preferring to focus on their own affairs and trust in the strength of cavern walls, shielding mountain ranges, and stretches of barren wastes to shield them from outside problems. This strategy has served them for thousands of years, but it is increasingly untenable in modern times. Goblins on Akasaat have been pushed into alliances with giants and wastelanders as the Hierarchy has increased pressure on them in an attempt to acquire precious resources such as aquifers, mineral deposits, and aetherite. The nascent goblin communities of Orbis Aurea have come into sharp conflict with the azaka as they vie for the same subterranean domains. As such they frequently ally, trade, and mingle with troglodytes and the okanta settlements around them, sometimes even integrating into them completely.

Magic is the unifying thread in goblin society. Their natural magical sense predisposes them to supernatural skillsets, and most goblins have an ample understanding of magic founded in their personal experience. Many scholars and education systems in goblin society have their roots in arcane studies, starting out as methods to pass along the tools of wizardry before expanding out to other fields of study. For goblins scholarship and wizardry go hand in hand, and it is a poor education that does not cover the basics of the magical arts. Goblin wizards are respected even outside of goblin society, and many who wish to learn magic do so at the feet of goblin teachers. Sorcery is also well known among goblins, especially sorcery born of elemental bloodlines. However, goblins rarely discuss their society's strong proliferation of magical studies with outsiders. This is especially true with the Hierarchy's formation of the Vanguard, a military arm of the Protectorate that hunts down and imprisons unsanctioned use

of and education in magic. Many goblins fear that widespread knowledge of their magical aptitude would lead to a Vanguard pogrom of their people.

Druidic practice is the main manifestation of goblin spirituality and religious mysticism. Where goblin wizardry examines magic and studies it as a science, their form of druidic art interacts with it on a more personal and intuitive level. Goblin druids commune with the world through their natural understanding of magic, explaining it as a force that pervades all things. They hold that goblins are the children of magic, and that they will return to its endless currents when they die. In the meantime they serve the community as mediators and agriculturalists, finding water and establishing farms in the stony caverns and desolate wastes.

Lastly, most goblin societies are highly focused on achievement and productivity. A goblin takes pride in their work and still more pride in display their skill to others. Druids seek out rare and exceptional companions, occultists collect relics from Pre-Collapse ruins, wizards cover themselves in enchanted items or collect massive libraries, and merchants buy expensive items from the most distant and foreign locations to parade their wealth. Hobbies often focus on producing tangible goods so that goblins can show the work of their hands. This constant demand and toil can prove stressful though, and it is easy for a goblin to feel they can't put in enough effort, or that they are inferior to their peers. Sometimes, these goblins leave their homes to adventure or find a place in the outside world.

## GOBLINS AS PCs

Goblins are defined by their class levels, and do not possess racial hit dice. All goblins have the following racial traits.

**+2 Dex, +2 to One Other Ability Score:** Goblins are almost all agile and quick, but show a great variety of other talents.

**Humanoid:** Goblins are humanoids with the goblinoid subtype.

**Small:** Goblins are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a—1 penalty to their CMB and CMD, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

**Fast:** Goblins are fast for their size, and have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Darkvision (Ex):** Goblins can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Slight Build:** Even the largest of goblins are more often lithe and lean than imposing. Their physical stature lets them function in many ways as if they were one size category smaller. Whenever a goblin is subject to a size modifier or special size modifier for an opposed check (such as Stealth, but not armor class or attack rolls), the goblin is treated as one size smaller if doing so is advantageous to them. A goblin is also considered to be one size smaller when squeezing through a restrictive space. A goblin can use weapons designed for a creature one size smaller without penalty. However, the space and reach of a goblin remain those of a creature of their actual size. The benefits of this racial trait stack with the effects of powers, abilities, and spells that change the subject's size category.

**See Magic (Su):** Goblins possess an intuitive understanding of, and ability to perceive, magic. They can see the presence or absence of magical auras within 30 feet. By focusing as a move action, they can learn the strength and location of each aura they see, and may make Perception or Knowledge (arcana) skill checks to determine the school of magic involved in each otherwise as *detect magic*. If the aura emanates from a magic item, the goblin can attempt to identify its properties with Spellcraft.

**Quick Reflexes (Ex):** Goblins are quick to react to danger and gain a +2 bonus on Initiative checks.

**Languages:** Goblins begin play speaking Hymnas and Goblin. Goblins with high intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aquan, Aklo, Giant, Ignan, Okantan, Terran.

## NEW RULES

The below rules represent unique talents and traits of goblins native to the Aethera System.

### Alternate Racial Traits

The following racial traits can be selected instead of existing goblin racial traits.

**Adept Climber:** As cave-dwellers, some goblins are more adapted to underground life and gain a climb speed of 20. This racial trait replaces fast.

**Bluecap:** Some goblins have adapted differently to their dark environments, creating flickering lights to guide them. Goblins with this trait gain *dancing lights* as a spell-like ability at will, using their character level as their caster level. This racial trait replaces darkvision.

**Cold Adaptation:** Orbis Aurea is home to its own variety of goblins, distinguished by insulating characteristics such as thicker, rubbery skin and profuse hair. Goblins with this trait can move across icy or snowy surfaces without penalty and do not need to make Acrobatics checks to run or charge across ice. In addition, they gain cold resistance 5. This racial trait replaces fast.

**Engineer:** Many goblins have an intuitive knack for working with machinery and gain Skill Focus in either Craft (clockwork) or Craft (mechanical). This racial trait replaces Quick Reflexes.

**Hob:** Some goblins are significantly larger than their fellows, and are colloquially known as hobs or hobgoblins. Goblins with this trait are Medium creatures instead of Small, and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size. This modifies the goblin's base size and replaces the slight build trait.

**Seer:** Some goblins are blessed with the ability to perceive magic more fully than their fellows, gaining unique insight from it. These goblins add +1 to the caster level of their spells and spell-like abilities from the divination school. In addition, they may use *guidance* as a spell-like ability a number of times per

day equal to their Wisdom bonus. This racial trait replaces quick reflexes.

**Trickster:** Goblins have a reputation for trickery and magical affinity, and the two often go hand in hand. Goblins with this trait gain either *ghost sound* or *prestidigitation* as an at will spell-like ability, using their character level as their caster level. This racial trait replaces quick reflexes.

### Feats

The following feats are designed to help expand or improve on a goblin's inherent abilities.

#### EFFORTLESS SIGHT

Through training or constant use, you have improved your natural ability to see magical auras.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) 5 ranks, goblin

**Benefit:** Your see magic racial trait improves, becoming natural and effortless. You know the strength and location of every aura within your range without needing to focus as a move action.

#### EXTENDED SIGHT

You are skilled in the use of your magical sight, and have learned to see even the faintest whispers of magic at the edge of your vision.

**Prerequisite:** Goblin

**Benefit:** The range of your see magic ability increases from 30 feet to 60 feet.

#### INTUITIVE ARCANA

Between your experience and natural understanding of magic, you can easily piece together the nature of magical effects.

**Prerequisites:** Int 13, goblin

**Benefit:** You can make Spellcraft checks untrained. If you ever gain a rank in Spellcraft it becomes a class skill for you and once per day you may reroll a Spellcraft check before the result of the check is known. You must take the result of the reroll, even if it's worse than the original roll.

# GOBLIN, AETHERAN

## GOBLIN, SCOUT

CR 1/2

XP 200

Male goblin rogue 1

CN Small humanoid (goblinoid)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see magic; Perception +4

### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size)

**hp** 5 (1d8+1)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** shortsword +0 (1d4-1)

**Ranged** [light revolver](#)<sup>ACS</sup> +3 (1d6)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** A goblin scout prefers to ambush his enemies, and attempts to sneak behind cover or concealment before attacking.

**During Combat** If possible, a scout stays out of range and sight of his enemies, firing from hidden positions and shifting away from blown cover. He will lead enemies into traps or waiting allies, and pick off the weakest and most vulnerable targets first.

**Morale** A goblin scout is not a heavy combatant, and reacts accordingly. He will flee from close quarters combat or when combat is turning against him. If injured, he will likely flee rather than stay and fight. However, fleeing scouts often set up new ambushes elsewhere, inform better equipped allies, and frequently come back for revenge.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 9, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** —2; **CMD** 11

**Feats** [Dodge](#), [Improved Initiative](#)

**Skills** Acrobatics +6, Bluff +3, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Perception +4, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +6, Use Magic Device +3

**Languages** Hymnas, Goblin

**SQ** slight build, trapfinding

**Gear** [armored jacket](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [light revolver](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, shortsword, bullets (20)

Goblins encountered outside of their settlements are usually scouts or outcasts. Scouts are most commonly found in subterranean areas or nearby them, patrolling the area or looking for opportunities and resources. Outcasts, on the other hand, can take up residence anywhere. If they're down on their luck they may be found in abandoned buildings or ramshackle outposts, but if they've experienced a windfall or have steady work, can be as easily found in darkened bars and casinos.

## GOBLIN, SCHOLAR

CR 1

XP 400

Female goblin (bluecap) wizard 2

LN Small humanoid (goblinoid)

**Init** +6; **Senses** see magic; Perception—1

### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+1 armor, +2 Dex, +1 size)

**hp** 9 (2d6+2)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** dagger +1 (1d3-1)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

At will—[dancing lights](#)

**Transmutation School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

5/day—[telekinetic fist](#)

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

1st—[color spray](#) (DC 13), [expeditious retreat](#), [ray of enfeeblement](#), [sleep](#) (DC 13)

0—[ghost sound](#) (DC 12), [message](#), [prestidigitation](#), [read magic](#)

**Prohibited Schools** conjuration, evocation

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** If forced to enter combat, a goblin scholar will use her *potion of shield* and cast *expeditious retreat* beforehand.

**During Combat** In combat, a goblin scholar keeps her distance from combat and aims to disable as many enemies as possible with *color spray* and *sleep* before relying on her *telekinetic fist* for damage.

**Morale** If reduced to half her hit points, a goblin scholar will retreat as fast as possible using *expeditious retreat*. If necessary, she will use her *scroll of silent image* or cast *ghost sound* to distract enemies who chase her.

**Base Statistics** By default, a goblin scholar uses her Physical Enhancement ability to add +1 to her Constitution.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 15, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB**—1; **CMD** 11

**Feats** Extended Sight, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll

**Skills** Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Spellcraft +7

**Languages** Hymnas, goblin, giant, terran

**SQ** arcane bond (ring), slight build

**Combat Gear** *potion of shield*, *scroll of silent image*;

**Other Gear** dagger, leather coat

Goblin scholars are students of lore and magic. They are teachers and apprentices, researchers and experimenters. Outside goblin society they are most likely to be found on research projects or as part of magical guilds, lending their expertise and natural skills to their current cause.

## GOBLIN, STEELCAP

**CR 3**

**XP** 800

Male goblin (hob) fighter 4

N Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see magic; Perception +5

## DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 48 (4d10+16)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2 (+3 vs fear)

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk spiked gauntlet +5 (1d4)

**Ranged** mwk *combat shotgun*<sup>ACS</sup> +9 (1d6)

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** A steelcap needs little preparation for combat, but if given the opportunity he will rush his opponents in order to catch as many of them as possible in the scatter range of his shotgun.

**During Combat** Steelcaps are ruthless and clever, and a steelcap will do his best to hammer down weak targets first or catch as many enemies as possible in scattershots. If his enemies are easy to hit he will make heavy use of Deadly Aim to improve damage. He keeps close to his enemies but tends to stay just out of melee range.

**Morale** Few steelcaps are willing to turn from a fight, though one will readily give his ground for tactical advantage or to lead his opponents into a trap or ambush. Otherwise, only being reduced to 10 or fewer hit points will cause a steelcap to rethink combat, and even then a chance to use a *cure moderate wounds* potion will bring him back in, and he will fight to the death for a cause he believes in.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

**Feats** *Deadly Aim*, *Dodge*, *Improved Initiative*, *Point Blank Shot*, *Precise Shot*, *Toughness*

**Skills** Climb +6, Perception +5, Survival +8

**Languages** Hymnas, Goblin

**SQ** armor training, bravery +1

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other**

**Gear** masterwork combat shotgun, masterwork spiked gauntlet, pellet (20), plated web-fiber armor +1, slug (20)



Goblin soldiers, known colloquially as “steelcaps” are experienced combatants from a variety of backgrounds. Some are the soldiers of their communities, others are adventurers and outcasts who learned how to defend themselves, and still others are mercenaries who hire out to the highest bidder. What they all share is that their society sees them as born fighters, goblins given a gift of strength and grit that sets them apart from their peers. Being a steelcap isn’t a specific job or something that someone chooses, rather, it is a societal construct: tough, combative goblins are known as steelcaps, and steelcaps are the soldiers and mercenaries of goblin society. It is no coincidence that most are hobs or redcaps; these traits are inextricably tied with the steelcap label. Goblins with these traits are unconsciously, sometimes even openly, expected to serve in a soldier’s capacity. Violence and combat are thought to be in their nature, a simple facet of who and what they are. As a consequence, many end up taking the role handed to them, and some of them struggle with those expectations. Struggling steelcaps may desert, turn mercenary, or seek their fortunes elsewhere, becoming adventurers or wanderers.

## Campaign Role

Steelcaps are ultimately combatants in one form or another, and are frequently encountered on the battlefield. They may be hired mercenaries, soldiers in a goblin military or militia, or lone gunslingers looking out for themselves. Unfortunately, steelcaps tend to be more infamous than reputable owing to the poor relations between goblins and the hierarchy, and the stress that their society puts on the group as a whole.

As allies, steelcaps can be hardened mercenaries taking pay in exchange for assistance or friendly soldiers fighting for the same cause. Exiled or wandering steelcap allies may be searching for meaning or assistance as they try and find their way in life after leaving their place in goblin society. Those comfortable in their position eagerly work as sparring partners and hands on tutors, while the disillusioned will share their experiences and skills while staying out of combat.

Enemy steelcaps can be hostile soldiers, desperate deserters, or simple criminals looking to gain coin from the weak and unprotected. Those who love their job will fling themselves into violence with a willing bloodthirst, battering opponents into submission.

## Boons

When a PC forms a strong bond with a steelcap or successfully perform a service for them, the steelcap may award the PC with one of the below boons at the GMs discretion. NPC boons were originally presented in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Gamemastery Guide*.

**Favor:** Reveals the location of a hidden goblin settlement in the local region.

**Favor:** Uses their ability to see magic to identify a spell, curse, or magic item.

**Favor:** Offers their services in a small fight that the PCs might need a hand with.

**Skill:** Teaches methods for finding hidden sources of water and food, granting a +2 bonus on Survival checks to hunt and forage for food.

**Skill:** Shares tips and tricks for getting around underground, granting a +2 bonus on Survival checks to navigate and avoid hazards in subterranean environments.

**Skill:** Instructs a PC in wariness and scrutiny, granting them a +1 bonus on Perception checks.

**Unique:** Serves as a bodyguard and friendly sword for an entire mission without requiring compensation

### TAANZANITE

CR 6

XP 2400

Female goblin sorcerer 7

LN Small humanoid (goblinoid)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft., see magic; Perception +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +1 deflection, +1 dodge, +3 Dex, +1 size)

**hp** 31 (7d6+7)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Ranged** mwk light revolver<sup>ACS</sup> +7 (1d6 x4)

**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th;

concentration +11)

7/day— arcane bolt

**Spells Known** (CL 7th; concentration +11)

3rd (5/day)—dispel magic, major image (DC 18),

suggestion (DC 18)

2nd (7/day)—detect thoughts (DC 16), glitterdust (DC

16), hideous laughter (DC 17), invisibility,

1st (7/day)—charm person (DC 16), comprehend

languages, expeditious retreat, identify, silent image

(DC 16), unseen servant

0— arcane mark, ghost sound (DC 15), mage hand,

mending, message, prestidigitation, read magic,

**Bloodline** arcane (sage)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If given the opportunity, Taanzanite will cast invisibility and expeditious retreat to ensure that she gets the drop on her opponents and can keep out of their reach.

**During Combat** Taanzanite prioritizes the most heavily armed and least magical of her enemies, aiming to turn them to her side with charm person or suggestion, though if need be she'll disable them with hideous laughter. She'll readily use illusions to confuse, disorient and divide her enemies and will pick off targets of opportunity with her revolver or arcane bolt. If hurt, she

retreats to cover and uses a *potion of [cure moderate wounds](#)*.

**Morale** If reduced to half her hit points, Taanzanite flees.

She casts *[invisibility](#)* to avoid detection and *[expeditious retreat](#)* if it seems likely to turn into an extended chase.

If her opponents continue to pursue, she'll follow up with illusions to serve as decoys.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 17

**Feats** [Combat Casting](#), [Dodge](#), [Eschew Materials](#), [Extend Spell](#), [Improved Initiative](#), [Spell Focus](#) (enchantment), [Spell Focus](#) (Illusion)

**Skills** Bluff +11, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +14, Perception +7, Spellcraft +16,

**Languages** Aklo, Aquan, Giant, Goblin, Hymnas, Terran

**SQ** metamagic adept (2/day), slight build

**Combat Gear** *potion of [cure moderate wounds](#)* (2);

**Other Gear** +1 *[leather coat](#)*, *cloak of resistance* +1, masterwork *[light revolver](#)*<sup>ACS</sup>, *ring of protection* +1

Taanzanite is an icon of goblin society, born in the Underworld city of Osmir, located somewhere beneath the Bleaching Sea. Osmir is one of the largest-known goblin settlements and Taanzanite is prominent practitioner and scholar of the arcane arts. She learned her craft at the feet of the wizened archmage Moxylon of the Deep Sanctum and has made a circuit of countless Akasaati goblin settlements, amassing a library of lore and craft secrets before returning to her homeland to teach new apprentices what she had learned. The fruits of her studies were obvious, and soon hopeful apprentices and curious scholars from nearby communities flocked to her in the hopes of learning her secrets.

Lately, Taanzanite has begun to tire of her status as a teacher, and has begun to wield her influence towards the betterment of goblins as a whole. She is wary of the threat that a post-war Hierarchy could pose to her people at the same time sees the strength goblins could have if they stood together. As a

result of this new perspective, Taanzanite now picks apprentices strategically, cultivating not only adept students of magic arts, but also social and political teaching designed to .

Taanzanite has begun to travel again, sometimes to talk to other goblin communities, and sometimes to venture into human camps and cities, listening to their views and discussing economics and politics. She leverages her expertise and scholarship to obtain invitations to mage guilds and respected schools, giving lectures on magic and sorcery and making connections that she bends towards her other purposes. Slowly she is amassing a network of well-placed magicians and philosophers among goblins and humans alike, and is proving that she is as adept at social maneuvering as magic.

## Campaign Role

As a scholar, politician, and major figure in goblin society, Taanzanite makes a better ally than an enemy. She can be a resource for characters interested in magical phenomena or training and a connection to a wider goblin society. Curious and professional, she will gladly offer aid in research projects on obscure spells or magical items, and characters interested in her cause of representing and unifying goblins will find her an ardent and outspoken voice in their favor. Even if Taanzanite doesn't have the resources or knowledge to do something herself, she undoubtedly has someone in her pocket who does.

People who represent the Hierarchy may make an enemy of Taanzanite though, and while she won't be a direct foe she can be a devastating political opponent. Anyone who threatens her agendas may find magical and scholarly resources of goblin society closed to them as she turns her networks against the characters' efforts, and if they prove truly adversarial she may even employ her magic against them, tracking down their secrets by reading minds and suborning their allies with her enchantments. The more active Taanzanite and her students are on the surface

the more they risk drawing the attention of the Vanguard, especially under the increasingly-aggressive leadership of Grand Marshall Hunter.

## Boons

When a PC forms a strong bond with Taanzanite or successfully perform a service for her, she may award the PC with one of the below boons at the GMs discretion.

NPC boons were originally presented in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Gamemastery Guide*.

**Favor:** Identifies an item or magical effect at no charge.

**Favor:** Provides a favorable introduction to another magician or scholar who has rare and valuable skills.

**Favor:** Provides directions to a specific goblin settlement and a favorable letter of introduction to its ruling body.

**Skill:** Teaches the nuances of identifying a cast spell, granting a +2 bonus on Spellcraft checks to identify a spell as its being cast.

**Skill:** Gives pointers on local research and investigation, granting a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks to gather information.

**Skill:** Draws parallels between illusions and mundane deceit, providing insights and lessons in lying, granting a +1 bonus to Bluff checks.

**Unique:** Unlocks a PC's natural magical power, granting them a single cantrip from the sorcerer/wizard list which they can cast as a spell-like ability once per day.



# LEECH-EATER

*This hairless feline creature has a partial exoskeleton and scaled forelimbs ending in curved talons.*

## LEECH-EATER

CR 3

XP 800

N Small animal

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent, Perception +7

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +1 size)

**HP** 25 (4d8+6)

**Fort** +6 **Ref** +6 **Will** +3

**Immune** aetherite poison; **Resistances** acid 5

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +7 (1d4+3), bite +7 (1d4+3)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 16

**Feats** [Dodge](#), [Run](#)

**Skills** Stealth +7, Perception +7

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any desert or urban (Akasaat)

**Organization** solitary or pair

**Treasure** incidental

Leech-eaters are four-legged feline-appearing creatures artificially created through alchemical fleshwarping practices<sup>HA</sup> as a predator species of the [aAetherleech](#). An average leech-eater measures three feet in length and weighs 60 lbs.

## Ecology

Originally bred in captivity on Akasaat through alchemical fleshwarping, leech eaters were designed to introduce a natural predator to aether leeches in order to stem the growing population during the early aetherite mining boom era. In subsequent decades leech-eaters that escaped into the wild turned feral and now roam the Wasteland. While

they provide a necessary service, wild leech-eaters can become nuisances when they burrow into a home in pursuit of an aether leech.

Despite their name, leech-eaters happen to feast upon a wide variety of small animals and insects. Hiding in burrows and tunnels, they can subsist off of rats and other vermin for weeks without so much as touching the prey they were designed to hunt. They are known to possess mischievous personalities, and will often play with their food before eating it. They can spend hours tracking down their prey, their turquoise eyes glowing in the dark with perfect vision. Before finally pouncing upon their quarry, they release a delighted yowl as a battle-cry to commence their attack.

## Habitat & Society

Leech eaters thrive in dry, arid environments and like many felines have little need for water, deriving most required fluid intake from their prey. During daytime hours, leech eaters nest in dark, cool places like subterranean burrows and shadowy alleys, conserving energy for night-long hunts in cooler climate.

Domesticated leech-eaters are popular as pets in the Akasaati arcology of Central, especially among residents of Midland and Highrise. Some aethership captains even keep leech eaters aboard their vessels as pest control. When they aren't hunting, domesticated leech-eaters enjoy a range of processed food administered to them in bowls and canisters containing a healthy assortment of nutritious vitamins.

Most leech-eaters, particularly of the domestic variety, are bred to be as small as possible in order to most effectively track their quarry through cramped piping and tunnels. A more expensive tiny-sized leech-eater is fashionable among the wealthy elites in Highrise. These leech-eaters can serve as a wizard's familiar and use the same statistics as a cat but retain

immunity to aetherite poison (but no acid resistance) and confer a +2 bonus to Fort Saves vs. aetherite poison. When bred larger their purpose veers more towards combat-oriented roles and often comes with a more comprehensive exoskeleton. The Vanguard tried in vain to train leech-eaters as a means of hunting down their quarry when conventional methods fail but have since turned toward the Orbis Aurean hexhound as a magic-tracking resource.

## Leech-eater Companion

**Starting Statistics:** Size Small; Speed 30 ft.; AC +5 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d4), 2 claws (1d4); **Ability Scores** Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 9; **Special Qualities** darkvision, scent

**4th-Level Advancement:** Size Medium; Speed burrow 10 ft.; AC +2 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d6), 2 claws (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str +4, Dex -2, Con +2; **Immune** aetherite poison, **Resist** acid 5.



# SANDSTORM SKATE

*This diamond-shaped creature possesses a pebbled, sandy hide, broad dorsal fins and a long barbed tail.*

## SANDSTORM SKATE

CR 6

XP 2,400

N Large animal

**Init** +7; **Senses** tremorsense 10 ft., low-light vision;  
Perception +10

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 76 (9d8+36)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 30 ft (sand or loose soil only)

**Melee** slam +11 (2d6+5), sting +11 (1d6+5 plus poison)

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

**Special Attacks** poison, sandstorm strike, trample  
(2d6+7, DC 19)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 21, **Dex** 16, **Con** 19, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** [Combat Reflexes](#), [Improved Initiative](#), [Skill Focus](#)  
(Stealth)

**Skills** Climb +14, Perception +10, Stealth +14 (+24 when stationary in sandy terrain); **Racial Modifiers** +10  
Stealth when stationary in sandy terrain

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** warm deserts and scrub land (Akasaat)

**Organization** solitary or school (3–5)

**Treasure** incidental



## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Poison (Ex)** Sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 16; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dex and 1 Con; *cure* 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Sandstorm Strike (Ex)** Whenever a sandstorm skate initiates a trample attack while burrowing and ends its movement on the surface it creates an explosive cloud of debris in a 20-foot radius centered on itself. This cloud persists for 1d6 rounds and obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. A creature within 5 feet has concealment (attacks have a 20% miss chance). Creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker can't use sight to locate the target). A moderate wind (11+ mph) disperses the cloud in 2 rounds; a strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the cloud immediately.

An ambush predator native to the sandy expanses of Akasaat for as long as anyone can remember, the sandstorm skate is rarely seen until it strikes. Spending much of their time under a thin layer of sand or scree, with only well camouflaged eyes above the soil, the skate waits until prey is close before erupting from the ground to sting and envelope their prey. A sandstorm skate is roughly 8–10 feet from fin tip to fin tip, but typically measure 18 feet long from head to stinger, and weighs around 3,000 lbs.

## Ecology

The broad, flat body and thick tail of a sandstorm skate might seem ill-suited to land movement, but the fine scales that cover them, as well as the spikey horns that adorn their fins, back, and tail, along with powerful muscles in the body and tail, allow the skate to shimmy and “swim” through loose soil and sand with surprising speed.

A crafty hunter, though perhaps a bit laconic, most skates will seek out an area within their range that sees traffic from fauna—along migration routes or near water sources. They lie in wait there, relying on their natural camouflage, until anything smaller than themselves that might be a potential meal wanders by. Bursting out of the sand in a cloud of dust and debris, they quickly bite and sting prey, hoping to overwhelm it in one go. Once the dust settles it is easy to miss the skate feeding on its catch, as the creature rest atop its victim and appears at first glance to be a small hill or dune. When it finally moves on little is left but bones.

Long lived, with the oldest observed skate coming in at 75 years, skates mate rarely when the territory of two overlaps. The mother will lay a clutch of 2-5 eggs in a nest and tend them for 2 months. Once they hatch a skate mother will hunt with her children for a few years, forming a school. Working in concert, the group of skates will ambush and attempt to bring down larger prey or groups, hoping to leverage their numbers into a bigger payoff. No few trade caravans have been completely wiped out by a sandstorm skate school.

## Sandstorm Skate Companion

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Medium; **Speed** 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.; **AC** +3 natural armor; **Attack** slam 1d6, sting 1d4; **Ability Scores** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 5; **Special Qualities** low-light vision.

**7th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Large; **Speed** burrow 30 ft.; **AC** +4 natural armor; **Attack** slam 1d8, sting (1d4 plus poison); **Ability Scores** Str +8, Dex -2, Con +2; **Special Attacks** trample, poison (*frequency* 1 round (4), *effect* 1d2 Dex and 1 Con damage, *cure* 1 save, Con-based DC); **Special Qualities** tremorsense 10 ft.

# SKYFISHER

*A massive bell of largely translucent pink tissue flares out into a crystalline coral-like growth trailing dozens of sinuous tendrils.*

## SKYFISHER

CR 10

XP 9600

N Huge vermin (aether)

**Init** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., thoughtsense 120 ft.; Perception +6

### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16 (-2 Dex, +10 natural, —2 size)

**hp** 177 (15d8+60 plus 50-hp force field)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +3, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** amorphous, telekinetic forcefield; **DR** 5/piercing or slashing; **Immune** aetherite radiation

### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 40 ft. (average)

**Melee** 6 tentacles +17 (1d10+8 plus grab and poison)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

**Special Attacks** engulf, poison, telekinetic thrust (DC 20 8d6 bludgeoning)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 26, **Dex** 6, **Con** 18, **Int** —, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 29 (cannot be tripped)

**Skills** Fly -6

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** warm skies

**Organization** solitary, or congress (50-80)

**Treasure** standard (100 lbs. of raw aetherite)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Amorphous (Ex)** A skyfisher's body is malleable and shapeless. It is immune to precision damage (like sneak attacks) and critical hits, and can move through an area as small as one-quarter its space without squeezing or one-eighth its space when squeezing.

**Engulf (Ex)** If a skyfisher begins its turn with an opponent at least two size categories smaller than itself grappled in one of its tentacles, it can withdraw that tentacle into

its digestive sac by making a new combat maneuver check to grapple (as though attempting to pin the foe). If it succeeds, it engulfs the creature and inflicts 1d8+7 points of bludgeoning damage and 2d6 acid damage as the sac fills with digestive enzymes. The seal formed is airtight, so an engulfed creature risks suffocation. Engulf is a special form of pinning, and an engulfed creature can escape in the same way as he can from being pinned, but since an engulfed creature is contained wholly inside the skyfisher, the victim cannot be targeted by effects or attacks that require line of sight or line of effect. A skyfisher that is grappling or pinning a foe cannot attack other targets with that tentacle, but is not otherwise hindered.

**Poison (Ex)** Tentacle—*injury*; *save* Fort DC 19; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dex and 1d4 Con; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Telekinetic Forcefield (Su):** A skyfisher is sheathed in a thin layer of shimmering energy that grants 50 bonus hit points. All damage dealt to a skyfisher with an active force field is reduced from these hit points first. A skyfisher's force field has fast healing 5, but once its hit points are reduced to 0, the force field dissipates and cannot be reactivated for 2d4 hours. Once reactivated it has 1 bonus hit point, but the fast healing is immediately in effect.

**Telekinetic Thrust (Ex):** As a standard action a skyfisher can project a blast of telekinetic energy at a single target within 160 ft. A creature struck by the blast takes 8d6 points of bludgeoning damage and is pushed back 25 ft. A successful DC 20 Fortitude save negates the movement effect and halves the damage. The save DC is Wisdom-based. A skyfisher may not make this attack again for 1d6 rounds.

**Thoughtsense (Ex):** A skyfisher can hear thoughts within a 120-ft. radius. The received thoughts are a susurrus of disjointed words and emotions and cannot be understood, but allow the skyfisher to



locate thinking creatures within its detection radius as though it had blindsense, with the following exceptions. Thoughtsense functions through solid objects, but nondetection, mind blank, and similar effects can block the effect. Thoughtsense can distinguish between sentient (Intelligence 3 or greater) and nonsentient (Intelligence 1–2) creatures, but otherwise provides no information about the creatures it detects. Creatures without Intelligence scores cannot be detected with thoughtsense.

Skyfishers are huge floating predators of the air consisting of a central mass, or bell, containing what passes for organs for the creature, a fringed crystalline mantle beneath, as well dozens of tentacles that dangle below. Ranging in color from bright blue to pink and purple, they are semi-translucent and composed of a specialized substance rich in aetherite. High flying, slow, and strangely graceful, seeing the distinctive bell of a skyfisher far off in

the sky was said to be beautiful and haunting. They were once a common sight across Akasaat as recently as the start of the Century War, but were hunted for their ability to naturally collect aetherite from particulate matter in the air and condense it into crystals. As such, skyfishers are now vanishingly rare. A skyfisher measures fifteen feet wide and nearly as tall, not counting the length of its tentacles. Their light, diaphanous bodies only weigh 250 lbs.

## Ecology

The typical skyfisher lifespan is unknown, though it is believed that they can live for centuries. It is even speculated that their tissues might not be susceptible to the normal aging process (like skywisps), leaving only disease or misadventure as causes of death. Based on collected stories and a few written accounts it is likely that from time to time the skyfishers would gather in great numbers to breed, though the last time such a congress was recorded was a decade prior to the start of the Century War. Accounts vary, but generally agree that the creatures exchanged genetic information with multiple partners, then sacrificed a large portion of their mass that quickly differentiated into hundreds of small skyfishers. Able to fly from birth, though not very good at maneuvering, these offspring were quickly spread by the winds and appeared to know instinctively how to hunt and navigate the skies of Akasaat. There are no recordings of such an event though, only second and third hand accounts, so the exact nature of their reproduction is not certain.

Skyfishers have no natural predators, as most animals will avoid creatures with aetherite infusion unless desperate or otherwise immune to aetherite poisoning. This has left the number of predators of skyfishers limited, save for those introduced by poisoning from aetherite refinement. Since the Century War, natural philosophers have noted an increase in predation from birds (typically vultures) showing advanced stages of aetherite sickness. The

Hierarchy has, patently, disavowed that refineries could produce any sort of mutations in local wildlife, much as they have any other stories of mutations arising from exposure to aetherite radiation.

## Habitat & Society

Deceptively peaceful floating beasts, a skyfisher spends most of its time simply going wherever the wind takes them. They expend few calories coasting about, so they do not need to feed more than a few times a month, but when they do descend for sustenance the result is often devastating. Drawn to concentrations of animals by their thoughtsense ability, the skyfisher will float far enough down so that their appendages can easily access anything on the ground. Slowly floating over an area, they gather any living thing they can detect, grabbing prey with their powerful tentacles and drawing it into their central mass for slow digestion. Few things can effectively hide from the skyfisher's uncanny abilities, and anything large enough to put up too much of a fight is quickly targeted with the skyfisher's telekinetic thrust. No few Wasteland settlements have been wiped out by a hungry skyfisher, with only the smashed structures and abandoned tools left behind to show that anyone was ever there.

Naturally infused with aetherite, skyfishers are born levitating high above the ground. Though they are telekinetic, growing in power as they mature, skyfishers are either too simple or too alien to do much more than float along with the air currents of Akasaat. Unfortunately for the skyfishers, as aetherite became scarce on Akasaat leading up to the Century War they eventually became sought after for the crystals that condense in their bell as they mature. For almost fifty years during the war's onset skyfisher hunting was an incredibly dangerous industry, and teams of sky hunters would harpoon the creatures, dodging tentacles and telekinetic blasts to drag their quarry down to the ground to flense

the valuable (and radioactive) aetherite from the still quivering skyfisher's flesh. The danger and radiation, coupled with the skyfishers having been hunted near to extinction, have caused the vocation to die out, but the damage has already been done. Where once the sky teemed with gently floating fishers, now it is counted a once in a lifetime event to catch sight of a far off bell.

While out of vogue now, there are still several songs, poems, and works of fiction that celebrate the brave and foolhardy men and women who hunted the skyfishers. The extreme risk, and potentially great payouts, inspired hope in no small number of the Protectorate's poor, and a few modern trade families can trace their lineage back to a particularly lucky skyfisher hunter hundreds of years ago. Radio dramas memorializing great hunts still sometimes get play on pirate channels, though official stations have long since retired that material.

In traditions that go further back, the skyfisher was regarded as a holy animal by Wasteland tribes from the Crescent Tablelands. For most, seeing a skyfisher far off in the sky was seen as a good omen, and still is by local tribes that adhere to rapidly diminishing traditions. The approach of a skyfisher to a settlement served as corollary, indicating the displeasure of air and sky spirits for the residents' actions. It is also likely that more than one tribe may have wiped out another and claimed "skyfisher attack" instead, justifying the destruction of their neighbors as the will of the spirits.

For good or ill the years of skyfisher hunting and resultant scarcity have led to a decline in those beliefs, and few wastelanders even remember what a skyfisher is now, much less hold it in any kind of reverence. Those that do know of them only from stories long passed down or old paintings on rocks and caves. Despite this, or perhaps due to some lingering spiritual influence, there are still some shamans and oracles that tell of a time when the skyfishers will converge into a congress again, filling the sky above the city of

Central as they consume the population to feed their breeding frenzy. Should enough skyfishers still exists to form a congress, and were one ever to gather, the effects would be absolutely devastating to whatever place they gathered above.

## Harvesting Aetherite

The aetherite that crystallizes inside of a skyfisher is created through a process much like aetherite refinement. It isn't clear whether witnessing the breakdown of aetherite within a skyfisher inspired the refinement process, but the similarities are clear. An adult skyfisher in the wild can have its refined aetherite crystals harvested after death. Doing so takes 1 hour and requires a successful DC 25 Survival check. A successful check produces 1d8 shards of refined aetherite worth 100 au each. For every 5 points by which the DC is exceeded, the harvesting action produces another 1d8 shards of refined aetherite up to a maximum of 4d8 shards. Shards not successfully harvested disperse in swift sublimation. On a failed check the harvester is exposed to medium aetherite radiation (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 443).

## Skyfisher Companion

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Large; **Speed** fly 30 ft. (poor); **AC** +3 natural armor; **Attack** 2 tentacles (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str 17, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 9; **Special Qualities** telekinetic forcefield (2 bonus hp per HD, fast healing 1, otherwise as above), thoughtsense 30 ft.

**7th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Huge **Ability Scores** Str +8, Dex -2, Con +4; **Speed** fly 40ft. (average); **AC** +5 natural armor; **Attack** 4 tentacles (1d8 plus poison); **Special Attacks** poison (*frequency* 1 round, *effect* 1d2 Dex and 1d2 Con damage, *cure* 1 save, Con-based DC); **Special Qualities** telekinetic thrust (1d6 bludgeoning damage per 3 HD, the save DC is Wisdom-based.), thoughtsense 60 ft.

# SKYWISP

*A diaphanous creature with a dome-shaped body trails small tentacles down in the air.*

## SKYWISP

CR 1

XP 400

N Medium vermin

**Init** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

## DEFENSE

**AC** 8, touch 8, flat-footed 8 (-2 Dex)

**hp** 15 (2d8+6 HD)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** -2, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** dust cloud (5-ft. radius);

**Weaknesses** susceptible to music, vulnerability to fire

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 20 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** 4 tentacles +1 (1d4 plus 1d3 acid)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 6, **Con** 16, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 9

**Skills** Acrobatics -2, Fly +6, Perception +2, Stealth -2 (+8 when using camouflage), Survival +2; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Fly (flight speed), +10 Stealth (when using its camouflage ability), +8 Swim (swim speed)

**SQ** camouflage, jet

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** warm deserts (Akasaat)

**Organization** solitary, pair, bloom (3–5), or swarm (6–10)

**Treasure** none

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Camouflage (Ex):** A skywisp has the ability to alter its temperature to bend light around its body, causing it to nearly vanish from view. It can activate this ability as a free action, granting it a +10 bonus on stealth checks made while in a desert environment. Furthermore, it can use the Stealth skill to hide, even while being observed.

**Dust Cloud (Ex):** A skywisp can emit a blast of air at the ground, kicking up a blast of sand in the 5 ft. radius

cloud. Those caught within are blinded for 1d4 rounds unless they succeed at a DC 12 Reflex save. A skywisp can use this ability once per minute as a free action while in a sandy or dusty environment. This cloud provides concealment in the area it's created in for 1d4 rounds.

**Jet (Ex):** A skywisp can move at five times its fly speed as a full-round action.

**Susceptible to Music (Ex):** A skywisp is attracted to music, especially singing and wind instruments. A skywisp's attitude can be influenced with Perform checks, per the rules for Diplomacy. Furthermore, skywisps are highly susceptible to musical influence and suffer a -2 penalty on saving throws against bardic performances.

While Akasaat was once an oceanic world teeming with life, as it shifted dramatically to a desert world, life was forced to adapt or die off. The skywisp is an example of this forced evolution, chaged as many of the world's oceanic life was by magical forces as much as mundane ones. They have developed a complex system of gas filled bladders that allow them to float in the sky without much effort, which they can release in a burst to kick up a dust cloud to blind potential prey so they can either escape or feed upon the unsuspecting prey. Due in part to the dry environment and the flammable nature of the gases collected inside of the skywisp, they are highly vulnerable to fire and they typically stay well away from any fire source, making campfires and torches useful tools for keeping them away from camps. Skywisps also developed the ability to camouflage themselves by altering their body's heat to create a mirage around their translucent bodies to blend in to their desert surroundings, making them some of the best ambush predators on Akasaat. Typically skywisps are about 5 feet long (tentacles included), but only weigh about 5 to 10 pounds. Skywisps have

a very short lifespan, with few lasting more than a year once they reach adulthood.

## Ecology

Skywisps look much like aquatic jellyfish found in the oceans of Orbis Aurea and Kir-Sharaat, with a few differences. They are almost completely transparent, but are faintly tan or sometimes light blue in color, which helps them blend into the desert or sky and refract a distorted view of the environment they're in within the bulk of their bodies. Skywisps are softbodied, gelatinous creatures with a dome-shaped central mass, which trail about two dozen or so thin tentacles from below. Skywisps have multiple phases in their lifecycle, most of which are spent grounded in cool, shady portions of the Akasaati desert, as only adult skywisps are capable of flight. Immature skywisps congregate in clusters of ten to twenty on dark cave walls and other places out of the harsh Akasaati sun. Although extremely rare, some subspecies have the ability to revert to an earlier phase of their development to extend their life. It is not yet known if this grants them true immortality, but it does seem to prolong their life indefinitely through cellular regeneration. Young skywisps spends much of their time near shallow oases, diving in and out of the water hunting for prey; typically small insects and other invertebrates. At least once a year, skywisps can be found in blooms or swarms traveling across the surface of Akasaat looking for suitable mates, although a few subspecies reproduce asexually, or else looking for more abundant hunting grounds.



## Habitat & Society

During the day, mature skywisps tend to float at elevations of fifteen to twenty feet, and during the night they rise up to hundreds of feet to enjoy the cooler night air. When hunting, skywisps usually stick low to the ground and cloak themselves, waiting for prey to come near. If something comes close enough to a cloaked skywisp, they lash out with their tentacles. Should the prey survive and attack back, the skywisp usually will jet off to safety and hide itself, waiting for another opportunity to present itself before attacking again. Skywisps digest their meals externally using their acidic tentacles, then land over the slurry remaining to absorb nutrients into their bodies. At night, skywisps grow dormant, entering a state not unlike that of sleep. Scholars debate whether the skywisp is truly

capable of sleeping as a human might. During this time skywisps remain at high altitude, often drifting helplessly and blown far from their waking positions, explaining erratic migratory patterns.

Skywisp have a keen interest in music, flocking to areas where the wind naturally creates gentle notes as they pass through the odd shapes of Progenitor ruins dotting the Wasteland, or where Wastelanders perform music. It is well documented that skywisps are often spotted floating around wind chimes. Numerous designs for wind chimes across Wasteland settlements reflect their shape and many Akasaati instruments feature jellyfish motifs on them. Some remote Wasteland tribes outside of the Samarasati Tablelands employ skywisps as hunting animals, training and controlling them with music.

Wastelanders studying the Score—typically cantors and bards, though occasionally other classes with musical focus—suspect that the skywisps' interest in music may derive from an inherent connection to the melodic and subharmonic patterns of the Score. Vocalizations and arrangements of portions of the prophetic music unerringly draws all nearby skywisps and maintains their attention for the duration of the performance, though repeat performances of Score snippets seem to have no affect on already exposed skyfishers. Natural philosophers from Kir-Sharaat who learned of this phenomenon wonder if skyfishers may share some form of gestalt intelligence when together, and this theory—while unproven—has given rise to speculation among Hierarchy academies that skyfishers could be independent sensory organs of some greater entity. These outlandish theories are largely dismissed, though few have been able to provide theories with more weight.

## Variant Skywisps

**Box Skywisp (CR +2):** This subspecies is larger than the normal species, reaching Large size and

possessing a 20-foot reach with their tentacles. They are much tougher than ordinary skywisps and possess regeneration 4 (bypassed by fire) and are under a constant *blur* effect. Box jellies typically have a faint reddish tint to their bodies and are quite aggressive.

**Deathcap Skywisp (CR +1):** This subspecies has a poisonous sting that they can deliver with their natural attacks. Those struck by the tentacles of a deathcap skywisp must succeed on a DC 14 fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. They typically have a black-striped pattern on their bodies.

**Shocker Skywisp (CR +1):** This particular subspecies of Skywisp has the ability to absorb static electricity from the blowing winds and sand, delivering a potent shock to those who get caught in their tentacles. They deal an additional 1d6 points of electricity with their natural attacks instead of acid damage and typically have bioluminescent bodies unless they are actively cloaking themselves, radiating light as a torch would.

## Skywisp Companions

Although they are difficult to tame, skywisps have been historically popular companions among Wasteland Akasaati, and more recently among the Riders. The Razor Wisps, a Freelancer group based out of the Wasteland city of Teratha, uses the skywisps on their banners, and seek to mirror the skywisp's abilities to vanish after sudden attacks in true guerilla fashion.

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** small; **Speed** 10 ft., fly 20 ft. (perfect); **Attack** 2 tentacles (1d3 plus 1 acid); **Ability Scores** Str 6, **Dex** 8, **Con** 10, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6; **Special Qualities** camouflage, darkvision 60 ft.; **CMD** (cannot be tripped).

**7th-Level Advancement:** **Size** medium; **Attack** 4 tentacles (1d4 plus 1d3 acid); **Ability Scores** Str +4, **Dex** -2, **Con** +6; **Special Attacks** dust cloud (5 ft. radius); **Special Qualities** jet.

## Alchemical Items and Poisons

### DEATHCAP POISON 500 AU

**Type** poison (injury)

**Save** Fortitude DC 14

**Frequency** 1/round for 6 rounds; **Effect** paralyzed for 1d4 rounds

**Cure** 1 save

In the past this potent skywisp poison has seen use extensively with hunting game, but more recently it has found a use among bounty hunters to catch their prey alive.

### JELLY STRINGS 250 AU

These thin strings are crafted from alchemically treated skywisp tentacles. When strung on a string instrument, it grants the user a +2 bonus on Perform (string) checks, which increases to a +4 bonus when attempting to influence a skywisp's attitude.

### MIRAGE PASTE 675 AU

This stinky paste is made from smashing, blending, and boiling skywisp bodies until it becomes a thick paste. By smearing it on skin and equipment, it grants a creature +5 alchemical bonus on Stealth checks for 1 hour, but causes blurry, tunneled vision which imposes a -2 penalty on Perception checks for 8 hours (or until the affected creature spends 5 minutes washing the paste off).

### WISPBALM, JAR 500 AU

The highly regenerative cells of a skywisp are used in the creation of this alchemical paste that, temporarily, mimics some of the qualities of an *unguent of timelessness* in organic matter. When applied as a standard action, an application of wispbalm can prevent organic matter from rotting. When used to preserve a corpse wispbalm acts as [gentle repose](#) and lasts for 1 day. When used on a living creature, a dose of wispbalm suppresses general aches and pains associated with aging and removes 1 point of ability score penalty from aging for 1 day..

One dose of wispbalm is enough to cover one Medium-sized creature or object and each jar of wispbalm contains 2 doses.

## Equipment

### JELLYFISH FLUTE 250 AU

These specially crafted flutes are designed to play low-pitched notes that are appealing to skywisps. While some are rather plain in decoration, others have intricate jellyfish and whirlwind designs. These flutes are quite popular on Akasaat and have begun to see some trade on some of the other worlds as novelty items. They grant a +2 bonus on Perform (wind) checks made to influence a skywisp's attitude.

## Magic Items

### SKYLASH 44,301 AU

**Slot** — CL 10th **Weight** 2 lbs.

**Aura** moderate evocation, illusion, transmutation

A *skylash* is an organic whip with crystalline properties. It has a highly decorative handle, with each one being slightly different in construction, usually featuring pearls, shells, and even fossils from some of Akasaat's extinct sea life. Despite not being truly alive anymore, this weapon seems to constantly undulate slowly by itself as if it still was. A *skylash* is constructed by stretching, then weaving tentacles from a skywisp together into a tight braided whip and then treating this whip with alchemical mixtures, containing small amounts of refined aetherite, until the whip begins forming a crystalline coating along its surface.

A *skylash* functions as a +1 *corrosive*<sup>UE</sup> whip that radiates neon-blue light as a torch. This weapon deals lethal damage, even to creatures with armor bonuses. Once per day the wielder of a *skylash* can create a powerful blast of air when it is swung quickly in a circle in front the wielder, which functions as [gust of wind](#). Additionally the wielder of *skylash* can become invisible at will.

**CONSTRUCTION** 22,151 AU

[Craft Magic Arms and Armor](#), [Empower Spell](#), [Extend Spell](#), [acid arrow](#), [gust of wind](#), [invisibility](#), caster level 10th or higher.

# SPINESHELL

*This towering, broad-shouldered reptile has a line of spines trailing down its back that end in a cluster on its muscular tail.*

## SPINESHELL

CR 7

XP 3,200

N Huge animal

Init +4; Senses low-light vision; Perception +15

## DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16 (+8 natural, -2 size)

hp 93 (11d8+44)

Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +6

## OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +17 (2d6+16)

Ranged spines +6 (1d6+11)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

## STATISTICS

Str 32, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5

Base Atk +8; CMB +21; CMD 31 (35 vs trip)

Feats [Endurance](#), [Improved Initiative](#), [Iron Will](#), [Power Attack](#), [Run](#), [Vital Strike](#)

Skills Acrobatics +0 (+4 to jump), Perception +15

## ECOLOGY

Environment any desert (Akasaat)

Organization Solitary, pair, bale (2-6)

Treasure none

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Spines (Ex)** Any creature that attempts to grapple a spineshell takes 2d4 points of piercing damage from the spineshell's sharp spines. As a standard action a spineshell can fling a cluster of spines with a sweep of its tail. This attack has a range of 60 feet with no range increment. A spineshell can use its spines 5 times per day.

Spineshells are reptilian natives to the planet Akasaat. Rugged, stubborn, and more than capable of self-

defense, these powerful creatures are well suited

to the dangers of their barren home.

Even the crucible of the Collapse has only served to strengthen their resolve. An adult spineshell stands 18 feet tall and weighs 15 tons.

## Ecology

While the planet of Akasaat is far different from its pre-Collapse



state, the spineshells serve as a sort of missing link to pre-Collapse life. Evolved from large sea turtles, their stout, quadruped bodies have adapted to life on dry land. Powerful flippers became legs tipped with climbing claws. Their once-hard shells have become flexible and leathery, allowing for the kind of mobility required to keep up with their ever-changing ecology. As expected by their namesake, each adult spineshell grows a line of spines that protrude from back of their heads and trail all the way down their flat, leathery backs. These sharp protrusions extend down the beast's tail, ending in a dense cluster around the tip. With a flick of their tail, these creatures can force several clustered spines to detach from their tail and impale prey and predators alike at a distance.

Wild spineshells are found almost exclusively around the Ashrana Canyon, with small groups cropping up around a few of the deeper ravines. Most of their time is spent well below the surface, resting in cliffside caves to conserve energy and regulate temperature. When active, spineshells are usually out in search of food, preferring to hunt the mirage jellyfish with their projectile spines. Spineshells hunt alone, though they have been known to cooperate in areas where larger predators are common.

Spineshells have brief courtship periods where males compete for a female's attention in nonlethal combat. During the cooler seasons, pregnant females follow their instincts and make the long, arduous climb to the 'beach' of their birth at the surface. Upon arrival, each female digs out a nest in the sand and lays dozens of eggs within, burying them for safety before retreating to the depths. The resulting hatchlings are left to fend for themselves, with only a few surviving past the long crawl to the canyon's edge and the relative safety below. There, the remaining young will feed upon plant matter, carrion, and small mollusks, growing to full size over the course of five years. Once they reach adolescence, they become far more

aggressive, competing with one another for territory and food. This violent transitional phase spurs the growth of their telltale spines, which become sharper and deadlier as they reach adulthood, eventually growing sturdy enough to be used as a weapon.

## Habitat & Society

Wasteland tribes are a major influence in the growth of this species. At first, humans around Ashrana Canyon hunted their hatchlings for easy meals. Later, in times of relative stability, fledgeling spineshells were taken in as pets. Those few humans who had the means of feeding their new companions found themselves blessed with sturdy beasts of burden who were well suited to the hazards of the deserts.

Spineshell domestication began roughly 300 years ago, and spineshells still prove to be difficult to control at times. While rarely violent towards their owners, spineshells are notoriously stubborn. Caravans that rely on these beasts have to be prepared for sudden stops as their mounts will sometimes wander off in search of live food or fresh water, despite how recently they've been fed. When stressed, spineshells will sometimes engage in a behavior called forting. Forting spineshells will bury themselves halfway into the sand and use this position of security to take a nap ranging between thirty to sixty minutes while resisting attempts by their handlers to move. Sometimes, forting spineshells will remain in this state for weeks on end, entering a state of hibernation-like dormancy.

## Spineshell Companions

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Medium; **Speed** 40 ft.; **AC** +4 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d6) **Ability Scores** **Str** 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 7; **Special Abilities** low-light vision, scent.

**7th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Large; **AC** +4 natural armor; **Attack** bite (2d6); **Ability Scores** +8 Str, -2 Dex, +4 Con; **Special Abilities** spines.

# AKASAAT FLORA

Like the animals of Akasaat the plant life has adapted just as much to the arid climate, relying on conserving water or simply shutting down when water isn't available. Needles or fleshy shapes reduce the amount of water lost to exposed surfaces while cupped shapes collect water to store it. Dormant periods allow them to conserve resources in winter, survive long periods of drought, or take best advantage of a generous storm. Waxy coatings on leaves protect the plant from the strong ultraviolet light and prevent sunburn. Strong winds lead to stunted growth, and plants will often grow to lean in the direction of a prevailing wind. Other plants may use aerial roots as a secure anchor halfway down a cliffside to avoid winds at the top. Mobility adaptations allow plants to hitch a ride on passing animals with thorns or burrs, or catch strong winds in hopes of finding a better place to set roots down.

## THE WASTELAND

Few areas of the planet are entirely plant free. Even the sand of nutrient poor dunes can support an

array of dormant flowers waiting to burst from the sand at the hint of water or deep rooted shrubs that can hold a line against ever shifting sands.

The salt flats are antagonistic to plant life due to the high saline content and soils contaminated with heavy metals are nearly impossible for plants to survive. What few plants manage to grow here are stunted and of little use.

The rocky landscape of the badlands are better able to support vegetation and wildlife. Small green spots surround natural springs in the badlands, but getting to them is difficult at best and they are often defended violently by nearby settlements or an aggressive apex predator. Most of the trees in the badlands are pines and drought resistant evergreens. Their roots pry into any crevice that offers purchase and may force cracks deep into solid rock over centuries. Wasteland myth holds that the oldest tree in the world is a scrawny twisted thing in the dead center of the Samarasati Tableland badlands that sprouted before Luthias drew breath. If true, the tree would be the oldest mortal lifeform on the planet.

Deep in the Wastelands lies the Solenne Oasis, a patch of jungle is jarringly out of place surrounded by sand dunes and dust. Early in the Century War the site of two deadly crashes from opposing sides in the war, the oasis is now the home to a secretive druid circle dedicated to protecting the patch of green from outsiders. Their ongoing research into the unique plant life of the oasis has borne fruit, allowing them to trade in healing ointments, treatments for crop diseases, plant and symbiont grafts, and other less arcane products. Visitors to the oasis are not allowed unescorted access to the jungle contained in the ship and no outsiders are allowed into the heart of the ship. At all hours singing can be heard from the heart as the druids take shifts to sustain the song their circle started generations ago. The continual song is the only thing keeping the aetherwarped winter acacia tree, the

## THE EMBER-STAR

One byproduct of fire, ironically, is water vapor. In the Char Fields, this has led to fanciful stories surrounding a small plant called the ember-star. The ember-star reacts to the presence of heat and water by blooming and going to seed shortly after, forming a hard fireproof shell. The seeds will not germinate until they are exposed to fire to char the hard shell and allow water and light to reach the inside. Beneath the flower's roots run the smoldering fires of the region, a warning of unstable footing as well as a symbol of temporary beauty and renewal by fire. The tiny red flowers can be used to guide adventurers to safer ground.

only survivor of the crash, trapped in the hollowed remains of the battleship.

The rich green and red plants that grow so easily here are absolutely unique: a genetic blend of native and alien plant life given free rein to develop and evolve within the skeleton of the downed battlecruiser. The druids keep the jungle contained within the battlecruiser as much to protect the planet as to protect the plants within. Their experiments over the years have proven that the plants in their care possess dominant genetic traits enhanced by ancestral exposure to aetherite. The plants can crossbreed with related plants from either planet of origin, resulting in unpredictable and dangerous mutations that risk utter corruption of the original species. Worse, the druids have realized their own ancestors exposure to the plants left genetic marks too, resulting in a human community touched by both an alien world and aetherite exposure. The druids rightly fear that if the Hierarchy or the Tritarch Dominion discover their community they will be destroyed out of xenophobic fear.

## THE HIERARCHY

Farming in the Hierarchy uses hydroponic vertical farms built into the sun-drenched faces of arcologies that recycle filtered grey water from residents and capture water vapor from the plants. Hierarchy researchers have selectively bred the plants for low water needs, and on higher tiers they are often decorative as well, providing shade and comfort to wealthy citizens. Lower tier farms are visibly industrial in nature, and designed for efficient use of resources to maximize food production. During their rebuilding efforts Bastion engineers redesigned the vertical farms as modular units that can be easily repaired. The other arcologies plan to implement those changes in the next year, and the Rider network would pay well for a copy of the plans for Wasteland settlements.

Unlike animals, the arcologies don't have an approved plant list. The architecture of the tiered cities casts too much shade, making it difficult for lower tiers to grow much of anything inside the city and the sunlit areas of higher tiers are already claimed by existing hydroponic farms making it difficult for any but the most expert of gardeners to grow much more than a few houseplants. Most of the farms are dedicated to starchy staples and supplemental vegetables, but some of the higher tiers are also used to grow plants for medical purposes. Most arcologies rely on a limited set of hyper-efficient food crops, a situation some members of the Symphonium have noted is a vulnerability if war with the Erahthi reignites.

Because space for plants is limited in the arcologies and food is considered a higher priority, natural fibers are often more expensive than other options. Clothing is crafted from animal hair, silkworms, or other sources such as mushrooms, and leather is common as well. Created fibers such as viscose and acetate, are a relatively new invention and are based on various chemical treatments a cellulose slurry made from the woody bits of leftover food plants. The new fibers are slick to the touch, lightweight, and easy to recycle, making them ideal for the growing population of low-slotted individuals. Some of these fibers, in particular an artificial silk called nitrocellulose, are extremely flammable and must be further treated to prevent tragic deaths. Interestingly, nitrocellulose is potentially explosive and the Research department is considering its use as a more controllable explosive.

The famed pneumatic tubes of Central and those of other arcologies are complicated things to maintain. Every so often canisters get stuck, break, or sometimes hit things that shouldn't be in the pipes at all, like rats. But the worst plague if you ask the engineers assigned to maintain these systems is the web mold. This bright yellow fungus can stain fingers orange,

## FOREST MANAGEMENT

The forest surrounding Central is used for forest-grazing as part of a forest management plan. To protect the forest from future risks, Central has recently bought out the last of the corporate land holdings near the Battlements. Whatever backroom deals were made to convince the previous owners to sell, the end result is strict laws setting a rotation schedule between grazing herds, and recovery years to maintain the long term health of the forest. Playing shepherd for Central's herds is an oddly comfortable job despite the low ranked Slot, though poachers from the Wasteland communities tucked deeper into the forest are a worry. There are a few patches of the forest still owned by individuals unwilling to sell the land to the Hierarchy. These are fenced off from the rest of the forest and what occurs behind those fences is unknown. For a small set of elite citizens of Central these holdings exists outside of arcology surveillance.

forms networks of webbing within the pipes, and leaves a sticky and slightly oily residue on everything it touches. When disrupted by a passing canister whatever remains will slowly merge and form another web in about a week. It's otherwise harmless, just really annoying.

## THE UNDERWORLD

The caverns below the surface of Akasaat are full of as many bizarre varieties of fungus and pale parasitic plants. Barren caverns are the realm of slime molds and lichens, able to slowly spread across bare rock. Many of these plants are brightly colored and some of them glow in order to lure small cavern dwellers closer so they can hitch a ride and spread. More abundant caverns may have a layer of decomposing material from generations of use by bats or other residents. Here mushrooms of varying size and shape can be found. Each cavern is an isolated ecosystem and may host unique sub-species of

toxic or safe mushrooms that have evolved to look like each other, so properly identifying which ones are safe to eat is nearly impossible on sight. Other plants are parasitic, growing on existing fungus.

## ARMORED SALT VINE

Few plants save for the armored salt vine can survive in the harsh Akasaati salt flats. This vine thrives by exuding toxic minerals absorbed from its surroundings as crystalline deposits, forming a rudimentary armor out of the toxic material. Because the minerals are still present armored salt vine can kill animals allowed to graze on it. Dried, the vine is resistant to damage and able to handle heavy loads with less fraying. Alive, the plant is one of the few means to quickly remove salts and heavy metals from a spring without using magic or heavy equipment. Wastelanders will pay well for a transplantable cutting able to clean water sources and many experienced travelers carry the cuttings in small bags to guarantee safe water on their journey.

### ARMORED SALT VINE ROPE 120 AU

Weight 5 lbs.

This 50-foot length of hemp-like rope is encrusted with minerals reinforcing it along its entire length. The rop has a hardness of 5 and 8 hit points. Because the mineral deposits are rough when broken, a bound creature takes 1d4 points of damage when making an Escape Artist attempt. Armored saltvine rope adds a +5 alchemical bonus to the Escape Artist DCs to escape bonds made from this material.

### ARMORED SALT VINE, LIVE 200 AU

Weight 3 lbs.

This small cutting can be planted in a contaminated water source to clean the water of toxins or poison. Up to 1 cu. ft. of water per plant per hour may be cleaned in this way. Toxic liquid remains neutralized for 48 hours after the plant is removed before salt or minerals rebuild to dangerous levels. Additional plants can be grown from this trimming with a successful DC 10 Craft (alchemy) or

Knowledge (nature) check, taking a month for each new plant to be large enough to be useful.

### **SALT VINE ARMOR** +100 AU

**hp/inch 10**      **Hardness 8**

Any armor that is not primarily made out of metal may instead be crafted from alchemically-treated saltvine. Armor crafted in such a fashion features the rough, mineral exterior of saltvine plants. Creatures who begin their turn grappling a creature wearing saltvine armor suffer 1d3 points of damage from the abrasive crystalline serrations growing on the armor. Saltvine armor also leeches toxins from the skin as it is worn, granting a +1 alchemical bonus on Fortitude saves versus poison after being worn for at least 8 hours.

## SUNSTALK

Tall and leafy plants native to the Wasteland, sunstalk is a tenacious and hardy bioluminescent plant that absorbs sunlight for nutrition via a highly-refined photosynthesis, and uses some of that additional energy to generate light and heat during nighttime hours. During the day, sunstalk plants unfold their wide leaves like inverted umbrellas and these leaves take on a coal black coloration that are cool to the touch. At night, or when exposed to darkness for 1 minute, sunstalk plants fold their leaves into tightly-rolled cones and radiate light like a torch and raise the ambient temperature around their trunks by 15 degrees. Burrowing animals often nest in the roots of sunstalk plants and eat insects that would feast on the vegetation. Wasteland settlers grow sunstalk farms to harvest their leaves for clothing and sunlight-adaptive alchemical materials, and travelers to the wastes often set up camps near sunstalk plants.

### **SUNSTALK WEAVE** +300 AU

**hp/inch 3**      **hardness 1**

Sunstalk weave can be incorporated into any armor or clothing that is not primarily made out of metal. Armor with sunstalk weave protects its wearer from heat hazards generated by sunlight, granting a +4 alchemical bonus to

## THE FLORISTS

The caverns provide smuggling routes connecting Teratha, Central, and Aegis. They are relatively safe from Vanguard interference but close enough to the cities to undercut the illegal trade from Dylath on this side of the Tablelands. A handful of ambitious smugglers from Teratha have secured a section of the caves and rigged them with a simple hydroponics farm and stolen aethertech lighting. Wealthy citizens in the arcologies have a strong demand for their products and the smugglers can turn a good profit by avoiding taxes, tariffs, or the ire of corporations importing the same goods at higher prices. A quarter of the operation is dedicated to medicinal plants that treat pain, nausea, and in some cases psychological disorders. The rest is dedicated to far more profitable plants: Tulips. Each individual flower is cut fresh that morning and delivered to wealthy citizens willing to pay the cost for prompt delivery of the status symbol. Other colorful and fragrant flowers are available, all plants that strict Hierarchy rules classify as wasteful and don't grow in the community farms. Off-planet flowers are of course the most valuable and the least legal of the collection.

Fortitude saves to resist heat. After 1 hour of exposure to darkness, sunstalk weave generates heat and light, shedding light as a torch for an equal amount of hours that it was exposed to sunlight. Additionally, it protects the wearer from cold hazards, granting a +4 alchemical bonus on saves to resist nighttime cold environment hazards.

### **SUNSTALK, LIVE** 600 AU

**Weight: 8 lbs.**

A live sunstalk plant measures four teen tall and has a central trunk that is four inches in diameter. The bough of its leafy vegetation fans out to roughly six feet wide during daytime hours and half that as it contracts at night. A sunstalk plant produces 2d6 sour, seeded berries twice per year that can be grown into young sunstalk plants with a successful DC 10 Craft (alchemy) or Knowledge (nature) check, after 1 month producing a mature sunstalk plant.

# ROAMING THISTLE

*This tightly-curved mass of plant matter splays out into a fan of razor-sharp tendrils.*

## ROAMING THISTLE

CR 4

XP 1,200

N Large plant

**Init** +0; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +1

## DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+6 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 37 (5d8+15)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

**Immune** electricity, plant traits; **Resist** cold 10 and fire 10

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 4 tentacles +8 (1d4+5 plus bleed and grab)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** bleed (1d6)

## STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** —, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +10 (+14 grapple); **CMD** 20 (can't be tripped)

**SQ** tumble

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any desert (Akasaat)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or patch (3–6)

**Treasure** incidental

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Tumble (Ex)** Roaming thistle can roll itself up and move rapidly towards its target. This distance can be increased while under the effect of high winds. For every category of wind speed at strong and above, add 10 ft. to the creature's speed.

Originally a biological weapon used during the Century War, a roaming thistle is an example of erahthi ingenuity getting out of hand. Thistle bombs, balls of densely packed thorns and vines, were bred to be one-shot items used strictly for combat purposes that would rapidly expand to fill confined spaces, entangling and damaging enemy combatants. Roaming thistle came to be when these biological weapons unexpectedly took root in the aftermath of battlefields. These plants became wildly unpredictable and proved to be as dangerous and predatory as their weaponized intent. Creation of thistle bombs were banned by the signing of the Century Accords.

Roaming thistle have no natural place in the ecosystem and are a dangerous, invasive species of plant that will attack and kill any living non-plant creature that it comes into contact with. As such extermination parties are often formed to eradicate these menaces whenever they crop up, but their

resilient

nature and savage ability to rip a human to shreds makes any encounter with these plants dangerous.

A roaming thistle is 8-feet wide, four feet tall, and weighs 200 lbs.



# VERDANT CORTEX

A shambling, vaguely humanoid mass of plant matter crackles with psychic energy.

## VERDANT CORTEX

CR 10

XP 9,600

CN Huge plant (aether)

**Init** +7, **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +10 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 126 (12d8+72)

**Fort** +16, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

**Immune** aetherite radiation, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep, stun

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +15 (1d8+7)

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

**Special Attacks** channel aether 4/day (6d6)

**Spells Known** (CL 9th; concentration +13)

4th (5/day)—[crushing despair](#) (DC 18),  
[telekinesis](#) (DC 18)

3rd (7/day)—[deep slumber](#) (DC 17), [force punch](#)<sup>UM</sup> (DC 17), [vampiric touch](#)

2nd (7/day)—[hold person](#) (DC 16), [howling agony](#)<sup>UM</sup> (DC 16), [share memory](#)<sup>OA</sup>, [suggestion](#) (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—[command](#) (DC 15), [forbid action](#) (DC 15), [forced quiet](#) (DC 15), [magic missile](#), [murderous command](#)<sup>UM</sup> (DC 15)

0 (at will)—[daze](#) (DC 14), [detect magic](#), [ghost sound](#) (DC 14), [light](#), [mage hand](#), [message](#), [read magic](#),  
[telekinetic projectile](#)<sup>OA</sup>

### STATISTICS

**Str** 25, **Dex** 16, **Con** 22, **Int** 19, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +16 **CMD** 29 (can't be tripped)



**Feats** [Combat Casting](#), [Great Fortitude](#), [Improved Initiative](#), [Iron Will](#), [Lightning Reflexes](#), [Weapon Focus](#) (slam)

**Skills** Climb +27, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +16, Knowledge (nature) +16, Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +16

**Languages** Envisaging

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any underground (Akasaat)

**Organization** Solitary or node (verdant cortex plus 1-3 aetheric spore slaves)

**Treasure** incidental (200 lbs of raw aetherite)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Channel Aether (Su)** Up to four times per day the verdant cortex may, as a standard action, tap into their node of

aetherite to release a pulse of raw aetheric energy in a 30-foot radius burst that generates an area of dim blue light within the area of effect. This energy reinvigorates creatures with the aether subtype, healing them for 6d6 points of damage. Creatures without the aether subtype are instead exposed to aetherite poison (see below).

**Envisaging (Su)** A verdant cortex communicates wordlessly, almost incomprehensibly. Caring little for the wants and desires of other creatures, they have no need to engage in exchanges of dialogue. Instead, a verdant cortex mentally scans beings for their thoughts and intentions, and then retaliate with flashes of psychic projections that emit a single concept in response to whatever the other being was thinking. The flash is usually a combination of a visual and aural stimulation, which displays how the cortex perceives future events might work out. For instance, a verdant cortex seeking to raze a city communicates this concept to non-cortexes by sending them a vivid images of the city crumbling to ash. A verdant cortex's envisaging functions as a non-verbal form of telepathy. Verdant cortexes cannot read the thoughts of any creature immune to mind-affecting effects.

**Poison (Su)** [Aetherite poison](#): Channel—contact; *save* DC 17; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Con damage and 1d4 Cha damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Radioactive Spores (Su)** A thin cloud of sweet-smelling spores surround the verdant cortex in a radius of 30 feet. Any living creature that dies within this radius rises again as an aetheric spore slave under the cortex's control in 1d4 minutes. A verdant cortex may create and control any number of aetheric spore slaves so long as their total Hit Dice do not exceed twice its own amount. Any creatures with Hit Dice that exceed this limit are not reanimated.

**Spells** A verdant casts spells as a 9th-level psychic<sup>OA</sup>, but does not gain any other psychic class features.

Verdant cortexes are former biological weapons that were accidentally fused with aetherite, mutated by this exposure and given terrifying psychic and telekinetic

abilities. These creatures dwell beneath the surface of Akasaat, moving toward seemingly inscrutable ends. A verdant cortex is twelve feet tall and weighs 850 lbs.

## Ecology

While all of the surface deposits of aetherite were depleted on Akasaat, deep pockets of subterranean aetherite are still present today and remain the sole purview of post-war Hierarchy mining operations seeking to develop leverage against Orbis Aurea's monopoly on the aetherite trae. One of the greatest hazards in subterranean aetherite harvesting is the discovery of creatures called cerebral cortexes. These highly-intelligent plant creatures are the byproduct of biologically engineered erahthi spore weapons infiltrating the cavernous Underworld of Akasaat and intermingling with natural aetherite deposits.

A verdant cortex is a mutated biological weapon that has joined into a symbiotic relationship with a mass of raw aetherite, growing into an ambulatory mass possessed of an alien, gestalt intelligence and destructive psychic powers. Each verdant cortex possesses a frightening sentience cobbled together from fragmentary psychic impressions found within aetherite. When in the presence of intelligent beings, a verdant cortex "speaks" through the telepathic projections of visual and emotional abstractions. Miners who survived encounters with these unpredictable creatures sometimes describe experiencing vivid visions of vines growing over the surface of Akasaat along with a dread-inducing sense of euphoria and an unseen presence. However, these messages are not to be taken as an offer of friendship, as they are almost invariably followed up with lethal force.

The primary means by which a verdant cortex performs its terraforming process is by spore implantation into corpses. The spores of a verdant cortex can take root in a recently-deceased body and infuse it with a potent dose of aetheric radiation. This provokes a rapid mutation into a porous husk,

animated by the growing plant life within. These spore slaves remain at its creator's side for a few days, surviving off radiation from the cortex's aetherite until its infestation completely overgrows the original host body. This shambling creature is then sent out to find another sizable chunk of aetherite, where it will burst open as the writhing vines will grow around it and absorb its energy. After six months, this growth becomes a new verdant cortex.

## Habitat & Society

Verdant cortexes were once spore-based terraforming weapons that the Tritarch Ascendancy of Kir-Sharaat deployed during the Century War. These weapons were intended to terraform vast portions of Akasaat using clippings from Heartwood trees, creating regions of the planet more hospitable to erahthi life that could be used as staging grounds. The biological weapons did not take root as their creators hoped, due to intrinsic differences between the planar alignments of Kir-Sharaat and Akasaat. Unbeknownst to the Ascendancy's Chamber of War, the spores managed to survive penetration into the crust of Akasaat following orbital deployment and adapted themselves, over the course of decades, to the radiation of underground aetherite deposits, continuing their intended plan of "transforming" Akasaat, starting with themselves.

Despite their solitary nature, mapping out confirmed sightings reveals a coordinated pattern that suggests some kind of slowly expanding network. Hierarchy researchers working to understand the verdant cortex suggests that each cortex is part of some greater, singular creature that has yet to be discovered.

The presence of verdant cortexes beneath Akasaat is a well-guarded secret within the Hierarchy and the precise nature of their existence and intelligence is not shared outside of the highest-levels of the Protectorate. Word of the cortexes' presence has not yet made it to the Chamber of War on Kir-Sharaat, but such

intelligence would likely be of significant value to the Tritarch and his subordinates.

Planar scholars within the Protectorate have only just begun to research the nature of verdant cortexes and their means of gestalt propagation. However, they have discovered similarities between the means in which verdant cortexes communicate and alien entities from the planes beyond known as aeons. While direct encounters with aeons have been few and far between, their method of psychic communication suggests that there may be a connection between aeons, aetherite, and verdant cortexes that is not yet understood.

Outside of Hierarchy territories, the subterranean communities of goblins and ratfolk in the Underworld began encountering verdant cortexes long before the Hierarchy was aware of them. These communities long ago determined that the cortexes are unreasonably hostile and organize raiding parties to exterminate verdant cortexes whenever these rare creatures are sighted.

Often times verdant cortexes are encountered with a host of spore slaves harvested from Underworld-dwelling animals or humanoids unfortunate enough to be caught in the cortexes' spore aura before death. Thankfully, these created spawn have mercifully-short lifespans and often burn out before they can take root elsewhere and create more verdant cortexes.

## Aetheric Spore Slave

An aetheric spore slave is an aether-infused corpse with multiple vines sprouting out of its body. Treat an aetheric spore slave as a creature with the [aetherwarped template](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, but with the below special qualities.

**Plant Traits:** This creature's animation is provided by the plants that burrow throughout their body as well as aetheric radiation. Aetheric spore slaves lack aberration traits, but gain plant traits. They are treated as plants, not aberrations, for the resolution of effects related to creature type.

# KIR-SHARAAT FAUNA

Kir-Sharaat is known as a planet full of exotic plants and flowers. Popular understanding of the planet and nearly all artistic representations cast it as, in a word, lush. Full of glowing leaves, coiling vines, and flowers the size of dinner plates. And in many ways this is not an inaccurate assessment of the planet. But there are also animals here and plenty of them. Kir-Sharaat's unique animal like plants, thousands of insect species, and as many spiders are easy to find in the upper layers of the planet-wide canopy. Beneath the sun-lit treetops are a variety of animals adapted to the surface terrain as well as dangerous megafauna. Below ground tunnels are lush with plant and animal life among the roots of the great Heartwood trees and at the lowest levels of the planet are ocean-sized rivers coiling through the roots only occasionally surfacing before returning to the below-ground systems.

The plant-rich environment makes for an increase in oxygen in the atmosphere, keeping the world fairly warm though it is far from a jungle environment. A protective ozone layer shields life in the canopy from sunburn, while the canopy itself keeps life on lower levels safe from further exposure. The planet's higher gravity makes for stockier built creatures, thicker limbs and stronger muscles than similar animals on

other planets, save for those underwater where they are supported by the water and don't need to resist the pull of gravity.

## THE CANOPY

Nearly the entire population of wildlife in the canopies of Kir-Sharaat are essentially plants adapted to fill the roles of animals. The Heartwood trees also bud off many of the common 'animal' life that take on the roles of birds, monkeys, or other creatures common to the treetops in addition to the erahthi. Easily mistaken from a distance for the creatures they resemble on other planets, on closer inspection the plant-nature of these verdant animals becomes immediately apparent. Their movements are more fluid, often hydraulic in nature instead of jointed. While many of them serve their roles in the greater ecology to spread seeds, consume water, and complete the oxygen cycle there are distinct differences. Predatory versions of these creatures have adapted to eating plant-material though many eat the plant-life prey species instead of the normal vegetation. Thankfully rates of sexual reproduction are limited for creatures the Heartwood produces, keeping these animals in balance with demands on environment.

What animals are in the canopy other than the plant-creatures are insects. While the atmosphere of Kir-Sharaat is not high enough in oxygen to cause giddiness amongst human visitors it is enough to cause an easily recognizable effect on much of the insect life on the planet. The bugs here are simply bigger. Bees are often the size of an average human's palm, dragonflies the size of birds, and large spiders can be truly dangerous to human and erahthi alike. The sheer amount of insect life is impossible to miss at this scale, and the tree tops literally buzz with the constant activity of pollination or scavenger beetles clearing dead wood and branches. Most of the bugs here aren't

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Moving a plant or animal from one environment to another should be done with care, since there is a risk of a limb snapping under increased weight. Human visitors to Kir-Sharaat often take a few weeks to adapt to the additional strain on their muscles. Long term visitors often have to adjust on return, taking a few weeks to rid themselves of the distinctive gait called 'the hops' that comes with muscles trained to walk under higher gravity.



KIR-SHARAAT



particularly aggressive unless something that can be mistaken for prey or food wanders into the area. Some bees are aggressive, mostly those from warmer climates near the equator where they must be aggressive to compete with other species. Spiders can be a danger, often weaving traps between branches or hunting the abandoned branch roads at night.

## THE TRITARCH Dominion

Within the Dominion, the erahtli make use of the plant-creatures for food and nutrition, hunting or farming them in the sun-lit canopy. Some communities have developed a thriving industry of spider silk for industry use keeping the insect alive in the canopy for a few more decades. At least until a plant-spider capable of producing equally strong silk is discovered. Honey, be it produced by an insect or other pollinator, is a common source of minerals and concentrated nutrition. Kir-Sharaat uses the red-honey produced in the beehives as a primary food source for refugee populations in the crowded cities, leading to a new generation with a greater sweet-tooth than previous ones. As a result, a wide variety of decadent candies have been created since the end of the Century War, popular among the young as well as any human visitors to the planet.

Erahtli civilization has long domesticated and bred insects for a variety of purposes, most recognizable to outsiders in the crafting of special weave armors made from spider silk and other insect-generated resins. Ancient erahtli wore chitin armor and forged weapons from the sharpened mandibles of giant beetles, though these traditions are centuries out of use, save for ceremonial or historic purposes. Domesticated insects can be found in most erahtli communities, from pets to farm animals used in the production of textiles, lubricants, and other necessities that are not harvested from plant-matter.

Plant versions of insects have become more common in recent years. A number of erahtli researchers have pointed out that the plant-versions of these vermin

seem to be out pushing non-plant species out of their niches, theorizing this is due to a reduced need to care for offspring and the availability of additional plant-based food sources. Debate is still open on what, if anything, to do about this as the result seems to be a natural result of competition between species. Suggestions have been made to use the Tementi Sanctuary as a refuge for the endangered species due to its already protected and isolated status.

## THE DARKWILD

Wildlife that more closely resembles that found on other planets is mostly found below the canopy in the Darkwild. Mammals, reptiles, and avian life keep to the lower levels of the planet, sticking to ground-dwelling environments. They are often adapted for the aquatic and low-light conditions, with sharp ears and noses, or eyes adapted to twilight conditions. Avians tend towards ground-dwelling habitats, the few that nest in branches out-competed in the canopy hundreds of years ago and the surviving species have since adapted to safer ground nests and burrows. Insect life in the Darkwild is just as large as above, but there are far more beetles and other scavengers here and they can get aggressive when it comes defending sources of food. Any carcass in the Darkwild will be overrun by fist sized beetles within the hour and stripped bare within days, quickly processed into soil to feed the roots of the massive trees.

Megafauna dominate the surface, picking through the tree roots or extending their reach to the few areas not covered by forest near the ice caps or the Baladees Tuya. Large herbivores ready to defend each other with sharp horns and hooves move in herds from gazing location to location, searching for the grazing grounds where beams of light from above create a lush meadow full of easy to digest vegetation. Between meadows the herds will graze on mushroom fields as they follow the trails within hollow trunks of long fallen trees. When desperate in winter they will eat bark or pick off small saplings and aerial roots sprouting from the

trees. Harder to digest, but enough to keep them alive for the journey. Predator megafauna, bears or large dinosaurs, are generally solo hunters trailing after the herds to pick off any that lag behind. They will secure a kill against aggressive insect life, often dragging it back to a lair to eat in peace or share with a mate.

Smaller animal life is usually found below ground, often following the tunnels created by the roots of trees long past. The soil is shaped on a massive scale by the trees, following the course of roots and moisture that drips down the trunks. Some areas of the below-ground are almost entirely a dense network of small root structures, overgrown to the density of ground, forcing residents to tunnel through them like soil. When the great forests sway in the wind, the force rocks their roots below to create temporary tunnels that pulse in tune with the movement.

Taproots plummet down to the water table, supplying the tunnels with water and easy access to moisture throughout. Animal life in the Darkwild tunnels are encouraged in this environment to stay on the move, the temporary tunnels could close or the roots could grow thicker cutting them off from food or water supplies. Seasonal dens are common as are migrations following seasonal resources. The more secure locations are often dug into bedrock or other root resistant formations, and have been claimed by the zahajin for their communities. Even these more stable areas are not without their risks given how often aetherite is found in the same locations. Thankfully most of the local animal life has adapted to this and are resistant to the dangers of long term exposure.

## Subdermal Leech (CR 3)

Warm subterranean waters of the Darkwild are home to a tenacious and rare breed of flesh-boring parasites. Individual subdermal leeches are irritations, rather than hazards, and are usually harmless and easily removed. But when encountered in underwater swarms of fifteen or more, they can be life-threatening. When first encountered, a successful

DC 15 Perception or Knowledge (dungeoneering) check identifies the parasites in time to avoid them. If this check fails and a creature moves into an area of subdermal leeches, the parasites are quick to envelop their prey, slithering between joints in armor and abusing exposed flesh. Creatures in sealed suits that protect against exposure to the vacuum of space or underwater environments are immune to a swarm of subdermal leeches.

On exposure the leeches begin painfully chewing through their victim's exposed flesh causing 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per round for 3 rounds. Each round the affected creature must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or become nauseated from the pain. During these three rounds, an attack that deals at least 1 point of fire damage or application of salt as a full-round action kills the leeches and ends this effect.

At the end of 3 rounds subdermal leeches inflict 2 points of Constitution damage per day with no save. Subdermal leeches may be removed with a successful DC 20 Heal check that takes 1d4 hours. On a failed check the leeches are not removed and the victim takes 2 additional points of Constitution damage. Additionally, a casting of *remove disease* can purge a creature of a subdermal leech infestation.

### SUBDERMAL LEECH

CR 3

Type infestation

Save DC 15 Fortitude

Onset immediate; Frequency see above

Effect 1d6 points of nonlethal damage for 3 rounds then 2 points of Constitution damage per day.

## THE DEEP WATER

As lush as Kir-Sharaat is, most of the water is below ground in great aquifers that surface in only a few locations. This ocean comes in many ranges of salinity from fresh to brackish or salty depending on the contents of the soil and rock surrounding the underground river. The tunnels between

large pockets of water are often bare of much life, the water moving too quickly under pressure for anything to spend enough time there to settle. The water in the tunnels is often pitch black and cold, the tight quarters offering little comfort and larger animals prevented from travel between oceans. The occasional strong-rooted mollusk can be found there, and some eels or other predatory fish are able to survive by burrowing and waiting for fish migrating from one location to another to pass through.

The oceans are well lit by comparison. Because the water is often filtered through veins of aetherite the dissolved mineral is found in the water, leading to microscopic shelled creatures that sparkle with the embedded element and cast a glow in the depths. Many fish, crabs, and other aquatic life eat these and handle the high concentrations by converting it into sparkling shells or patches of scales. The flickering glow reflects their movement through the water and other fish use bioluminescent lures to tempt prey closer, mimicking the movements before lunging for a meal. The largest of the ocean residents are often the most saturated with the mineral, resulting in glowing streaks along their sides as they've evolved ways to lock the mineral into temporarily bio-safe containment.

Great coral structures find a stable home in these oceans, colonies of micro and macroscopic life find it easier to settle where the currents aren't as violent as those in the tunnels between oceans. Larger predators lurk at the edges of these corals, finding the hunting grounds as convenient as the zahajin do. Octopuses and other mollusks blend into the corals, hunting with stealth. The corals are the most abundant concentration of non-geological aetherite on the planet and are protected viciously by nearby zahajin communities. Coral destruction releases the mineral from relatively safe confinement directly into the water, which can lead to widespread radiation exposure as the environment in the area is tainted as well as any tree or community that relies on that water.

## Toxic Fish (CR 3)

Humans and other vulnerable species should be careful when consuming fish from the oceans of Kir-Sharaat. Dissolved aetherite can result in unhealthy exposures to the element. In general, fish liver and kidneys can be assumed to be poisonous. Cooking an uncleaned fish can trigger a small explosion if an embedded chunk of aetherite has been overlooked.

A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check, or DC 20 Survival check reveals this and allows the food to be properly cleaned for consumption. Failure to clean seafood before exposing it to fire can also result in embedded aetherite exploding. Characters in a 5ft radius caught must make a DC 12 Reflex save or take 2d6 points of damage. A *purify food and drink* spell, negates both risks entirely.

### TOXIC FISH, EATEN

Type poison, ingested

Save DC 13 Fortitude

Onset 2 hours

Effect 1d4 Dex damage, creature sickened for 48 hours

Cure 1 save

## UNDERWORLD

Precious little is known about the subterranean realms below the Darkwild. Most of this ignorance is due in part to the native zahajin population ferociously guarding their territory and providing little—if any—information to outsiders. Prior to the Century War, erahthi scholars of the Seeker caste had begun a decades-long research process into the depth of Heartwood tree taproots. Through combinations of mundane and magical transportation and excavation they were able to enter a subterranean cavern system located beneath the Heartwood of Kir-Arkhal (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 218). There, the Seekers discovered cavern microbiomes resplendent with fungi and forests glowing like miniature suns.

THE ÆTHERPASTEN



# AZHEDAK



## AZHEDAK

CR 1

XP 400

N Small animal

Init +4; Senses blindsense 40 ft.;

Perception +5

### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+4

Dex, +1 size)

hp 11 (2d8+2);

Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1

**Defensive Abilities** spines; Immune gaze attacks

### OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee bite +6 (1d4+1), tail slap +6 (1d4+1 plus)

Ranged spine +6 (1d4+1 plus)

### STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 13, Cha 9

Base Atk +1; CMB +1; CMD 16 (cannot be tripped)

Feats [Weapon Finesse](#)

Skills Fly +10, Perception +5, Stealth

+12

SQ spines

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** temperate caves and forest floor

**Organization** solitary, or swarm

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Spines (Ex)** Any creature attacking an azhedak with natural weapons or an unarmed strike takes 1 point of piercing damage. A creature that grapples an azhedak takes 1d3 points of piercing damage each round it does so. Additionally, an azhedak can launch a spine from its tail as a ranged attack with a range increment of 20 feet. An azhedak can launch a spine 10 times per day. Any creature that takes damage from the spines is also exposed to its poison.

**Poison (Ex)** tail slap or spines—**injury**; **save** Fort DC 12; **frequency** 1/round for 3 rounds; **effect** 1d2 Dex; **cure** 1 save; The save DC is Constitution-based.

## AZHEDAK SWARM

CR 3

XP 800

N Small animal (swarm)

Init +4; Senses blindsense 40 ft.; Perception +6

### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+4 Dex, +1 size)

hp 22 (4d8+4);

Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2

**Defensive Abilities** spines, swarm traits; Immune gaze attacks

### OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee swarm (1d8 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** consume, distraction (DC 13), poison (DC 13)

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#### STATISTICS

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**Str** 13, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 1, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

**Feats** [Skill Focus](#) (Perception)

**Skills** Fly +10, Perception +6, Stealth +13

**SQ** swarm traits

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#### ECOLOGY

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**Environment** temperate caves and forest floor

**Organization** solitary, or swarm

**Treasure** standard

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#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

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**Consume (Ex)** An azhedak swarm can rapidly consume any creature it swarms over. Against helpless or paralyzed targets, an azhedak swarm attack deals 3d6 points of damage.

**Poison (Ex)** spines, swarm—**injury**; **save** Fort DC 13; **frequency** 1/round for 3 rounds; **effect** 1d2 Dex; **cure** 1 save; The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Spines (Ex)** Any creature attacking an azhedak swarm with natural weapons or an unarmed strike takes 1d3 points of piercing damage. Any creature that takes damage from the spines is also exposed the swarm's poison.

Common aerial hunters of the Darkwild, azhedaks are nocturnal, near sightless flying mammals that use echo-location to navigate around the shadowy forest floor. Azhedak measure 4 feet from wing tip to wing tip, with a small central body that is mostly ears and mouth, and a 3 foot long prehensile tail. An adult azhedak weighs 8 lbs.

## Ecology

Residents of Kir-Sharaat's Darkwild, the azhedak are voracious predators undeterred by larger species. The coloration of azhedak varies, but general features dark brown or black skin, with short dark brown or dark green fur on the central body. Black spines, which

start at the crest of the head, cover its back and run down to the tip of the tail, making the appendage a fearsome weapon. The azhedak uses their tail to spear prey, as well as to defend themselves from predators. Azhedak are also able to fling spines from the tip of the tail, and the mild paralytic that coats the spines is often enough to incapacitate the insects, birds, and other small prey that serves as the azhedak's primary food source. Voracious eaters, likely due to the energy needed to fly and maintain a coat of spines, a typical azhedak will eat its body weight in prey in an average night. When in swarms, azhedak take on larger prey and become considerable hazards to humanoids.

When not on the hunt, azhedaks roost under roots, in caves, cliff faces, or anywhere else off the ground they can find purchase. Wrapping their tails around limbs, stalactites, or anything else at hand, they hang upside down from the perch and sleep with their heads toward the ground. They sleep for eight to twelve hours at a time, recuperating and regrowing spines so that they may hunt again when then awaken. On waking they simply let go and take wing.

## Habitat & Society

Territorial to a fault, Azhedak typically roost alone, avoiding the company of other azhedaks, with the exception of juveniles before they are weened by their mother. Notoriously combative and tempermental creatures, azhedaks will fling spines at someone or something with almost no provocation, and will furiously attack anything that disturbs their favored roost. As they are able to remain aloft and harass trespassers, most creatures find it easier to move on than challenge an angry azhedak for space. Regarded as a nuisance and hazard best avoided by travelers through the undergrowth, experienced guides know to keep a sharp eye toward the bottoms of roots, tree limbs, and other outcroppings. As it is said, best to let sleeping azhedaks lie.

While their combativeness alone would be enough to distinguish the azhedak from other Kir-Shiraat wildlife, they become even more dangerous every spring and fall. When the season turns they are drawn by a deep set instinctual urge to gather together into great wheeling masses. These mating swarms fill the night air with their ultrasonic calls and the rasp of leathery wing on wing as they flow like a single creature through the air between roots and trunks. They build a prodigious hunger in their swarms and the azhedaks will descend en masse on prey like a voracious cloud. Working in concert they can quickly bring down large animals and strip them to the bone in a few minutes in with their furious feasting.

Post swarming an azhedak female will give birth to single pup after a two-month gestation period. Pups mature rapidly, and the mother provides first milk, then captured prey for her young during the brief period of time it takes for the juvenile to reach maturity. After only two to three weeks the pup is fully grown and ready to attempt their first flight. An azhedak's first foray into the air marks the delineation between juvenile and adult, and once they take wing they set out to lay claim to their own roosting territory, leaving the parent behind forever.

Outside of predation, azhedaks are long lived, remaining hale and active well into their 20s. This longevity coupled with their short reproductive cycle has led the species to be quite fecund, and as a result they can be found virtually everywhere on Kir-Sharaat where they can carve out a niche. Only the artic poles and oceans are thought to be completely devoid of azhedaks.

Azhedaks are often hunted for their spines and the poison that coats them. Using the harvested components, it is possible to create an injection that grants the user something like the azhedak's expanded senses for a short time, as well as giving the user a sense of euphoria after the benefits wear off. The effect is accompanied by extreme eye dilation and sensitivity to sound and smell, turning to a distant gaze and

lack of response to stimuli as the effects shift from beneficial to deleterious. It's dangerous work to hunt azhedaks though, and no few beginners to the trade find themselves full of spines for their trouble. The less successful never return at all.

The drug, blindspikes, works on both erathi and non-plant creatures, leading to a black-market trade in the treated spines, as well as the azhedaks themselves. Following the Century War, multiple attempts to smuggle a viable population off of Kir-shiraat have been made by a variety of desperate and enterprising groups, most of which have been thwarted by the difficulty of transporting a population of fiercely territorial animals and the efforts of the Erathi authorities (who would be happy to shut the trade down entirely).

#### **BLINDSPIKE 100 AU**

**Type** drug, injected

**Addiction** minor

**Save** DC 13 Fortitude

A blindspike is applied by stabbing the treated spine into a vein as a standard action, granting the user a +2 alchemical bonus to Perception and blindsense 20 ft. for 2d6 minutes. After the duration the user experiences a sense of euphoria and a dulling of the sense, imposing a -4 penalty to Perception checks for an hour. Additional applications of a blindspike during that hour have no effect.

#### **CONSTRUCTION**

Craft (Alchemy) DC 25 (requires a spinetail spine)

## Azhedak Companion

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Small; **Speed** 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); **AC** +1 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d4), tail slap (1d4); **Ability Scores** Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6; **Special Qualities** blindsense 40 ft., fling spines, spines.

**4th-Level Advancement:** **Ability Scores** Str +2, Con +2; **Special Attacks** poison (*frequency* 1 round/3 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dex damage; *cure* 1 save; Con-based DC).

# CEPHALINA

*This tiny nautilus-like creature has little, delicate tentacles and large expressive eyes.*

## CEPHALINA

CR 1/4

XP 100

N Tiny animal (aquatic)

**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +5

### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 6 (1d8+2)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

**Melee** tentacle +2 (1d2–4)

**Space** 2½ ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 2, **Dex** 14, **Con** 8, **Int** 3, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 6 (14 vs. trip)

**Feats** [Toughness](#)

**Skills** Acrobatics +2 (–2 to jump), Perception +5, Swim +10

**SQ** amphibious, ink cloud

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any aquatic (Kir-Sharaat)

**Organization** solitary, pair, hustle (3–8), bustle (9–17)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Familiar:** When taken as a familiar, a cephalina grants its master a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks.

**Ink Cloud (Ex):** A cephalina can squirt a tiny cloud of luminous pink ink as a standard action. Underwater, this ink cloud creates a 5 foot space of total concealment

and sheds vibrant pink light like a torch for 1 round. Out of water this ink can fire as a ranged touch attack out to 5 feet. Creatures struck glow with a soft, pink glow similar to candlelight for 1 round that imposes a –2 penalty of Stealth checks.

Cephalina are tiny, nautilus-like creatures native to the shallow waters of Kir-Sharaat. They are herbivores, feeding on algae and other water-born plant-like. Cephalina navigate in the dark by creation of luminous ink that they use to illuminate dark spaces. Typically, these tiny creatures dwell at near-surface levels and venture up onto the shore to scrape algae off of rocks as tides lower. Cephalina are often raised in captivity by both erahtthi and zahajin animal handlers, and their ink is harvested to create phosphorescent dyes and pigments.

A cephalina measures about 1 foot across and weighs 6 lbs.



# DEEPLIGHT MOTH

*This vibrantly blue moth with a jet black stinger sheds a lambent cerulean light.*

## DEEPLIGHT MOTH

CR 1/4

XP 100

N Tiny vermin

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

**Aura** light 5 ft.

### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 size)

**hp** 2 (1d8-2 HD)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** mindless; **Immunity** all mind-affecting effects, poison

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** sting -2 (1d2-4 plus poison)

**Space** 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** poison

### STATISTICS

**Str** 2, **Dex** 14, **Con** 6, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** -6; **CMD** 6 (10 vs. trip)

**Skills** Fly +14, Perception +2, Stealth +10; **Racial Modifiers** +12 Fly, +8 Stealth

**SQ** light aura, vermin traits

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** warm forest or underground

**Organization** solitary, pair, group (3–6), or glitter (7–19)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Familiar:** The master of a deeplight moth familiar gains a +3 bonus on Perception checks made in dim light or darkness.

**Light Aura (Ex):** Deeplight moths create an area of dim light in a 5-foot radius around themselves. They can suppress or resume this ability as a swift action.

**Poison (Ex):** Ingested or Sting— injury; *save* Fort DC 8; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Wis damage; *cure* 1 save

## DEEPLIGHT MOTH SWARM

CR 2

XP 600

N Tiny vermin (swarm)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

**Aura** light 10 ft.

### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 size)

**hp** 31 (7d8 HD)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

**Defensive Abilities** mindless, swarm traits; **Immunity** mind-affecting effects, poison; **Weakness** swarm traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** swarm (1d6 plus poison)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** distraction (DC 13), poison

### STATISTICS

**Str** 2, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

**Skills** Fly +14, Perception +2, Stealth +10; **Racial Modifiers** +12 Fly, +8 Stealth

**SQ** light aura, swarm traits, vermin traits

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** warm forest or underground

**Organization** solitary, pair, fury (3–6 swarms), maelstrom (7–12 swarms)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Light Aura (Ex):** Due to their sheer numbers, deeplight moth swarms create an area of bright light in a 10 foot radius around themselves. They can suppress or resume this ability as a move action, as it takes longer for the swarm to synchronize. Once per day, a swarm of deeplight moths can choose to flash in chaotic patterns as a standard action, mimicking the effect of *hypnotic pattern* with a caster level equal to their hit dice.

**Poison (Ex):** Ingested or Sting— injury; *save* Fort DC 12; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d6 Wis damage; *cure* 1 save

Deeplight moths are bioluminescent winged insects that live within all parts of the Kir-Sharaat's Darkwild and are drawn to areas with high concentrations of aetherite deposits and fresh flowing water.

They typically are about four inches in length with a wingspan of eleven to twelve inches and typically weigh just under half a pound.

## Ecology

Deeplight moths have soft hairs covering their wings, antennae, and bodies with a silver coloration with faint bluish accents, which are both waterproof and oil resistant. Despite this coloration, they glow with a wide variety of neon colors depending on which subspecies they belong to and have been known to change this glow color when stressed or sickly. Deeplight moths are equipped with a poisonous stinger on their abdomen, used to defend themselves from predators and are quite toxic if eaten, making them unpalatable to all but the hardiest of predators.

Deeplight moths favor wet environments and must lay their eggs in water. When the eggs hatch the young larvae seek out lakes, slow-moving rivers, or other pools of water to live in until their metamorphosis draws near, feeding on algae and diatoms found on rocky surfaces. Once they reach enough maturity to begin their metamorphosis, they leave the water behind and seek out any nearby foliage to begin spinning their chrysalis. Once they emerge from their chrysalis, they feed on any foliage or insects that they can catch while their large wings begin drying. After their wings dry, young deeplight moths take to the air and flock together with any others of their kind in the

area, spending a fair amount of time together as they explore their new environment, joining other groups of deeplight moths until there are enough to be classified as a swarm.

## Habitat & Society

Deeplight moths are drawn to light and warmth, including

the radioactive warmth of aetherite. These moths congregate around sources of aetherite and also creatures of the aether subtype, especially phalanx. They are passive creatures unless they feel threatened, fluttering around in the dark collecting pollen and spores from local Darkwild flora and while they are not a significant threat individually, swarms of deeplight moths can be considerably hazardous to Darkwild travelers.

While the Erahthi have a particular fondness for deeplight moths for purely aesthetic reasons, zahajin regard these creatures with a spiritual reverence. Some zahajin clans claim that deeplight moths are beacons that guide the dead to their final rest and swarms of deeplight moths represent great tragedy in the recent past. Both erahthi and zahajin have myths of deeplight moths serving as shepherds for wayward spirits or a lost traveler within the Darkwild, and zahajin are unlikely to initiate combat against a creature travelling with the company of deeplight moths unless directly threatened. During the foundation of the ancient truce between zahajin and erahthi, deeplight moths appeared in great numbers around places where both zahajin and erahthi gathered.

### DEEPLIGHT POISON 100 AU

Type poison (injury or ingested)

Save Fortitude DC 12

Frequency 1/round for 6 rounds

Effect 1d3 Wis damage; Cure 1 save



# JAGUN

*A long sinuous creature of armored segments on four legs tapers into a pointed, triangular head with eight eyes and a fanged maw.*

## JAGUN

CR 3

XP 800

N Large animal

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, scent; Perception +9

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 22 (4d8+4)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 20ft

**Melee** bite +7 (1d10+4), tail pincer +6 (1d8+4)

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

**Special Attacks** charging stride

### STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 17, **Con** 13, **Int** 1, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 5

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

**Feats** [Improved Initiative](#), [Skill Focus](#) (stealth), [Weapon Focus](#) (bite)

**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Climb +9, Perception +9, Stealth +18, Swim +8; **Racial Modifiers** Acrobatics+4, +4 Perception, +8 Stealth

**SQ** sprint

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** temperate caves and forest roots (Kir-Sharaat)

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** incidental

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Charging Stride (Ex)** A jagun can ignore difficult terrain when charging and may charge while using its climb speed on vertical or inclined surfaces. The runner may make one 90 degree turn while charging.

**Sprint (Ex)** Once per minute a jagun may sprint as a swift action, increasing its land speed to 60 feet for 1 round.

There are few creatures among the roots and forest floor of Kir-Sharaat as swiftly lethal as the jagun. Capable of powerful burst of speed, with a keen eye and hunter's instincts, they have few beasts that can match them on the forest floor. Able to find purchase on all but the most sheer surfaces, as well as being a strong swimmer, the jagun is an equal opportunity predator that consumes anything it can stalk and kill. A jagun measures 12 feet long and weighs 800 lbs.

## Ecology

Jagun are ambush predators, preferring to stalk and attack unwitting prey with a ferocious rush. Jagun follow up their initial rush against prey with powerful bites and strikes with their tail pincer, aiming to disable prey as fast as they can.

Solitary hunters, jagun range over a territory that spans several miles, only moving on to a new hunting ground when prey becomes scarce. They will try to avoid other runner's territory, recognizing such by scent markers, unless truly desperate. Daylight rarely filters down to the forest floor, so while technically nocturnal, there is virtually no hour of the Kir-Sharaat day a runner could not be active. When not actively foraging a runner will nest in a cave or root structure where it can avoid other predators, and remains in a lethargic state there for nearly 20 hours a day. The rest of the time they are on the prowl, and in lean times, will stay on the hunt for much greater portions of the day.

Jaguns are hermaphroditic, and will seek out a mate when in season roughly every 14 months. Encounters are brief and violent, often leaving one or more injured, and jagun have been known to simply eat a potential mate instead, if hungry enough. Afterward, both participants will then lay a clutch of six to eight fertilized eggs in a shallow pit and cover them with leaves and debris. That is the extent of the parenting that the runner typically exhibits, and mature jagun

have been seen hunting their own offspring, indicating little to no familial attachment. The eggs take 3 months to mature, and once the ravenous young emerge from their shells they scatter quickly to avoid the hunger of their siblings, or become the first meal of their quicker relatives. Juveniles take only a year to mature, but fierce competition for hunting ground takes the lives of many.

Though it is rare, jaguns have been successfully domesticated. The process involves intensive conditioning and can only be done with juvenile jagun shortly after they hatch, leading to a small but lucrative market in jagun eggs. The process takes years, and is said to be much closer to taming predatory birds than any other kind of animal. Once tamed, jagun make impressive war mounts and hunting allies, redirecting their ferocity toward the foes of their chosen companion with singular focus, though they are loyal only to their trainer and will attack anyone or anything else they consider prey.

With the end of the Century War word of the ferocious jagun has spread throughout the Protectorate, no doubt embellished in the stories of returning soldier that served in Kir-Sharaat raids, and a trade in both eggs and living specimens has grown among some wealthy circles. Anyone hoping to make a successful hunt will either have to secure erathi approval or find some other way to reach the forest floor and return with living cargo, not to mention the difficulty of smuggling such things off planet, but if



the price is right there are always some enterprising groups willing to try, or hirer contractors for the work.

## Jagun Companion

**Starting Statistics:** Size Large; Speed 30 ft., climb 20ft.; AC +3 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d8); **Ability Scores** Str 17, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 11, Cha 2; **Special Qualities** darkvision 60ft, scent.

**4th-Level Advancement:** **Ability Scores** Str +2, Con +2; **Speed** 40ft., climb 30ft., swim 20ft.; AC +5 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d10), pincer (1d8); **Special Qualities** charging stride, sprint.

# FLYTRAP, STALKER

*This ambulatory plant draws itself along on multiple vine-like legs and has a gaping maw at its center.*

## STALKER FLYTRAP

CR 10

XP 9,600

N Large plant

Init +7; Senses low light vision, blindsense 120 ft.;

Perception +10

## DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)

hp 142 (15d8+75)

Fort +14, Ref +8, Will +8

Defensive Abilities camouflage; Immune plant traits

## OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bite +18 (2d8+8), 4 tendrils +14 (2d6+4 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 30 ft.

Special Attacks spore spray, swallow whole (2d8+8 bludgeoning, AC 16, 14 hp)

## STATISTICS

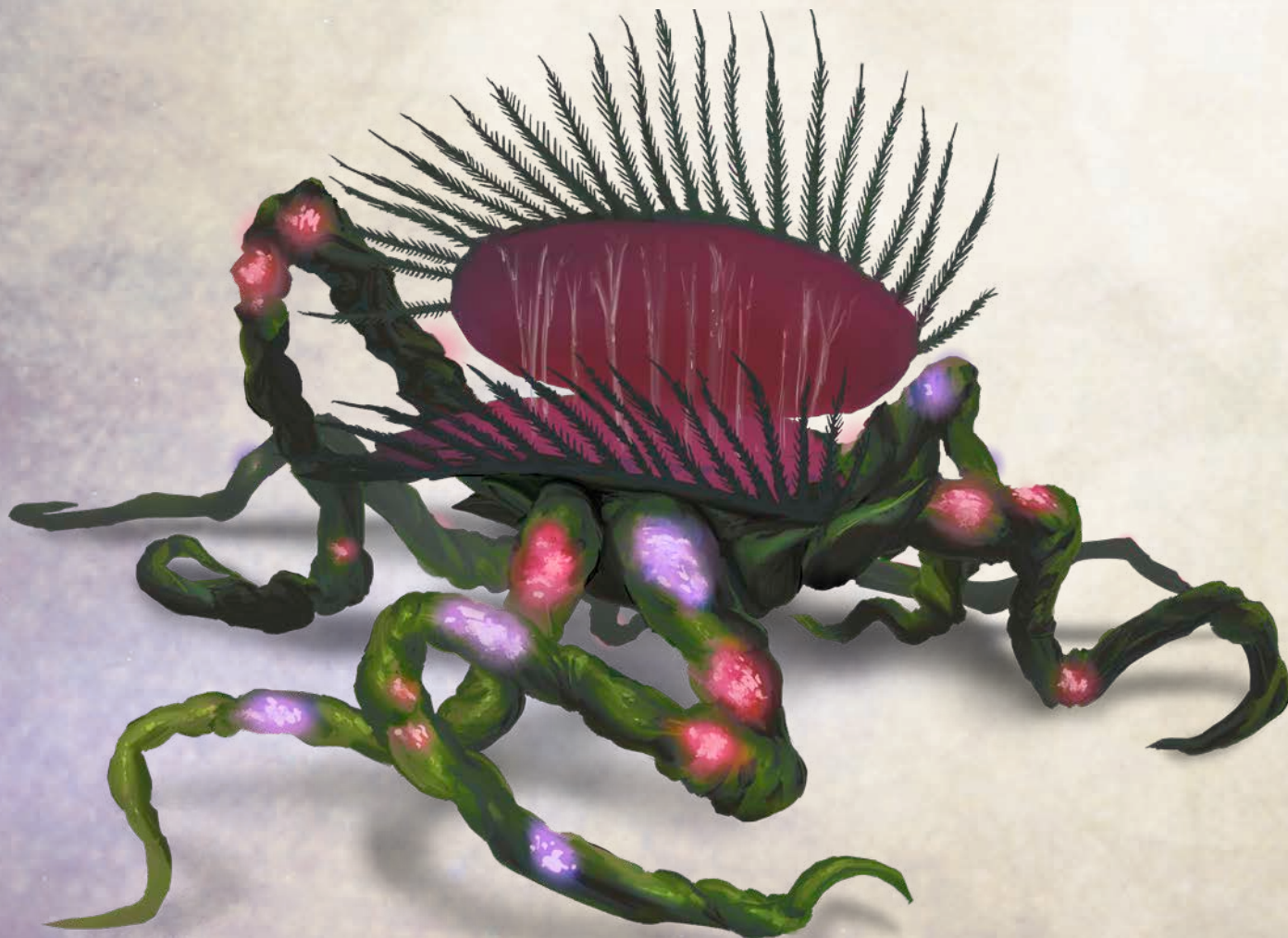
Str 26, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 4, Wis 16, Cha 6

Base Atk +11; CMB +20; CMD 33 (can't be tripped)

Feats [Cleave](#), [Improved Drag](#), [Improved Initiative](#), [Power Attack](#), [Skill Focus](#) (Stealth), [Stealthy](#), [Vital Strike](#), [Weapon Focus](#) (tendrils)

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +23

SQ camouflage



## ECOLOGY

**Environment** warm forests (Kir-Sharaat)

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** incidental

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Camouflage (Ex)** Whenever it remains stationary, a stalker flytrap is under the constant effects of an *invisibility* spell and if rendered visible (such as by attacking) a stalker flytrap becomes invisible again at the start of its turn after 1 round of neither moving nor attacking.

**Grab (Ex)** When the stalker flytrap hits an opponent with its tendrils, it deals normal damage and can initiate a grapple on its opponent as a free action. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. A stalker flytrap can pull grappled opponents toward its mouth at a rate of 10 ft. per round.

**Horrific Gorging (Ex)** As a full-round action, a stalker flytrap can completely consume a helpless creature of Medium size or smaller. When it does, it deals bite damage as a coup de grace and swallows the creature as the swallow whole ability. Allies of the swallowed creature within 30ft that see this happen must succeed a DC 15 Will save or become frightened for 1d4 rounds. The frightened condition is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Spore Spray (Su)** As a standard action, a stalker flytrap can spray a cloud of spores in a 30-ft cone. Creatures caught within this cloud of spores become exhausted. A DC 22 Reflex save negates this effect. The cloud of spores lingers for 1d4 rounds afterward, and any non-plant creature that ends its turn within must save against the spores. If a creature is already exhausted and fails its save against spore spray, it falls asleep for 1d6 rounds. A strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the spores in 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Swallow Whole (Ex)** If the flytrap begins its turn with an opponent grappled in its mouth, it can attempt a new combat maneuver check (as though attempting to pin

the opponent). If it succeeds, it swallows its prey, and the opponent takes bite damage. A flytrap can swallow a creature up to one size category smaller than it is. A swallowed creature keeps the grappled condition; the flytrap does not. A swallowed creature can attempt to cut itself free with any light slashing or piercing damage, or attempt to break the grapple. The AC of the interior of the flytrap is 16, with 14 HP. A swallowed creature that breaks the grapple finds itself in the flytrap's mouth, where it can be bitten or swallowed again. If a creature cuts itself free from the flytrap, the flytrap may not swallow a creature whole again until the damage is healed.

Among the many terrifying creatures to be found upon Kir-Sharaat's overgrown surface, the stalker flytrap is among the most feared. Invisible predators of the forests, there are few things as insidious one of these gigantic, carnivorous plants and few things are as horrific as having an encounter with one. A stalker flytrap is 10 feet long and weighs 950 lbs.

## Ecology

On the surface, stalker flytraps seem like simple creatures, driven only to wait and feed on unsuspecting prey. Despite their lacking intelligence, however, these flytraps are surprisingly intense and cunning hunters. Patient, they have been known to wait for prey, unmoving, for days at time. When creatures wander unsuspecting into the creature's massive maw, it is often too late before they realize what has happened and are snapped up within the flytrap's mighty jaw.

More deadly than the creature's massive mouth is the innate camouflage that it possesses. A stalker flytrap is able to blend into its surroundings almost flawlessly, rendered effectively invisible to the natural eye. This allows them to wait largely undisturbed for a meal to come to where it waits, striking often without much resistance. While this invisibility is natural, it



is not insurmountable—once observed or attacked, a stalker flytrap often reveals itself in all its terrible glory. Fear of the sight of it often enough to paralyze most creatures that would come across it.

A stalker flytrap also possess multiple small tendrils that lay across the area where it airs, often appearing as little more than roots or vines among the underbrush. Immensely strong, these tendrils allow the flytrap to attack and subdue more dangerous prey, as well as drag unconscious or defeated foes towards its gaping maw.

The most notable feature of the stalker flytrap is the large maw that dominates the majority of its body. While usually invisible, seeing or being trapped within the flytrap's mouth provides the victim with one of the most terrible sights the creature could provide—a giant, brown flesh interior, flowing with saliva and mucous and lined with thousands of tiny, barb like teeth. Victims are often eviscerated within minutes. The rest of the stalker flytrap's body, when visible, seems to consist largely of a mass of writhing tentacles that wrap around a large stalk. The tentacles, shorter than the vines used to set upon prey, provide the flytrap with information about the immediate area, allowing them to sense and track movement, changes in the area, and a variety of other information. The base of the stalk itself secretes a thick mucus that allows flytrap to glide across the ground in the event it needs to relocate or scout for new prey. The stalker flytrap can stand exceptionally tall—up to ten feet tall.

The natural lifespan of the stalker flytrap is unknown. They live and they die unseen by the untrained eye of those wandering through the forests. Young stalker flytraps first begin to move and feed after about a year, starting at about a foot and a half tall. They grow rapidly, and within five years reach their full size.

## Habitat & Society

The stalker flytrap can only thrive as well as the environment around it. Because of this, these flytraps typically favor the warmest forests on Kir-Sharaat, often drawn to where the populations of indigenous creatures are the highest. This allows them to feed for long as possible before the selection thins out and they must move on to new hunting grounds. However, stalker flytraps are capable of surviving just about anywhere where there is plant life for them to blend in with and wildlife for them to feed upon, though they have never been found in the coldest parts of Kir-Sharaat. They tend to favor more dense underbrush and thick canopies, shying from open clearings and settlements.

Stalker flytraps are typically solitary predators. Highly territorial, a single flytrap can move about and feed upon creatures in an entire section of a forest, using it's mucus to mark its territory against other hunters that may come into its feeding grounds. If another predator—particularly another flytrap—comes into a stalker flytrap's hunting grounds, it will instinctively seek out and attempt to kill the invader through whatever means it can.

Stalker flytraps reproduce by spraying spores out in an area, allowing these to pollinate and mutate the flora in the hopes of growing another stalker flytrap. Once an area has been seeded with spores, the flytrap typically moves on, not caring to see the fruits of its seedlings—nor wanting to come into conflict with them as they grow. A flytrap typically seeds an area once the prey begins to run thin and it moves on to newer hunting grounds where food is more plentiful, leaving the spore to sprout and grow into what, in time, will be a new horror for the repopulated area.

The spores of a stalker flytrap have a noticeable secondary effect—to most living creatures, they have a distinct sedative property. A flytrap will often use their spores to weaken victims that wander too close to it, before they can put up too much of a fight. If engaged by attackers, the flytrap will use its spores to

advantage as well, billowing them out in a cloud in front of it the hopes of weakening its attacker or even putting them to sleep, after which it immediately feeds on the victim.

The denizens of Kir-Sharaat often make rooting out these invisible menaces a priority once their presence has been discovered, and many a hunting party, traveler, or explorer has been lost to their grasps. Adventurers are often hired or entire hunting parties formed simply to try and track down one in an area. Evidence of saplings usually leads to destruction at fear of infestation and more of flytraps springing up in up the coming years. Because of this, stalker flytraps are rarely found near settlements, and often not foolish enough to wander too close to them—though appetite can override sense in many cases.

A stalker flytrap views other creatures as little more than food. It doesn't possess the deeper intelligence needed to truly understand or discern creatures that can harm it from prey, and will often set upon anything that its tentacles catch wind of passing through. The only creatures they can readily discern are other stalker flytraps, leading to either conflict or retreat. Upon finding a smaller flytrap, a stalker flytrap will understand this as a sign that the area had been thinned out and must repopulate, often spurring it to move on.

## Variant Flytrap Stalkers

Some variant breeds of flytrap stalkers exist across Kir-Sharaat, specialized to specific environments.

### AQUATIC STALKERS

Found in coastal regions of Kir-Sharaat's surface oceans, aquatic stalkers are covered in layered growths of seaweed and slimy bottom-dwelling vegetation.

**Challenge Rating:** As a flytrap stalker +1.

**Subtype:** A flying stalker gains the aquatic subtype and the amphibious universal monster ability.

**Speed:** An aquatic stalker gains a swim speed of 50.

Additionally, the aquatic stalker gains the jet universal monster ability with a speed of 200.

### DEEP STALKERS

Deep stalkers are subterranean variants of a traditional flytrap stalker and have fungal bodies and subsist on decomposing flesh rather than live kills. These creatures possess more virulent spores and the ability to temporarily raise the dead to protect it.

**Challenge Rating:** As a flytrap stalker +2.

**Senses:** Deep stalkers possess blindsight rather than blindsense.

**Speed:** A deep stalker has a climb speed of 20 ft. and a burrow speed of 10 ft.

**Deep Spores:** A deep stalker's spore spray takes the form of a 30-foot radius emanation rather than a cone. Additionally, a deep stalker may use its spore spray as a move action rather than a standard action.

**Reanimator:** A deep stalker that kills its prey with its swallow whole ability can regurgitate the creature's corpse as a zombie with the advanced template as a free action. Undead created in this manner serve the flytrap stalker until slain. A deep stalker may control a number of hit dice of undead equal to twice its hit dice (usually 30). Additionally undead created beyond this limit are not under the flytrap stalker's control.

### FLYING STALKERS

Flying stalkers are aerial predators that move with clumby grace but startling speed. Thankfully rare, these variant flytrap stalkers prowl the highest reaches of remote forests.

**Challenge Rating:** As a flytrap stalker +1.

**Speed:** A flying stalker gains a fly speed of 60 with poor maneuverability.

**Feats:** A flying stalker trades out [Improved Drag](#) for [Flyby Attack](#).

**Spore Cloud:** Rather than create a 30 foot cone of spores with its spore spray ability, a flying stalker can opt to dust an area with its spores as a full-round action. The flying stalker may move up to twice its speed and any spaces it passes through or occupies are affected by its spore spray ability.

# Root Star

*Five violet tentacles sprout from within a patterned shell from which four yellow eyes peer out.*

## ROOT STAR

CR 1/2

XP 200

N Small animal (aquatic)

**Init** +3; **Senses** low-light vision, darkvision; **Perception** +2

### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 6 (1d8+2)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** shell retreat

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** 5 tentacles +3 (1d3 plus grab)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 11, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 3

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +0 (+5 grapple); **CMD** 13 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** [Weapon Finesse](#)

**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Climb +4, Stealth +19; **Racial Modifiers** +10 Acrobatics, +8 Stealth

**SQ** amphibious

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** temperate caves and forest roots

**Organization** solitary, or rout (4-7)

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Shell Retreat (Ex)** root stars can withdraw into their shells completely, increasing their natural armor bonus to +5 but decreasing their speed to 0.

Found all over the roots and caverns of Kir-Shiraat's Darkwild, root stars are agile and curious cephalopods. Their five tentacles are ideal for climbing around the tangled environs of the forest floor and tunnels below, while their sharp eyes are able to penetrate the gloom of the leaf choked

ground and caverns below. With strong limbs and an incredibly sharp beak they hunt insects, small mammals, as well as fallen fruit and mushrooms. Quick and ever alert for danger, root stars flee larger predators when they must, but if threatened without the opportunity to escape they grab onto any available surface and retreat completely into their shell, offering no soft point for a potential threat to attack. A root star measures three feet across without counting its tentacles and weighs 150 lbs.

## Ecology

Extremely intelligent animals, root stars commonly fashion simple tools from rocks and sticks, and have been observed to have complex problem-solving skills. Social beasts, they can often be found in small family groups, or routs, that travel and forage together. Naturally capable of metachrosis—the ability to change their pigmentation—they express their emotions via complex color bursts and patterns on their skin, and can make whistling calls channeled through their shells to communicate over long distances.

Root stars reproduce by laying eggs, which the female will typically attach to the bottoms of roots or tree limbs where the rout is nesting. The eggs take eight to twelve months to hatch, and stars can spawn roughly once a year. A typical clutch consists of 2–3 eggs, and there are normally only a few fertile females in a rout, so each new generation is rarely more than 6 youths. The entire rout will take turns guarding the clutch. Once hatched they remain juvenile for five to seven years, after which they are fertile until fifteen. Juveniles stay with the rout until mature, then the males will leave and seek out a new rout to join, while females remain in their family rout. Star elders of either sex tend the nest and watch over the eggs of the rout in their remaining years, allowing the younger individuals to forage for the group. The lifespan of



root stars can extend beyond twenty years, but that longevity is quite rare.

Root star shells are extremely durable, surprisingly light, and develop ornate and vibrant whorl patterns as the root star ages. Shell outer coloration is generally dark brown or gray on the front-top side and shades toward green or blue and lighter in a repeating whorl patterns. The interior of the shell remains a pearlescent white.

## Habitat & Society

More curious than cautious, root stars quickly overcome any fear they might have of the trappings of civilization. Attracted to the sounds and smells, they can be found around settlements of any size, and are particularly drawn to dumps and trash heaps for the easy foraging. Natural problem solvers with clever appendages, they are regarded as something of a nuisance as few places can be considered truly 'root

star proof' from the always hungry little omnivores. Nothing short of a locked metal box can keep a root star away from provisions once it has caught the scent of them, and Kir-Shiraat naturalists joke that it is only a matter of time before the cephalopods figure out how to pick locks. It is not unusual for stars to steal other items as well, as they have an insatiable fascination with bright shiny things, which they invariably bring back to the root nest.

## Root Star Companion

**Starting Statistics:** Size Small; Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC +3 natural armor; **Attack** 2 tentacles (1d3 plus grab); **Ability Scores** Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 3; **Special Qualities** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, shell retreat.

**4th-Level Advancement:** 5 tentacles (1d4); Ability Scores Str +2, Con +2.

# TAINWURM

An enormous serpentine creature rises up, bristling with writhing tendrils.

## TAINWURM

CR 10

XP 9,600

N Large animal

**Init** +8; **Senses** low-light vision, tremorsense 30 ft.;  
Perception +11

## DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 142 (15d8+75)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +15, **Will** +8

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

**Melee** bite +18 (4d6+8), 2 tentacles +13 (1d8+4 plus grab)

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

**Special Attack** heedless charge

## STATISTICS

**Str** 26, **Dex** 18, **Con** 21, **Int** 3, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +20 (+24 grapple); **CMD** 35 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** [Dodge](#), [Improved Initiative](#), [Improved Vital Strike](#), [Iron Will](#), [Lightning Reflexes](#), [Power Attack](#), [Run](#), [Vital Strike](#)



**Skills** Acrobatics +4 (+8 to jump with a running start, +8 to jump), Climb +16, Perception +11, Stealth +11

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** Darkwild (Kir-Sharaat)

**Organization** solitary or pair

**Treasure** none

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Heedless Charge (Ex):** When a tainwurm runs or charges it may ignore difficult terrain.

Tainwurms are enormous and vicious predators native to the wilds of Kir-Sharaat. These cunning are tremendously fast and capable of easily climbing up the planet's gigantic trees. Tainwurms are solitary and ruthless hunters, infrequently choosing to hunt as a mated pair. In spite of their best efforts, zahajin have been unable to capture and tame tainwurms, and young tainwurms raised in captivity often turn on their handlers with gruesome results. Only through the aid of magic or another supernatural bond has a tainwurm been able to be controlled, and even then such creatures are willful and ferocious. Isolated incidents of a young tainwurm imprinting on a druid and serving as a lifelong companion, though such occurrences are incredibly rare.

An adult tainwurm measures 20 feet in length and weighs 4,500 lbs.

## Tainwurm Companion

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Medium, **Speed** 30 ft.; **AC** +4 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d8); **Ability Scores** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 10; **Special Qualities** low-light vision, heedless charge.

**7th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Large; **AC** +3 natural armor; **Attack** bite (2d6), 2 tentacles (1d6 plus grab); **Ability Scores** Str +8, Con +4; **Special Qualities** tremorsense 30 feet.

# ZAHAJIN, IYUAJA

Deep in the twisting morass of roots and stone that makes up the flooded, twilight realm of Kir-Sharaat's Darkwild, the zahajin are the undisputed rulers. Even in ages when the Tritarch waged war against the zahajin, they were the primacies of this twilight domain. But for all that the zahajin rule the material Darkwild, the fey creatures that inhabit its reflection on the Evermorn are equally as entrenched in their power. During the first war with the erahthi, zahajin survivors fled through thin-spots into the Evermorn in search of respite from the genocide of their people. Little is known of this era or the zahajin as they existed before their first foray into the Evermorn. Even the timing of this event is uncertain, as zahajin historical record is largely an oral tradition and poorly kept, while the fey seem content to obfuscate the truth to their own enigmatic ends.

When the zahajin finally returned to Kir-Sharaat from the Evermorn they were not the same creatures that first stole away into that time-wracked plane. They had taken on the traits of fey creatures, but however many untold ages passed on the Evermorn was enough to transfigure the zahajin in myriad ways. This transfiguration, combined with their exposure to raw aetherite located deep within the Darkwild, led to a host of unpredictable mutations among their kind. Often times these mutations are purely superficial, such as vestigial eyes or brittle spines. But occasionally a zahajin instead expresses a heritage connected to a powerful fey creature existing further back in its lineage. These zahajin are called iyuaaja (ee-WA-sha) in their own language, which when translated into Hymnas means "long blood."

## FEY ANCESTRY

The *iyuaaja* are seen as curiosities among typical zahajin and represent less than 3% of the total zahajin population on Kir-Sharaat. Though they visibly

express powerful fey traits, they are less specialized than others of their kind and are often times seen as "weaker", due to their lack of the keen hunters' aspect and primal force of presence common among ordinary zahajin. Curiously, while they are immune to aetherite radiation they are not dependant on it as their kin are. No special place in zahajin society is reserved for the iyuaaja, though among the fey courts of the Evermorn, these progeny of ancient fey unions are often accepted into the arms of their ancestors, even if they do not remember the birth of their own scions, due to the erratic nature of the Evermorn.

The zahajin subraces presented below have different ability score modifiers than those presented in the *Aethera Campaign Setting* and lack many of their kin's powerful abilities. The iyuaaja are therefore better-suited for player characters than standard zahajin. Each iyuaaja is represented by a powerful fey creature, and the iyuaaja listed below represent only a handful of their total number, while more strange and alien iyuaaja may exist elsewhere on Kir-Sharaat.

All iyuaaja zahajin possess the following base statistics, in addition to ability score modifiers and special abilities provided by their fey heritage.

**Humanoid (aquatic, zahajin):** Iyuaaja zahajin are humanoids with the aquatic and [zahajin](#) (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 564) subtypes.

**Medium:** Iyuaaja zahajin have no size adjustments.

**Amphibious:** Iyuaaja zahajin are comfortable both in and out of water.

**Darkvision:** Iyuaaja can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Low Light Vision:** Iyuaaja can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

**Slow Speed:** Iyuaaja zahajin are as slow on land as their kin and possess a 20 base speed.

**Swim:** Iyuaaja zahajin have a swim speed of 30.

**Light Blindness:** Abrupt exposure to bright light blinds iyuaaja zahajin for 1 round; on subsequent

rounds, they are dazzled as long as they remain in the area of effect.

**Aetherite Radiation Immunity:** Iyuaja zahajin are immune to the toxic effects of aetherite exposure.

**Languages:** Iyuaja zahajin begin play knowing Zahaj-el. Iyuaja with a high Intelligence can choose from the following bonus languages: Aklo, Aquan, Erahthi, Hymnas, or Sylvan.

## Erl-Kith

Tall and regal, erl-kith possess wings of autumnal leaves where feathers should be and wooden antlers. They are proud, willowy, and quick.

- **Ancestry:** erlking<sup>B4</sup>
- **Ability Modifiers:** +2 Dex, +2 Cha, -2 Str
- **Wood Attunement:** Erl-kith gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls when attacking with weapons made entirely of wood.
- **Autumn Wings:** Erl-kith possess immense wings of autumnal leaves, granting them a fly speed of 40 feet.

## Glai-Kith

Regal and cunning, glais-kith's skin possess a greenish hue. They are subtle and grounded, with a keen eye for deception.

- **Ancestry:** glaistig<sup>B5</sup>
- **Ability Modifiers:** +2 Con, +2 Wis, -2 Int
- **Earth Supremacy:** Glais-kith gain a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both they and their opponent are touching the ground.
- **Burrow:** Glais-kith possess a burrow speed of 20 feet.

## Hama-Kith

Hama-kith are reclusive and elusive, with skin like freshly polished wood. Their ability to commune with trees makes them a target of much suspicion among other zahajin.

- **Ancestry:** hamadryad<sup>B4</sup>
- **Ability Modifiers:** +2 Con, +2 Cha, -2 Str
- **Nature Tongue:** Hama-kith may *speaking with plants* at will, but may only communicate with trees.

- **Natural Climber:** Hama-kith are at home in trees and gain a climb speed of 40.

## Muse-Kith

Possessed of otherworldly brilliance and presence, muse-kith have long, diaphanous fins in regal shades of crimson and gold.

- **Ancestry:** muse<sup>B5</sup>
- **Ability Modifiers:** +2 Int, +2 Cha, -2 Str
- **Brilliance:** Muse-kith are unnaturally quick learners and gain 1 additional skill point per level.
- **Inspirational:** Whenever a muse-kith uses the aid another action they provide a +3 bonus rather than a +2.

## Norn-Kith

Norn-kith are tall and muscular with manes of sinewy hair. They are attuned to the Score in ways others of their kind could never dream of. Visionaries with enigmatic goals, norn-kith are most likely to be drawn off-world to discover their destinies.

- **Ancestry:** norn<sup>B3</sup>
- **Ability Modifiers:** +2 Str, +2 Cha, -2 Dex
- **Visionary:** Whenever a norn-kith gains an insight bonus from any source, treat that bonus as +1 higher.
- **Fated:** Once per day as a free action, when norn-kith rolls a saving throw they may choose to roll twice and take the better result.

## Ravn-Kith

Drawn to war and suffering, ravn-kith seek to insinuate themselves into any ongoing conflict. They are tall and lean with dense musculature and gray-black skin with feathery growths at their shoulders and in place of hair.

- **Ancestry:** vilderavn<sup>B5</sup>
- **Ability Modifiers:** +2 Str, +2 Cha, -2 Con
- **Hex Ward:** Ravn-kith gain a +2 bonus against hexes or spells with the curse descriptor<sup>UM</sup>.
- **Soul Eater:** A ravn-kith may cast *death knell* once per day as a spell-like ability.

# ZAHAJIN, IYUJA (GLAI-KITH)

*With spear and shield, this green-skinned, aquatic humanoid stands tall and defiant.*

## ZAHAJIN, IYUJA (GLAI-KITH)

CR 1/2

XP 200

Iyuja zahajin fighter 1

CN Medium humanoid (aquatic, [zahajin](#)<sup>ACS</sup>)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;  
Perception +3

### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

**hp** 13 (1d10+3)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

**Immune** aetherite radiation; **Weakness** light blindness

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

**Melee** livespear +3 (1d8+2)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (with livespear)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14

**Feats** [Exotic Weapon Proficiency](#) (livespear), [Power Attack](#)

**Skills** Acrobatics -1 (-5 to jump), Perception +3, Swim +13

**Languages** Zahaj-el

**Other Gear** wooden armor<sup>APG</sup>, light wooden shield, shortspear

In the twilight roots of the Darkwild, glai-kith are zahajin who possess a deep and profound connection to the eternal and the natural. The ancestry of glai-kith can be traced back to the powerful glai-stig of the Evermorn, enigmatic and supernaturally beautiful fey of vast power. Glai-kith tend toward protector roles in zahajin society and many who seek to understand their inherent connection to the natural world become druids or rangers, and some tap directly into the elemental powers of earth or wood to become terrakinecists or phytokineticists.



## Ecology

Glai-kith express their zahajin mutations in ways that represent their connection to the elements of earth and wood, growing barky flesh, mossy hair, and flesh that has the striations of live wood. These elemental traits are juxtaposed with aquatic features common among all zahajin, and the occasional startling mutations of additional eyes, and vestigial limbs born of constant exposure to aetherite radiation.

Without a dependency on aetherite, glai-kith are capable of venturing far from the Darkwild, though their responsibilities and oaths sworn to zahajin communities rarely afford them the opportunity to

capitalize on this liberated state of being. Inversely, without the dependency on aetherite radiation, most glai-kith are constantly reminded of the difference between themselves and their less fey-attuned kin.

## Habitat & Society

Though glaistig have long since retreated from the material plane to focus on their inscrutable goals within the eternal Evermorn, they once held the zahajin in great regard during their exodus from Kir-Sharaat following their first disastrous conflict with the Era-Sharaat. Descendants of these unions of glaistig and zahajin have lost whatever social status they held as scions of the mythic glaistig, but nonetheless glai-kith hold a centuries-old reputation as wise and resolute guardians. Glai-kith rarely climb to the higher reaches of the Darkwild, content to hunt and protect on the ground levels and within the flooded caverns deep below the surface of Kir-Sharaat. Due to this, glai-kith are rarely seen by non-natives of the Darkwild, but they are numerous within zahajin communities.

Like others of their kind, glai-kith struggle with a profound division between their connection to the primordial Evermorn and its fey inhabitants and the more terrestrial Darkwild of their zahajin ancestors. Generations removed from the material plane have left glai-kith unsettled by their material plane cousins and though physically weaker and less attuned to the power of aetherite—and therefore less dependent on it—glai-kith find themselves feeling like outsiders among both their fey and zahajin kin.

## Glai-Kith Equipment

Glai-kith favor wooden weapons and armor and pioneered fighting techniques using highly flexible spears of alchemically modified wood designed to be used in one hand and in combination with shields.

**LIVESPEAR** 15 AU

**Type** light one-handed exotic; **Special** brace, reach

**Dmg (S)** 1d6

**Dmg (M)** 1d8

**Critical** x3

**Damage Type** piercing

**Range** 20 ft.

## Glai-Kith Fighting Styles

Glai-kith are dedicated combatants and have trained for generations in esoteric fey-born combat arts.

### GLAISTIG STYLE (COMBAT, STYLE)

You have learned the combat arts of the mythic glaistig.

**Prerequisites:** Con 13, Wis 15, Survival 5 ranks, base attack bonus +7 or monk level 5th.

**Benefit:** When in Glaistig Style you ignore difficult terrain so long as you do nothing but move during your turn. Additionally, you may use Survival to track while moving at normal speed without taking a penalty to the check.

### GLAISTIG FLANK (COMBAT, STYLE)

The natural world harries your foes.

**Prerequisites:** Glaistig Style, Con 15 Wis 15, Survival 9 ranks, base attack bonus +12 or monk level 9th.

**Benefit:** When using the Glaistig Style feat you may treat any square containing a plant of medium or larger size (such as a tree) as an ally for the purposes of determining flanking. Plant creatures (whether allies or not) count toward this ability.

### GLAISTIG CRUSH (COMBAT, STYLE)

You can crush your foes between yourself and nature.

**Prerequisites:** Glaistig Style, Glaistig Flank, Con 15, Wis 17, Survival 12 ranks, base attack bonus +13 or monk level 11th.

**Benefit:** You deal additional damage equal to your Wisdom bonus whenever you successfully deal damage to an opponent you are flanking with Glaistig Flank. This additional damage is precision damage and not multiplied on a critical hit. Additionally, your first attack each round ignores 1 point of hardness from stone or wood objects per point of your base attack bonus.

# ZAHAJIN, IYAUJA (MUSE-KITH)

*An elegant, piscine humanoid with iridescent pink scales and a swirling mane of rose-colored hair carries themselves with a fluidic grace.*

## ZAHAJIN, IYAUJA (MUSE-KITH)

CR 1/2

XP 200

Iyauja zahajin monk ([zen archer](#)<sup>APG</sup>) 1

LN Medium humanoid (aquatic, [zahajin](#)<sup>ACS</sup>)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;  
Perception +6

### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 Wis)

**hp** 8 (1d8)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

**Immune** aetherite radiation; **Weakness** light blindness

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

**Melee** unarmed strike +0 (1d6)

**Ranged** shortbow +2 (1d6/x3) or shortbow flurry of blows  
+1/+1 (1d6/x3)

**Special Attacks** flurry of blows, perfect strike 1/day

### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 8, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 14

**Feats** [Improved Unarmed Strike](#), [Perfect Strike](#)<sup>APG</sup>, [Point-Blank Shot](#), [Precise Shot](#)

**Skills** Acrobatics +6 (+2 to jump), Knowledge (history) +5,  
Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +6, Swim +12

**Languages** Hymnas, Zahaj-el

**SQ** amphibious, inspirational

**Other Gear** arrows (20), shortbow

Possessed of unearthly grace and charm, muse-kith are inherently creative exemplars of zahajin culture. Descended from unions of ancient zahajin and muses of the Evermorn, they are shepherds of culture and art, both creating and inspiring creation. Muse-kith create art that is rarely seen beyond the lightless realm of the Darkwild, capturing crystallized moments of zahajin history in paintings and song.

## Ecology

Muse-kith prefer the watery depths of the Darkwild and regions of natural beauty and splendor. They are often found within the fringes of zahajin societies, sculpting aetherite into delicate structures inherently representative of the Score. Muse-kith prefer enormous family units, sharing mates and children with little boundary from one discrete “family” to the next. They are hedonistic and aloof, though all too tragically meet with unexpected ends due to their fragile constitution combined with the harsh wilderness of Kir-Sharaat.

## Habitat & Society

Muse-kith bring creation wherever they travel, be it in tangible forms such as art or intangible forms of philosophy and song. Among other zahajin, muse-kith build new ways to tell stories and interpret tales of old. To muse-kith, the facts of a story aren’t as important as the emotional intention behind the story or the message it conveys. In these ways, muse-kith’s mutations of oral history contributed to the loss of accurate historical information within zahajin culture. Touched as they are by the divine intentions of muses, muse-kith perceive the Score in their very blood and often produce prophetic art and song without realizing it. Sometimes, these facets of muse-kith’s inspiration meet as mutation of zahajin history in song and poetry is influenced by a perception of events that have yet to come to pass, leading to a history of foretold events that serve to further confuse the true story of the zahajin, yet also guide them into an unknown future.

As artists, muse-kith creations are among the most widely known examples of zahajin art outside of their culture. Due to iyauja’s ability to travel outside of the radioactive aetherite-laden cradles of zahajin society, their artwork can be found in reaches of the Darkwild that are more accessible to outsiders. Though the most ephemeral of muse-kith art made from natural



materials and simple paints are often lost before they can be appreciated by other inhabitants of Kir-Sharaat, more durable art such as stone sculptures, scrimshaw, or aetherite carvings have not only been seen by erahtli explorers of the Seeker caste, but also brought to historic museums and put on display. In this regard, must-kith often represent an unintentional bridge between erahtli and zahajin culture.

## Muse-Kith Fighting Styles

Muse-kith are creative and tempestuous individualists and bring this sense of powerful personality with them into martial endeavors, blending music and violence into brutal art.

## MUSE STYLE (COMBAT, STYLE)

You combine martial prowess and musical aptitude into a stunning synergy.

**Prerequisites:** Bardic performance, Perform (sing) 3 ranks, base attack bonus +3.

**Benefit:** When using Muse Style you may begin your bardic performance as a free action whenever you strike an opponent with a melee attack. Additionally, each time you successfully score a critical hit against an opponent with a CR equal to or greater than your level while using Must Style, you gain 1 additional round of bardic performance.

## MUSE INSPIRATION (COMBAT, STYLE)

You find beauty and inspiration in the chaos of battle..

**Prerequisites:** Muse Style, Perform (sing) 6 ranks, base attack bonus +6.

**Benefit:** When using Muse Style you may expend 2 rounds of bardic performance to temporarily gain the benefit of a combat feat that you do not possess. This effect lasts for 1 minute. You must meet all the feat's prerequisites. You may spend another 2 rounds of bardic performance before this effect ends to replace the previous combat feat with another choice.

## MUSE REVERBERATION (COMBAT, STYLE)

Your consecutive hits in combat extend your bardic performance.

**Prerequisites:** Bardic performance, Perform (sing) 9 ranks, base attack bonus +9.

**Benefit:** When using Muse Style, so long as you are currently maintaining a bardic performance, each time you successfully damage an opponent with a melee attack you gain 1 additional round of bardic performance. Rounds gained in this fashion stack with the additional rounds of bardic performance granted on a critical hit by Muse Style. Additionally, when you use Muse Inspiration you may gain the benefit of 2 combat feats that you do not currently possess, rather than 1 combat feat.

# DRUID ARCHETYPE: LINEBOUND

Linebound are druids who adhere to ancient traditions that allow them to bind the power of a ley line into a fragment of aetherite.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** A linebound gains no proficiency in armor or shields and is also prohibited from wearing armor or shields. A linebound who wears armor or uses a shield is unable to cast druid spells or use any of her supernatural or spell-like class abilities while doing so and for 24 hours thereafter. This alters the stone warden's weapon and armor proficiencies.

**Aetherite Bond (Su):** At 1st level a linebound forms a bond with a fragment of aetherite forged into an amulet. This bonded item is similar to a wizard's arcane bond bonded item, and follows all the rules of such an item with the following exceptions.

A linebound's bonded item serves as a vessel for her spells and a conduit for communion with nature through the power of ley lines. A linebound must commune with her fragment each day to prepare her spells. Additionally, the linebound uses her fragment as the divine focus for all her druid spells. Starting at 2nd level, a linebound's fragment can be used once per day to cast one spell from the druid spell list that is of a level the stone warden can cast, even if the linebound did not prepare it that day. The spell is treated like any other spell cast by the linebound, including its casting time, duration, and other effects dependent on the stone warden's level. This spell cannot be further modified by metamagic feats or any other ability. This ability replaces nature bond.

**Eldritch Reservoir (Su):** At 4th level a linebound learns to tap into the residual energy of all ley lines, gaining an eldritch reservoir. The linebound's eldritch reservoir can hold a maximum amount of magical energy equal to  $3 + \text{the linebound's level}$ . Each day, when preparing spells, the linebound's eldritch reservoir fills with raw magical energy, gaining a

number of points equal to  $3 + 1/2$  her druid level. Any points she had from the previous day are lost. The eldritch reservoir can never hold more points than the maximum amount noted above; points gained in excess of this total are lost.

Points from the eldritch reservoir are used to fuel many of the linebound's powers. In addition, the linebound can expend 1 point from her eldritch reservoir as a free action whenever she casts a druid spell. If she does, she can choose to increase the caster level by 1 or increase the spell's DC by 1. She can expend no more than 1 point from her reservoir on a given spell in this way.

**Ley Line Exploits:** At 4th the linebound learns to manipulate the energies of ley lines and gains a number of ley line exploits chosen from a selection of the arcanist's arcane exploits. The linebound learns one exploit at 4th level and one additional exploit every 2 levels thereafter. A ley line exploit may not be selected more than once. Once an exploit has been selected, it cannot be changed. Most exploits require the linebound to expend points from her eldritch reservoir to function. Unless otherwise noted, the saving throw DC for an exploit is equal to  $10 + 1/2$  the stone warden's level + the linebound's Charisma modifier.

The following arcanist exploits are available to a stone warden: arcane barrier, arcane weapon, energy shield, flame arc, ice missiles, lightning lance, potent magic, see magic, spell disruption, and spell resistance.

At 14th level and on the linebound may select a greater arcanist exploit instead of an arcanist exploit. The following greater exploits are available to a stone warden: Burning flame, dancing electricity, energy absorption, greater spell disruption, greater spell resistance, icy tomb, lingering acid, redirect spell, and spell thief.

This ability replaces wild shape.

# KIR-SHARAAT FLORA

It is easier to answer what isn't a plant on Kir-Sharaat than what is, and for many residents they can spend most of a lifespan never interacting with anything that isn't a plant. The dominant species of the planet are the erahthi, themselves plant creatures and most of their agriculture is plant based as well. Kir-Sharaat is a large planet with abundant water and land, resulting in a range of temperatures optimal for growth. The equator features lush jungles and tropical flowers, while the middle latitudes feature more subtropical and deciduous plants. Areas of high altitude or near the poles often feature conifers and other plants with adaptations for the cold such as needles, or thick bark. The erahthi from these areas as well as the local plant-creature wildlife, often reflect their environment and share the same adaptations as the plants.

At first glance, life here is easy compared to other planets in the system. There is abundant water, ample heat, slightly higher oxygen, and few industrial concerns save for the aftermath of the Century War. But this abundance is itself a concern for the plant and plant-like wildlife of the plane. Overgrowth is a risk and the competition between species for light is intense. Smaller trees may easily be overwhelmed by a fast growing competitor, starved for light and choked by circling vines, before finally collapsing under the weight, leading to the potential death of both plants. Like any other ecology a careful balance exists between the species in any given area to keep the system from collapsing.

## THE CANOPY

The massive trees of Kir-Sharaat provide more of a backdrop for smaller plants that have adapted to growth in the canopy. Most of the plant-life interacts with each other, treating the trees more like terrain than another plant. Aerial roots and vines are common in the canopy, allowing a plant to latch

onto bark or wrap around branches to stay in place. Air plants are common throughout the canopy, tangled on any branch that offers the opportunity for it. In colder climates mistletoe and other berry plants are easy to find tangled in branches. In warmer and wetter climates, air plants include thin silvery mosses that provide housing for bright red biting beetles, and in even hotter jungles orchids in a wide variety of color and scents are found.

Not all plants in the canopy are vines. The scale of the Heartwood trees allow the crevices of their bark and branches to gather debris, eventually forming captured pockets of rich soil free of rocks and clay. The nutrient thick dirt is ideal for rooted plants, allowing shrubs and bushes to flourish. Older pockets can even support full trees, as their roots run deep into the cracks of bark. In some cases the oldest of these trees have formed natural grafts with their host, merging vascular systems and becoming impossible to dislodge. These elder trees are often found at the centers of erahthi communities and are honored as the oldest members of the community. Villages were often formed around the central tree that served as a meeting place and emergency shelter during storms or other crises.

The war drove many out of their centuries old homes, but the signs of civilization have not completely been erased yet. Bee hives left behind have run wild, leaving unharvested honey dripping out of hollows to tempt wildlife to raid the hive. The burned ruins of abandoned villages have been reclaimed by accelerated growth, marked by the brighter green of new shoots among the older growth. It is not uncommon to find a patch of thick growth covers over the remains of a crashed ship as the forest seems to actively attempt to erase the marks of war. Abandoned villages are equally overrun, though edible vines and rough shelters are usually available for adventurers willing to spend the night with the memories of war at

their doorstep. The large branches that form the roads of the erahthi are often lined with plant life serving as guardrails or even food supplies for the journey.

## THE TRITARCH Dominion

Like any other animal species the erahthi do require food, their energy needs far exceeding those of more sedentary plants. Honey and other insect products are common, but vegetable based diets are a standard throughout their communities. Before the war the villages were able spread their needs across the local surroundings and dedicate Reapers to forming and hunting for the community. But the concentration of refugees behind fortress walls and war demands on the Reaper caste have left this challenge in the hands of the Builders and Problem Solvers. Industrial food production has been the only answer to supplying the needs of the overpopulated cities. Vertical farming along the bark of the large trees is common, and uses compost from the community to recycle waste as well. The erahthi engineers have focused on vine fruit and leafy plants that are already suited to the climbing patterns of growth and it is not uncommon for the sunny side of their community trees to be covered in additional greenery tended by insects and harvesters. Now that the war is over, there has been no indication that the population of the cities intend to return to the villages so the industrial approach to food seems to be a permanent shift for now.

The Dominion has strict limitations on invasive species on the theory that a species evolved elsewhere to take advantage of every opportunity presented could quickly outpace more moderate locals. And given the welcoming nature of the planet climate, nearly every species from off-planet is considered potentially invasive. Alien fruits, seeds, and other materials are confiscated immediately at official ports, and Thorn Guard commonly raid illegal gatherings to look for off-world materials claiming 'environmental risk'. While the reason given isn't entirely invalid, it hasn't escaped notice that those targeted most often

## THE ORCHID HOBBY

Orchid collection is a favorite activity for those with the free time to collect the plants from the forests near the equator. Orchids come in a vast array of varieties and are often specialized to life in specific or even specific trees. Competitions have risen in the cities, testing the skills of gardeners to grow the plants with strict needs. Younger gardeners are fond of breeding new plant lines to combine the colors and flower shapes of different breeds. The hobby has become a symbol for some of the younger generation, representing the breakdown of sharp lines between the castes. Even so, older refugees who abandoned their home villages are particularly happy to retrieve a piece of home and are sure to gift generous adventurers in return for bringing the plant to them.

are also active participants in political or cultural rebellion.

The Dominion uses their plants to create equipment and tools, best known in the form of symbiotic plants. These symbiotes bond with a host, erahthi or other, and serve the needs of the bonded host so long as the host provides it with what it needs to live. Symbiotes are closer to plants than animals and have been designed to prevent reproduction. They produce no viable seeds and are resistant to new growth from cuttings unless treated with the right fertilizers to encourage new roots. This is a deliberate effort to keep the symbiotic life under control, since the plants are capable of moving and living without a host for some time and are often capable of a great deal of damage if left unchecked. While any specific symbiote is unlikely to overrun an area, experimenting to create new forms of symbiotes always carries an element of risk. Should a dangerous sample escape and reproduce it could lead to a dangerous crisis. The Dominion requires researchers working on new strains of symbiotes not yet properly neutralized to do their work in areas isolated from large population centers. These research buildings often include air filters as

## HYBRID VITALITY

As the Century War ended and the erahthi researchers have had a chance to consult with other biologists and druids throughout the system a curious trend has been noted. Nearly all plant life on the other planets have some parallel on Kir-Sharaat that closely resembles the alien plant life. Under the current Tritarch, research has been undertaken to examine the viability of possible cross breeds of these plants as terraforming weapons. To date, the Kir-Sharaat plant and hybrids have proven to be more aggressive when tested in simulations of either parent environment.

well as physical security to prevent pollen or spores from escaping and cross-breeding with any other plant life in the area.

## THE DARKWILD

The large roots of the Heartwood forest define ripples in the terrain, creating complex valleys and hills of thin soil over the massive roots. Where the occasional beam of light slips through the leaves above, patches of rich meadow grasses and flowers run rampant. Mosses crawl up the bark of the massive trees to stay in the light and many of the plant creatures of the canopy will briefly visit the Darkwild in these crossover areas. But most plants beneath the canopy must adapt to low light conditions in the twilight areas between the meadows. The heavy canopy prevents strong light reaching the surface of the planet, and thick mosses and oversized mushrooms are abundant here. Mushrooms stretch in giant fields following the outlines of trunks of long ago fallen trees, while shade friendly vines cling to the roots and fern forests arch overhead, often mixed sizes from small to giant.

The blackened forest of Kir-Arkhal has been left abandoned by the erahthi, and the floor of this area is coated in ash and charcoal where the forest continues to smolder to the ground. The skeleton of tree branches in the canopy above let a great deal of

light to the surface and into the Darkwild. The soil is rich with charcoal and woody remains, making it easily some of the best growing on the planet at the surface level. As a result the ground is thick with plants competing over the resources, resulting in masses of heavy vines easily dominating any weaker plant under their mass. Thick masses of heart shaped leaves conceal treacherous footing and many Darkwild megafauna fall victim to the vines. Zahajin avoid the area, claiming the vines have been known to grow up to ten feet in a single day and unwilling to become trapped in the mass.

## Unstable Tunnels (CR 3)

The great Heartwood trees of Kir-Sharaat are rooted into the ground but like any tree they are buffeted at the top by wind. This movement at the top of the trees creates movement at the base, a subtle shifting of roots with the weight of the tree. This creates areas of unstable tunnels that can collapse with little notice.

A character can make a DC 20 Survival check to notice the disturbance of root movement in a tunnel. Success means the hazard is identified and the character and their allies have 1d6 rounds to find a more stable tunnel or quickly dig enough of a hole to survive when the root moves to collapse the tunnel. Characters caught in the collapse must succeed on a DC 12 Reflex save or take 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage. Those who fail their saves are buried.

Buried characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute. If a buried character falls unconscious, they must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution check or take 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead.

## THE DEEP WATER

Few true plants can tolerate the amount of aetherite in the deep waters of the world, so the closest thing to a plant in the deepest of waters are the animal colonies of corals. But where the water reaches the surface the potential for plant life is

rich. The lowland bogs of Ranacelen are full of mangrove trees, thick mosses, and water thirsty bushes heavy with berries. Large shallow patches of the Talamader Sea are lined with reeds fields at the edges and the shallows are thick with kelp forests housing sea-adapted plant-life and fish.

Patches of thick kelp called the Nduumaar Islands float on the water, and on any given day their location shifts with the currents. The plant life has formed a rippling mat of semi-stable 'ground', at least enough to support the weight of a person in the thicker areas. These islands do present a risk to small ships at night that may get entangled in the strands. The kelp on these islands has adapted to the mineral thick water and can be used as a filter for clean drinkable water allowing stranded sailors to survive long enough to be rescued. The island also has a storied history as a floating headquarters for pirates and other sorts of scum and villainy.

## UNDERWORLD

For as shrouded in mystery as the Underworld of Kir-Sharaat is, stories from the time of the ancient first war between the erahthi and zahajin shed light on fascinating secrets of these deep realms. Stories of aetherite geodes miles in diameter housing rifts into the Evermorn are uncorroberated but nonetheless captivating.

More factual expeditions into Kir-Sharaat's Underworld thanks to excursions of the Seeker caste have revealed the existance of unusual forma of flora living within the isolated biomes captured deep beneath the roots of Heartwood trees. Types of plants not otherwise native to Kir-Sharaat's warm and wet climate can be found in these geological time capsules, from arid vegetation more at home on a world such as Akasaat to fungal masses hundreds of feet across.

Further expeditions into the Underworld by the Seeker caste have been called off by the Council of Song in light of the growing threat of the Taur.

In spite of this supposed redistribution of Seeker resources, many of the findings of this caste from Kir-Sharaat's Underworld have remained sealed by the Council of Song and the Seekers responsible for the findings shipped off to deep Gulf recon missions perilously close to Taur-patrolled space.

## LEECHWEED

The wild and unpredictable mutations caused by the overlap of chaotic fey energy from the Evermorn and aetheric radiation contribute to many short-lived and fascinating forms of plantlife found in Kir-Sharaat's Darkwild. But for as many species of plants mutate themselves into extinction, some hardy and resilient mutations remain persistant across generations.

Leechweed is an invasive plant native to the Darkwild born of unstable mutations found only in aeras of aetherite radiation. Leechweed derives all sustenance from aetheric radiation and even dampens the presence of radiation when it flourishes. Dense growths of leechweed lower the radiation level of aetheric radiation by one step. However, leechweed also poses a considerable hazard to spellcasters in its presence. A creature attempting to cast a spell in an area of leechweed must succeed at a Concentration check DC 15 to successfully cast the spell.

Additionally, the presence of leechweed raises the DC for all other concentration checks made by spellcasters within or adjacent to a leechweed growth by 5.

Due to its deletrious effect on aetherite radiation and spellcasting, zahajin typically destroy infestations of leechweed whenever they encounter it.

### LEECHWEED FILTER MASK 225 AU

Weight 3 lbs.

A leechweed filter is a breatheable fabric mask made from alchemically treated leechweed fibers. This piece of headgear grants a +4 alchemical bonus to Fortitude saves to resist aetherite radiation effects. Spellcasters wearing a leechweed filter mask treat all Concentration check DCs as 2 higher than normal.

# CRIMSON MUSE

*A twisting tree draped with vines and blooming with vibrant red leaves bears many succulent crimson fruit.*

## CRIMSON MUSE

CR 6

XP 2,400

N Large plant

**Init** +6; **Senses** low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.;

Perception +8

### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 76 (9d8+36)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

**Immune** plant traits

**Weakness** vulnerable to fire

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft.

**Melee** 4 vines +12 (1d8+6 plus grab)

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

**Special Attacks** constrict (2d4+6), grab (Large), musebloom

### STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 4, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 25 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** [Improved Initiative](#), [Skill Focus](#) (Stealth), [Vital Strike](#), [Weapon Focus](#) (vines)

**Skills** Perception +8, Stealth +10

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** forests (Kir-Sharaat)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or grove (3–6)

**Treasure** incidental (4d6 musebloom)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Musebloom (Ex)** The crimson muse tree produces a bulbous, dark red fruit known as musebloom from its branches and along its body. This fruit is very sweet, with a core full of seeds. When ingested by an intelligent creature, it has the side effect of providing the creature with a sudden and immensely heightened of creativity and ingenuity, similar to the effects of the spell [burst of insight](#)<sup>OA</sup>. This fruit is highly addictive, and

take both a physical and mental toll on those who eat it, and because of the dangers acquiring it, many are known to go out hunting it themselves. A creature that ingests musebloom treats it as a drug with the following statistics: type ingested; addiction severe, Fortitude DC 20; effects 1 hour; +4 enhancement bonus to Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma when making a d20 roll based on these statistics.

In the dense forests of Kir-Sharaat, the trees colloquially known as crimson muse trees are among the most unexpected—and deadly—predators hidden in the dense forests. Known for their highly addictive fruit, the crimson muse is typically encountered by travelers and adventurers unaware of the dangers posed by the seeming innocuous tree and the fruit it bears. A crimson muse stands twelve feet tall and looks like an average, though possibly dying, tree with scraggly, jagged branches and vibrant red foliage. A crimson muse bears musebloom, a bulbous and squishy fruit the size of an adult human's fist.

## Ecology

The crimson muse tree takes its name from both its deep red foliage and the dark red fruit that plums from its branches and vines, known as musebloom. Musebloom is a highly addictive drug, able to give those who imbibe it incredible creative and cognitive insights, an attribute that the crimson muse tree uses to its advantage. A crimson muse is able to recognize those who have ingested its fruit within the last month thanks to a unique pheromone that is released hours after ingestion. Upon such a person's return, or when threatened, the crimson muse sets about capturing its prey, using its vines to weaken them before squeezing the life out of them. Once the prey has been killed, the crimson muse wraps its victim in its prickly thorns, slowly draining them of their bodily fluids for sustenance.

## Habitat & Society

The crimson muse is a patient predator, able to feed off one capture for a month at a time. It is smart enough not to devour a creature the first time it comes for its blooms, instead waiting for the inevitable return trips after it has become addicted to the musebloom. Crimson muse rarely kill their victims, instead imprisoning them in stupors and slowly consuming them over long periods of violent addiction. Crimson muse trees are often found in isolation, blending into the forest and foliage around them, but in rare instances they appear in small groves with upwards of five others of their kind. Those who consume the musebloom fruits often inadvertently help create more crimson muses trees by spreading the seeds within the fruit, allowing them to spring up in unexpected places.

## Musebloom

Musebloom is a highly addictive but sought-after drug capable of opening the consciousness of intelligent creatures. The high provided by musebloom stimulates the heights of creative ecstasy and lofty feelings of self-worth and pride. Those enraptured by the musebloom find their creativity expanded and are visited by hallucinogenic visions of future events. This feeling, combined with the highly addictive nature of the fruit itself, leads many to become dependent on it to the point where it is necessary to accomplish anything at all, and eventually leads them to seek out the fruit itself, driving them into the crimson muses' waiting vines.

**MUSEBLOOM 450 AU**

**Type** ingested

**Addiction** severe, Fortitude DC 20

**Effect** 4 hours; +1d4 alchemical bonus on Craft, Knowledge, and Perform checks.

**Effect** instant; augury with 75%, experienced as a vivid hallucination.

**Damage** 1d4 Wis and 1d4 Cha damage



# ERIIHU, CULTIVATOR

*This towering plant has insect-like features and a bulbous, pulsing abdomen.*

## ERIIHU, CULTIVATOR

CR 3

XP 800

N Large plant (erihu)

Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +8

### DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, -1 size, +1 natural)

hp 39 (6d8+12)

Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +4

Immune mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep, stunning

### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +7 (1d8+4 plus grab and poison), 2 claws +7 (1d6+4)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks swallow whole (1d6 acid and poison, AC 12, 10 hp)

### STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 15, Cha 6

Base Atk +4; CMB +9; CMD 22 (26 vs trip)

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack

Skills Climb +12, Perception +8, Stealth +4

SQ communal physiology

### ECOLOGY

Environment Any (Kir-Sharaat)

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

Treasure incidental



## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Poison (Ex)** Bite, swallow whole—injury or contact; *save* Fort DC 15; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Dex/1d3 Wis damage; *cure* 2 saves.

Eriihu are plentiful predators on Kir-Sharaat whose behavior varies widely from animalistic hunting to military-style guerilla attacks and coordinated offenses. The remnants of a bioweapon project created by the Era-Sharaat in their early wars against the zahajin, eriihu have disturbing parallels with the azaka found on Orbis Aurea. An eriihu can reach up to thirteen feet in height and weighs a 1,000 pounds.

## Ecology

When the Collapse struck the planet that would become Kir-Sharaat, the planet's population of azaka were left behind, but not left alone. The energies released by the Progenitor terraforming engines changed the azaka into plant creatures. The process, however, was not complete, and the resulting creatures were pitiful half-formed things, struggling to survive. They might have died out completely had the Era-Sharaat not discovered them. Embroiled as they were in their prehistoric war with the zahajin, the Era-Sharaat experimented on these once-azaka, altering and training them into footsoldiers, led and coordinated by a “commander” that could stand back from the front lines and make life difficult for any zahajin strike force that got too near its “headquarters.” Undeniably effective, some fey can still tell tales of these “eriihu,” with blood-curdling descriptions of the hordes of reaping vegetation that descended upon them.

The Tritarchs are as enigmatic and uninformative on the topic of the eriihu as they are on the rest of history, but the fact remains that the eriihu were abandoned in favor of the erahthi. Early erahthi histories contain references to vicious eriihu attacks on San-Kaishan for several years that eventually just

stopped without explanation. While neither erahthi nor eriihu are aware of the reason, the eriihu lacked any sort of culture with which to pass along hatred of the Tritarchs and their new favored children. Eriihu biology ensures that any children of a given eriihu are germinated far from the parent plant, and the pollen-based minds of the brainblossoms are only rarely compatible with each other, leading to extreme territorialism and lack of socialization.

When humanity discovered the erahthi, they also discovered the eriihu. One of the first five scout vessels to land on Kir-Sharaat in 3903 was destroyed by eriihu when it touched down in a brainblossom's glade. The eriihu performed other attacks on aetherite mining operations on Kir-Sharaat over the next nine years, not helping humanity's impression of the erahthi in the process. The Century War occasionally saw battlefields on Kir-Sharaat become three-way melees when battle lines drew too close to eriihu glades. The Chamber of War attempted to weaponize the eriihu, but were curtailed by Tritarch Athrakarus himself, who forbade the erahthi involving themselves in the affairs of “these wayward and pitiable children.”

## Habitat & Society

The typical eriihu is a disposable footsoldier in the wars conducted by its brainblossom, often set the task of feeding the glade. It does this by capturing and swallowing prey of any sort, then traveling back to the center of the glade and disgorging the half-digested remains into a communal fertilizer pit. At other times, the eriihu is a basic and plentiful soldier, swarming over the enemies a brainblossom has set for itself with sheer numbers, although smaller glades will adopt guerilla tactics to flank and ambush threats.

The fact that brainblossoms inherently understand erahthi has mystified erahthi researchers, who are only now beginning to discover the markers of magical and genetic tampering from the eriihu's early history.

# ERIIHU, BRAINBLOSSOM

*This quadrupedal plant creature bears a deep violet stamen of cerebral tissue.*

## BRAINBLOSSOM

CR 4

XP 1200

N Large plant (erihu)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +11

### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 47 (5d8+25)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

**DR** 5/slashing; **Immune** plant traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 10 ft.

**Melee** tentacle +2 (1d6)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Special Attacks** pollen cloud

### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 15, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 17

**Feats** [Coordinated Maneuvers](#)<sup>APG</sup>, [Improved Initiative](#), [Pack Attack](#)<sup>UC</sup>

**Skills** Knowledge (Geography) +7, Knowledge (Nature) +7, Perception +11, Stealth +11

**Languages** Erahthi, Zahaj-El (cannot speak)

**SQ** communal physiology, communal teamwork

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** Any (Kir-Sharaat)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or glade (1 plus 3 or more erihu and/or erihu deepdelvers)

**Treasure** standard (see description)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Communal Teamwork (Ex)** Erihu brainblossoms were created to serve as commanders in the Era-Sharaat's wars against the zahajin, and some of that training remains in the genetics of the erihu. An erihu brainblossom grants any teamwork feats it possesses to all erihu within 50 feet. The erihu do not need to

meet the prerequisites of these feats. This ability is pollen-based and follows all rules for pollen listed under Communal Physiology.

**Pollen Cloud (Ex)** As a standard action, a brainblossom can open new flowers and launch additional pollen into a cloud 100 feet in diameter. This has one of five effects, lasting until the brainblossom spends another action to close its flowers or change its pollen type unless otherwise noted in the pollen's entry. This ability is pollen-based.

**Anticoagulant:** The pollen clings to creatures and objects, irritating wounds and inhibiting clotting. All slashing or piercing attacks within the area also cause 1 point of bleed. This pollen remains in effect for 1d6+4 rounds after the brainblossom switches pollen types or dies, but can be removed by a strong wind or by washing an affected character or object with a full-round action and a gallon of liquid.

**Germinator:** This pollen stimulates the production of immature erihu seeds in the brainblossom. This functions as Vomit Swarm by a 7th-level caster, except that the swarm summoned has the verdant creature template. This ability can be used once per year.

**Lachrymator:** The pollen irritates mucous membranes, forcing all non-erihu in the area to make DC 17 Fortitude saves or become sickened or fatigued, chosen when the brainblossom uses this pollen. Failing this save by 5 or more results in the target also becoming nauseated for 1d3 rounds. These conditions end naturally one round after the brainblossom switches pollen types or dies. This is an inhaled poison effect.

**Metabolizer:** This flammable pollen enhances the external nervous system function of brainblossom pollen, increasing speed and reaction time. This grants all erihu in the area except for the brainblossom the effects of Haste with a caster level equal to the brainblossom's HD. In addition, all

creatures within the area gain vulnerability to fire. This pollen can be used once per day.

An eriihu brainblossom commands its glade with an iron will. One mind, many fronds. The Era-Sharaat's tampering has given them a warlike mindset passed down through the generations, and a brainblossom is constantly at war, although the foe it fights is not always quantifiable. Brainblossoms can tower up to 14 feet high and weigh more than 400 pounds. Brainblossoms understand Erahthi and Zahaj-El, but cannot speak and must be taught to read and write.

## Ecology

When a brainblossom launches its seeds, the seeds are already motile and capable of defending themselves against predators. These seeds propagate across a wide area once out of the immediate vicinity of the brainblossom, and have been known to travel over five miles from a parent plant. This wide-ranging propagation makes it difficult to study what influences a seed to develop into a basic eriihu, deepdelver, or brainblossom, but it is known that new brainblossoms are more likely to develop from seeds that fall outside the range of an existing glade, and those seeds that germinate within a glade join that glade without complication. The pollen-based mind of a brainblossom is incompatible with its own kind, and two brainblossoms will naturally set themselves at the very limits of their influence. Any overlap in glades is a no-plant's-land, as eriihu in the area of overlap suffer violent reactions similar to hemorrhaging. Occasionally, two brainblossoms will germinate in close proximity and at roughly the same time, becoming chemically similar and producing pollen that combines both intellects into one mind.



## Habitat & Society

The typical brainblossom is still affected by the Era-Sharaat's tampering millennia ago: Built for war, and viewing everything in the world as a cause, goal, or function of war. Ironically, those brainblossoms that saw action in the Century War have begun to mellow, some ancient instinct becoming sated by true combat in a way that guerilla raids and hunting cannot satisfy. These calmer brainblossoms have adopted erahthi villages, protecting them from predators and using their subservient eriihu to aid in village tasks. Some brainblossoms have even been willing to engage with researchers, to the point where they have learned to write the erahthi language and begun to communicate.

A brainblossom is intelligent enough to use tools and magic items, but lacks most of the body parts required to use humanoid items. A brainblossom is only capable of wearing items occupying the arms, feet, neck, and ring slots.

# ERIIHU, DEEDELVER

*What at first resembled a tall front of is an enormous six-eyed, mantis-like creature made from dense vegetation.*

## DEEDELVER

CR 2

XP 600

N Medium plant (erihu)

**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +9

### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)

**hp** 19 (3d8+6)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

**Immune** plant traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +4 (1d4+2), bite +4 (1d6+2 plus grab and poison)

**Special Attacks** grab, poison, rend (2 claws, 1d4+3), swallow whole

## STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14

**Feats** [Blind-Fight](#), [Death from Above](#)<sup>UC</sup>

**Skills** Perception +9, Stealth +8

**SQ** communal physiology, deep breath

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** Any (Kir-Sharaat)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or cluster (3-8)

**Treasure** incidental

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Deep Breath (Ex)** An erihu deepdelver closes its flower buds when it holds its breath, cutting it off from the glade but maintaining any effects it had from said glade.

**Poison (Ex)** Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 13; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dexterity/1d4 Wisdom damage; *cure* 1 save.

The erihu deepdelver is a specialized soldier for an erihu brainblossom, dedicated to making deep strikes into enemy territory and fighting in the inhospitable regions of the Darkwild. A brainblossom will typically engage a threat with multiple erihu, holding back the more ferocious deepdelvers concealed in the trees above until a precision strike can lay waste to the foe. A deepdelver can grow up to seven feet tall and weigh up to 140 pounds.

## Ecology

Deepdelvers form roughly 30% of a typical erihu glade. A deepdelver's physiology and inborn training make it an ideal soldier for descending into the Darkwild and striking at the zahajin from above, although these skills are put to use easily enough nearly anywhere in the trees of Kir-Sharaat.



Researchers have witnessed deepdelvers who are cut off from their glades revert to animalistic behavior, and in this state a deepdelver will often attempt to seek out and consume aetherite. Unfortunately they cannot digest aetherite, and typically contract a fatal case of aetherite radiation poisoning, although aether-warped deepdelvers are an occasional hazard in the depths of the Darkwild.

The eriihu lifecycle begins when a brainblossom produces a cloud of pollen and seeds. These seeds are motile, moving on leg-like trichomes or wing-like samaras, and possessing a small, poisoned thorn to dissuade predators. These seeds disperse for miles, find moist, sheltered nooks, and first grow into egg-like fibrous masses reaching up to six inches in diameter as the specialized structures of the different eriihu develop inside them. A basic eriihu or deepdelver will claw its way free of these "eggs" once their claws are developed enough, but an immature brainblossom possesses no such tool, and instead begins pumping more and more pollen into the interior of its shell, until the shell bursts in a broad spray of pollen, releasing the brainblossom and establishing its initial pollen cloud. These immature eriihu grow rapidly over the course of the next few days, until they are fully grown seven to ten days after first germinating. Any newly-germinated eriihu will naturally fall into the glade of the brainblossom the new eriihu finds itself in, while those outside of any glades possess a simple, animalistic hunting intelligence which sends them ranging across the landscape for food, potentially finding a glade to call home in the process.

## Habitat & Society

Designed to descend into the Darkwild in search of zahajin, deepdelvers are hyper-specialized ambush predators intended to strike from the branches overhead. Many zahajin songs and histories relate tales of the horror inflicted by

deepdelvers, whole parties of warriors torn limb from limb while others were swallowed whole and carried back to fertilize their dread masters.

Because the deepdelver cuts itself off from the glade, it carries within itself a chemical duplicate of the mind of the brainblossom it serves. While the natural limit for how long a creature can hold its breath means that this mental image is refreshed whenever the deepdelver returns to the glade, some scholars have hypothesized that if a deepdelver were to be granted the ability to hold its breath indefinitely, the mental brainblossom within it would eventually diverge from the actual brainblossom it was based on.

The venom produced by eriihu is a paralytic and sedative, intended to pacify the eriihu's prey on the journey back to the glade. However, with appropriate harvesting techniques and alchemical refinement, eriihu venom can be made into the potent hallucinogen known as gnarl.

An eriihu glade is both the physiological melding of a group of eriihu and the physical location around the brainblossom itself. Eriihu seek out locations for glades with military planning, seeking areas with good sightlines and control over the surrounding terrain. These glades are usually situated at a joining of branches, fortified by dragging thorny barricades into place and cutting away weaker approaches, with special attention paid to any low points that water could collect in. These low points are further waterproofed with packed moss and used for the communal fertilizer pit, a slurry of plant matter and occasional flesh that provides nutrients for the glade. Adventurers have found that in the event that an eriihu glade has been preying on settlements of erahthi, zahajin, and the like, these fertilizer pits may contain undigested equipment, making them a lucrative, if unappetizing, source of supplementary income.

# OUMOERA

*This six-legged creature with bark covered flesh is covered with leafy vegetation that hides sharp thorns.*

## OUMOERA

CR 8

XP 4,800

N Large plant

**Init** +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +9

### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 102 (12d8+48)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

**Defensive Abilities** thorny hide; **Immune** plant traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

**Melee** bite +15 (3d8+7 plus grab)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 25, **Dex** 20, **Con** 18, **Int** 2, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 7

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +17 (+21 bull rush and grapple); **CMD** 32 (36 bull rush, grapple; 40 vs trip)

**Feats** [Combat Reflexes](#), [Dodge](#), [Improved Bull Rush](#), [Mobility](#), [Power Attack](#), [Vital Strike](#)

**Skills** Climb +21, Perception +9

**SQ** verdant stride

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any forest (Kir-Sharaat)

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Thorny Hide (Ex)** A creature that strikes an oumoera with a melee weapon, unarmed strike, or a natural weapon takes 1d8+7 points of piercing damage from its thorn covered hide. Melee weapons with reach do not endanger a user in this way.

**Verdant Stride (Su)** An oumoera may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at its normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other

impairment, including magically created undergrowth such as [entangle](#).

With their thick hides and rapid movements, oumoeras are often mistaken for reptiles, but are in fact ambulatory plants, native to the forests of Kir-Sharaat. Oumoera are 12 feet long and weigh 950 lbs.

## Ecology

Oumoera ascend the mile-high trees of Kir-Sharaat each day to reach the top of the canopy, where they lounge in the sun, then descend to the deep pools and rivers at ground level where they submerge themselves by night, to better absorb vast quantities of water.

Oumoera possess a large mouth full what appear to be densely packed teeth, but are in reality specialized stems with thicker thorns on their inward faces, in no way connected to any form of digestive system. This distinction however is lost on most who encounter them, as oumoeras are notoriously hostile, mashing to a fine pulp anything that moves between these imitation jaws.

As dangerous as they are, oumoeras are sometimes actively sought out to be captured and deployed in disused access shafts, wells, and sewer systems. As long as there is a clear and mostly vertical path between sunlight and water, an oumoera can be coaxed into patrolling any area wide enough for it to easily climb through.

Once a year, a pair of flowers bloom on the sides of the oumoera's head, each producing a spiny bulbous fruit if pollinated. Once these have grown sufficiently ripe, the oumoera shakes them free at the peak of its daily migration, whereupon they drop to the forest floor and begin germination into sapling oumoera. While oumoeras don't normally rely on animals carrying their seeds further from their homes, those willing to brave the dangers of their forest homes to locate such a fruit find them to be a sweet and



fragrant delicacy after removing the spine covered and somewhat rubbery outer skin.

It's also possible, if far more dangerous, to grow a new oumoera from a sufficiently large cutting, such as a leg. While far too slow to be considered regeneration by most standards, severed oumoera limbs regrow to maintain symmetry within two or three years for even the largest specimens. Carefully tended, and given access to sufficient light and water, any severed grouping of stems will also continue to grow, striving to restore symmetry, reaching full size and mobility in roughly the same eight year frame required for a new oumoera to grow from a pit.

Oumoera migrations are also essential to the life cycles of several other species within the forests they call home. Spores and sticky seeds from numerous species on or near the forest floor where vegetation is far too dense for a proper breeze to waft through stick to the hides of traveling oumoeras, spreading far and wide as a result. Meanwhile, the perforations left in the sides of the tallest and thickest of fungal stalks

as they dash up and down provide opportunities for small insects and drifting spores to find purchase where they would otherwise be unable to penetrate the stalks' firm outer flesh. Finally, the falling bodies of dead oumoeras (along with the discarded bodies of any creatures unfortunate enough to cross their path in life) do an excellent job of clearing away more delicate vegetation as they plummet to the floor, while also providing an impressively large and water-bearing bed for fresh fungal growth once they finally stop thrashing.

While the vast majority of oumoeras grow into the same familiar lizard-like form, with six climbing limbs and a single broad "mouth," certain injuries or other conditions leading to uneven growth cause around one specimen in ten to grow strangely elongated bodies or extra limbs. In exceedingly rare cases, oumoeras have even been found with extra "mouths," either appearing to be two-headed, or with extra jaws mounted at the end of their front legs in a frightening fractal growth of deadly thorns.

# ROOTSWORN

A creature composed of mossy wood, draped in a tattered cloak resembles an erahthi comprised entirely of twisted roots and leafy vegetation.

**LIRIN, SEEKER OF TRUTH**

**CR 5**

XP 1,600

Agender [erahthi cantor](#) 4 (*Aethera Campaign Setting* page 90, page 90)

NG Medium Plant (augmented)

**Init** +3; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12

## DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +5 natural)

**hp** 38 (4 HD; 4d8+20); fast healing 5

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7; –2 penalty on all saves to resist inhaled fumes, poisons, smoke, etc.; +4 bonus on all saves against all sonic or language-dependent effects, including performance abilities.

**Defensive Abilities** plant traits, erahthi traits; **Immune** critical hits, flanking, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep effects, and stunning

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +3 (1d4+1 plus grab and implant roots)

**Ranged** mwk combat shotgun +7 (1d6; 30 ft. range, scatter)

**Special Attacks** divine performance (countersong, fascinate, harmony of fate, reveille of thorns), repertoire hymn (aether), repertoire verse (aether), spreading reach, verses (portentous invocation, verse of brachiation)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 4th; concentration +4)

At will—[plant growth](#), [speak with plants](#), [transport via plants](#), [warp wood](#) (DC 13), [wood shape](#) (DC 13)

**Cantor Spells Known** (CL 4th; concentration +8) (DC 14)

2nd (2/day)—[barkskin](#) (hymn), [inflict moderate wounds](#) (DC 15), [resist energy](#)

1st (4/day)—[divine favor](#), [expeditious retreat](#), [longshot](#)<sup>UC</sup>, [obscuring mist](#), [shillelagh](#) (hymn)

0—[acid splash](#) (DC 13), [create water](#), [detect magic](#), [mending](#), [read magic](#), [spark](#)<sup>APG</sup>

Hymn Wood

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Lirin usually attempts to use their social skills to avoid combat whenever possible. Given enough time, they will cast [barkskin](#), [divine favor](#), [longshot](#), and [resist energy](#) (usually fire) on themselves while stalling for time with social interactions.

**During Combat** Lirin prefers to fight from a range, using spreading reach to keep opponents at bay and attacking with slam attacks or their combat shotgun.

**Morale** Lirin isn't suicidal, and attempts to flee if brought below half their total hit points.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +3 (+7 when grappling); **CMD** 20

**Feats** [Combat Casting](#), [Diehard](#)<sup>B</sup>, [Toughness](#)

**Skills** Bluff (+6), Climb (+6), Diplomacy (+6), Intimidate (+6), Knowledge (geography) (+7), Knowledge (nature) (+7), Knowledge (religion) (+5), Perception (+12), Perform (singing) (+6), Profession (bioengineer) (+10), Sense Motive (+12), Spellcraft (+7), and Stealth (+11) (+15 when in forested terrains); **Racial Modifiers** +4 bonus on Stealth checks while within forested terrains. +8 bonus on Perception, Sense Motive, and Stealth checks.

**Languages** Aklo, Erahthi, and Hymnas

**SQ** well-versed

**Combat Gear** 2 *potions of cure light wounds* (1d8+1);

**Other Gear** masterwork [web-fiber armor](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, masterwork [combat shotgun](#)<sup>ACS</sup>

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any, usually on Kir-Sharaat

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** NPC gear; mwk combat shotgun (500 AU), 40 slugs (ammo, 10 AU), mwk web-fiber armor (400 AU), 2 potions of [cure light wounds](#) (300 AU each), 140 AU

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Spreading Reach (Su):** See below.

**Tenacious (Ex):** See below.

A rootsworn is an intelligent plant creature comprised of vines, flowers, thorns, bark, and other vegetation bound together in a vaguely humanoid form by sheer willpower. The transformation into a rootsworn has more in common with reincarnation than resurrection, though the process of becoming a rootsworn preserves and maintains all memories and personality traits that the rootsworn had before their original body's death. While any creature can become a rootsworn, so far only erahthi rootsworn have been encountered. Rootsworn are the same size as they were prior to their transformation, but weigh 50% more than the base creature did in life.

## Creation

Rootsworn are born when a living creature willingly consumes flesh from an [amerta](#) (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 476) and survives exposure to the creature's otherwise regenerative flesh. The first recorded rootsworn—Lirin Arkhak—is a well-hidden secret kept by the Council of Song, revealed by rumors circulating both within the Dreaming Throne and corroborated by sightings in remote Kir-Sharaat settlements. Forged from the mind and soul of an erahthi mystic, the rootsworn was forged long before the conclusion of the Century War just two decades after the arrival of humanity to Kir-Sharaat.

Lirin Arkhal was a member of an esoteric cabal of erahthi mystics and occultists known as the *Oe-Laladorin* (High Seekers, in Hymnas) who were obsessed with the secrets of the enigmatic amerta. Lirin was one of fifteen members of the *Oe-Laladorin* who ventured five thousand miles away from the Heartwood of San-Kaishan. According to the redacted story as told by Lirin themselves, the *Oe-Laladorin* discovered a remote Progenitor ruin deep within the

Darkwild far from any known erahthi settlement. The structure was bound in ancient roots and the destroyed remnants of undocumented Heartwood trees. At the ruin's heart was a slumbering amerta and scores of still-active Progenitor technology. Lirin's team set up within the ruin to study the amerta and the Progenitor ruins and claim that they found engravings and etchings in metal plates depicting the entities that looked remarkably like the Tritarch. Many wings of the ruin were sealed by dense masses of dead roots and vegetation and the *Oe-Laladorin* believed that the amerta may have been the source.

Lirin claimed that in the presence of the amerta they were experiencing vivid hallucinations and visions, that they could hear the myriad voices of the amerta speaking to their waking mind as though in dream, and began acting erratically. One morning, Lirin's team entered the chamber of the amerta to find Lirin feasting on the creature's regenerating flesh. The plant-matter that made up the amerta had begun to regenerate inside of Lirin's body, consuming their flesh and transforming them into something other than erahthi.

When the other *Oe-Laladorin* members tried to stop Lirin, they became hostile and attacked the team, nearly killing them all. The survivors of the team fled back to San-Kaishan where they were arrested by the Thornguard and brought to the Dreaming Throne where they were imprisoned under orders of Tritarch Athrakarus and evidence of their research destroyed. Yet rumors from attendants within the Council of Song still circulate and peers of Lirin claim to have encountered the lost cantor in remote settlements far beyond major erahthi cities, though transformed in some way to be more a part of the wilderness. More unsettling are the parts of these stories that claim Lirin is not alone, and is accompanied by others of their transformed nature.



## Society

Rootsworn are secretive and reclusive. Due to their treatment in the past by the Chamber of War, most rootsworn are unfriendly to those different than themselves and tend to dwell far away from civilization. Most rootsworn are enigmatic and appear to be working toward seemingly inscrutable ends and traverse Kir-Sharaat in search of Progenitor ruins and combat those also seeking entrance to these ancient places.

Due to the means of their creation, rootsworn possess a complicated relationship with amerta. While amerta themselves hold no specific interests in the rootsworn, the rootsworn revere amerta as though they were objects of worship, seeking counsel from these ancient titans and looking for guidance in their actions. Whether amerta suppose these actions or are merely tolerating the beliefs of the rootsworn is unknown, though the thought of creatures as powerful as amerta collecting a following of faithful and zealous creatures born of their flesh is the kind of pulp story that plays well in off-world pulp radio dramas. The fact of this fiction is uncertain.

## CREATING A ROOTSWORN

“Rootsworn” is a template that can be added to any living creature with Intelligence and Charisma scores of 10 or greater. A rootsworn retains all the base creature’s statistics and abilities except as noted here.

**CR:** Same as the base creature +2.

**Type:** The base creature’s type changes to plant. It gains the augmented subtype. Do not recalculate BAB, saves, or skill ranks.

**Size:** As the base creature.

**Senses:** As the base creature, plus low-light vision and blindsight 30 feet.

**AC:** The rootsworn adds its CR to any natural armor bonus the base creature may have (minimum +2).

**Hit Dice:** Change the base creature's racial Hit Dice to d8s. All Hit Dice derived from class levels remain unchanged.

**Defensive Abilities:** A rootsworn retains all of the base creature's defensive abilities and special qualities. It also gains the following additional defensive abilities.

*Ageless:* Rootsworn do not age and are immune to supernatural aging effects.

*Fast Healing:* A rootsworn gains fast healing equal to its CR while in areas of direct sunlight.

*Immunities:* Rootsworn are immune to critical hits, flanking, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep effects, and stunning

**Melee Attacks:** A rootsworn loses any natural attacks the base creature had, but gains a slam attack that deals damage based on its size. This slam has the grab ability and affects creatures up to one size larger than the rootsworn. A rootsworn retains any weapon proficiencies the base creature had.

**Special Attacks:** A rootsworn retains all of the base creature's special attacks. It also gains the following additional special attacks.

*Implant Roots (Ex):* When a rootsworn hits with a slam attack, tiny roots detach from the rootsworn and burrow into the target. The target is automatically affected by *entangle* and takes an additional 1d6 points of damage per round (which bypasses damage reduction) until the vines are removed (as a full-round action). Removing the vines causes 1d6 points of bleed damage to the target. A creature that dies without removing these vines rapidly undergoes a metamorphosis into a mundane tree of equal size

and cannot be raised or resurrected except by *true resurrection*, *miracle*, or *wish*.

*Spreading Reach (Su):* As a swift action a rootsworn can extend vines along the ground, creating an area of magical difficult terrain, allowing them to use these vines to make natural attacks and combat maneuvers as though their reach was 10 feet greater. Each consecutive round that a rootsworn uses this ability they extend their reach by 10 feet, to a maximum of 30 additional feet of reach. Additionally, a rootsworn gains a +4 bonus to their CMD and saving throws versus effects that would move them from the space they occupy. If a rootsworn moves from the space they started using this ability in, whether willing or not, this effect automatically ends.

*Tenacious (Ex):* A rootsworn gains a +4 racial bonus on CMB checks made to grapple and a +4 racial bonus to its CMD.

**Special Qualities:** A rootsworn retains all of the base creature's special qualities. It also gains the following additional special attacks.

*Woodland Stride (Ex):* The rootsworn may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at their normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. Terrain that is enchanted or magically manipulated to impede motion still affects the rootsworn as normal.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** A rootsworn with a Charisma score of 10 or higher gains the following spell-like abilities, usable at will: plant growth, speak with plants, transport via plants, warp wood, and wood shape. These spell-like abilities have a caster level equal to the rootsworn's total HD, and the save DCs are Charisma-based.

**Ability Scores:** Str +2, Dex +2, Con +2, Cha +2

**Skills:** A rootsworn gains a +8 racial bonus on Perception, Sense Motive, and Stealth checks.

# VERDANT CREATURE

*This monster resembles a jungle cat, except with hide of mottled wood and green vines in place of muscles and sinew.*

## VERDANT TIGER

CR 5

XP 1,600

N Large plant (augmented)

**Init** +6; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +4 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 45 (6d8+18)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

**DR** 5/slashing

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +10 (1d8+6 plus grab), **bite** +9 (2d6+6 plus grab)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Special Attacks** pounce, rake (2 claws +10, 1d8+6)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 23, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +11 (+15 grapple); **CMD** 23 (27 vs. trip)

**Feats** [Improved Initiative](#), [Skill Focus](#) (Perception), [Weapon Focus](#) (claw)

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Perception +8, Stealth +7 (+11 in areas of tall grass), Swim +11; Racial Modifiers +4 Acrobatics, +4 Stealth (+4 in tall grass)

**SQ** camouflage, woodland stride

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Kir-Sharaat, Plane of Wood)

**Organization** solitary or pair

**Treasure** none

In the elemental Plane of Wood plant life is abundant, while animal life is virtually absent. Instead, the plane is populated with its own expression of such creatures. Formed of vines and bark, flowers and leaves, these plant creatures often display major differences from the animals that inspired them,

but function very similarly. They are spread throughout the plane, taking residence in its thick forests and feeding on sunlight and each other.

Where these creatures spring from differs, but their reproduction makes their nature most obvious. Some fall like fruit from massive trees, others grow beneath the ground until they mature, and others blossom into being, unfolding flower petal limbs as they take their first steps. It is possible to replant some fallen or dying plant creatures from their bodies, and a few wealthy gardens intentionally cultivate varieties of these plants. Resourceful adventurers who encounter verdant creatures could find rewards for killing or capturing them, if they contacted the right people.

Verdant creatures can be found in abundance in the plane of wood, but are also common on Kir-Sharaat. Elsewhere they are quite rare, but they can potentially take root in any environment they find themselves in. If not carefully handled they swiftly adapt to terrain and spread as far as they can, slowly seeding territory they claim and spreading the influence of their home plane with it.

## Creating a Verdant Creature

“Verdant creature” is an inherited template that can be applied to any living, corporeal creature. A verdant creature uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted below.

**Challenge Rating:** +1.

**Type:** The creature's type changes to plant (augmented). Do not recalculate base class Hit Dice, BAB, saves, or skill points. Verdant creatures from the Plane of Wood have the extraplanar subtype while on the Material Plane.

**Armor Class:** Natural armor improves by +1.

**Defensive Abilities:** A verdant creature gains damage reduction equal to its increased CR, overcome by slashing damage.

**Special Abilities:**

*Camouflage (Ex):* A verdant creature can use Stealth to hide in any sort of natural terrain, even if the terrain does not grant cover or concealment. It gains a +4 racial bonus on Stealth checks. This bonus does not stack with any racial Stealth bonus possessed by the base creature.

*Woodland Stride (Ex):* A verdant creature can move through any sort of foliage at full speed without taking damage or suffering impairment. Areas of foliage that have been magically manipulated affect it normally.



# AMRITA FAUNA

The Amrita Asteroid belt appears to be a lifeless stretch of barren rock adrift in the airless vacuum of the gulf. However, beneath the surface of radiation-scoured asteroids, the Amrita belt possesses a surprisingly robust ecosystem of microbial and invertebrate life.

## LIFE IN THE GULF

The airless void of the Gulf is an inhospitable anathema to most life. Between the forces exerted by total vacuum to the constant radiation bombardment from the system's two suns, little life can be found in the dark spaces between worlds. However unlikely, life has managed to take root in the most hostile of places. Organic life in the Amrita belt is spurred on by the presence of tenacious microbial life deep within the asteroids themselves that were once a part of the now-destroyed world of Amrita, lost in the Collapse. These bacterial and other single-cell lifeforms provide a baseline for an ecology starting at vacuum-dwelling insects and other simple life, all the way through complex space-dwelling creatures like shantak<sup>B2</sup> and somalcygot<sup>B5</sup>.

The majority of animal life in the Amrita belt consists of a variety of breathless vermin that derive sustenance from aetherite radiation, solar radiation, or a combination thereof to fuel cell division. These insects are harmless nuisances that cling to asteroid surfaces, infest aethershops, and Belt colonies like Complex Four. By and large these infestations remain relegated to airless regions and exposure to pressurized environments is often enough to kill individuals of these species.

## STOWAWAYS

The proliferation of interplanetary travel through Amrita for over a century has dramatically altered the ecosystem of this remote environment. Aethershops

are essential sealed habitats, capable of sustaining their own varied ecosystems not entirely unlike a terrarium. Within the fleets of aethershops that routinely visit or reside exclusively within the Amrita Belt, the presence of vermin and small animals in the crawl spaces and cargo holds of aethershops turns each vessel into its own distinct biome. On many capital-class vessels these infestations are so hard to stamp out due to the vessels' sheer size and the amount of tiny crawl spaces that they are often left entirely unattended. Unless an outbreak of a disease forces ship crews to properly exterminate "native" life, these sealed ecologies can develop independently.

The mobile habitats of aethershops are compounded by what is referred to as "dock intermingling" whereby docked aethershops transfer vermin on uncleaned cargo, through part transfers, or aboard their crew. Sometimes these episodes of habitat intermingling also come from aethershops unintentionally offloading ship-born life onto stations, and then eventually onto another awaiting vessel. It is here in Amrita where isolated terrestrial ecologies meet for the first time, like the development of radiation-immune rodents born from hardy Akasaati stock interbred with Orbis Aurean tundra mice. These tenacious vermin eat wiring, claw their way through ventilation ducts, and breed shimmering and silvery rodents in enormous litters.

The presence of such ship-born ecologies in the Amrita belt is why most terrestrial worlds require quarantine on products brought in from Amrita, though often times big cargo shipping consortiums will bribe officials to belay the quarantine period.

## COLONY ECOLOGIES

The massive, sealed environments of colonies are often home to an amalgamated ecology of myriad terrestrial worlds. Parasites from Akasaat infesting birds from



AMRITA

Seraos that hunt rodents from Orbis Aurea. Over the last hundred years, the diversity of these contained ecologies has grown so much that portions of some of the oldest and most derelict stations are more verdant and full of wildlife than some terrestrial nations.

Complex Four is the largest and most well-known of the colonies of the Amrita Belt. Boasting a population of over six-hundred thousand sentient creatures, Complex Four is home to twice that population—if not more—in hardy Belt-dwelling animals and vermin. From giant centipedes and rats to poisonous spider species from across the system Complex Four is a melting pot of parasites and vermin across all ecosystems.

The failed colony of Chanter's Hall is an example of an artificial habitat becoming a self-sustaining environment all its own. Chanter's Hall was constructed by the Hierarchy in 3901 and was intended to be a shipyard for the construction of mining aethercraft that would ply the Amrita belt, shortcutting the need to burn fuel to transport mining equipment all the way from Akasaat. Initial surveys of the aetherite deposits in nearby asteroids seemed promising, but the consortium heads responsible for securing funding for the venture overstated the aetherite reserves. In 3907, six years after the facility was finished, the aetherite veins dried up and like many early mining operations, Chanter's Hall shuttered its doors and closed down.

However, Chanter's Hall did not become an airless monument to failure as many structures of its like often do. In the haste to move out from Chanter's Hall, the site foreman misplaced an open *bottle of air* that he used to assist in air filtration. When the doors to Chanter's Hall were sealed and humanoid life exited, the animals and plants left behind continued to thrive on one-another. In an unlikely development, the vermin and animals within Chanter's Hall along with the plants present, were able to attain a stable ecosystem that has grown over the last hundred years to fill all five levels of the mining facility. Walls are

encrusted with lichen and fungus, small rodents and other animals hunt in fungal mounds and mushroom forests through abandoned hangars and maintenance bays. The upper levels with intact glass windows, let in sunlight from the binary stars and is lush with green plantlife. Somewhere in the station, the original *bottle of air* that allowed this habitat to form is still pumping out breathable atmosphere, and Chanter's Hall waits for explorers to delve into its depths in search of what else may have been left behind by its original inhabitants.

## AIRBLEEDERS (CR 4)

Airbleeders are voracious parasites that originated in the highest arctic peaks of Orbis Aurea and thrived once introduced to the vacuum of the Gulf. These tiny parasites resemble translucent, winged spiders roughly the size of a gnat. Swarms of airbleeders move like clouds toward sources of breathable air, which they consume over time. Airbleeders consume oxygen and transform it into a suffocating gas that is suitable for sustaining their young. In the Gulf, airbleeders move in hive-minded swarms at a speed of 5 feet. They consume a 5 foot cubic volume of breathable air per hour, creating an equal-sized area of nonflammable bad air<sup>GMG</sup>. In environments where air is generated, such as an aethership with an active aetherdrive, this amount of oxygen loss isn't easily noticeable as air-filtration systems clean up the bad air. Crew members might only notice the air is stuffy or thin, provided the airbleeder swam isn't in the open. A successful DC 20 Perception check identifies this smell as the work of airbleeders.

Airbleeder swarms protect themselves by suffocating living creatures through funneling themselves into the lungs of the offending creature. A creature adjacent to an airbleeder swarm can attempt a DC 14 Reflex save to prevent this infestation, otherwise their lungs become filled with scrabbling vermin. A creature that fails its Reflex save is infested and is staggered until the infestation is removed and must succeed at a DC

14 Fortitude save each round to breathe. Due to the violent nature of an airbleeder infestation, characters cannot opt to hold their breath and immediately begin suffocating. When the character fails one of these Fortitude saves, they begin to suffocate. In the first round, they fall unconscious (0 hit points). In the following round, they drop to -1 hit points and are dying. In the third round, they suffocate and are dead.

Airbleeders can be removed by exposing the victim to explosive decompression (*Aethera Campaign Setting* page 99) which immediately expels the airbleeders from their host. Additionally, spells such as *air bubble* and *water breathing* forcibly expel airbleeders and *remove disease* kills all airbleeders infesting a host. An airbleeder swarm is immune to weapon damage but 1 point of fire damage is sufficient to kill an airbleeder swarm in an entire 5-foot space.

#### AIRBLEEDERS

**Type** infestation

**Save** Fortitude DC 14

**Onset** immediate; **Frequency** 1/round

**Effect** staggered and suffocation

## BELT BURROWERS (CR 5)

Belt burrowers are a mutated strain of rot grubs that were all but wiped out on Akasaat more than 100 years ago. These grub-like invertebrates do not burrow into most living creatures, but are instead drawn to sources of aetheric radiation that they subsist on. Belt burrowers can survive in a vacuum and are immune to all forms of radiation. Typically a belt grub infestation can be found in and around areas of aetherite radiation, such as in maintenance hatches near aetherdrives or in containers where raw aetherite is stored. However, creatures with the aether subtype (such as infused and phalanx) are ideal hosts for belt burrower larvae. When creatures with the aether subtype approach an infested area, 2d4 burrowers swiftly squirm their way toward the living aether-charged host to burrow into the creature, which can attempt a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid the burrowers

## INFESTATIONS

Parasites such as airbleeders or belt burrowers cause infestations, a type of affliction similar to diseases. Infestations can only be cured through specific means; no matter how many saving throws are made, the infestation continues to afflict the target. While a *remove disease* spell (or similar effect) instantly halts an infestation, immunity to disease offers no protection, as the infestation itself is caused by parasites.

(but only if the creature is aware of the belt burrowers' presence). Unlike rot grubs, belt burrowers can burrow into creatures with a DR of 5 or lower without issue.

Once belt burrowers have infested a living body, they burrow into the victim's muscles (including the synthetic muscles of phalanx) and lay their eggs. On the first round of infestation, applying electricity to the point of entry can kill the burrowers and save the host, but this inflicts 1d6 points of electricity damage to the victim. Cutting the burrowers out also works, but the longer the burrowers remain in a host, the more damage this method does. Cutting them out requires a slashing weapon and a DC 20 Heal check, and inflicts 1d6 points of damage per round that the host has been infested. If the Heal check is successful, one burrower is removed. *Remove disease* kills any belt burrowers in or on a host.

Once a target is reduced to 0 Strength by belt burrowers their larvae remain in gestation for 24 hours, after which time the victim of the infestation takes 1d4 Con damage per hour until the larval belt burrowers have reduced the victim to a 0 Constitution and devoured their bodies from the inside out. The larval burrowers then rupture forth from their host's body and begin migrating toward sources of aetheric energy.

#### BELT BURROWERS

**Type** infestation

**Save** Fortitude DC 15

**Onset** immediate; **Frequency** 1/round

**Effect** 1d2 Str damage per grub plus see text

# AERDANEL

## AERDANEL

## CR 1

XP 400

N Medium vermin

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision (60ft.); Perception -2

### DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

**hp** 15 (2d8+6)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** -2

**Immune** mind-affecting effects

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 30 ft.

**Melee** blite +4 (1d6+4)

**Special Attacks** suffocate

### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** —, **Wis** 6, **Cha** 2

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

**Skills** Fly +6, **Perception** -2

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** the Gulf

**Organization** solitary, pair, infestation (4-8)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Suffocate (Ex)** With a successful combat maneuver check made to grapple, an aerdanel can attach itself to a target's face. On a successful combat maneuver check the target immediately begins to suffocate. Every round the aerdanel maintains the grapple an aerdanel can suck air out of the target's lungs, attempting to gradually suffocate its prey, reducing the duration for which the opponent can hold its breath by 1d6 rounds. If this reduces the remaining time that the creature can hold its breath to 0 rounds or fewer, the DCs of Constitution checks to resist suffocation increases by 5.

There are few things more frightening to those who travel the stars of the Aethera System than the vermin commonly known as aerdanel. Aerdanel pose an unexpected threat to any ship traveling from gate to gate or from asteroid to asteroid, and if left unchecked can lead to the doom of all aboard whatever ship they happen to latch themselves on to as they travel the black.

An adult aerdanel measures seven feet long and weighs 150 lbs.

## Ecology

Aerdanel are carnivorous Gulf-acclimated vermin that can remain dormant for decades at a time without food or water within the vacuum of the Gulf. While they are primarily carrion-eaters, these creatures will attack living prey that is isolated, or out of desperation. Aerdanel originated on Akasaat where they exist as a subterranean vermin only a few inches in length. An infestation of these creatures aboard an aethership passing through the Gate Hub at Fractured Gate was lost within Folded Space for eight months. When the ship finally emerged, its crew missing, rescue teams found massively overgrown aerdanel living within the damaged ship. Many of the aerdanel were killed, but even more escaped and



rapidly bred through the settlement of Fractured Gate. Within a month the infestation was brought under control, but not before more aerdanel eggs found their way aboard other Amrita-bound vessels, spreading their progeny across the darkness of the Gulf.

Aerdanel tend to flock to where food is most plentiful to them, and as such they tend to be more frequently located among the Amrita asteroid belt and in shipping ports. However, it is possible to encounter them almost anywhere out among the stars, and some aerdanel have taken to hiding near gates for a ship to pass, latching on and hoping to survive the trip.

An aerdanel travels a variety of ways. The simplest and most common way for an aerdanel to get from one place to another is to attach itself to a passing aethership and hitch a ride to whatever the aethership's destination may be; once attached an aerdanel rarely detaches until the ship comes to a stop again. Aerdanel not attached to an aethership typically catch the currents left in the wake of a passing aethership and uses the current to provide itself the momentum needed to drift.

Aerdanels cannot naturally breathe in the vacuum of space. However, they can survive on very low amounts of oxygen for extremely long periods of time, up to a month if necessary, and are not at risk of decompression. An aerdanel possesses an exceptionally large lungsack within itself that expands to fit as much air possible. Most commonly, an aerdanel siphons air when it attaches itself to a ship, chewing through the metal to a pipe or directly into the ship itself so that it can fill both its belly and its lungs. These holes start tiny—not big enough on most ships to register as any sort of hull breach—but can grow larger the longer an aerdanel is attached to a ship, and if left unattended one the aerdanel is killed or leaves, can cause all sorts of unforeseen damages and problems. An aerdanel's lungs hold a deceptive amount of air, and depending on the size, construction and sealing of the ship, even

a single aerdanel can potentially pose a serious threat to the lives of travelers and crew aboard a ship that it has attached itself to. The rate at which they suck the air and pressure out of a cabin is extremely slow, sometimes leaving occupants unaware of what has happened until it is already too late.

## Habitat & Society

Encountering a single, solitary aerdanel is uncommon. A single aerdanel is a nuisance at best, in most cases, chewing holes in hulls and cables but nothing that can't be fixed on the quick, if left unattended they can pose a bigger threat. More likely when aerdanels are encountered, it will be in packs or even flocks of them. Small packs often travel close and attach themselves to the same ships, slowly chewing holes in the hull and siphoning out the air within. The danger and damage posed by a pack of aerdanels is often realized much quicker, but they are much quicker to damage critical ship systems or drain a ship of air. Even more deadly are flocks of the creatures, and it is not unheard of for a full flock of aerdanels that attach themselves to a passing ship to suck it entirely dry of air, with the passengers within only realizing what is happening when it is too late to do anything about it.

Because of their reliance on oxygen to travel, a ship's life support systems are often the first thing an entrenched aerdanel seeks out on a ship, wanting to siphon oxygen away at the source. Once that succeed are the quickest noticed, but can often cause great damage before they are properly dealt with. Flocks of aerdanels are also known to pose great threats to aetherships parked in docs, so higher scale docks in well populated areas keep strict watch and inspection for such creatures - less reputable or poorly funded docks, however, sometimes have the problem of aerdanel infestations.

Aerdanels, when confronted, are not typically aggressive, and will often try to escape rather than

engage whatever creature has attacked them. If cornered, or otherwise without an easy path of egress, however, they can prove formidable for those not prepared to handle them. An aerdanel typically attacks by taking to the air and trying to bite at its attacker with its sharp mandibles. If the creature is an organic that breathes or otherwise requires oxygen, in many cases the aerdanel will try to attach itself to the attacker's face and suck the air straight out from its lungs, suffocating it. Just like when attached to ships, a flock of aerdanel is much more dangerous than smaller numbers, and when such levels of infestation are found sometimes entire sections of ports are quarantined and closed until the creatures are dealt with by professionals, rather than risk them finding their way on to new ships or killing a crew.

Aerdanels reproduce by laying eggs, most often left in the wiring of ships, in nooks and crannies of space ports, or in the crevices of asteroids and colonies that have the air and minerals to sustain them. Aerdanel eggs are abandoned by the parents, always moving in search of more ships and more air; typically only one or two aerdanels out of a clutch of ten or more will survive long enough to journey out on its own. Aerdanels grow to maturity at a slow rate, and the younger an aerdanel is, the smaller and harder to locate it becomes. This makes weeding out aerdanels before they can hatch and become pests crucial in making sure that some spaceports can continue functioning without problem.

An aerdanel, when killed, does provide some use. Many useful things can be fashioned from their bodies. To stick to ships mid-flight while they chew away at hull and cables or when attempting to suffocate attackers, aerdanels produce an incredibly strong, incredibly quick drying mucus that allows them to reliably stick themselves to almost any surface, even at great speeds. This mucus can be harvested and used for a large number of applications, ironically the most popular to create an adhesive paste that shipwrights can use to patch holes and damage—such

as the kinds caused by aerdanels—in moments instead of in hours. The lungsacs of an aerdanel also has numerous uses, and is commonly adapted into masks that contain air to allow organics to survive in certain environments for a period of time.

## Aerdanel Vermin Companions

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Medium; **Speed** 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (average); **Attack** bite (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int —, Wis 6, Cha 2; **Special Qualities** darkvision 60 ft.

**7th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Large; **AC** +3 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d8); **Ability Scores** Str +4, Dex -2, Con +4.

## Alchemical Items

The following alchemical items are created from parts harvested from an aerdanel.

### AIRTRAP 20 AU

**Weight** 2 lbs.

Fashioned using the expanding lung sacs and adhesive mucus of the aerdanel, these small sacs can be used to trap in air, and then the alchemically enhanced mucus sealant used adhere it over a creatures mouth. An airtrap provides air for one hour either underwater or in the vacuum of space when filled to capacity. Once an airtrap has been used, the adhesive is no longer functional and it must be replaced.

### SHIPWRIGHT'S AID 50 AU

**Weight** 8 lbs.

The mucus produced from the mouth of the aerdanel dries extremely quickly and is exceptionally sticky, making it perfect for surviving the rigors of space travel. Fashioned into a proper alchemical adhesive called shipwright's aid, this adhesive is commonly favored by captains and engineers for emergency repairs or to seal holes left from combat or accidents encountered while traveling. When applied as a full-round action, the adhesive dries in 1d3 rounds, and can be used to patch an aethership hull breach in a 5-foot space.

# ALLOY WORM

*This worm-like creature's gaping maw lays at the center of a ring of sinuous appendages, each dripping with a corrosive saliva.*

## ALLOY WORM

CR 4

XP 1,200

N Small vermin

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; mineral sense 30 ft.; Perception +1

## DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 18, flat-footed 18 (+1 size)

**hp** 30 (5d8+10)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

**Immune** mind-affecting effects

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.

**Melee** bite +7 (1d4+4 plus attach)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** liquefy (1d8+2)

## STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** —, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6 (+10 grapple); **CMD** 16 (can't be tripped)

**Skills** Stealth +12; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

**SQ** digestive camouflage, no breath

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any asteroid (Amrita Asteroid Belt)

**Organization** solitary, pair

**Treasure** incidental

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Digestive Camouflage (Ex)** Recently digested minerals alter an alloy worm's coloration providing a +8 racial bonus to Stealth checks, as well as other effects dependent upon the mineral ingested. The additional bonuses granted by the most common materials in the Aethera System are given in [TABLE 10-1: DIGESTIVE CAMOUFLAGE BENEFITS](#).

**Liquefy (Ex)** An alloy worm can excrete an incredibly effective corrosive substance from its jaws. In the round

after an alloy worm is attached to its target and for every round it remains attached, it deals acid damage that ignores both hardness and damage reduction.

**Mineral Sense (Ex)** Alloy worms have an extremely developed sense of smell that can detect the nearest source of raw or refined materials. This ability allows an alloy worm to know which material occupies every square within 30 ft. This ability cannot penetrate barriers.

The nightmare of miners across the Amrita belt, alloy worms are creatures that most commonly live within asteroids and subsist on the deposits of precious metals there. While naturally appearing stark white in contrast to the blackness of space, their coloration can change to match their surroundings, an ability



**TABLE 10-1: DIGESTIVE CAMOUFLAGE BENEFITS**

| MATERIAL            | ADDITIONAL EFFECT                                                        |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adamantine          | DR 2/– and bypass adamantine DR                                          |
| Aeronite            | +2 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saves vs. airborne toxins and effects |
| Aetherite, depleted | Bypass magic DR                                                          |
| Aetherite, raw      | Immunity to poison and radiation, shed light as a torch                  |
| Aetherite, refined  | Resist fire and electricity 5                                            |
| Aurite              | +2 bonus on saving throws vs. cold effects                               |
| Duranite            | DR 1/–                                                                   |
| Flauros             | Bite attack deals 1 additional point of fire damage                      |
| Iron, Cold          | Bypasses cold iron DR                                                    |
| Mithral             | As silver plus +3 natural armor                                          |
| Silver              | Bypass silver DR                                                         |
| Steel               | +3 natural armor                                                         |
| Steel, Singing      | +4 bonus on saving throws vs. sonic effects                              |
| Stone               | +2 natural armor                                                         |
| Wood                | +1 natural armor                                                         |

based entirely on their diet and natural environment. What makes these creatures so frightening is the acid that drips from their mouths; it can dissolve through the hardest of substances, and all it takes is time.

As such alloy worms are incredibly hard for researchers to study without the aid of magic. No one is sure how long they can live, when they mate, or how long their eggs take to gestate—only that these creatures have the capacity to lay eggs. An alloy worm in captivity is often destroyed before it can escape or do irreparable damage to its surroundings. Efforts to contain one are also deadly, as the worms do not discriminate between ore or equipment carried or worn.

Rumors from the fringe also speak of alloy worms that have ambushed mining vessels prior to collecting their due. Reports have included sightings of ghost ships found with holes in their hulls or cockpits, the surface pocketed with drops of their acid before exposing the interior to the vacuum of space. The

worm's ability to suddenly jump at moving sources of metals certainly lends credence to the tale.

If alloy worms are the nightmares of miners in the Amrita belt, a swarm of them is a lucid terror. When populations of alloy worms go unchecked, or they are found in larger, more ancient rock, they coagulate into a horde of worms able to take down smaller vessels with ease. Entire mining outposts have fallen to their numbers, and when discovered, submitting the coordinates as a no fly zone is recommended.

#### ALLOY WORM SWARM

**CR 6**

**XP 2,400**

**N** Small vermin (swarm)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; mineral sense 30 ft.; **Perception** +1

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 21, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +1 size)

**hp** 58 (9d8+18)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

**Immune** mind-affecting effects, swarm traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.

**Melee** swarm (4d6)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** mass liquefy (2d8+2)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** —, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** –1 (+14 grapple); **CMD** 6 (swarm traits)

**Skills** Stealth +12; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

**SQ** digestive camouflage

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** asteroid

**Organization** solitary, pair, colony (3–4)

**Treasure** incidental

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Mass Liquefy (Ex)** As the alloy worm's liquefy ability, except this damage is applied the round after a swarm enters the same square as its target and for every round it remains.

# BELT SLUG

*A pulsing slug-like creature with pebbly flesh is surrounded by a haze of greenish spores.*

## BELT SLUG, BARBED

CR 3

XP 800

N Diminutive vermin

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

**Aura** spore cloud (10 ft.)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 size)

**hp** 22 (4d8+4); regeneration 1 (fire)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3

**Defensive Abilities** mindless; **Immunity** mind-affecting effects, cold, poison

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

**Melee** sting +2 (1d2-5 plus poison)

**Ranged** barb +10 (1d4+3 plus poison)

**Space** 1 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** barbs, poison

### STATISTICS

**Str** 1, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** -6; **CMD** 7 (cannot be tripped)

**Feats** [Toughness](#)<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Climb +3, Perception +2, Stealth +15; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb, +12 Stealth

**SQ** vermin traits, void adaption

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Amrita Asteroid Belt)

**Organization** solitary, pair, colony (3-6), or hive (7-21)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Barb (Ex):** As a standard action a barbed belt slug can fling a poisonous barb from its body. This attack has a range of 30 feet with no range increment. A barbed belt slug can launch 8 barbs in a 24 hour period.

**Poison (Ex):** Spore Cloud— inhaled or Sting/Barb— injury; save Fort DC 16; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dex damage and 1 Con damage; *cure* 2

saves. This ability is constitution-based and includes a +4 racial bonus.

**Spore Cloud (Ex):** Barbed belt slugs constantly release a cloud of toxic spores around themselves in a 10 ft. radius. These spores stick to exposed surfaces and bloom into mossy, fungal growths over the course of 1 minute. Barbed belt slugs gain regeneration 1 (fire) when within the spore cloud's area.

**Void Adaption (Ex):** Barbed belt slugs are immune to the environmental effects of a vacuum and do not need to breathe.

## BELT SLUG, LARGE

CR 6

XP 2400

N Large vermin

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17 (+8 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 67 (9d8+27)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

**Defensive Abilities** mindless; **Immunity** all mind-affecting effects, cold, poison

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** sting +9 (1d8+6 plus grab and poison)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Special Attacks** frenzy, grab, poison

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 21 (cannot be tripped)

**Feats** [Power Attack](#)<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Climb +12, Perception +2, Stealth -4; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb

**SQ** vermin traits, void adaption

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Amrita Asteroid Belt)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or infestation (3-5)

**Treasure** none



### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Frenzy (Ex):** Once per day, a large belt slug that takes damage in combat can fly into a frenzy in the following round. It gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls, +1d8 temporary hit points, and a +2 bonus on fortitude saves, but takes a -2 penalty to its AC. The frenzy lasts as long as the battle or 1 minute, whichever is shorter.

**Poison (Ex):** Sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 21; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dex damage and 1 Wis damage; *cure* 2 saves. This ability is constitution-based and includes a +4 racial bonus.

**Void Adaption (Ex):** Large belt slugs are immune to the environmental effects of a vacuum and do not need to breathe.

The belt slug is a species of Gulf-dwelling invertebrate native to the Amrita Asteroid Belt. Belt slugs are fully capable of surviving the vacuum of space, but it have found a niche as a pest throughout most of the space stations and many of the Aethershops that pass through the region. They are well camouflaged to most asteroids in the region, with a skin pattern that is primarily a rocky brown

with splotches of grey and silver to break up their silhouette, while their jagged barbs are uniformly black. They have five tiny black eyes on their heads, but their mouths are located on their bellies.

### Ecology

While belt slugs are fully capable of surviving in space, they are attracted to the warm pipes and heating ducts found on space stations and aethershops, especially during breeding season where their spores clog the pipes and vents with moss-like growths. Belt slugs produce dozens of spawn in a single mating cycle and can quickly spread out of control, becoming a dangerous infestation. It is a common problem enough that nearly all stations have policies and procedures designed to deal with any infestations before they quickly grow out of hand. These stations typically use fire to burn out any fungal growths and employ security teams to combat the belt slugs.

During most of the year, only the barbed members of their species are active. These slugs are quite tiny, only about six inches in length and they weigh less than a pound. Much like aphids, barbed belt slugs

are born pregnant with a lifetime worth of fertilized eggs and can reproduce asexually without the need for other members of their species. They wander around, spreading their toxic spore clouds that grow into belt moss until the breeding season, where things take a radical turn for some of their species.

Through a process not entirely understood, one in about five barbed belt slugs will undergo a mutation during this time where they begin changing into larger members of their species. As their egg reserves begin dying off they will dramatically grow in both size and weight, with some reaching over eight feet long and weigh nearly six hundred pounds. In addition, they begin growing hard chitin plates a larger stinger. These large belt slugs have greatly shortened life spans, with most dying off by the end of the breeding season and the rest shortly after. Coupled with their increased size and shortened lifespans, their aggression increases to a near suicidal level. The large belt slugs actively seek out any prey around their nests. They have reportedly thrown themselves against nearly any obstacle outside of intense flames and they will devour any prey that they come across. Anything they cannot completely devour will usually be brought back to the nest, assuming that the nest supports their increased size in the first place, giving the smaller members of their species a much needed boost of calories to aid in their efforts of ensuring the next generation.

## Habitat & Society

The habitat of belt slugs is marked by the presence of “belt moss,” an invasive fungal growth spread by their kind. Growing from the sticky spores released from the barbed belt slugs during the breeding season, this fungal, moss-like growth quickly spreads wherever barbed belt slugs travel. This moss collects nutrients from whatever surface it clings to, while drawing in various types of radiation from the environment; ultraviolet, gamma, infrared, and even heat. Belt moss deals 1d4 points of damage per month that bypasses object hardness to any structure

it grows on, weakening whatever it clings to as it leeches minerals and materials, causing structural harm that can lead to hull breaches in space stations and aethershops alike. Despite its ability to absorb heat and radiation, belt moss is quite flammable, making fire the best tool to destroy it with.

Belt moss creates a rich bed of nutrients, which can be fed upon by the belt slugs during the lean times out amongst the stars, keeping the species alive in the harshest of environments without fear of extinction. Beyond that, this Belt moss creates a nursery where barbed belt slugs can lay their eggs, and reduces likelihood of infection or disease. This moss also releases the chemicals necessary for the mutation in the barbed belt slugs, fostering their prodigious growth.

Extermination contracts for belt slugs are common across Amritan settlements, as prolonged infestations of these vermin can lead to structural collapse of an entire colony. Six years before the end of the Century War, a Hierarchy observation outpost became infested with belt slugs and the problem was ignored for nearly a full year. By the time the severity of the infestation was discovered it was too late to salvage the facility. Worse was that during the colony’s evacuation the structural damage caused by the buildup of belt moss in the air gaps between the outer and inner hulls led to a complete containment breach, causing an explosive decompression through the facility that claimed seven hundred and eighty-six lives. In larger, local colonies like Complex Four, regular sweeps for signs of belt slug activity are common jobs offered to low-skill workers and war refugees. Typically bounties on belt slugs range from 5 to 10 au per husk for barbed belt slugs and 100 au per head for giant belt slugs. The threat posed to all settlements by these vermin is real enough to justify the often-times great cost of their extermination, but the alternatives are even more costly given a long-enough time table.

While they are an extreme nuisance as pests, Amritans have discovered that belt slugs are edible and

cooked belt slug is a surprisingly tasty delicacy that can be occasionally found following an extermination of an infestation. Most describe their meat to be close to the texture of crab meat, but with an earthy, metallic aftertaste. Belt slug can be served in a wide variety of ways, but most commonly it is roasted on kabobs with veggies and fruits, although it can also be added to a number of soups and stews.

## New Alchemical Items

### POWDERED SLUG BARBS

50 AU

Craft DC 20

When dried and powdered, slug barbs can make for a powerful anesthetic, making it a valuable resource in the medical field. Applying powdered slug barbs is a standard action and grants immunity to pain effects for 1 hour and imposes a -4 penalty to all Strength and Dexterity-based skill and ability checks.

## Variant Belt Slugs

Prone to mutation, belt slugs have uncommon variations seen in remote reaches of the Amrita Asteroid Belt.

**Aetheric Belt Slugs (CR +1):** Some subspecies have absorbed nutrients from aetherite and mutated because of it. These belt slugs typically have a glossy black coloration and their spores glow with vibrant blue light, shedding illumination as a torch. They have immunity to aetherite radiation, but have vulnerability to electricity. Their natural attacks deal an additional 1d4 points of damage (half fire and half electricity damage). These belt slugs were created by Hierarchy researchers during the early days of the Paragon project.

**Caustic Belt Slugs (CR +1):** Some species of Barbed Belt Slugs have a type of caustic venom. Any natural attacks that would normally deliver poison also deals an additional 1d4 points of acid damage. In addition, they have immunity to acid damage. Typically, they have dark yellow stripes on their bodies and have long wings capable of flight (30 ft.; poor maneuverability).

**Rusted Belt Slugs (CR +0):** Although extremely rare, this subspecies of belt slugs have undergone a mutation, gaining some supernatural powers. Their type changes to aberration and they have both the Rust and Scent Metals abilities, typically shown in rust monsters<sup>B1</sup>, but lack poison. They typically have a rusty coloration across their bodies and long antennae on their heads. This species of belt slug was created by the erahtli during the Century War.

**Vampiric Belt Slugs (CR +1):** Another rare subspecies, the vampiric belt slugs feed on blood of living creatures. They have both the attach and blood drain (1 Con damage) universal monster abilities and lack poison. They typically are extremely pale, nearly white in coloration, but take on a deep crimson hue when full of blood. Vampiric belt slugs have the ability to burrow (20 ft.) and they typically live deep inside hollowed out asteroids and have light sensitivity.

## Belt Slug Companions

Though highly uncommon, belt slugs can be domesticated by removing their spore glands and raising them in multiple captive generations. No Amritan settlements will accept “domesticated” belt slugs, but that doesn’t stop some people.

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Small; **Speed** 30 ft., climb 30-ft.; **AC** +2 natural armor; **Attack** sting (1d6), barb (ranged; 1d6 plus poison); **Ability Scores** Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 2; **SA** barb (As a standard action a barbed belt slug can fling a poisonous barb from its body. This attack has a range of 30 feet with no range increment. A barbed belt slug can launch 8 barbs in a 24 hour period), poison (*frequency* 1 round.; *effect* 1d2 Dex damage; *cure* 1 save; Con-based DC). **SQ** darkvision 60 ft., void adaptation (Barbed belt slugs are immune to the environmental effects of a vacuum and do not need to breathe.); **CMD** can’t be tripped.

**4th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Medium; **AC** +1 natural armor; **Attack** sting (1d8), barbs (1d8 plus poison); **Ability Scores** Str +4, Dex -2, Con +2.

# NOVAMITE

*This black-shelled beetle's inner body glows with a brilliant light.*

## NOVAMITE

CR 1/4

XP 100

N Tiny vermin

**Init** +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +4

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+4 Dex, +1 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 4 (1d8)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

**Defensive Abilities** none; **Immune** mind-affecting effects

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** bite +6 (1d4-4)

**Space** 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** blink, flash, glow

### STATISTICS

**Str** 2, **Dex** 18, **Con** 10, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** -6; **CMD** 8

**Feats** [Weapon Finesse](#)

**Skills** Climb +4, Stealth +12; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb, +8 Stealth

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** underground

**Organization** solitary, cluster (3–6), or swarm (20–60)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Blink (Ex)** Three times per day, as a full-round action, a novamite can alter its bioluminescence in an intense sputtering pattern of irritating flashes which require a single creature within 20 feet to become confused for one round (DC 10 Will negates). The save is Charisma-based.

**Flash (Ex)** As a full-round action, a novamite can alter its bioluminescence in a complex pattern of soothing pulses which require a single creature within 20 feet to

become fascinated for one round (DC 10 Will negates).

This save is Charisma-based.

**Glow (Ex)** A novamite's body constantly sheds light as a torch. As a full round action, a novamite can increase the intensity of this light for one round, shedding bright light in a 60-foot radius, and increasing the light level for an additional 60 feet by one step (darkness becomes dim light, dim light becomes normal light, and normal light becomes bright light). While glowing more intensely, any sighted creatures within 30 feet with an unobstructed view the novamite is dazzled. Other novamites and flarefarmers are immune to this effect.

Novamites are simple insects with immense, constantly glowing abdomens, causing them to resemble a large glowing tick, or a light bulb that sprouted legs. Novamites grow up to 1 foot in length and weigh roughly 1 lb.

## Ecology

Usually considered harmless on their own, they feed on carrion and rarely display any hostility. When threatened, they prefer to alter their glow in a way that confuses or pacifies would be attackers before skittering away as quickly as their stubby legs can carry them. The biggest danger a novamite poses to most is as a ravenous pests, as they reproduce rather rapidly if left unchecked, and their young are notoriously ravenous. consuming all the food needed to fuel a lifetime of energy and brilliance.

Most novamites exist in a symbiotic relationship with flarefarmers, intelligent plants which depend on the light they shed for their survival. This relationship makes life particularly easy for the novamites, which are encouraged to nest within the tightly woven bodies of the flarefarmers, gorged on a steady and ample supply of food, and exposed to pleasing pheromones that encourage them to emit brighter pulses of light.



## Habitat & Society

Prior to their domestication, the ancestors of modern novamites were significantly smaller, considerably more agile, and capable of flight. Their glowing bodies originally served to attract potential mates over considerable distances. Having been bred for increased size and brightness, today the creatures are rather helpless on their own, awkwardly scuttling about as their bodies serve as living generators, and their now vestigial wings often burning away completely as they mature and glow more intensely.

Most novamites never have reason to leave their nests more than a few times in their lives. The flarefarmers which serve as both homes and caretakers inspect and compare each new batch of hatchlings, culling the dimmer specimens, and trading the rest between each other to prevent inbreeding. Once inspected and properly housed, a novamite need only eat, mate, and glow as the flarefarmer hunts for food, depositing kills within its branches for easy feeding, and dealing with any would-be predators.

Even if a flarefarmer is killed, any novamites it carried will usually continue to use its body as their nest until discovered and adopted by another. The dense tangle of branches and thick inner leaves provide a safer and more secure home that conceals their constant glow than any natural cavern possibly

could. When no flarefarmers are available, desperate novamites often attempt to approximate their old living conditions by wriggling into bags and pouches (particularly those used to store food), the shells and skulls of larger creatures, old cans, discarded clothing, or the branches of particularly leafy plants.

Under favorable conditions, and supplied with ample food, a female novamite will lay three clutches of around 20 eggs each over her hundred day lifespan, embedded directly into a source of food. These eggs hatch into larvae, consuming whatever food is available for their first 30 days as they grow to maturity. Few hatchlings actually reach adulthood, due to predators in the wild, or selective culling in captivity. Those which do immediately begin to glow on reaching maturity, soon attracting mates to produce offspring of their own, and either living in luxury within a living flarefarmer, or roving the nearby tunnels in search of suitably large corpses to drag to their nests to sustain future generations.

## Novamite Familiars

A spellcaster who selects a novamite as a familiar gains a +3 bonus on Perform checks as long as the familiar remains within 1 mile of her; a novamite familiar loses the mindless trait and has an Intelligence score appropriate for its master's level.

# ORE LIZARD



A faint glow emanates from the hide of this reptilian creature.

## ORE LIZARD

CR 8

XP 4,800

N Large animal

**Init** -1; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., low-light vision;  
Perception +12

**Aura** radiation (20 ft.)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 8, flat-footed 23 (-1 Dex, +15 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 78 (12d8+24)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

**DR** 5/piercing

**Immune** acid and radiation

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft., burrow 20 ft.

**Melee** bite +13 (2d6+4), tail slap +13 (2d6+4, plus radiation spike)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10-ft. with tail slap)

**Special Attacks** radiation spike

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 8, **Con** 14, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 22 (26 vs. trip)

**Feats** [Great Fortitude](#), [Improved Natural Armor](#), [Improved Natural Attack](#) (bite), [Improved Natural Attack](#) (slam), [Power Attack](#)

**Skills** Climb +16, Perception +12

**Special Qualities** no breath

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any underground (Amrita)

**Organization** solitary, pair

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Radiation Aura (Ex)** An ore lizard exudes a zone of radiation from the irradiated plates of metal on its body. Within 20 feet creatures must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save each round or take 1d4 points of Con drain and 1d4 points of Strength damage as secondary damage each day. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Radiation Spike (Ex)** Whenever a creature takes damage from an ore lizard's slam attack, that creature must succeed on a DC 18 Reflex save or an irradiated shard breaks off in its flesh. Embedded shards expose the creature to the ore lizard's radiation aura until 24 hours have passed or they are removed. Removing one shard requires a DC 18 Heal check made as full-round action. For every 5 by which the check is exceeded, one additional shard can be removed. On a failed

check, a shard is still removed, but the process deals 1d6+1 points of damage to the victim.

The natural predator of the alloy worm, ore lizards are keen hunters and long-lived creatures of the Amrita belt. Scientists discovered their incredible lifespan while holding them under quarantine, a process required as the metals that make up their exoskeleton constantly emanate radiation. The eldest ore lizard in captivity has been able to surpass the Century War, a fact only known by the combined generations of scientists who have studied it. Coupled with the fact that ore lizards are only found within the oldest and largest of asteroids, it is theorized that the genetic makeup of these creatures were at one point altered by the energies of the Collapse. An ore lizard is 12 feet long and weighs 700 lbs.

## Ecology

Ore lizards are voracious hunters and the only natural predator of the alloy worm, another subterranean native to the Amrita asteroids. Ore lizards can easily feed on alloy worms as they also carry an inherent immunity to acid and the worms have no natural resistance to the radiation the ore lizard can produce. Ore lizards hunt either solo or in pairs, and studies have confirmed they are intelligent enough to know which is better when encountered with a swarm or with hostile creatures found in numbers. A single egg will be incubated for a span of 6–8 years, and a young lizard has been known to take up to 50–60 years in order to reach maturity.

## Habitat & Society

Ore lizards make their homes in deep subterranean tunnels of Amritan asteroids, curiously never within regions where aetherite is present. The radioactivity of ore lizards comes from the toxic mineral viridium which is prevalent in the deepest portions of many Amritan asteroids. Young ore lizards scuff their hides on these radioactive deposits in order to attract viridium shards are layered in

increasingly thick scaled armor on their hides, though the ore lizard appears to somehow be able to synthesize new viridium naturally after initial exposure after hatching. Amritan researchers at the Harper Institute in Complex Four are studying the ore lizard in captivity, trying to solve the mystery of synthesizing the quality of its radioactive hide.

## Variant Ore Lizards

Ore lizards brought to other terrestrial worlds and exposed to different minerals over multiple generations grow into unique and divergent subspecies. These variants lack the radioactivity of their forebearers and are typically bred as part of biological weapons research.

**Aeronite (CR -1):** Ore lizards forged with aeronite are natural air purifiers. These creatures are bred to be more docile than others of their kind and their bite and claw attacks inflict only 1d8 points of damage plus the ore lizard's Strength bonus. Ore lizards of this variety create a field of breathable air around themselves that, while not functional in an open vacuum, grants a +4 bonus to saves made to resist airborne toxins to adjacent creatures while in an atmosphere or sealed environment. These ore lizards lack the radiation aura and radiation spike abilities.

**Adamantine (CR +1):** Adamantine ore lizards are highly aggressive and violent creatures. They gain DR 10/adamantine and piercing, a +4 bonus to natural armor, and their natural attacks bypass damage reduction and object hardness as adamantine weapons. Additionally, these ore lizards increase their burrow speed to 40 ft. These ore lizards lack the radiation aura and radiation spike abilities.

**Flauros (CR +1):** Flauros ore lizards radiate an aura of heat that causes 2d6 points of fire damage to any creature that ends their turn adjacent to them. They are immune to fire and gain the fire subtype. The natural attacks of a flauros ore lizard deal +1d6 points of fire damage. These ore lizards lack the radiation aura and radiation spike abilities.

# PALEBUG

*This chittering arthropod has a pale, transparent carapace tipped with long antennae.*

## PALEBUG

CR 1/4

XP 100

N Tiny vermin

**Init** +3, **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., hauntsense 30 ft.;  
Perception +4

## DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +1 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 5 (1d8+1)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0

**Immune** mind-affecting effects

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +5 (1d3-4)

**Space** 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 3, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +1 **CMD** 7 (15 vs. trip)

**Feats** [Weapon Finesse](#)<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Climb +7, Perception +4, Stealth +15; **Racial Modifiers** Climb +4, Perception +4, Stealth +4

**Special Qualities** hauntsense

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Amrita Asteroid Belt)

**Organization** Solitary, pair, colony (3–10)

**Treasure** none

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Familiar** A spellcaster who selects a palebug as a familiar gains 3 bonus hit points. A palebug familiar loses the mindless trait and has an Intelligence score appropriate for its master's level.

**Hauntsense (Ex)** A palebug is automatically aware of any haunts or incorporeal undead within 30 feet. This does not discern details such as direction or numbers, merely the presence or absence. Physical barriers do not

impede this ability, but barriers of force do. When aware of a haunt, a palebug emits an eerie trilling sound.

Palebugs are the byproduct of Hierarchy research into reliable detection of incorporeal undead in the depths of the Gulf. These creatures bear the unique trait of being able to sense paranormal activity and act as an early warning system from attacks by incorporeal undead. A palebug measures roughly 2 feet in length and weighs 4 lbs.

## Ecology

Research into what would become palebugs began aboard the Hierarchy laboratory aethership *Unseen Hand* in 3940. These insects share similarities with some of the more resilient arthropods found on Akasaat, hinting at their genetic legacy. Where they differ from their heritage, however, is in their namesake coloration. Each palebug has a chalky, transparent carapace, giving these them a deceptively sickly appearance. In truth, palebugs are quite lively, especially when they sense undead.

The three antennae on their heads function as special sensory organ, picking up remnants of the restless dead. Palebugs who sense nearby undead will stiffen their bodies and rapidly flap their stunted



wings while emitting an eerie trilling sound. This display can be startling to anyone who isn't expecting it, but even more terrifying to anyone who knows what it means.

Feral palebugs are an increasingly common sight on Amrita thanks to a few breeding pairs escaping from careless owners. They can crop up just about anywhere, though they tend to nest near the homes of Mediums and other living creatures with connections to death. Thankfully, palebugs are rarely aggressive, only attacking when protecting their eggs.

## Habitat & Society

Originally designed as a stepping stone to greater supernatural discoveries, palebugs began as a proof of concept to test the effects of negative energy exposure on insects over generations of controlled breeding. Researchers aboard the *Unseen Hand* believed that a slow, steady exposure to negative energy would attune their test subjects to the presence of the unrestful spirits that plague the belt. With further research, these adaptations could be revised for safe use on intelligent creatures at an expanded range, making life in the belt much easier.

Sadly, that day never came. One of the shadows used for testing escaped containment, slaking its thirst for life on the hapless crew. Long after the majority of the shadows departed the derelict vessel, it was set upon by salvagers who discovered the palebugs and the shadows that remained aboard the ship. The surviving salvagers recovered the research of the science team and recognized the palebugs aboard the vessel for what they were—a valuable commodity to be exploited.

Palebugs have since become a popular, if unsettling, pet among the people of the Amrita Belt. Being omnivores with a forgiving palette and a high tolerance for unusual environments, the insects are incredibly low maintenance. However, it seems that they have a particular taste for high protein solids coated with a sweet substance, such as syrup. This is especially useful for spellcasters with palebugs

familiars, as the awakened insects often use their empathic connection to express voracious hunger and persistent anxieties.

Today, palebugs are primarily bred for their ability to detect haunts and undead, making them a valuable commodity in the Gulf regions and Amritan colonies. They have also found a foothold market in Orbis Aurea as they are often capable of detecting the oncoming of a netherstorm (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 288) with 20% accuracy up to 1d3 minutes before the netherstorm begins.

## Alchemical Reagents

The thorax and antennae of a palebug, harvested after death and preserved, can be used as an alchemical reagent when casting necromancy spells. Use of palebugs for the purposes of alchemical reagents is uncommon within Gulf regions, but on terrestrial worlds—especially in regions with minimal undead presence—palebug parts are easier to sell. The antennae of palebugs have become a popular status symbol tincture in high-class Hierarchy nightclubs.

### PALEBUG THORAX 2 AU

#### Weight —

The dried thorax of a palebug is used in the creation of powders designed to ward off spirits, such as *abjurant salt*<sup>UE</sup>.

#### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 5 (10 au); **Spells** necromancy school

**Effect** +1 caster level for the purpose of the effect.

### PALEBUG ANTENNAE 1 AU

#### Weight —

The delicate antennae of a palebug is renowned for its divinatory properties is sometimes consumed as a placebo by those seeking to attain heightened spiritual awareness.

#### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 6 (6 au); **Spells** divination (scrying) school

**Effect** +1 caster level for the purpose of overcoming spell resistance.

# PARAPET

*This small creature has a sleek, scaled body with a vibrant iridescence.*

## PARAPET

CR 1/2

XP 200

N Small animal

**Init** +2; **Senses** aetherite scent, low-light vision;  
Perception +8

## DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 4 (1d8)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

**DR** 3/bludgeoning

**Defensive Abilities** defensive ball

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 5 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +0 (1d4)

**Space** 3 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 11, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 7 (+11 vs. trip)

**Feats** [Skill Focus](#) (Perception)

**Skills** Climb +1, Perception +8; **Racial Modifiers** +4  
Climb

**Special Qualities** no breath

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any asteroid (Amrita Asteroid Belt)

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** incidental

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Aetherite Scent (Ex)** As a full-round action a parapet can pinpoint the presence of raw aetherite within 30 feet by tasting mineral compositions. This ability penetrates barriers but not extradimensional spaces.

**Defensive Ball (Ex)** A parapet can roll up into a ball as a swift action, increasing its natural armor bonus to +3 but decreasing its speed to 0 ft. Unrolling is a move action.



The parapet is considered the good luck charm of the otherwise bleak expanse of the Amrita Asteroid Belt. Able to sniff out aetherite deposits, parapets are valuable companions for miners and fortune seekers alike, and can fetch a high price at trading posts both local and abroad. A parapet measures 3 feet in length and weighs 50 lbs.

## Ecology

Being able to survive the vacuum of space, parapets are frequently mistaken for asteroids themselves as they drift through the emptiness of the Gulf, carried on aetheric currents. A parapet can suspend most of its biological functions, allowing it to enter a state of torpor where it is sustained solely by solar radiation absorbed through its armored hide. A parapet in hibernation can persist in this state for decades, if not longer. The full extent of their hibernation has not been discovered in the relatively short time since their discovery. Once a parapet collides with solid matter, be it an aethership or another asteroid, they begin digging to find soft minerals which comprise much of a parapet's diet (typically heavy metals such as lead and gold).

Parapets have exceptionally resilient metabolisms and require only half a pound of heavy metals to subsist for 1 month. In captivity this typically amounts to 1 au worth of raw materials commonly available in nearly any settlement. Aethership pilots often find parapets this way, clinging to their ship after sailing through debris fields.

Parapet are a monogendered species, capable of reproduction with any member of their kind, but not self-reproduction. Due to the harshness of their native environment, parapets exhibit an incredibly prolonged period of delayed implantation. After conception, they can prevent embryonic development for a span of time as long as a year. When a suitable environment can be found for birth, preferably underground as young (called buffets) have no developed shell, up to 4 buffets can be born at a time. After they reach maturity, anywhere between 3 and 12 months old, they leave

their burrow where they are most commonly found in the wild.

## Habitat & Society

Parapets are solitary creatures that prefer tight underground burrows for their dens. Due to the non-terrestrial nature of their native environment, these creatures often exhibit irregular activity cycles, remaining awake for 3 to 6 hour bursts followed by a sleep cycle of twice as long as waking. Parapets do not have a traditional mating cycle, and procreation and mating is typically arranged by happenstance when two parapet unexpectedly run into one-another. Parapets do not forge familial bonds and do little to rear their young. These habits ensure that the native parapet population in the Amrita Belt are considerably low, as is the species' overall population density.

Domesticated parapets are a relatively new development, evolutionarily speaking. Little has changed in a parapet's choice of habitation and social behavior when domesticated, though they can be imprinted to trust and see non-parapets as members of their own kind. In spite of this, even trained parapets are highly independent creatures desiring the ability to come and go as they please. Training a parapet is a exhausting endeavor due to their behavior and Handle Animal DCs required to train them are increased by 5. Due to this fact, most professional ask for considerably higher rates for training domesticated or wild parapets.

Trained, domesticated parapets are commonly sold for 300 au in Amritan markets, and up to three times as much in more remote settlements beyond the Belt.

## Parapet Companions

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Small; **Speed** 30 ft., burrow 5 ft.; **AC** +2 natural armor; **Attack** 2 claws (1d4); **Ability Scores** Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 9; **SQ** aetherite scent, low-light vision.

**4th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Medium; **Attack** 2 claws (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str +4, Con +2.

# AMRITA FLORA

Nearly all biological life requires two things to survive: oxygen and water. Both of these basic elements are anathema to the vacuum of the Gulf, where oxygen exists in absence and absent air-pressure water boils under the slightest of temperatures. In spite of this environment, there are some forms of hardy plantlife that can survive in the dark and cold recesses of asteroids within the Amrita Belt, and in some cases within the very raw vacuum of the Gulf in its entirety.

## STAR SPORES

Fungus are among the only forms of plantlife capable of surviving in a total vacuum due to their internal composition. While many forms of fungus will wither and die under the extreme conditions of the Gulf, there are species of mold and lichen capable of not only surviving but thriving within airless and highly radioactive environments. Most of these forms of plant life are harmless and can be seen growing in shadows of asteroid craters or in the deep crevasses of aethership hulls. Some are cause for mild irritation, like allergies, if air filtration equipment isn't properly maintained.

Some forms of space-born fungus are highly hazardous to life exploring the Gulf and make their way into colonies or aetherships. Yellow mold<sup>CRB</sup> survives on exposure to a vacuum, though grows dormant whenever within sunlight. Patches of yellow mold can spread to consume dark caverns and deep asteroid craters. Their spore ejecta can find its way onto the hulls of aetherships, which in turn spread yellow mold into foreign environments they travel to.

Green slime<sup>CRB</sup> can survive in the vacuum of the Gulf, though becomes dormant in such conditions. Patches of green slime in space dry out and become a viscous sludge that harmlessly attaches to any surface. Once the green slime returns to an oxygen rich environment it will reconstitute and begin to spread as normal. Tales of aetherships picking up green slime in

an asteroid cave only to have it come alive inside of a colony hangar and drip down, dissolving maintenance workers, are the kinds of horror stories often told in Amritan cantinas.

Additionally, new forms of mold found only in the Gulf exist within the dark reaches of the Belt. Blackstar mold is one such hazard, containing a connection to the negative energy plane and a reanimating effect on corpses left in its vicinity.

## Blackstar Mold (CR 2)

Blackstar mold is a type of fungus highly disruptive to organic matter. This slow-spreading fungus is charged with negative energy and forms under highly specific situations, making it mercifully rare across most of the Amrita Belt. Blackstar mold can only form when a living creature is slain and later rises as an incorporeal undead creature (such as a ghost or wraith) while in the vacuum of the Gulf. Terrestrial fungal spores on the corpse's body, when bombarded with radiation, will become charged by the negative energy unleashed in the creation of incorporeal undead and grow to consume the physical remains of the corpse, becoming a blackstar mold patch.

Creatures that end their turn on a patch of blackstar mold must succeed at a DC 14 Will save or take 1d6 points of negative energy damage. A successful save negates the damage. Undead automatically fail this save and are healed the same amount. Creatures who die from exposure to negative energy within an area of blackstar mold rise 1 round later as a zombie. Blackstar mold can be destroyed by fire or positive energy, and 5 points of damage from either source is sufficient to destroy a 5-foot patch of blackstar mold.

Astrobotanists speculate that greater concentration of blackstar mold may be able to spawn more powerful forms of undead, but such concentrations have not yet been seen.

## THE CURRENTS OF SPACE

Astrobotanists traveling the Gulf observed a singularly unique phenomenon whereby Gulf-borne fungus on asteroids nearby to aetheric currents would germinate spores that are swept up in the flow of these kinetic waves, allowing their spores to be carried across the vast reaches of space at tremendous speeds. Often times these spores would become lodged in the hulls of aethershops plying the currents of space, which then transport the spores to terrestrial worlds where they can take root.

Multiple species of fungus were observed performing this reproductive cycle and all have analogous terrestrial counterparts. What has baffled researchers studying this fungal behavior is the order of operations, whether the fungus found in the Amrita Belt was brought from terrestrial worlds, or whether the fungal life started in the darkness of the Gulf and took root on distant worlds over the course of centuries. Given that the Amrita Belt is comprised of debris from a shattered world, it further raises questions about the nature of life in the perceived seat of the Progenitors' civilization prior to the Collapse.

During the Century War, the erahthi observed these same spore distributions and some consideration was put into the development of fungal weaponry that could be delivered through the same means, but ultimately the Chamber of War could not determine a way by which to deliver a spore-based weapon via the aetheric currents that did not also endanger Kir-Sharaat. Whatever came of the plans for those biological weapons is unknown.

## Phlogiston Spores (CR 1)

Phlogiston spores are an invasive, incorporeal spore cloud, emanating from plants native to the phlogiston region of the Evermorn. These space-dwelling fungal asteroids are capable of expelling their spores into the Material plane, whereby they congregate in shifting clouds of scintillating rainbow dust. Clouds of phlogiston spores typically cover an area over

100 miles across, large enough for an aethership to potentially risk exposure to during flight.

A Successful DC 20 Knowledge (planes) or Perception check can identify the shifting patterns against the darkness of space as phlogiston spores. As the spores are incorporeal in nature, they pass harmlessly through the hulls of aethershops and colonies. Within a cloud of phlogiston spores, a creature must succeed at a Fortitude save every round of exposure or become seeded by the spores. Creatures who fail their save against phlogiston spores and become seeded act as though they are within an area of wild magic<sup>GMG</sup> so long as they remain within the spore cloud and for 1 hour thereafter.

Effects or spells that completely block incorporeal creatures (such as *wall of force*) can block the presence of phlogiston spores.

## COLONY BIODIVERSITY

The introduction of multiple worlds' flora into confined spaces such as aethershops and colonies has resulted in the Amrita Belt developing a wide range of unusual and—often times—unintentionally crossbred plants. Many of these crossbreeds are functionally indistinguishable from their terrestrial counterparts, with subtle variations in appearance and favored climate. However, research into the crossbreeding of interplanetary vegetation has led to the development of hardy new breeds of staple crops capable of surviving in both diverse and hostile environments. Vegetables from Orbis Aurea that thrive in high-radiation and low-light environments, crossbred with sun-flourishing low-water requiring vegetation from Akasaat results in resilient—though so far inedible—plants that can survive almost anywhere.

Since the end of the Century War, erahthi astrobotanists have begun working with researchers based in the Amrita Belt to determine if the floral biodiversity found within Amritan colonies can be used to repopulate plant life on both arid worlds like Akasaat, but also to aid in terraforming of lunar

surfaces. However, the research of these scientists have been impacted by criminal organizations across the Amrita Belt. One group in particular, the Ghost Stars, have begun kidnapping astrobiologists. Rumors regarding the disappearances seem to indicate that the Ghost Stars are attempting to engineer synthetic levin (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 376), a highly addictive and valuable drug made from a plant native only to Kir-Sharaat. Others suggest that the kidnappings may have to do with scrapped erahtbi bioweapon plans from the Century War.

Astrobotanists working for the Verdant World research group in Complex Four believe that the biodiversity found in Amritan colonies could potentially be the key to preventing a second Collapse. Researchers from the Verdant World group believe that the Collapse may have been precipitated by a steep and steady decline of biodiversity among the ancient Aethera System, leading to an ecological disaster of interplanetary proportions.

To combat this, the Verdant World group has created breeding programs whereby they are introducing the hardiest and most prolific plants from across Akasaat, Kir-Sharaat, Seraos, and Orbis Aurea in the hopes of engineering super plants capable of surviving in the most extreme environments imaginable. Verdant World's alchemists started this project in 4004 and their primary samples come from Hierarchy-controlled space. Their desire to retrieve unique flora samples from Kir-Sharaat has been met with repeated blockage by the Dominion out of fear that they may intend to use their knowledge of the planet's plantlife to develop biological weapons for the Hierarchy.

To date, Verdant World has created a number of hybrid plants enhanced with a magical reinforcement. These plants are sold to privately sold to interested parties directly from their offices in Complex Four, but are prohibitively expensive for an ordinary Belter. Verdant World uses the profits from these sales to fund their interplanetary expeditions and maintain

strong relations with the Hierarchy and Paragon Ascendancy.

## Magical Plants

The hybrid plants created by the Verdant World group utilize the rules for magical plants found in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Wilderness*.

### STEELBLOOM 3,000 AU

Slot — CL 3rd Weight 12 lbs.

#### Aura faint transmutation

This short and hardy shrub has fibrous leaves interwoven with an organic metallic fiber. In autumn the leaves on a *steelbloom* oxidize, rust, and crumble away, making way for new growth in the spring. The plant also features rare, colorful flowers that contain supernatural power. Crushing a *steelbloom* flower and rubbing it on a living creature's exposed skin grants the benefit of [barkskin](#) and DR 1/ adamantine for the duration of the effect.

A *steelbloom* produces one flower per week during its growing season, which lasts for 13 weeks during the spring. This shrub never has more than one flower growing at any given time.

### CONSTRUCTION 1,500 AU

[Cultivate Magic Plants](#), [barkskin](#), cultivator must have 1 rank in Knowledge (nature).

### WINTERFEED 4,000 AU

Slot — CL 5rd Weight 80 lbs.

#### Aura faint conjuration

*Winterfeed* are low, crawling bushes similar to juniper. A handful of *winterfeed* berries, when consumed, sustain a creature for 8 hours without the need for food or water and protects them from extreme temperatures as [endure elements](#).

A *winterfeed* produces enough berries each day for up to four creatures to eat or drink. *Winterfeed* grow year round and can subsist on low aetherite radiation rather than sunlight and water when necessary.

### CONSTRUCTION 2,000 AU

[Cultivate Magic Plants](#), [create food and water](#), cultivator must have 1 rank in Knowledge (nature).

# FLAREFARMER

*This strange creature resembles a thorny tumbleweed on sinuous, vine-like legs glowing with a vibrant internal radiance.*

## FLAREFARMER

CR 7

XP 3,200

N Medium plant

**Init** +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12

### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural)

**hp** 74 (10d8+30 HD)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

**Immune** plant traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** 3 vines +13 (1d4+6 plus grab)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d4+6), grab, shine, swallow whole (1d4+6)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 23, **Dex** 19, **Con** 16, **Int** 6, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +13 (+17 grapple); **CMD** 27 (31 grapple)

**Feats** [Combat Patrol](#)<sup>APG</sup>, [Combat Reflexes](#), [Dodge](#), [Mobility](#), [Spring Attack](#)

**Skills** Climb +14, Perception +12; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb

**Languages** Sylvan (can't speak)

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** underground (Amrita)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or hunting pack (3-6)

**Treasure** incidental

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Shine (Ex)** A flarefarmer typically houses at least one novamite ([see page 109](#)) within its body. As a swift action, the flarefarmer can shift its inner leaves to reveal (or hide) the novamite, causing it to shed light as a torch, and allowing the novamite to use its own

special abilities. Effectively, this allows a flarefarmer to use any one of the three novamite abilities described in that creature's entry once per round, so long as a novamite is revealed. A revealed novamite is vulnerable to any area effects which target the flarefarmer, and can also be attacked directly, but always has improved cover from the flarefarmer (effectively giving the novamite 25 AC, a +8 reflex save, and 4 HP). Once a housed novamite has been killed, a flarefarmer loses its shine ability until it can be replaced.

Flarefarmers are a race of intelligent plants, dwelling within the interior of the larger asteroids in the Amrita belt. Unable to endure the harsh vacuum of space for extended periods, but still dependent on intense light to survive, they have entered into a symbiotic relationship with a species of intensely bioluminescent insects known as novamites. A flarefarmer stands 5 and a half feet tall and weighs 80 lbs.

## Ecology

A flarefarmer's body largely resembles an inverted hedge, with a thick tangle of sturdy yet flexible branches surrounding an inner nest of dense leaves, supported by three sturdy legs. Carried within each is one or more novamites, whose blindingly bright abdomens aid in their photosynthesis. While this provides the flarefarmers with all the nourishment they require, in order to keep the largely helpless novamites fed and active, flarefarmers rove their caverns in small hunting parties seeking out hidden vermin to throttle with their vines and "devour" to provide the mites with a regular supply of carrion.

Like most plants, flarefarmers reproduce through flowers, which bloom once a year along their longer vines, pollinated by rubbing them against each other in a complex courtship ritual some describe as resembling a complicated secret handshake. The resulting seed pods are typically planted in the same

pieces of carrion serving to feed their novamites for a year as the young sapling grows large enough to house a novamite of its own, but some larger and more prosperous communities maintain public gardens prowled by free range novamites, collectively tending to each new generation.

## Habitat & Society

While they do organize in small primitive societies and communicate with each other to warn of new dangers or fresh vermin nests, flarefarmers do not typically make tools or weapons. They do however decorate their home caverns with small sculptures made from bones, chitin, and on rare occasions, equipment left tangled in their branches after their novamites strip away the meat from their kills.

Most flarefarmers house a mated pair of novamites at any given time, with several larvae hidden deeper within their bodies. Flarefarmers congregate at trading posts deep within their caverns on a monthly basis to exchange and study their novamites, striving to breed bigger and brighter specimens, ensuring no flarefarmer goes without, and providing spares to those embarking on more dangerous or far-ranging hunts.

## Alchemical Reagent

The following alchemical reagents can be harvested from dead flarefarmers. Harvesting a reagent from a flarefarmer requires a successful DC 20 Survival check, which produces 500 au worth of reagents.

Flarefarmer hunting is a dangerous task within the Amrita Belt and so far attempts to contain flarefarmers in captivity have failed. Bounty on intact flarefarmer carcasses range between 200 to 300 au, though canny hunters recognize that the value is not necessarily in the creatures themselves but the coils of



heat-reactive firevine contained within their novamite shrines. Successfully harvesting these coiled vines is delicate and skilled work. Due to the rarity of these materials outside of the Amrita belt, firevine coils sell for twice market price on terrestrial worlds, especially planets where plant aetherships are manufactured.

**FIREVINE 100 AU**

**Weight 2 lbs.**

The tight coils of internal vines within a flarefarmer work like heating coils in machinery, allowing a flarefarmer to regulate body temperature with the aid of a novamite. These coils are used in the creation of climate control modules for plant aetherships.

### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 5 (500 au); **Spells** fire subschool spells

**Effect** Spell effect is empowered as if by the [Empower Spell](#) metamagic feat. This effect does not stack with [Empower Spell](#).

# SERAOS FAUNA

The tempest-wracked gas giant of Seraos feels as though it should be inhospitable to animal life. From a distance, this notion seems validated by the constant storms and flashes of lightning coursing through the planet's upper layer of Yehdre. But much like the Amrita Asteroid Belt, life finds a way to persevere within the cracks and crevasses of this stormy world, in regions of serene calm air bordered by walls of raging storms. But the richest of life on Seraos is not found on the surface, but deep within the miasmic seas and crushing, lightless depths.

## YEHDRE

Yehdre is home to numerous species of avian creatures descended from surviving animals of the destroyed planet of Amrita and elementally-touched animals that were torn from the Plane of Air during the Collapse. Yehdre's wildlife consists almost exclusively of creatures capable of flight, and any land-borne animals present on the floating landmasses tossed up by the Stormflows are invariably alien, typically abandoned on Seraos by offworld explorers. Thousands of species of bird are native to Yehdre, divided among the innumerable Stormflows that shift and move across the planet's surface between its great tempests.

Due to the enclosed nature of Stormflows migration of Seraos avian wildlife is typically impossible. However, when a Landrist goliath ([see page 128](#)) breaches a Stormflow wall it is often times accompanied by a trail of smaller aerial animals that move in the relatively calm wake of such a massive and powerful creature. Those that survive by clinging close to the goliath can emerge in new Stormflows, introducing heretofore unseen species. Landrist goliaths themselves are rare sights and are not thought to be great in number, making the number of journeys of these majestic creatures from Stormflow to Stormflow infrequent.

Avian life in Yehdre navigate through a specialized magnetic receptor capable of sensing the positions of Seraos' largest storms and the tremendous electrical energy they emit in the form of lightning bombardments. This means that avian animals native to Seraos do not navigate by "north" but rather by the slowly-shifting position of the planet's greatest storms, barely measured in inches per year. Birds native to Seraos that are brought to other worlds are often disoriented for six to eight months (treat as the staggered condition) but eventually reorient to both the non-subjective gravity and the static placement of magnetic north.

## Shroud Worms (CR 3)

Predatory invertebrates native to the upper atmosphere of Yehdre, shroud worms are diaphanous creatures resembling ribbons of fine, translucent silk with a deep red central vein branching with numerous brighter arteries. Shroud worms excrete a highly corrosive slime from their bodies that dissolves organic and inorganic substances with equal ease. These creatures are light enough to be blown around by the wind. A handful of shroud worms are a nuisance, but when they are encountered in a dense pocket they can strip the flesh from unprotected creatures and eat through the hulls of aethershops.

A creature passing through a cloud of shroud worms takes 1d6 points of acid damage per round of exposure. This acid deals full damage to objects and ignores hardness. A creature damaged by a cloud of shroud worms must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save or have some of the worms stuck to their bodies. Adhered shroud worms continue to deal acid damage to creatures even after they leave the cloud and through their dissolving process become further adhered, making them difficult to remove. A character must spend 1 minute and succeed at a DC 12 Strength check to remove adhered shroud worms (this process also inflicts 1 point of damage per round). A



SERAFOS

## ISLAND ECOLOGIES

The floating landmasses within Yehdre, trapped within equilibrium of subjective gravity, are discrete biomes in their own right. While some islands are no larger than a few hundred feet on a side, others can range in size measured in miles. As these landmasses are formed from shards of the lost world Amrita, they represent fragments of Amritan ecology like a fly trapped in amber. Deserts, mountains, even forests can be found here with startlingly alien ecologies. However, these landmasses are all doomed to destruction as they drift toward the tempest walls of their respective Stormflows, to be scoured clean by ravaging winds and lightning storms. The ecologies on their surface existing only so long as the land they are on does not drift into the eternal tempest's gnashing maw.

successful DC 20 Heal check made at the start of the process can negate this damage.

Shroud worms reproduce by dissolving creatures into masses of flesh that fall down into Vorsaag. Here, the internal body chemistry of shroud worms intermingles with the toxic sea and causes these creatures cells to divide at an alarming rate, reproducing by consuming the liquefied remains of their victims and asexually replicating.

## LANDRIST

Home to dense, toxic gasses, Landrist is an enigmatic realm that is poorly understood by natural philosophers and astrobiologists. While much of Landrist is comprised of carbon dioxide, it is also made up of heavier gasses such as argon and xenon. Xenon, especially, is notable for Landrist's vibrantly violet-colored lightning storms where electrical discharge from Yehdre-based storms punctures Landrist and excites the xenon gas in the atmosphere, igniting into a flare of blue-purple that appears as blooms within the darkness. Animals native to Landrist use these sporadic storms as inciting moments to hunt and forage. Xenon gas explosions within Landrist stir up flocks of diminutive, gas-swimming creatures called ayscapa that move in

swarms of hundreds much like terrestrial starlings. When excited by xenon storms, these animals draw the attention of Landrist-dwelling predators like miasmic leviathans ([see page 132](#)). In turn, flocks of ayscapa often flee to the surface of Seraos, bringing miasmic leviathans with them.

Hunters working the Stormflows discovered the ecology of ayscapa in relation to miasmic leviathans and have recently begun using alchemical electricity bombs as depth charges to stir up ayscapa flocks so as to draw miasmic leviathans to the surface of Yehdre. Leviathan hunting as an enterprise is still in its infancy, but the impact on the population of miasmic leviathans has already been noted by natural philosophers studying the ecologies of Seraos. They posit that the number of miasmic leviathans may be far fewer than could sustain long-term hunting expeditions, and fear that within a century miasmic leviathans could be rendered extinct from over-hunting.

### PLASMA FLASK 40 AU

**Weight** 1 lb.    **Craft** DC 20

Plasma flasks are created from noble gasses harvested from Landrist combined with plasmic aetherite. You can throw a plasma flask as a splash weapon. Treat this attack as a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 10 feet.

A direct hit deals 1d6 points of fire damage and 1d6 points of electricity damage. Every creature within 5 feet of the point where the flask hits takes 1 point of fire damage and 1 point of electricity damage from the splash. The plasma dissipates quickly and does not persist for multiple rounds. Creatures with the aether subtype who suffer a direct hit from a plasma flask are staggered unless they succeed at a DC 11 Fortitude save.

### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 1 (40 gp); **Spells** fire or electricity subtype spells  
**Effect** Plasma flasks can be used as alchemical power components in the following ways:

*Plasma Conduit (M):* When consumed as an additional material component for a spell with the fire or electricity

subtype that deals damage, a plasma flask power component causes the spell to deal 1d6 points of additional damage of the alternate energy type (+1d6 electricity damage for fire spells, +1d6 fire damage for electricity spells).

*Plasmic Stabilizer (F)*: When used as a focus for a spell of with the fire or electricity subtypes, a plasma flask adds +1 to the spell's save DC.

## VORSAAG

Little is known or understood about Vorsaaag, a layer of Seraos with such crushing gravity that gasses are transmuted to liquids. Initial surveys during the Century War posited moderate aetherite deposits within Vorsaaag, though no expedition into the fluidic layer of Seraos has ever turned up physical evidence of aetherite presence. Furthermore, no expedition to Vorsaaag has ever returned with proof of inhabitation in this layer by any life. Whatever does live within this crushing realm likely is adapted to exist solely within the extreme physical pressure of such an inhospitable place, and much like creatures native to weightless environments like the Gulf, may be invertebrates and considerably alien to non-natives. The handful of exploratory missions into Vorsaaag returned with mixed tales of moon-sized leviathans swimming in the night-black depths, though the veracity of such claims is unsubstantiated.

Much like Vorsaaag, the fabled core of Seraos—Luuvt—is little understood, if it even exists as a discrete location at all.

## Volatile Miasma (CR 10)

Deep within Vorsaaag exists pockets of highly condensed Seraos miasma that has mixed with combustible gasses from Landrist and became trapped within heavy fields of fluidic atmosphere. Volatile miasma forms around free-floating veins of raw aetherite that creates just enough outward force to prevent the bubble from collapsing under the high environmental pressures. Volatile miasma appears in pockets of 2d6+2 x 10 feet in radius. Upon entering

the area of volatile miasma a creature suffers 8d6 points of acid damage that bypasses object hardness. The raw aetherite at the core of an area of volatile miasma can be harvested for refinement, but the risks vastly outweigh the rewards of such bold endeavors, as the aetherite within the miasma weighs only 100 lbs per foot of the field's radius (and generates radiation normally). The precarious equilibrium of the aetherite vein at the center of a volatile miasma field means that if it is disturbed, the entire field collapses (see below).

Any amount of fire or electricity (such as from a spell or effect that deals energy damage) ignites a pocket of volatile miasma, causing it to erupt into an explosion that deals 8d6 points of fire damage and 8d6 points of electricity damage to all creatures within the field. A successful DC 20 Reflex save halves this damage.

The round after exploding (or if its aetherite vein is removed from its position) a volatile miasma field collapses in on itself, causing 18d6 points of bludgeoning damage to all creatures contained within and moves them to the center of the collapsed field. Creatures who succeed on a DC 25 Reflex save take half damage from the collapse and are not moved.

There is a 5% chance that collapsing a volatile miasma field by creating an explosion flash-refines the aetherite within and—thanks to the incredible pressures of Vorsaaag—condenses the mineral down into a much more valuable and easily transportable form weighing 1 lb. per 5 feet of the volatile miasma field's original size.

The risk inherent in flash-refining aetherite in a volatile miasma field makes it highly unsuitable for long-term mining operations, but daredevil entrepreneurs who are able to afford sufficient protections from the layer's environmental hazards could potentially gain tremendous wealth in refined aetherite ore.

Volatile miasma can be identified from 10 feet away by their faintly luminous centers with a successful a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check.

# AERIAL FILCHER

*A tiny, iridescent creature of diaphanous flesh trails long and translucent tendrils through the air.*

## AERIAL FILCHER

CR 1/4

XP 100

N Tiny animal

**Init** +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +4

### DEFENSE

**AC** 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2 size)

**HP** 3 (1d8-1)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0

**Immune** Seraos miasma

### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 50 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** tentacle +2 touch (1d2 acid)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 4, **Dex** 13, **Con** 9 **Int** 2, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 7

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 26

**Feats** [Weapon Finesse](#)

**Skills** **Perception** +4, **Stealth** +8; **Racial Modifiers**  
Stealth +4

**Special Qualities** camouflage, compression, confer immunity

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any air (Seraos)

**Organization** solitary, bloom (3-6), or cloud (7-10)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Camouflage (Ex)** Aerial filchers can adjust the color and texture of their flesh as a move action, allowing them to make Stealth checks while observed.

**Confer Immunity (Ex)** An aerial filcher can suspend its acidic secretions and affix itself to the mouth and nose of a living creature and act as a respirator versus Seraos miasma, conferring its immunity to the toxic gasses to its host. An aerial filcher can only perform this task for 1 hour before its tentacles once more become acidic. It can continue to convey this ability to its host, but deals 1d2 points of acid damage each round it does so.

**Familiar** A wizard who can acquire a familiar can choose an aerial filcher as a familiar. An aerial filcher familiar grants its master a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves vs. poison.

While aethership captains navigating the Stormflow often have more pressing matters than admiring the scenery, it's hard not to notice aerial filchers. Scintillating in the strange lights of the outermost atmospheric layer of Seraos, these cyclopean, jellyfish-like creatures drift on the thermal winds, feeding on gas and tiny prey. An aerial filcher is one and a half feet long and weighs 1 lb.

## Ecology

Aerial filchers are semi-vertebrate cousin of the common jellyfish normally found on Orbis Aurea and Kir-Sharaat. Natives to Seraos, aerial filchers—like many Stormflow fauna—began their evolutionary life in the pseudo-liquid, toxic miasmas of Landrist, or even the deeper layer of Vorsaag. Hierarchy biological scholars believe that the aerial filcher began as a near-aquatic life form and has transitioned into a partially vertebrate form since the Collapse. Hierarchy scholars do not believe that this form is the final evolutionary stage of the aerial filcher species, and that they may one day fully transition to vertebrate status.

The composition of an aerial filcher is bizarre at first sight, and is comprised of a soft and color-changing bell of tissue containing multiple hollow organs suspended in delicate membranes, all of which double as air-bladders, capable of processing oxygen and turning it into hot gasses that keep the aerial filcher aloft. The aerial filcher has a single, downward-pointing eye that is essential for aerial predation. A fragile and translucent ocular socket and cranium encases an aerial filcher's eye and brain, from which multiple prehensile spinal cords descend, each covered with a fatty layer of rubbery flesh that

secretes corrosive spinal fluid. The aerial filcher uses these spinal tentacles as both sense organs capable of detecting odors and temperatures, and also appendages used for killing and externally digesting prey, which are liquefied absorbed through the skin as nutrients.

An aerial filcher is capable of conveying its immunity to Seraos miasma by acting as a living filter for the gaseous toxin. By attaching itself to a host, the filcher forms a symbiotic bond, filtering the Seraos miasma into oxygen and gathering helpful bacteria from the mouth of its host that it uses to clear its digestive system. The symbiosis process is harmless to the host for 1 hour, after which time the filcher can no longer suspend its secretion of acid, which typically ends the symbiotic bond unless the host is immune to damage from that element. Some Hierarchy researchers have suggested that the filcher may also be scraping other biological information from its hosts which—long term—could be incorporated into its own biology and used for further synthesis into a vertebrate life-form. It is unknown to what extent aerial filchers may utilize alien biological data for their own metamorphosis.

Aerial filchers reproduce asexually, spawning anywhere from 10 to 100 inch-long filcher nymphs in a single breeding cycle. Mortality rates among filcher nymphs is high, leading to a less than 10% chance for survival in the wild. Aerial filchers do surprisingly well in captivity and are able to adapt to almost any environment, but psychologically suffer when in confined spaces for prolonged periods of time.

Aerial filchers do not suffer cellular degradation over time, and as such do not age or die of old age, though they tend to only live 10 to 20 years in the wild due to predation by larger animals.

## Habitat & Society

Aerial filchers are ambush predators by nature, using their downward-focused eyes to line up prey before



dropping from extreme heights to attack. As such, these creatures prefer to live within the high-altitude reaches of Seraos' stormflows and typically hunt birds and other tiny or smaller mammals. An aerial filcher will live within the same Stormflow during its entire life, typically alone. Blooms and clouds of aerial filchers are rare and are typically made up of surviving aerial filchers from a spawning of aerial filcher nymphs that did not disperse upon maturation.

Due to their immunity to Seraos miasma, aerial filchers will dip down into lower layers of the planet to avoid predators and hunt prey during times when food is scarce in their Stormflow. Some aerial filchers have taken to forming relationships with humanoids looking to explore miasmatic reaches of Seraos in exchange for food and shelter. Some aerial filchers also become bonded to arcane spellcasters, serving as mobile and stealthy familiars.

# LANDRIST GOLIATH

*A cerulean creature as large as a dreadnaught aethership plies the skies, carrying a small forest and ecosystem on its back.*

## LANDRIST GOLIATH

CR 20

XP 307,200

N Colossal animal

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +27

### DEFENSE

**AC** 36, touch 7, flat-footed 31 (+5 Dex,—8 size, +29 natural)

**hp** 752 (35d8+595); regeneration 10 (fire; in Seraos miasma only)

**Fort** +36, **Ref** +26, **Will** +16

**Defensive Abilities** ferocity; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, death effects, disease, energy drain, fear, Seraos miasma; **DR** 15/—

### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 300 ft. (poor)

**Melee** slam +34 (6d6+24/19-20 plus grab)

**Space** 300 ft.; **Reach** 30 ft.

**Special Attacks** fast swallow, swallow whole (1d4 acid damage and see below, AC 20, 75 hp), trample (6d6+24, DC 43), goliath song (DC 38), tempest lash

### STATISTICS

**Str** 42, **Dex** 20, **Con** 45, **Int** 2, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +26; **CMB** +50; **CMD** 65 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** [Dazing Assault](#)<sup>APG</sup>, [Devastating Strike](#)<sup>UC</sup>, [Flyby Attack](#), [Greater Vital Strike](#), [Hover](#), [Improved Critical](#) (slam), [Improved Devastating Strike](#)<sup>UC</sup>, [Improved Initiative](#), [Improved Iron Will](#), [Improved Lightning Reflexes](#), [Improved Vital Strike](#), [Iron Will](#), [Lightning Reflexes](#), [Power Attack](#), [Snatch](#), [Staggering Blow](#), [Stunning Assault](#)<sup>APG</sup>, [Vital Strike](#)

**Skills** Fly +10, Perception +27

**SQ** massive

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Seraos)

**Organization** solitary plus native inhabitants (typically 3d6 aerial filchers, raidhawks, or other native fauna).

**Treasure** double standard

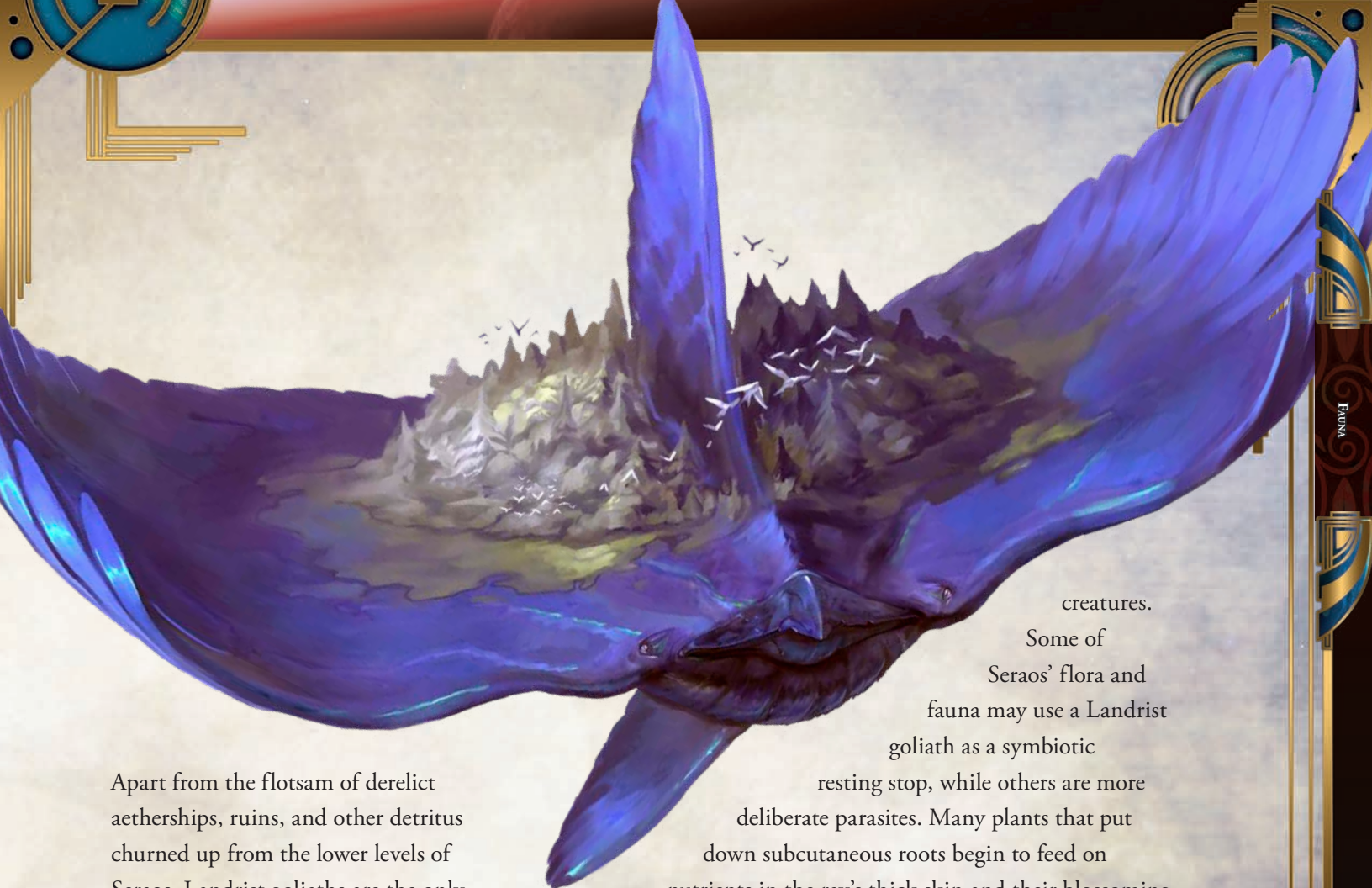
### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Massive (Ex)** Because Landrist goliaths are so massive, terrain features that form difficult terrain generally pose no significant hindrance to their movement, though areas of forest or settlements are considered difficult terrain to a Landrist goliath. A Huge or smaller creature can move through any square occupied by a Landrist goliath, or vice-versa. A Landrist goliath can make attacks of opportunity only against foes that are Huge or larger, and can be flanked only by Huge or larger foes. A Landrist goliath gains a bonus for being on higher ground only if its entire space is on higher ground than that of its target. It's possible for a Huge or smaller creature to climb a Landrist goliath—this generally requires a successful DC 30 Climb check.

**Swallow Whole (Ex)** A Landrist goliath possesses the swallow whole universal monster ability. A Landrist goliath's stomach is a cavernous chamber, typically filled with rocky debris from floating islands it has consumed, along with small aetherships and other debris caught in its massive maw. The space of a Landrist goliath's stomach is 50 feet by 50 feet. While the stomach is corrosive, the Landrist goliath's digestive system is remarkably slow, making the space safe to inhabit for short periods of time. Some Landrist goliath have entire ecosystems of symbiotic creatures living in their stomachs, such as giant amoeba or other more powerful entities.

**Goliath Song (Ex):** As a standard action a Landrist goliath can emit a reverberating call. Creatures within 300 foot cone of this song must succeed at a DC 38 or take 20d6 points of sonic damage and be stunned for 1 minute.

**Tempest Lash (Ex)** As a standard action a Landrist goliath can flick its tail and create a sudden gust of hurricane force wind in a 200 foot cone.



Apart from the flotsam of derelict aetherships, ruins, and other detritus churned up from the lower levels of Seraos, Landrist goliaths are the only other source of stable ground in the cerulean morass of Seraos' skies. Landrist goliaths are the largest known creatures in the Aethera System, ponderously riding the thermals of the Stormflow and occasionally causing gale force wind-wakes with a course-correcting, mighty flap. They possess a striking dorsal fin of mostly semi-permeable membrane that acts as a sail, and a smaller ventral fin that functions as a possibly vestigial rudder. Their huge, flat wings are dotted with organic ailerons that assist in keeping the Landrist goliath stable in flight.

Landrist goliaths measure 300 feet from wingtip to wingtip and 600 feet from head to tip of tail. Their weight is unknown.

## Ecology

A Landrist goliath is a mobile biome in its own right, a flying landmass housing a contained ecology not unlike an orbital habitat. Smaller birds and derivate life along with green-matter cling to the warm, mineral rich and porous skin of the often centuries-old

creatures. Some of Seraos' flora and fauna may use a Landrist goliath as a symbiotic resting stop, while others are more deliberate parasites. Many plants that put down subcutaneous roots begin to feed on nutrients in the ray's thick skin and their blossoming affords the goliath a combination of natural shelter for its symbiotic inhabitants and distinctly recognizable patterns important for the creatures' long courtship rituals during mating periods.

Landrist goliaths are largely only concerned with the consuming of huge amounts of skyborn protein (typically in the form of fine insects and other vermin that dwell within the clouds of lower Seraos cloud layers) and on noble gasses. Their complex internal chemistry is able to draw as much sustenance from the filtering of the toxic gases and sub-reactions between them as the animal matter. Xenobiologists from Complex Four suspect that the digestive processes of a Landrist goliath may be able to break down raw aetherite in such a fashion that leaves refined aetherite as a waste product. However, the sheer complexity of embarking on any such tests has prohibited any real conclusions to this theory.

These majestic creatures also engage in melancholic song that can be heard for miles, on rare occasions returned by other distant Landrist goliaths. The

volume of a Landrist goliath's song is so intense that it can cause significant damage to creatures in close proximity and is great enough to be heard over the constant rumbling of thunder across the planet.

Landrist goliaths are also the only animal known to be capable of independent travel from one Stormflow to another. Usually, anything foolish enough to venture beyond the habitable air-corridors would be summarily ripped asunder, but Landrist goliaths have been seen to do so. Recognizable scarring and their flora patterns have been spotted on other sides of the gas giant in disparate Stormflow corridors, corroborating their survival. One can only presume they travel between these corridors because they can—and perhaps those inaccessible vortexes hold the missing key to their mating and spawning grounds, along with other behavioral mysteries.

In spite of their name—denoting the layer of Seraos on which they originate—Landrist goliaths spend most of their time in the more hospital reaches of Yehdre, Seraos' upper-most layer.

## Habitat & Society

When the first aetherships exploring the Stormflow encountered a Landrist goliath, they naturally treated the beasts with extreme severance or abject panic. Luckily, the goliaths are so large, the absolute apex-predator (despite them not deliberately eating anything sentient) they feel no sense of threat. Some have been fired upon by opportunistic aethership captains thinking to carve out some kind of valuable blubber or trophy from them, and barely even changed their course.

Landrist goliaths may be resilient titans of the sky, but they are not indestructible. Though largely nonviolent, they will take defensive measures to shake off sustained, annoying stimuli such as munitions fire. There have only been a handful of reported cases of aetherships or their crew coming under attack from a Landrist goliath, and these cautionary talesareso

fraught with harrowing detail as to be indispensable deterrents against angering these gentle creatures.

One such tale of a Landrist goliath attack is a second-hand account that tells of how the Amritan mining ship *Deep Seeker* discovered a Landrist goliath and was able to successfully land on the creature's back. The crew decided it was a wise course of action to take samples from the goliath's hide and were immediately upon by a number of parasitic organisms attached to its fins. The crew were reduced to tatters in a matter of moments, and with a seemingly deliberate swing of its tail, the goliath created such a concentrated gust that it knocked the aethership into a gravity whirlpool from which it could not escape, and was sucked disastrously into the lower layers of Seraos atmosphere.

Landrist goliaths are notoriously fond of their solitude, save for what is presumed to be a long and laborious courtship routine leading to a goliath finding a mate. Goliath courtships are theoretical, as no living Landrist goliath has ever been witnessed performing such an activity, but extrapolations of potential behavior based on other large-bodied mammals, such as Orbis Aurean whales, give natural philosophers and xenobiologists alike ample theories to develop potential mating cycles from. The unique scarring and patterning of Landrist goliaths are not unlike scarring and patterninign on deep sea creatures, used to differentiate them between mates.

Researchers from the Paradigm Academy in the Akasaati city of Central believe that the size and quality of a Landrist Goliath's vegetation growth and symbiotic inhabitants may be key in attracting a mate, as these features often times help a Landrist goliath fend off other predators or parasites. Complicating any understanding of the Landrist goliath's lifecycle are the lack of sightings of young Landrist goliaths. It is unknown how a Landrist goliath gives birth, how many young it produces, or what their maturation cycles are. Given the slow speed and incredibly longevity these creatures have, it is entirely possible

that their mating cycles are so long, gestation periods so slow, that the period of time between conception and birth may be measured in decades, if not centuries.

Landrist goliaths are essentially peaceful creatures but can be utterly formidable in their defense. They are hugely resistant to atmospheric pressure and can sustainably produce a number of very valuable alchemical ingredients which be harvested at very minimal irritation to these sentient, flying islands of Seraos.

## Alchemical Items

The following alchemical items can be harvested from living Landrist goliaths with a successful DC 20 Survival or Knowledge (nature) check that takes 1 hour per 10 au of harvested components. Components harvested in this fashion may be spent toward the cost of creating the alchemical items listed below. A failed check spends an equal amount of time as a successful one.

A Landrist goliath may be harvested for components once per day without irritating the beast. After that there is a cumulative 10% chance that any attempt to harvest a goliath's resources will enrage the creature and cause it to defend itself. A successful DC 27 Handle Animal check that takes 1 hour to perform can soothe a Landrist goliath and lower the percentage it will become aggressive by 10%.

Calefin oil is a particularly valuable balm created from the secretions of a Landrist goliath's dermal glands. In the Landrist goliath the oil acts as a natural antibiotic, helping to prevent infections in the massive creatures. It is commonly sold off-world on Akasaat and Orbis Aurea where its temperature sealing properties are in higher demand.

Goliath gas, on the other hand, is a cheap to produce concussive that has grown in popularity among aetherite mining operations where the application of alchemist's fire to drive off vermin and other local hazards could result in a catastrophic

aetheric explosion. The concussive blasts of goliath gas are just as lethal, but lack the energetic spark necessary to ignite aetherite into a violent plasma.

Both of these items are readily available at the Seraos settlement of Fractured Gate, but otherwise uncommon in other parts of the Aethera System.

### CALEFIN OIL 150 AU

#### Craft DC 25

This viscous, translucent oil-like substance is secreted from a Landrist goliath's skin. It is a temperature seal and antibiotic that takes on a pleasant but very musky aroma when in contact with the air. Calefin oil can be applied as a standard action grants a +2 alchemical bonus on saves to resist hot and cold environmental effects and as well as saves versus disease and poison. A dose of calefin oil lasts for 3 hour after being applied. A newly crafted bottle of holds 3 doses.

One dose of calefin oil, applied in conjunction with a Heal check to treat disease, grants a +5 circumstance bonus to the check.

#### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 3 (150 au); **Spells** healing subschool

**Effect:** +1 caster level for the purpose of the effect.

### GOLIATH GAS 40 AU

#### Craft DC 20

This coruscant gaseous compound exudes a powerful, acrid musk. Landrist gas is bottled from a Landrist goliath's dorsal exhalations and carefully refined before being mixed with reactive alchemical components. When thrown, the flask explodes on impact with a sudden burst of expanding gasses. Treat this attack as a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 10 feet. A direct hit deals 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage. Every creature within 5 feet of the point where the flask hits takes 1 point of bludgeoning damage from the splash. A creature directly hit must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save or be knocked prone.

#### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 1 (40 au); **Spells** air spells

**Effect:** +1 caster level for the purpose of the effect.

# Miasmatic Leviathan

A whale-like creature of gargantuan proportions bellows violet mist from its great maw.

## MIASMATIC LEVIATHAN

CR 10

XP 9,600

N Gargantuan animal

**Init** +6, **Senses** darkvision, low-light vision, blindsight 120 ft.; **Perception** +15

### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 168 (16d8+96)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

**Immune** poison

### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 60 ft. (good), swim 60 ft.

**Melee** bite +22 (2d8+19 plus grab)

**Special Attacks** miasma

**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 36, **Dex** 15, **Con** 23, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +27 (+31 grapple)

**CMD** 39 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** [Dodge](#), [Great Fortitude](#),

[Improved Initiative](#), [Iron Will](#),

[Lightning Reflexes](#), [Mobility](#), [Skill](#)

[Focus](#) (Perception), [Weapon](#)

[Focus](#) (bite)

**Skills** Fly +11,

Perception +15,

Swim +21

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any air (Seraos)

**Organization** solitary or mated pair

**Treasure** none

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Miasma (Ex)** As a swift action, a miasmatic leviathan can expel an intense concentration Seraos miasma in a cloud that extends 30 feet around the leviathan's space and trails 100 feet behind it. Creatures who enter a space containing miasma must succeed at a DC 24 Fortitude save or take 1d2 points of Con damage. Creatures must succeed at this save each round they remain within the miasma. A creature that fails 2 consecutive saves versus the leviathan's miasma begins to immediately suffocate. Creatures who do not breathe are immune to the effects of miasma. A miasmatic leviathan can expel miasma for up to 10 minutes per day before needing to replenish its stores of the toxic gas by spending 1 hour in Landrist or below. The miasma created by a miasmatic leviathan provides concealment as fog. The save DC is Constitution-based.



Miasmic leviathans are gargantuan animals native to Seraos' second layer, Landrist, though can be found anywhere within the gas giant. These gentle creatures do not attack unless provoked and utilize the planet's toxic gasses as a defense mechanism. An adult miasmic leviathan measures 40 feet long and weighs 66,000 lbs.

## Ecology

Miasmic leviathans are ancient juggernauts of Seraos, gentle and inquisitive by nature. These creatures primarily dwell within the layer of Landrist and ascend to Yehdre to feed on smaller native life swept up into their cavernous maws. As residents of both gaseous and fluidic spaces of Seraos, miasmic leviathans can breathe both air and the toxic fluid of lower Seraos layers. Miasmic leviathans prefer not to engage in combat and deploy their miasma clouds as a defense mechanism, allowing them to hide within the opaque gas and descend down to lower layers where predators are less likely to pursue. Though given their enormous size, miasmic leviathans have few natural predators.

Unlike oceanic whales like those found on Orbis Aurea, miasmic leviathans are solitary creatures and only unite with others of their kind for procreation. Female miasmic leviathans lay clusters of gelatinous eggs that drift within the fluidic layer of Landrist and are fertilized by a male leviathan that pairs up with the female leviathan for the remainder of its life. Miasmic leviathans typically procreate twice in their life cycles, and can live to be roughly 80 years old. These creatures are slow growing, emerging from their eggs at six feet in length and usually reach twice that length within their first year of life, then require a decade to reach full maturity.

## Habitat & Society

Miasmic leviathans are long-distance travelers capable of traversing both fluidic and gaseous

portions of Seraos, often seen breaching cloud banks within calm Stormflows and briefly basking in the radiant sunlight before delving back into the lightless depths of Landrist. These creatures have no dens or lairs of their own, ever moving (even while sleeping) with the planetary currents.

Landrist whale oil, rendered from their toxic fat, is a valuable power component and alchemical reagent, purchased at high cost in markets across the Aethera System. Aethership whalers stake notoriously territorial claims over regions of Stormflows where these majestic creatures can be found and will process their bodies aboard the aethership and dump the remaining carcass into the planet's depths.

## Alchemical Item

### MIASMIC OIL 1 AU

Miasmic oil comes from the blubber of miasmic leviathans and is treated with alchemical solvents before sale. Miasmic oil burns twice as long as lamp oil and produces a noisome violet smoke that grants creatures adjacent to the light source burning miasmic oil a +2 alchemical bonus on Fortitude saves versus inhaled poisons.

#### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 1 (1 au); **Spells** fire spells

**Effect:** +1 fire damage.

## Miasmic Leviathan Companions

Miasmic whale companions are recently hatched and juvenile members of their species and lack their parents miasma ability without access to naturally-occurring miasmic gasses of landrist.

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Medium; **Speed** fly 60 ft., swim 60 ft.; **AC** +1 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str 13, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6; **Special Qualities** darkvision, low-light vision.

**7th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Large; **AC** +2 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d8); **Ability Scores** Str +8, Dex -2, Con +4; **Special Qualities** blindsight 120 ft.

# RAIDHAWK

*An enormous bird with a sword-like beak searches with its many gleaming eyes.*

## RAIDHAWK

CR 3

XP 1,600

N Large animal

**Init** +4; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +6

### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 32 (4d8+16 HD)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 60 ft.

**Melee** bite +7 (1d8+4), 2 claws +7 (1d6+4 plus grab)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Special Attacks** death grip, grab

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 19, **Int** 7, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 7

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +8 (+12 grapple); **CMD** 18 (22 vs. grapple)

**Feats** [Improved Drag](#)<sup>APG</sup>, [Power Attack](#)

**Skills** **Perception** +6

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Seraos)

**Organization** scouting party (2–6) or raid (8–20)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Death Grip (Ex)** A raidhawk is capable of flying while grappling a creature of Medium-size or smaller and only suffers half the normal penalty for attempting to grapple with only one limb.

Most creatures native to the upper atmosphere Seraos have some means of remaining indefinitely aloft, but the raidhawk is an exception. With bodies built for raw power rather than stamina, they launch only short flights to capture prey, spending the rest of their time firmly mounted on whatever stable purchase they can find using their incredibly

powerful vice-like talons. Easily capable of finding purchase in the hide of a larger flying creature or the hull of an aethership, a resting raidhawk's talons naturally squeeze tightly against even the thinnest support. Raidhawks measure nine feet tall with a 30-foot wingspan and weigh 75 lbs.

## Ecology

Raidhawks are carnivorous predators native to the upper atmosphere of Seraos. They are short-range hunters, rarely straying more than a half mile from a floating landmass, aethership, or larger creature they can roost on. When food is not plentiful, raidhawks will dispatch themselves in pairs, looping around in search of prey, and returning to alert the rest of their raid by puffing out a collar of brightly colored iridescent signaling feathers around their necks, which other raidhawks can easily identify at a great distance. By using this visual communication rather than a loud cry, unsuspecting prey often find themselves swarmed by a flight of raidhawks before ever realizing they've been scouted.

These signaling feathers are one of many nonverbal gestures raidhawks use to communicate with each other. Highly social, the hawks use a number of subtle head movements to indicate their moods and concerns, seemingly always keen on getting a group consensus before mounting a dangerous raid, securing a new roost, or deciding how to respond to a sudden threat.

As raidhawks don't build nests in any traditional sense, and often find themselves hanging upside down as they rest, they do not lay eggs as one might expect. Raidhawk reproduction is more similar to the lifecycle of a marsupial, giving live birth to their young as soon as their claws are sufficiently developed to find purchase, and nestling them deep in their thick feathered collars until their down thickens enough to provide protection from the harsh winds. A newborn



raidhawk

can fly after one week and reaches full maturity after one year.

## Habitat & Society

Raidhawks are social and highly territorial creatures. They tend to live in familial packs called raids. Multiple generations of raidhawk can be found within a single raid and all members of a raid are related to one-another. This requires raidhawks seeking to mate to find another raid and force their way into the family unit long enough to procreate. Given the harsh nature of Seraos and the sparse amount of land on which raidhawks can subsist, competition among raids is fierce and raidhawks looking for mates must often travel great distances from the typical territory of their parent raid.

While carnivorous and territorial, raidhawks are strangely respectful towards other creatures which may share their roosts. Any creature or object stable enough for raidhawks to make into at least a semi-permanent home is a rare enough find that they instinctively avoid disturbing the environment more than they need to. More than one visitor to Seraos has mistaken the birds for gentle passive creatures as a result, marveling at the way they ignore, or even show affection, to a ship's crew. Amusement quickly turns to

horror though the moment the hawks set eyes on a second ship, or other source of potential prey, and it voraciously tears into creatures exactly like those they've been peacefully riding along with. Raidhawks are likewise violently protective of whatever landmass of creature they cohabitate with and will cooperate to repel hostile creatures.

Social as they are with each other and their roostmates of other species, raidhawks are known for being particularly ruthless when on the attack. Rather than going for the easiest meal, the birds are more likely to identify the biggest threat when on a raid, bringing that creature down first if possible, and hopefully quelling any further resistance as they gather their fill.

## Raidhawk Companions

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Medium; **AC** +2 natural armor; **Speed** 5 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); **Attack** 2 claws (1d4); **Ability Scores** Str 12, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 7; **Special Attacks** grab

**7th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Large; **AC** +2 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d8), 2 claws (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str +6, Con +4; **Special Attacks** death grip.

# RIBBONTAIL

*This quadrupedal creature possesses jade colored plumage and a sinuous, feathered tail that shifts colors as it moves.*

## RIBBONTAIL

CR 1/2

N Small animal

**Init** +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent, Perception +5

### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 size)

**hp** 6 (2d8-2)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

**Immune** Seraos miasma

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** bite +4 (1d4-1), 2 claws +4 (1d4-1)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 8, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** -2; **CMD** 10 (14 vs. trip)

**Feats** [Weapon Finesse](#)

**Skills** Fly +11, Perception +5

**SQ** flickering ribbon

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Seraos)

**Organization** solitary, pairs, or flight (3-8)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Flickering Ribbon (Ex)** A ribbontail's tail feathers shift and shimmer between colors when moved rapidly. This allows a ribbontail the ability to use its Dexterity modifier instead of Charisma when making a Bluff check to feint.

**Familiar:** A wizard who can acquire a familiar can choose a ribbontail as a familiar. A ribbontail familiar grants its master a +2 bonus on Bluff checks.

Ribbonails are some of Seraos' most elegant creatures; agile, playful, and aloof bird-like quadrupeds with a complex biology that allows them to thrive at any altitude of the Stormflow.

A ribbontail stands roughly two feet tall, has a five foot wingspan, and weighs 4 lbs.

## Ecology

Ribbonails are primarily insect-eating creatures, subsisting on large moths that reside on floating islands or among the complex ecosystems present on Landrist goliaths. Beneath the ribbontail's plumage at its neck and chest are specialized gill-like breathing organs that helps the ribbontail filter the toxic airborne gasses constantly prevalent to the lower Seraosan atmosphere. Ribbonails are able to synthesize nutrients from the melange of lower-altitude toxins they filter through their neck-baleens, similar to the diets of miasmic leviathans. As a result, ribbontails frequently make scooping dives to avoid predators and feed on tiny miasmic life forms.

The ribbontail's eponymous tail feathers double as a vibrantly-colored sensory organ which allows the ribbontail to gauge atmospheric conditions from its environment, assisting with their navigation. The feathers of this tail also possess multi-faceted crystalline deposits that catch light in unique patterns, making the ribbontail's tailfeathers a diversionary focus for eluding predators.

## Habitat & Society

Dwelling within the uppermost layer of Seraos, ribbonails are common sights to visitors to the gas giant. Friendly and curious, ribbonails follow aethershops and explorers, keeping a safe distance though eager to scavenge food or dropped items. A ribbontail's forelimbs are extremely dextrous, and as such they are able to grasp and manipulate objects as if they had hands. While this doesn't allow a ribbontail to wield weapons, it does make them adept at tasks such as opening doors or stealing unguarded supplies.

Ribbonail families form communal nests in sheltered landmasses, preferring the company of

creatures such as Landrist goliaths. Ribbontails compete for nesting grounds with raidhawks, though due to their smaller size and more gentle demeanor often lose territory to the more aggressive avian species. As such, ribbontail nests tend toward nooks in floating landmasses or the interiors of derelict aetherships where the larger raidhawks cannot easily go.

Domestication of ribbontails came quickly to explorers of Seraos as the curious animals proved to be friendly and adaptable to the company of other, larger creatures. The demeanor of a ribbontail is not entirely unlike that of a friendly cat and just as mischevious.

Ribbontails communicate by a mixture of tail flourishes and trilling song. The high-pitched nature of a ribbontail's vocalizations are considered shrill by most species' preferences, but are essentially high-pitched to be heard effectively over the low background rumble of Seraosan thunder prevalent in Stormflow regions. When domesticated, especially if taken offworld or born outside of Seraos, ribbontails develop a much deeper and more melodic call that is more appealing to most species' sensibilities.

As small animals, ribbontails prefer not to engage in combat with any creatures larger than themselves and are quick to flee confrontations or seek the aid of larger, friendly creatures to assist in their defense. Stories of hunters seeking to capture ribbontails, only to be beset upon by miasmic leviathans or a swarm of aerial filchers were all too common in the early days of exploration on Seraos.

As domesticated animals, ribbontails are very receptive to training and can grow to considerably larger size in captivity due to the availability of food sources and differences in atmosphere and climate of foreign worlds. As familiars, ribbontails tend toward serving as scouts and spies, able to open doors and windows with their dextrous forelimbs and escape



capture with a flick of their tail. When trained for combat, ribbontails tend toward larger and more muscular builds and are as loyal to their masters as well-trained hounds.

In the wild, a ribbontail lives 5 to 7 years typically due to predation and food availability. In captivity a ribbontail can live as long as 20 years.

## Ribbontail Companions

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Small; **Speed** 30 ft., Fly 60 ft. (good); **Attack** 2 Claws (1d3); **Ability Scores** Str 8, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 8; **Special Qualities** low-light vision, scent.

**4th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Medium; **Attack** bite (1d6), 2 claws (1d4); **Ability Scores** Dex +6, Con +4.

# SERAOS FLORA

A gas giant too far from the suns rife with violent storms capable of turning ships into twisted toys on toxic winds is not the sort of place most would look to for life, plant or otherwise. But life is nothing if not adaptable and even remote Seraos has native species. Because they drift on the warmer currents, the plants often indicate slightly more welcoming environments for travelers. They often feature thick skins, to withstand toxic gases and resist acidic conditions. Most resemble air plants as found on other planets, growing in tangles of vine and bramble that clinging to whatever comes near enough to entangle on their travels.

The clinging behavior of many Seraos plants produces free floating communities of different plants bound together with interwoven branches. In many cases the plants have evolved into symbiotic relationships resulting in separate species that require each other to survive the harsh conditions. One plant may filter toxic gases from the air, while the other provides a strong latticework of defense capable of handling impact preventing storm damage. These sort

of interwoven relationships, literal and metaphorical, are found on all layers of the planet on one form or another.

## VEHDRE

The uppermost layer of Seraos has the least pressure, the lowest temperatures, and the most chaotic wind patterns of the planet. Warm currents of air from lower levels keep this layer at a constant churn and create streams of movement in bands around the planet. Life here tumbles in a constant freefall, subjectively able to control which direction counts as down 'down' by simply changing their momentum and perspective. The plants have fully adapted to this chaos by forming large patches of tangled thickets. These thickets are massive island sized shelters for the sparse wildlife of the planet and nearly impossible to map as they drift with the air currents, often tumbling end over end on the way.

Thicket plants are a pale green silver on this layer, and form airy constructs of vine and thin branches which are able to easily catch the wind and sail the currents. As they grow, they will form layers of thicker bark and close branches will merge into larger sheets. Eventually the thicket will gain enough mass to slowly sink into the next lowest layer taking whatever passengers are aboard along for the ride. Larger plants, including the thickets themselves, release leathery shelled nuts into the winds. Dried wings of leathery fibers allow the shell to spiral safely into the current where they will eventually be broken open by the wind or other predators to allow the seed inside to grow.

Without much of an insect life, flowers are relatively uncommon but fleshy seed pods are a temptation for birds and allow plants to spread from thicket to thicket. Each thicket may have its own particular mix of species but there are some common plants that can be found on almost any of them. The bladder root flowers are large bubbles that filter out the worst of the

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Gas planets after share many of the same traits of water planets. Movement should be considered in three dimensions, pressure increases towards the center, and often a solid mass can be found at the core where the pressure has increased enough to solidify material. Nearby satellites and moons create tides within the air or water. But unlike water, gas under a higher pressure is also warmer. This creates a self-sustaining temperature difference between layers of a gas planet, where lower layers are warmer than higher ones, which drives currents and weather throughout the planet.

toxic air in a ticket. They use the birds for pollination, a tiny hole in each flower fits the beaks of birds looking for a breath of clean air. Desperate adventurers may be able to collect the flowers, popping each bubble for a new breath to survive on. And many plants are shaped to collect water vapor from humid winds, allowing water to gather in pools in cup shaped leaves. It isn't safe to drink for any but native wildlife, but it can be easily treated or filtered to be drinkable by humanoids.

Other plants actively seek out connections, reaching to the flow of air in their surroundings to quickly grasp at anything that moves. While this usually means passing thickets allowing the plants to cling for safety, this can also mean birds and unlucky adventurers. Thief's claw vines are strong enough to be used as rope if they are kept alive. Small cuttings of live plants can be safely contained in a heavy bag and pirates in the area use them to bind prisoners or as waiting traps for victims or untrustworthy shipmates. If the plants get caught in the works of a ship though they can be lethal, tangling any gear-work and making it almost impossible for mechanics to work, so pirate crews have strict rules about letting the vines lose on friendly turf.

The uppermost layer is easiest for off-world access, and many explorers have come and gone, using the thickets as resting places along the way. In their wake they've left behind bits of invasive plant from other planets. In some thickets an adventurers may find fruit vines, grown from a past traveler's snack lunch. Other thickets are coated with mosses carried by an erahthi visitor. Some thickets have been deliberately seeded with useful plants and their branches woven together deliberately to protect the small garden. These smaller thickets often serve as safe houses for pirates needing a place to lay low, or as way-stations for an explorer to recover from a trip to the lower levels. Of course, staying the night to recover at one of these crafted safe houses has its own dangers, and the owner may not take kindly to others using their emergency supplies.

## STORMFLOW

The Stormflow is a large current circling the planet and the most recognizable feature from space. The edges mark a storm pattern that prevents the thickets in the flow from escaping to the rest of the layer and vice versa. Because the flow is so predictable, the thickets here are heavier with life and have collected into an archipelago of safety around the planet providing regular stops for migrating birds. But the Stormflow also brings things up from layers below Yehdre, allowing predators and other dangers to stalk the thickets before diving back into the depths.

## Acidic Fungus (CR 3)

Acidic funguses can be found on any layer of Seraos, but is most common in regions with exposure to Seraosan miasma. These fungus have learned to excrete acids to take advantage of the toxic qualities of Seraosan miasma to quickly burn through protective metals to get at the softer organic nutrients inside. These scavengers aren't picky about their targets either, equally happy with a derelict hull as a screaming adventurer.

When acidic fungus is disturbed it releases a cloud of spores that will take root on anything within 15 feet. Any creature or attended object can avoid contamination with a successful DC 15 Reflex saving throw. Unattended objects, including walls, gain no saving throw. The fungus deals 1d6 points of acid damage each round. Only half of an object or creature's hardness applies, but acid resistance or immunity applies in full. Ten points or more of fire damage in a single round will destroy the infestation on a creature or an object. As a full-round action a creature can apply 1 gallon of water to remove the mold from themselves, or another adjacent creature or object. Any effect that removes disease will also automatically remove the fungus.

If the fungus chews through the floor underneath a creature's feet, they may avoid falling with a successful DC 12 Reflex save. Failing the save causes falling

## Recovered Symbiotes

Symbiotes that survive in the wreckage of the derelicts may be able to find safety in a ship or a thicket and are quickly integrated into the larger plant structure allowing them to survive without an immediate host. Explorers who retrieve one of these symbiotes should check it over thoroughly before bonding though. Many of them have been exposed to aetherite and the toxins of the miasma, leading to dangerous side effects that put a new host at risk. Pirates and other traders are reluctant to deal with any symbiote retrieved from Landrist, considering them nothing but bad luck based on persistent rumors that their hosts will find themselves drawn back to the depths and further down.

damage and risks re-exposing the creature to the fungus on landing. Similarly, the fungus can drop from above on unwary victims.

A successful DC 14 Knowledge (nature) check identifies the presence of acidic fungus before a creature risks exposure.

## Landrist

Twilight settles in on Landrist, the second deepest layer of Seraos. Here derelict ships and the debris of the Century War gathers to be buffeted through the currents of thick as water air. Plant life in Landrist needs protection against the flying metal and powerful pressure. The plants of this layer are more compact to withstand atmospheric pressure and the oldest thickets have developed into tight woven balls of defensive bark and spiky thorns. Newer growth has taken advantage of the byproducts of exploration and integrated with the wreckage of derelict ships and Progenitor-era ruins, finding these structures to be an ideal sanctuary. As on Yehdre, the thickets grow denser and eventually gain enough weight that they will sink to the next lowest level, a process that can take hundreds of years. By the time thickets fall to the next layer down they are hollow balls of heavy wood covered in bark and spikes to protect their vulnerable contents.

There are a few dark-adapted plants that live their entire lives on Landrist. Most do not use chlorophyll to generate energy from sunlight, the light here is simply too weak or obscured making green a rare color and obvious indication of foreign plant life. Instead, many are parasitical and survive on nutrients found in the thicker layers of miasma or scavenged from surroundings. Many varieties of slime molds, mushrooms and algae crawl over anything they can get attached to in an effort to break down organic material they can find. The toxic miasma carries lighter weight slimes and spores easily, and many adventurers need to decontaminate themselves and their equipment when they return home.

Those derelicts that have pockets of preserved air also serve host to whatever plants were already present on the ship. Once the thickets have taken hold to protect the pockets, plants of Kir-Sharaat origin often flourish in the limited environment growing into thick and bizarre pocket-jungles in the dim blue light of aetherite radiation. Mushrooms and other plants from Akasaat manage to survive under the protection as well, scrambling for life on the debris or waiting in seed form for more welcoming environment. Plants growing here absorb the dangerous toxins of the local surrounding into their flesh making them significantly more deadly than their otherwise innocent brethren grown at home. What may look like a handful of safe berries, if harvested from Landrist can instead be a lethal plant parasite.

## Brainspike (CR 6)

One of the most insidious species of plants found in Landrist is a species of burrowing creeper called a brainspike. This vine-like growth derives nutrients from biological matter and uses other, harmless plants as camouflage to propagate itself. When encountered in the wild, brainspike is always attached to another seemingly harmless plant, be it a plant creature symbiont or a Landrist thicket. On contact with an infested plant, a creature takes 1d4 points of damage as the seeds begin to burrow

into their bodies. This damage also applies to any protective gear the character wears, potentially breaking environmental seals. A creature that takes damage from this effect must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or have the burrowing seeds from the brainspike take root. A creature that attempts to bond with a symbiont infested with brainspike does not get a saving throw to resist the effect.

On a failed save, the brainspike begins burrowing through the infected creature's body, causing 1 point of Dexterity damage per round. If a creature is reduced to a 0 Dexterity score by this effect the brainspike has reached their brain, at which point they begin suffering 1d4 points of Constitution drain per hour. Once a creature dies from exposure to brainspike, the plant erupts from their eye sockets and explodes into a shower of pollen that infests any nearby plants, restarting the brainspike's life cycle.

Spells that remove diseases automatically end the effects of a brainspike infestation.

## VORSAAG

The lowest known layer of Seraos is the warmest of the layers, but is also a pitch-black sea of crushing atmospheric pressure. The plant life here takes one of two forms, either tiny sporelike plants that survive the pressure simply by not having much to compress or the oldest and heaviest of the thickets from above that survive only by being wrapped in layers upon layers of bark. Once a thicket has dropped to Vorsaaag is it soon to be destroyed, rarely lasting more than a few decades before being torn to pieces in the dark. The death of a thicket in Vorsaaag can release hundreds of years worth of trapped plants, seeds, spores and collected debris into the lowest level currents of the planet. Most of the debris is consumed by the residents of the layer or destroyed by the pressure. But some material does cycle back to the top through the Stormflow. In this way, species considered long extinct can be revived after having been released from the time capsules that held them

## LIGHTS IN THE DARK

Explorers in this layer of Seraos are wise to stay alert for the dull red glow of sailor's ghost spores. These tiny plants react to rapid changes of pressure when disturbed by the wake of larger objects. The glow is proportionate to the disturbance meaning faster objects product brighter glows. Ripples of angry red in the distance are a warning to take cover to avoid an encounter with whatever monster or dangerous unseen debris is coming.

for centuries. Strange and unknowable plants dwell in these lightless depths, fueled by free-floating veins of aetherite too deep for any mining vessel to reach.

## Thunderpollen (CR 17)

Vorsaaag is home to plants that produce and consume energy in methods wholly alien to the rest of the Aethera System, some of which may originally hail from the elemental plane of air. Thunderpollen is the germination of a yet unknown plant species native to Vorsaaag. This pollen forms in pools within the fluidic atmosphere of Vorsaaag that measure 2d4 x 100 feet across. Thunderpollen is charged with static electricity that is discharged by friction and movement. Creatures moving through thunderpollen risk explosively discharging the kinetic energy the pollen has absorbed as electricity.

When a creature moves through a patch of thunderpollen and ends their turn still inside of the cloud, they generate an explosion of electricity in a 20-foot radius around themselves that deals 1d6 points of electricity damage for every 5 feet moved that round. A successful Fortitude save (DC 28) halves that damage.

In rare situations, a flow of thunderpollen will overlap with a deep vein of free-floating aetherite, and the explosive energy from the rapidly sublimating aetherite combines with the thunderpollen discharge.

A successful DC 24 Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (planes) check allows a character to identify a field of thunderpollen before they risk exposure.

# ORBIS AUREA FAUNA

The world of Orbis Aurea is a planet of extremes. The distant world's remote orbit around Aethera and Ashra alone means that little light reaches the planet's surface, but the emergence of the Shroud following the collapse ensured that it would be a world thrown into perpetual darkness. With little natural light reaching the surface of Orbis Aurea, the planet's wildlife was forced to adapt to both the extreme darkness and extreme cold. In this harsh environment, hardy and resilient variations of common creatures have risen up from both natural evolution and via supernatural mishap and design.

## A TWILIGHT WORLD

Even on its brightest days, when Orbis Aurea is closest to the system's binary stars and the Shroud is at its thinnest, the planet is no brighter than a late afternoon's overcast skies on other worlds. Darkness on Orbis Aurea is the rule, not the exception. Though it is a world of darkness, it is also a world of supernatural beauty in the form of auroras that both penetrate and are born of the netherite Shroud encompassing the planet. The blue-green light of these auroras creates a dancing haze of shadowy illumination with predictable regularity. The aetheric storms that roll across the planet not only impact the weather through the shroud, but also bring storms of light with them. It is by this atmospheric aurora activity that Orbis Aurea's wildlife builds their activity cycles.

Aurora flares come every 6 to 12 hours to any given region of the planet. These flares raise the surface light level of a region anywhere between 15 to 30 miles wide one step (typically from darkness to dim light). During daytime hours the flare of these auroras typically turns the world's dim light of day into normal light. Aurora flares last 1d6+1 hours and tend to attract local fauna and awaken predatory flora. Rarely, these aurora flares are accompanied by

netherstorms (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 288) that can drive wildlife away in panicked stampedes.

During periods of aurora flares, Orbis Aurean animals typically become more active. Herbivores are drawn out by plants that bloom in the aurora light, carnivores are drawn to the prey animal activity, and itinerant hunter clans of humanoids like giants are drawn to the migrations of animals that follow aurora activity.

## Stampede (CR Varies)

Stampedes created by effects such as netherstorms are common across Orbis Aurea. Herds of animals fleeing supernatural effects can cause significant damage even to hardened vehicles like aethercraft. A stampede represents a panicked trample by 3 or more creatures. To represent a stampede, determine the majority animals represented by the stampede. As a stampede is caused by fear and a desire to escape, a stampede does not normally end in combat, but more a hazard than a true encounter.

The CR of the stampede is equal to the CR of the creature with the largest representation in the herd, +1 for every 3 of its kind in the stampede. A stampede's area of effect is usually determined by the terrain (a stampede in a narrow canyon is constrained to the canyon's width) but on average has a number of spaces in width, per creature, equal to half the total number of creatures in the stampede.

To determine the damage of a stampede, take the creature's slam or hooves damage plus 1-1/2 times the animal's Strength modifier. Add one additional die of damage per 3 additional animals in the stampede.

Creatures in the path of a stampede may make a Reflex save (DC 10 + 1/2 the primary creature's HD + the creature's Str modifier, +1 for every 3 additional creatures in the stampede). Creatures that fail their saving throw versus a stampede are knocked prone.



ORBIS AUREA

For example, a stampede of 20 aurochs<sup>B1</sup> would be a CR 7 and deal 6d8+9 points of damage with a Reflex save DC of 22 and would be, on average 100 feet wide (ten 10-foot spaces).

## Orbis Aurean Animals

Common animals native to Orbis Aurea long-ago adapted to life on the frozen world. They are climate acclimated and light acclimated to the cold and dark planet. Treat all versions of animals from other sources as having the below simple template:

### BOREAL ANIMAL SIMPLE TEMPLATE (CR+0)

This simple template may be added to any creature of the animal type native to Orbis Aurea.

**Arctic Climate:** The base creature can survive in cold climates as though protected by *endure elements*.

**Senses:** The base creature gains low-light vision if it did not already possess it. Creatures with low-light vision gain darkvision 60 ft. instead.

**Light Sensitivity:** The base creature gains the light sensitivity universal monster ability. If the animal already possesses the light sensitivity ability it instead gains light blindness.

## THERMAL ACTIVITY

Though Orbis Aurea is a frozen world, the planet's great tectonic fluctuations—stimulated by the flexing of the world's mantle by the heavy gravity of its immense moon—generates prodigious areas of volcanic activity, most commonly in the form of hot springs and geysers. Regions of such strong volcanic activity are home to abundant and diverse forms of wildlife. The ecosystems of these warm climates are unlike any other found on the surface of Orbis Aurea. This biodiversity extends down below the frozen surface, with volcanic activity creating unique ecologies of animals and vermin down through the labyrinthine network of caves and what remains of pre-Collapse ruins.

Animals not normally native to arctic climates—even in the planet's temperate equatorial zone—can be found in these volcanic regions. The elemental forces in these regions are also strained further than elsewhere on the planet, where confluxes of earth and fire elemental energy collides with the planet's primarily water-aligned ley lines. As such, magma<sup>B2</sup> and mud elementals<sup>B2</sup> can sometimes be found in areas of persistent volcanic activity, rather than ice and water elementals.

## Thermal Parasites (CR 1)

Found in and around hot springs, geysers, and other extreme sources of heat on Orbis Aurea, thermal parasites are nearly invisible crawling vermin that rapidly leech heat from their surroundings. A creature that moves into a swarm of thermal parasites must succeed at a DC 11 Fortitude save or become infested. An infested creature suffers a –5 penalty on saves vs cold effects and is treated as being exposed to extreme cold<sup>CRB</sup> until the parasites are removed.

A successful DC 12 Survival check identifies a swarm of thermal parasites before a creature is exposed to them. Spells such as remove disease immediately cure a thermal parasite infestation, as does a successful DC 12 Heal check and 1 hour of work.

## FROZEN OCEANS

Orbis Aurea boasts enormous oceans that are entirely covered in ice save for in the warmest of summer seasons. The planet's oceans consist of the narrow Shaiok Sea that encircles the south pole continent of Orush, the Ehshahadra Ocean that lies between the western shores of Karkhota and the eastern shores of Pah, the narrow Nialuk Sea that encircles the north pole continent of Tep Halaisu, and the tempestuous Ferehnanda Ocean between the western coast of Pah and the eastern coast of Karkhota. Within these deep oceans, ancient sea stirs in unknown ways. Much of Orbis Aurea's oceans are unexplored and uncharted, and many of the world's most dangerous predators—like giant squids<sup>B1</sup> and cameroceras<sup>B5</sup>.

Whales also play a large role in okantan culture with whaling parties, typically consisting of at least one taiga giant, venturing out into the oceans during summer season to haul a whale up onto the ice to harvest for meat, bone, blubber, and other components essential to okantan life. Whales are little-used outside of traditional okantan and giant society with aetheric power supplanting oil-based light and heat. Some applications of alchemically-enhanced whale oil combined with aetherite are recent developments gaining traction among mercenary armies on the mainland, putting the Orbis Aurean whale population at risk of over-hunting.

## Oceanic Depths

Traversing Orbis Aurea's deep oceans comes with the very real hazards. Bypassing the cold is only the first hurdle to seeking out life below the waves. A creature takes 1d6 points of damage per minute for every 100 feet they are below the surface. A Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) means that a creature takes no damage that minute.

Any creature with the aquatic subtype ignores water pressure for the first 500 feet of depth and only takes 1d6 points of damage per 200 feet below that. For example, a slaughtermaw lamprey at a depth of 700 feet takes 1d6 points of pressure damage per minute, while a non-aquatic creature takes 7d6 points of pressure damage per minute.

Some creatures are completely immune to pressure damage. Aberrations native to aquatic terrain and outsiders with the aquatic or elemental subtype are generally immune to pressure damage, as are certain other creatures adapted to the environment (such as giant squids or whales). A GM should use their best judgment when determining if a creature is specially adapted to extreme depths.

## Light in the Deep

As in other terrestrial oceans, deep water is a realm of near total darkness. But on Orbis Aurea, where sunlight is at a minimum, the

ocean waters feel even deeper and ever darker. The binary suns ability to provide illumination quickly diminishes in Orbis Aurean oceans—should it even be present with the thick crust of ice over many of the planet's bodies of water.

Natural daytime light provides only shadowy illumination in a 30-foot radius when within 1 and 20 feet from the surface. Below that Orbis Aurean oceans are pitch black and require other means of detection, such as darkvision, to navigate.

Coastal portions of Orbis Aurea are heavy in silt and other sediments, creating even darker reaches of the planet's oceanic depths. Murky water reduces the radius of illumination provided by a light source (or natural light) by half. Very murky or muddy water obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have concealment.

## Alchemical Item

### AETHERIC OIL 40 AU

#### Craft DC 20

Crafted from the rendered blubber of Orbis Aurean whales and infused with aetherite in its liquid state, aetheric oil is a highly energetic and combustible chemical. When used as an alchemical weapon, similar to a plasma flask, aetheric oil works as alchemist's fire but inflicts 1d6 points of fire damage and 1d6 points of electricity damage on a direct hit. It also deals 1 point of fire damage and 1 point of electricity damage in its splash. A creature directly struck by a flask of aetheric oil catches fire unless they succeed at a DC 14 Reflex save. A creature that catches fire continues to burn, taking 1d6 points of fire damage and 1d6 points of electricity damage until the flames are put out (as a full-round action). Aetheric oil will burn in a vacuum.

A pint flask of aetheric oil burns for 20 hours in a lantern or lamp and sheds a blue-tinged light that improves the light levels generated by lanterns or lamps by one level.

#### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 1 (40 au); **Spells** fire or electricity spells

**Effect:** +1 caster level for the purposes of the effect.

# AETHERCRAB

*This shelled crustacean is adorned with gleaming shards of raw aetherite.*

## AETHERCRAB

CR 3

XP 800

N Medium animal (aether, aquatic)

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +5

### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+0 Dex, +5 Natural)

**hp** 30 (4d8+12 HD)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** retraction; **Immunities** aetherite radiation; **Resist** cold 10

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 15 ft., swim 15 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +6 (1d4+3)

**Special Attacks** resin strand (+3 ranged, Reflex DC 14, 30 ft.)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 16 (24 vs. trip)

**Feats** [Skill Focus](#) (Acrobatics), [Toughness](#)

**Skills** Acrobatics +3, Climb +3, Intimidate +5, Perception +5, Stealth +4, Survival +5, Swim +11; **Racial**

**Modifiers** +8 Swim

**SQ** water dependency

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any aquatic (Kir-Sharaat or Orbis Aurea)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or cast (3–6)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Resin Strand (Ex):** An aethercrab can spit a small strand of fibrous resin at its prey. As a standard action, the aethercrab can make a ranged touch attack at a target within 30 feet. Creatures of Medium size or smaller that are struck by the attack must succeed on a DC 14 Reflex save or become entangled. Flying creatures that fail their Reflex save fall to the ground. An entangled creature can escape by making a DC 14 Escape Artist

or Strength check. Should an entangled target take any amount of acid damage, the resin is instantly dissolved.

The save DCs are Constitution-based.

**Retraction (Ex):** An aethercrab can pull its fleshy parts into its shell as a swift action, allowing the aethercrab to use its shell as cover. While retracted into its shell the aethercrab cannot move or attack.

**Water Dependency (Ex):** An aethercrab can survive out of the water for 1 hour per point of Constitution. Beyond this limit, an aethercrab runs the risk of suffocation, as if it were drowning.

Aethercrabs dwell within the waters of Kir-Sharaat and Orbis Aurea and spend much of their time scouring the ocean floor in search for prey or objects to decorate their shells, using strands of naturally-produced adhesive resin. While aethercrabs are aquatic, they occasionally wander out of the water in search for decorations that wash up along the shores. They are usually not aggressive towards humanoids, but they will fight if they feel threatened or if they spot something interesting to decorate their shells with in the possession of a humanoid. They are typically four or five feet tall and weigh about two hundred pounds, with their shells easily making up half of that weight. Aethercrabs typically live for about thirty years in the wild, with those being kept in captivity generally only living for about fifteen years.

## Ecology

Aethercrabs have two large claws that are fairly precise despite their size and strength, eight segmented legs for movement, and a long spirally-curved asymmetrical abdomen, which is soft and vulnerable to attack, unlike the shelled abdomens seen in other crustaceans. To protect their soft abdomen, they typically salvage an empty seashell from another creature, using it like armor and turning it into a comfortable place to hide by retreating inside of it, while using its claws as a

door to block the entrance. An aethercrab's body is dark blue in color, with glowing neon-blue accents, no doubt a product of prolonged aetherite exposure. As they grow in size, they quickly become cramped inside their shell. Whenever an aethercrab outgrows their shell they are forced to find another. An aethercrab outside of its shell only has a natural armor bonus of +1 and may not use its retraction ability.

## Habitat & Society

Despite their biological need to change shells as they grow in size, aethercrabs seem to be fairly picky about what they use; favoring the shells of sea snails, but scarcity can occasionally force them to use the shells of bivalves and scaphopods (or even hollow pieces of wood and stone) in a pinch. In particularly lean times where there are not many other options available, Orbis Aurean natural philosophers have observed aethercrabs bullying others of their kind for their shell. It is not uncommon to see two aethercrabs fighting over any appropriately-sized shells should they find it at the same time. Aethercrabs are diligent about their shells, decorating them with new bits of collected foliage, stones, and crystals. No two shells are identical, but all are heavily decorated with chunks of aetherite that give them the species their name. Ironically, their apparent love for decorating their shells can also lead to complications, as their shells grow too heavy under the load of so many ornaments, which leads them to the reluctant aethercrab abandoning their current shell for a new one.

## Variant Aethercrabs

**Nethercrab (CR 3):** A rare subspecies of aethercrab, the nethercrab is a small-sized aethercrab that uses [netherite](#) (*Aethera Campaign Setting*, page 147) and often bone or carrion to decorate their shells.

They are much darker in coloration than others of their species, with black shells and glowing violet accents. The necromantic properties of netherite result in unusual side-effects of collection, and nethercrabs are often seen being followed by a skeleton or zombie that ignores the aethercrab but attacks other living creatures nearby. In addition to the standard abilities, nethercrabs are immune to the effects of netherite and have the netherite animation ability (as seen below).

**Netherite Animation (Su):** Nethercrabs are occasionally followed by undead creatures spontaneously reanimated from nearby corpses by their shell's embedded netherite shards. Any corpse of Medium size or smaller within 30 ft. of a nethercrab has a cumulative 10% chance per hour of reanimating as a skeleton or zombie, depending on its condition. The nethercrab can animate a maximum number of hit dice worth of undead creatures equal to twice the nethercrab's hit dice. These undead follow within 30 feet of the nethercrab at all times, but the nethercrab cannot control these undead creatures nor issue commands to them. These undead remain until destroyed.



# COLLECTOR BEETLE (AKKATHARVA)

*This long, spiny insect is adorned with tiny pebbles and jewels.*

## COLLECTOR BEETLE (AKKATHARVA)

CR 1

XP 400

N Tiny vermin (aether, aquatic)

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

### DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size)

hp 7 (2d8-2)

Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2

### OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +3 (1d4-2)

Space 2 1/2 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Special Attacks concussive snap

### STATISTICS

Str 6, Dex 14, Con 8, Int —, Wis 15, Cha 11

Base Atk +1; CMB -3; CMD 11

Feats [Weapon Finesse](#)<sup>B</sup>

SQ amphibious, shell of prophecy

### ECOLOGY

Environment coastline (Orbis Aurea)

Organization solitary

Treasure akkatharva casing (see below)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Concussive Snap (Ex)** While underwater, an akkatharva's bite is treated as a melee touch attack and deals 1 point of sonic damage in addition to its normal damage.

**Shell of Prophecy (Su)** An akkatharva's casing is studded with pebbles of aetherite, linking it with the Score in a manner that is still poorly understood. An akkatharva gains a +1 insight bonus to attack, AC, or saving throws, determined randomly at the start of each day.

An akkatharva (also known as a collector beetle) is an aquatic insect living in rocky, coastal bays

and tide pools on Orbis Aurea. While the majority of the species are small and non-threatening, the akkatharva's propensity for crafting protective casings from detritus in the area can lead an individual to pick up and incorporate pebbles of aetherite into a casing, and the energies of the aetherite twist and change the akkatharva. Most encounters with akkatharva are by fishermen seeking out the smaller individuals of the species, but groups dedicated to hunting akkatharva have begun appearing after discovery of the special qualities of the casing an akkatharva creates. These fishermen and hunters are in danger from the akkatharva's hyper-specialized sonic bite, but once vanquished, an akkatharva casing is a boon to diviners and scholars of the Score. The name translates from okanta as "shaking rhythm beneath the waves" or "sea rattler." An akkatharva grows up to eight inches in length and can weigh up to two pounds.

## Ecology

The typical akkatharva is no more than two inches long, and lives simply on the seabed amid colonies of its own kind. Concealing itself within a casing of silk and detritus, it feeds on small fish with a specialized bite that, when underwater, snaps shut with supersonic speed. The mandibles of an akkatharva contain muscles capable of snapping the claw shut at such a speed that a cavitation bubble forms in the water, shooting forward to stun and injure the akkatharva's prey.

When an akkatharva collects pebbles of aetherite and incorporates them into its casing, the aetherite radiation begins to induce changes in the akkatharva. Current research suggests that aetherite links the rudimentary brain structure of the akkatharva with the Score, granting it a limited intuitive ability to avoid danger. This, in turn, helps the collector beetle to live longer and grow larger than its lesser brethren. These larger akkatharva are territorial, and will drive

off or kill any other aetherite-decorated akkatharva in the colony. An aetherite-bedecked akkatharva will seek out more pebbles of aetherite over the course of its life, adding them to its casing along longitudinal lines of silk in such a manner that they begin to resemble measures of musical notation.

## Habitat & Society

The sheltered bays that akkatharva live in are often used as shelter by seagoing okanta, but an akkatharva is unlikely to bother a camp of land-dwelling creatures. More likely, a camping okanta will discover a colony of smaller akkatharva and draw the attention of the bigger one while the okanta attempts to gather dinner. Smaller akkatharva are Diminutive in size and no threat to a human-sized creature, although their claws can still sting. Akkatharva of all sizes use their snapping not just as a weapon, but also as a means of communication, and a colony will often synchronise its snapping somewhat, producing sounds reminiscent of maracas being shaken. This behavior has lead to the name the okanta have given them.

Smaller akkatharva are regular features of okanta feasts, capable of being prepared in many different ways. The most common method is simply to boil them whole and eat the meat, perhaps with butter or the rare lemon, but okanta and humans have come together to create a thick, highly-seasoned stew of grains and whatever seafood or meat might be available, including akkatharva. This dish is known as “kombo” after one of the ingredients used to thicken it, and is much-loved among the lower-class residents of Wighthaven. The flesh of the larger akkatharva, however, has been tainted through long exposure to low levels of aetherite radiation, and will usually give people an upset stomach. The infused, however, can eat it without harm, and moreover, say tainted akkatharva meat has a sort of energy they can detect. Many infused will pay a premium for the meat in the belief that it might help with longevity or virility.



## New Equipment

### AKKATHARVA FOCI 50 AU

The chitinous carapace of an akkatharva is covered in strands woven from silk and detritus, including pebbles, plant matter, cast-off shells, and fragments of aetherite. When properly prepared, these aetherite-studded cases can be used to enhance divinatory magic.

#### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 1 (50 au); **Spells** divination spells or occult skill unlocks

**Effect:** +1 caster level for the purposes of the effect. Additionally, when used as an additional component for [divination](#) or an occult skill unlock<sup>OA</sup> that has a percentage chance of producing meaningful results (such as Automatic Writing), an aetherite-studded akkatharva casing increases the chance by 5%.

# GIANTS

Giants are among the most primal and ancient of beings, intrinsically tied to primordial forces of nature and representative of the geographical and elemental powers of the universe. The giants that inhabit the Aethera System have done so for countless eons, dating back prior to the Collapse, though little remnant of their pre-Collapse society persists today. Due to their intrinsic connection to elemental forces, the giants of the Aethera System suffered an intimate and bone-deep reaction to the Collapse, as the essence of their very beings were torn asunder by whatever unknown forces tore whole worlds apart and reorganized the alignment of the system. Whatever civilization each giant society may have held prior to the Collapse was rent asunder by that change, and the giants of today may not even recognize their ancestors as giants that exist in the post-Collapse system are disparate and small in number, persisting through temerity and strength of being against the universally harsh and hazardous climates of their home worlds.

Evidence of giants' transitionary changes as a result of the Collapse can be found in the existence of a subset known as "bound giants." These creatures are unusual examples of giant-kind, so intrinsically bound to the elemental aspects of their homeworld that they straddle the line between the element their world was aligned to prior to the Collapse, and the element it is aligned to in the present. Much like how corrupted elementals (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 486) were warped by the tumult of the Collapse, some giants were only partially transformed from their previously-aligned incarnations and exist in a form of half-life between the two states of being. While corrupted elementals were twisted by the Collapse into polluted forms, these giants were largely weakened and broken by this change. Though centuries have passed since the Collapse, giants' ties to the planets' former planar natures remains strong. The incomplete transition to the planet's current planar affiliation may be a result

of the Collapse's incredible metaphysical violence, and they may be trapped in their current state. Or it may be that the Aetheran planar cycle is merely recovering from the Progenitor's stasis, and the bound giants will eventually find themselves changing even further. Though in spite of the theory that these giants were changed by the Collapse, there is no evidence that giants featuring these transitory forms were alive during the Collapse and their progeny share similar elemental instability.

## HABITAT & SOCIETY

The world of Orbis Aurea is storied with tales of powerful giant clans, carried on by the prodigious number of giants still residing on the shrouded world and their long history. Orbis Aurea has the greatest population of giants known to exist in the Aethera System and they are also the most integrated into interplanetary customs and society. While few giants from Orbis Aurea venture beyond to other worlds, stories of their accomplishments spread far and wide on the lips of okanta travelers.

Cave giants<sup>B3</sup> are subterranean denizens of Orbis Aurea, believed to be the degenerate survivors of another giant species transformed and broken by the Collapse. Encounters with these violent and often times feral creatures are increasingly common as they are driven toward the surface thanks to ongoing conflicts with the azaka (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 479).

The common cousin of cave giants, hill giants<sup>B1</sup> are equally dim and often-times violent giants that are lashed into slavery by frost giant warlords. Hill giants are typically kept like beasts of burden among the frost giants and used as shock troops in conflicts with okanta and taiga giant clans. Hill giants have little civilization of their own, and their cruel demeanor is likely a byproduct of their horrifying environment.

The most notorious of Orbis Aurean giants are frost giants<sup>B1</sup>. These barbarous giants claim vast swaths of the frozen world where the Paragon Ascendancy has not yet needed to expand. Though they lack the technological mastery of the Requiescat humans, they make up for this disadvantage with sheer size, strength, and supernatural allegiances. Frost giants build mountainous fortifications with deep subterranean burrows and cairns and can call upon linnorms, drakes, and other supernatural forces to bolster them. Frost giants have been at war with the nomadic taiga for centuries, and the origin of this conflict appears to solely be over territory, though taiga giants suggest there is a deeper and more spiritual essentialism to their conflict, but refuse to speak of it with outsiders.

Enemies even to frost giants, the tempestuous and violent mountain giants<sup>B6</sup> are thankfully few in number and exist in vanishingly small communities in some of the most remote mountain peaks in the southern hemisphere of Orbis Aurea. These warlike and cruel giants are rarely encountered, but even one of these titanic creatures poses a tremendous threat to the local population. The reason for mountain giants' small numbers dates back to an ancient conflict with their frost giant neighbors, resulting in the frost giants unleashing a powerful curse on the mountain giants, sending a wasting disease through their fortress-cities that now lay in ruin. Some survivors of this plague would later become plague giants<sup>B6</sup> and pass on their cursed illness to their woeful progeny.

Moon and eclipse giants<sup>B5</sup> are found only on Orbis Aurea, residing on the most desolate and airless mountain peaks closest to the netherite shroud. Unable to see the moon or its features, these giants reside within a collapsing civilization located on the western escarpments of the No Fly Zone in crumbling Progenitor ruins. Little is known of these giants and the few explorers who found their way to their lofty

ruin-cities and were able to relay back messages never returned.

While Orbis Aurea is best known for its frozen tundra and windswept arctic plains, it is primarily an oceanic world beneath a crust of ice. Little is known of the oceanic depths of Orbis Aurea, but the existence of ocean giants<sup>B4</sup> is well-documented not only by pilots of icebreaking aethercraft but also the original Requiescat humans who crash-landed on Orbis Aurea long ago. Ocean giants are a mixed-blessing, sometimes acting as benevolent shepherds of smaller races as they cross thin ice bridges or freeing vessels trapped in the oceanic ice. Other times they are vicious coastal raiders, preying on isolated settlements or stranded travelers. Little is known of their culture and society, save that they dwell in the deepest and darkest of ocean trenches.

River giants<sup>B4</sup> are considerably rarer, preferring to dwell far from both taiga and frost giant settlements along frozen rivers or within the temperate band around flowing waterways. These giants are all surprisingly old, and no young river giants have yet to be encountered. These giants tell stories of a more unified civilization in the early days following the collapse, and they served as escorts leading gravely wounded kin from the freezing forests out along the rivers to the oceans. But with their advanced age and dwindling numbers, these stories of an ancient age are nearly lost.

Though present on Akasaat, stone giants are also found on Orbis Aurea in large numbers, typically bordering taiga lands. As a seminomadic people, stone giants tend to build for the long term, settling into cave systems that can accommodate not only their own clan, but the occasional taiga guest. Orbis Aurean stone giants tend toward good alignments and are skilled stonemasons and engineers. Stone giant lore indicates that they taught the earliest okanta the arts of engineering used in the creation of their lost city of Haj-Harmarandh.

## GIANTS ON OTHER WORLDS

Though prominent on Orbis Aurea, giants can be found across the Aethera System. Though they are largely insular communities divided along starkly tribal lines of elemental and geographical delineation, the ways in which these cultural and societal boundaries take shape varies from world to world. Volumes could be written about giant civilization, and volumes more on details not known by outsiders. Natural philosophers, xenobiologists, and academics of all kinds seek to study from and learn the ways of native giant species. However, each world's primary government has differing relationships with their native giant populations.

### Aethera & Ashra

It is unknown if there are indigenous giant inhabitants on or near either of the system's binary stars, but in the rare instances where giants are able to find themselves off of their homeworlds, they are inexorably drawn to the call of the white dwarf Aethera. All creatures with the giant subtype that spend more than 1 week within the Gulf begin to experience hallucinations of fragmentary music; a discordant and siren-like call that only grows louder the closer they get to Aethera.

Within the orbital bounds of the binary stars' Gate Hub the song becomes so overwhelmingly powerful that it is difficult for creatures of the giant subtype to hear anything else, imposing a -10 penalty to sound-based Perception checks. Though they are not supernaturally compelled to do so, those few giants who do reach this point often continue on a self-destructive course toward Aethera. One harrowing tale from 4006 describes a stone giant working on an Ascendancy freighter overtaking the aethership's crew and piloting their craft into the star. Scholars of the Score are fascinated by this phenomenon and believe that giants may possess an inherent tie to the Score in ways that have only just begun to be understood.

Understandably, this phenomenon makes most giants unreliable as crew members aboard aetherships and is one of the primary reasons why they have not become regular off-world sights. Curiously, nether giants seem unable to hear the music of Aethera that others of their kind do and this deficit has played a role in their gradual rise to prominence among spacefaring organizations.

### Akasaat

On the arid world of Akasaat giants are broken into insular and clannish societies scattered across the vast reaches of the world not inhabited by the Hierarchy. These giant civilizations fought a losing battle against the Hierarchy during the early days of aetherite scarcity as mining operations threatened giants and their settlements. The Hierarchy classified giants as monsters and offered bounties for giant kills to "clear cut" areas of the desert for drilling and construction of now-derelict aetherite refineries. Entire clans were wiped out and many survivors and their descendants understandably hold long-remembered animosity toward the Hierarchy for their crimes. These giants will sometimes offer aid to anti-Hierarchy groups such as the Riders.

On Akasaat, ash giants<sup>B3</sup> inhabit the subterranean realms below the desert surface, often bringing them into conflict with the goblins that live in these same lightless realms. Ash giants are rarely seen on the surface and they were hunted to near-extinction by militant patrols of Hierarchy security forces during subterranean aetherite mining efforts prior to the Century War. The few ash giants that remain today live far deeper than any mining operation dared delve.

Cliff giants<sup>B4</sup> are isolationists living in small, scattered communities of no more than 10 giants. Typically they can be found along the steep walls of the great plateaus like the Samarasati Tablelands, far from where the cities of the Hierarchy call home. In tune with the natural world, cliff giants once held strong relationships with the Wasteland tribes and in

their oral traditions claim to have aided the human prophet Luthias in guiding his people up the sheer escarpment to the tablelands. The Symphonium denies these claims.

Desert giants<sup>B3</sup> call the vast open dunes and salt flats of Akasaat's most inhospitable reaches home, banding together in small tribes of 20 to 30 giants, often accompanied by megafauna beasts of burden. As long-lived species, the desert giants have an immediate recollection of humanity's rise and fall as seen from a great distance. Desert giants are common sights in the Wasteland between the Crescent and Samarasati tablelands, tending to dwell closer to the Crescent lands so as to stay out of the sights of Hierarchy forces. These giants infrequently trade with Wastelanders and maintain a rigid code of ethics and conduct that varies little from tribe to tribe. Every century, the desert giant tribes unite in remote reaches of the Wasteland to share stories, trade, marry, and discuss law and politics for a year before splitting apart again – often times into entirely new tribes made of conglomerates of previously existing groups – to repeat the process again in one hundred years.

Fire giants<sup>B1</sup> inhabit remote mountains and are most frequently encountered in the western reaches of the Crescent tablelands in regions of volcanic activity. These giants are highly territorial and aggressive, occasionally ranging down the western mountain faces to raid desert giant tribes out in the Wasteland before returning to their mountain bastions. Fire giants often tame desert drakes as hunting animals for their raids. Little is known of the homes of fire giants, save that they are tunneled into the mountains and little information on them is visible from the air.

Stone giants<sup>B1</sup> are frequently found in the mountains of the Samarasati tablelands, with some as close as the Kashranaan Mountains surrounding the Hierarchy capital of Central. Despite their close proximity, stone giants remain isolationist and reclusive, preferring to tend to their own in expansive cave networks and tumbledown Progenitor ruins. Historic conflicts with

the Hierarchy during the founding era of Central led to a decimation of stone giant numbers, though the descendants of these giants see their defeat as a symptom of poor leadership and regret the choice to fight against the settlers who had come to the mountains.

Clans of slag giants<sup>B4</sup> once ruled large portions of the Samarasati tablelands in the regions that are now home to the arcologies of Bastion and Sentinel. These giants, progeny of fire and stone giants with ancestry dating back prior to the Collapse, once commanded vast resources and resided within the Progenitor ruins that became these towering arcology cities. But during the founding of Central, greedy slag giant warlords attempted to rally the Samarasati giants against the settling humans to drive them out, but were in turn decimated by the humans' more robust understanding of magic. Today, only a handful of surviving slag giant clans remain, hiding in caverns in mountain fringes of the tablelands.

Only a handful of sun giants<sup>B5</sup> have ever been seen on Akasaat, residing far from human settlements in the vast open reaches of the world's Wastelands. These towering figures appear to lead solitary lives of contemplation, but are committed to a far greater task. These giants have, for as long as they can recall, been in a state of conflict with the kytons of Akasaat, battling these shadowy forces. The origins of the sun giants' conflict with the kytons traces back centuries and the conflict is a losing one as the kytons continue to adapt, change, and grow in power sun giants diminish and fade. Some among their number have broken away entirely, choosing to align themselves with dark forces like living idols to protect themselves from the machinations of the Choir.

## Kir-Sharaat

Giants are vanishingly uncommon on Kir-Sharaat, especially within proximity of erahthi Heartwood trees and their settlements. The few giants found on Kir-Sharaat reside within remote reaches of the

world's forests, often deep below the canopy within the less-traversed reaches of the Darkwild. This, in turn, puts the giants in closer contact with zahajin civilization and the enigmatic fey of Kir-Sharaat.

Marsh giants<sup>B2</sup> dwell within the coastal reaches of Kir-Sharaat's great ocean and many seas. These degenerate creatures would be of diminishing number due to their conflicts with both erahtli and zahajin, of whom they prey upon with equal measure, but have a fecundity second to none among giant kind. Marsh giants tend to form tribal communities of 20 or more of their kind and enslave other less physically powerful creatures. Marsh giant culture is a violent and cruel survivalist caste system and many clans are manipulated into veneration of horrifying extraplanar entities like sakhil<sup>B5</sup> who twist these clans for their own degenerate amusement.

Though it would seem on the surface that wood giants<sup>B2</sup> and jungle giants<sup>B3</sup> would have both a strong presence on Kir-Sharaat and a strong relationship with the erahtli, neither is true. Wood giants are exceedingly rare on Kir-Sharaat and where they do appear they are in remarkably small numbers. Wood giants refuse to stray into erahtli territory and mindfully tend trees within the Darkwild or higher elevations. Wood giants stay clear of Heartwood trees and have an aversion to their presence. Erahtli have little contact with these creatures as a result, and the Tritarch consider them possible conspirators with the zahajin. The exact nature of this enmity is not well understood, but may trace back to the rise of the Tritarch in the chaotic years following the Collapse.

## Amrita Asteroid Belt

No known giant species are native to the Amrita Asteroid Belt, but nether giants who travel off of Orbis Aurea can be found among the settlements scattered through the Belt region. Fossilized remains of giant humanoids have been discovered embedded in Belt asteroids, but they are partial remains at best and do not appear to be from any known species of giant.

## Seraos

In the tempest-wracked gas giant of Seraos, only two species of giant are known to inhabit the region. Cloud and storm giants<sup>B1</sup> are scattered inhabitants across the floating landmasses contained within the planet's Stormflow regions. Most cloud and storm giant settlements on Seraos are insular communities that rarely get an opportunity to interact with other sentient species, save for the rare elementals that traverse the planet. These giants are of a rapidly dwindling number due to predation by Seraos wildlife and low birth rates combined with high mortality rates. As descendants of Collapse survivors they share harrowing stories of mass disappearances of their kind in the dark of night, when the sounds of chains and screams fill the air and nightmarish creatures ravage their floating island settlements. The few giants that remain on Seraos are a scattered, disparate people who exist primarily in a hunter-gatherer ecology.

## The Gulf

Though nearly all giants who stay too long in the Gulf are drawn into Aethera's lethal siren song, some species of giant can still be found within the airless void between worlds. Shadow giants<sup>B6</sup> are the result of ancient tampering with Orbis Aurean giants by the Choir of the Machine. These industrious kytons transfigured stone and frost giants into powerful servitors that dwell primarily within the Shadow, but slip into the Gulf aboard Taur ships as horrifying shock troops.

So-called tomb giants<sup>B6</sup> are the despondant survivors of the initial wave of stone giants seeking to venture off of Orbis Aurea during the final days of the Century War. Though able to resist the call of Aethera, some stone giants succumbed to a crushing ennui while within the Gulf and underwent a horrific transformation into creatures of necromantic nature. Only a handful of tomb giants are believed to exist somewhere in the Gulf, their goals a mystery..

# GIANT, ANIMA

*This pale blue giant is adorned in robes of living seaweed and waterlogged wooden growths.*

## ANIMA GIANT

CR 5

XP 1,600

N Large humanoid (aquatic, giant)

**Init** +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +10

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17 (+8 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 59 (7d8+28)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

**Resist** cold 10

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to negative energy

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

**Melee** longspear +10 (2d6+9/x3) or 2 slams +10 (1d6+6)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with longspear)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration +7)

Constant—[speak with plants](#)

At will—[frostbite](#)<sup>UM</sup>

3/day—[goodberry](#)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 11, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 22

**Feats** [Cleave](#), [Endurance](#), [Improved Initiative](#), [Power Attack](#)

**Skills** Acrobatics +0 (+4 to jump), Knowledge (geography) +1, Knowledge (nature) +1, Perception +10, Survival +11, Swim +20

**Languages** Aquan, Giant, Sylvan

**SQ** amphibious, elemental saturation

**Other Gear** longspear

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Orbis Aurea)

**Organization** solitary, gang (2–5 and 1 wolliped<sup>B5</sup>), band (6–12 and 3 wollipeds), tribe (13–30 plus noncombatants; 1 druid or shaman of 5–8th level; 1 medium or spiritualist of 4–8th level; 10–20 wollipeds)

**Treasure** standard (longspear plus other treasure)



## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Elemental Saturation (Su)** As a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity, an anima giant can foster plant growth or ice in any terrain. This functions as *entangle* centered on the anima giant with a caster level equal to the anima giant's hit dice and with a save DC equal to  $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  the anima giant's hit dice + the anima giant's Charisma modifier (typically DC 15). When used on dry land this effect creates vibrant (though short-lived) plantlife. When used in water it creates slushy and rapidly freezing ice. In water the area for this effect is a sphere, rather than a flat radius. Anima giants are unaffected by their own elemental saturation effect and while within its radius their natural armor bonus increases to +12. An anima giant may only have one elemental saturation in effect at any time. If they use elemental saturation again it creates a new effect centered on the anima giant.

**Negative Energy Vulnerability (Ex)** Anima giants are highly susceptible to negative energy and take half as much (+50%) damage from negative energy effects that deal hit point damage. Additionally, anima giants suffer a -4 penalty on saving throws against negative energy effects.

Anima giants are solemn and melancholic giants who dwell both the frozen lands and arctic seas of Orbis Aurea. Anima giants stand 15 feet tall and weigh 1,200 lbs.

## Ecology

Anima giants are beings torn between the echo of a life their people lived prior to the Collapse and the harsh reality of the world around them. Anima giants dream of tending primordial forests, fostering life and basking in the metaphysical glow of ribbon-like streams of life energy. They dream of basking in the light of Aethera and no other star. But when they wake, anima giants struggle to maintain the frozen forests of their homeworld, Orbis Aurea, in the face of rapid advancement from the Paragon Ascendancy and expansionist dreams of the frost giants. Over centuries,

the anima giants have moved from the land into the sea, developed the ability to breathe water and walk on land, and feel at home in neither environment. They are strangers in their own skin, a disparate and diminishing people who are caretakers of frozen forests of ruin and blood-soaked battlefield tundra.

Anima giants are omnivores and follow nomadic predation patterns. As such they do not build settlements or permanent dwellings, but rather move to follow sources of food on both land and sea. In the ocean they tend to subsist on whales and other large sea creatures, while on land they stalk megafauna like dire bears and dire wolves.

## Habitat & Society

Nomadic by nature, anima giants follow continent-spanning, decades-long migratory routes. A single clan on anima giants may only be seen once in a single human's lifetime, as they journey across land and sea, traversing the entirety of their gigantic world. Anima giants' nomadic routes always traverse west to east and circumvent the globe by both land and sea routes. These migration patterns always bring them through regions of dense forestation—both living and dead—whenever they cross land. This is a seemingly intuitive call to travel and is not taught within their oral history.

Anima giant clans are centered around the guidance of the youngest of their kind that have only just passed into adulthood. Anima giants cherish the vivacity of youth and the young are encouraged to seek the counsel and wisdom of their elders, but not to be beholden to their old ideas lest their people stagnate. As such, anima giant culture is a rapidly-evolving state. Traditions are adopted, discarded, and adopted again as generational guidance changes and these mores vary wildly from tribe to tribe, even within close geographical areas. The one unifying line between all anima giants is deep-seated hatred for the undead and a repulsion to netherite, both of which they seek to destroy on sight.

# GIANT, NETHER (AKKANA)

*Ink black veins twist beneath the red skin of this lanky, long-armed giant.*

## NETHER GIANT

CR 3

XP 800

N Large humanoid (aether, giant)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +4

### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 30 (4d8+12)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** ghost ward (DC 15); **Resist** negative energy 10, **Immune** aetherite radiation, negative levels

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +6 (1d6+4)

**Ranged** mwk Large revolver +6 (2d6/19–20)

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

**Special Attacks** rock throwing (120 ft.)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 17, **Con** 16, **Int** 11, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22

**Feats** [Point-Blank Shot](#), [Precise Shot](#)

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Disable Device +9, Perception +4, Survival +4; **Racial Modifiers** Acrobatics +4, Disable Device +4

**Languages** Giant, Hymnas, Okantan

**SQ** unlikely agility

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Orbis Aurea)

**Organization** solitary, gang (2–3), found family (4–6 plus 1 alchemist or gunslinger of 1st–2nd level; and 2–4 infused and 1–2 humans), exclave (6–10 plus 15% noncombatants; 1 alchemist or gunslinger of 3rd–5th level; 1 oracle or sorcerer of 4th–6th level; and 4–7 infused, 2–4 phalanx, and 2–4 humans)

**Treasure** standard (Large web-fiber armor, mwk Large revolver<sup>UC</sup>, Large shortsword, [aetheric capacitor](#) (34 au), thieves' tools, other treasure)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

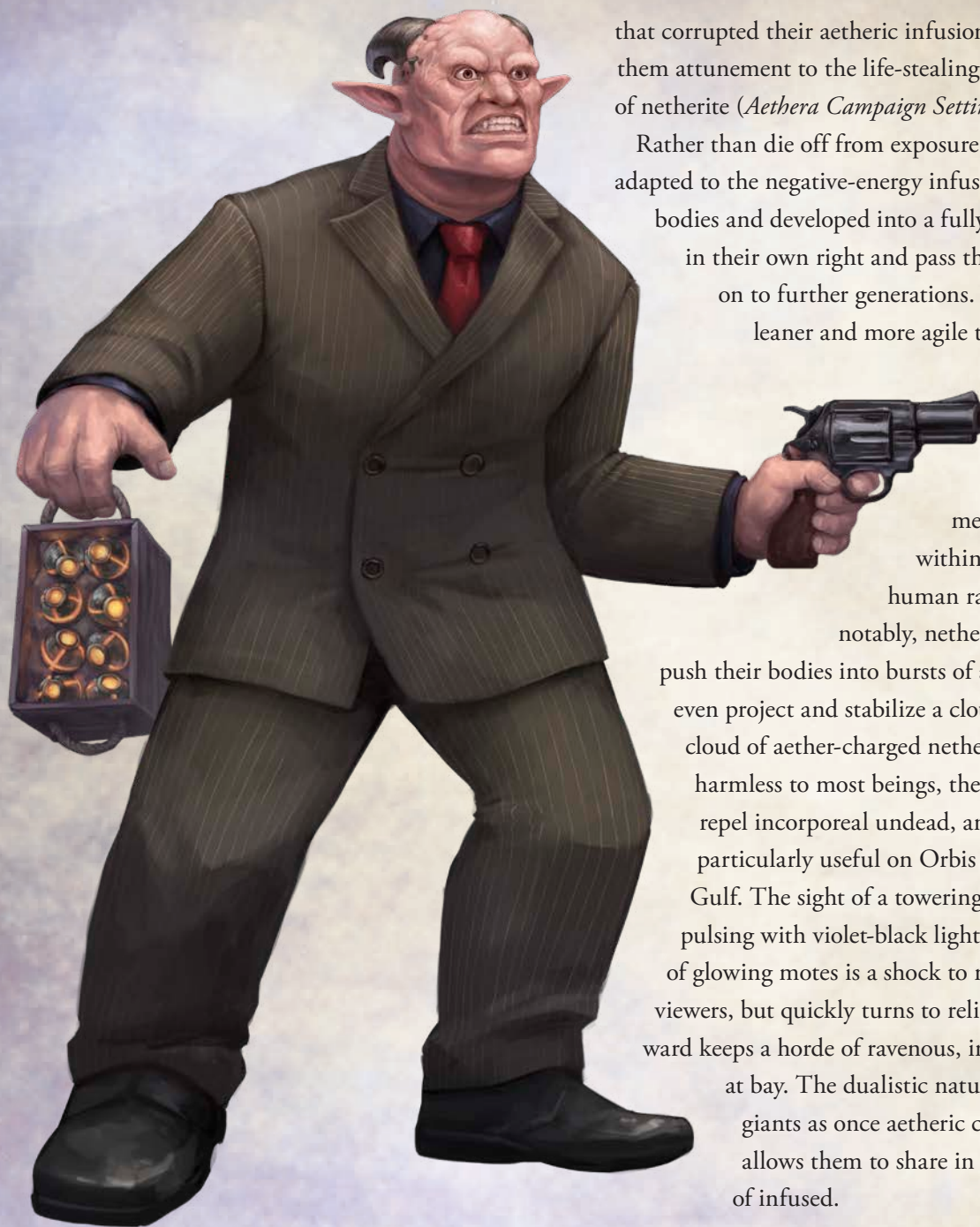
**Unlikely Agility (Ex)** An nether giant can periodically stoke their bodies into a burst of stunning alacrity. Once per day as a swift or immediate action when they make a Reflex save, or an Acrobatics, Climb, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, or Swim check, a nether giant can roll twice and take the better result. They must decide to use this ability before the roll is made.

**Ghost Ward (Su)** By concentrating as a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity, a nether giant can creating a hazy black field with a radius of 5 feet per Hit Dice. Incorporeal undead attempting to cross the field's edge must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the nether giant's HD + Charisma modifier) or become stunned at the field's edge for 1 round. Outsiders with the phantom subtype can cross the field, but must succeed at a Will save or be sickened while within the ghost ward's radius. The nether giant can dismiss the ghost ward as a free action. This ability may only be used defensively, not aggressively; forcing the ghost ward against incorporeal undead or a phantom causes it to collapse. A ghost ward lasts for as long as a nether giant spends a full-round concentrating on maintaining it. A creature that successfully saves against a ghost ward is immune to that nether giant's ghost ward for 24 hours.

Nether giants are tall, lean, red-skinned figures with stout horns and ink black veins. A typical adult nether giant stands 12 feet tall, weighs, 800 pounds, and lives to be 150 years old.

## Ecology

Though originally believed to be the result of prenatal aetherite poisoning in hill giants, nether giants (called *Akkana* among their own people;



that corrupted their aetheric infusion, granting them attunement to the life-stealing properties of netherite (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 287).

Rather than die off from exposure, nether giants adapted to the negative-energy infusion within their bodies and developed into a fully-fledged species in their own right and pass their unique traits on to further generations. Nether giants are leaner and more agile than hill giants,

but also more fragile.

They also display

mental capabilities

within the average

human range. Most

notably, nether giants can

push their bodies into bursts of alacrity, and even project and stabilize a cloud of antipodal cloud of aether-charged netherite. Though harmless to most beings, these projected fields repel incorporeal undead, and are therefore particularly useful on Orbis Aurea and in the Gulf. The sight of a towering crimson giant pulsing with violet-black light amidst a shower of glowing motes is a shock to many first-time viewers, but quickly turns to relief when a ghost ward keeps a horde of ravenous, indistinct specters at bay. The dualistic nature of nether giants as once aetheric creatures also allows them to share in the psychic bond of infused.

## Habitat & Society

Nether giants only recently joined contemporary Orbis Aurean society after centuries of existing on the fringes of okantan and giant communities, shunned by ancient cultural taboos regarding their connection to netherite. Given traditional okantan and, by extension, hill giant attitudes towards aetherite, most

translated “the old souls” in Giant) long ago mutated from their original and largely forgotten origins. Old stories told by taiga giant clans claim that nether giants were once endowed with aetherite-related powers, much as the infused are today, but in the ancient past fell victim to a plague

nether giants were viewed as vessels for the dead, earning them suspicion and rejection from their peers.

Wary of okantan interest in the first stranded group of Requiescat Hierarchy explorers, it wasn't until the crash of the *H.A.V. Ray of Dawn* and introduction of Paragons and infused that nether giants were drawn to Orbis Aurea's offworld visitors. In the paragons, nether giants felt the presence of a kindred spirit and the Paragons recognized the potential for the nether giants as allies in their formative civilization. Through the intervening years, nether giants have found a new home among the Hierarchy's castoffs, discovered a natural predilection for aethertech, and even reached the stars as aethership crew. Most nether giants not on Orbis Aurea now dwell in the Amrita Belt and choose to live among infused, phalanx, and other groups excluded from their parent societies.

Though only a decade has passed since their initial liaisons with Requiescat society, nether giants have quickly become valued members of the Paragon Ascendancy. Shared outcast status and aetheric physiology meant quick acceptance for nether giants among infused and phalanx communities. Their aptitude for technology also leads many to join construction and maintenance crews, particularly on Orbis Aurea's space elevators. While giant-sized tools can be hard to come by, a nether giant bundled against the cold and towering over their comrades is a not uncommon sight on the scaffolds above Wighthaven or Pahnahadra.

Nether giants' lives are not without conflict, however. Some infused resentment the giants' extended lifespan and reproductive viability. These same detail make nether giants a subject of scientific curiosity, and while some individuals volunteer for clinical trials to help develop treatments for their infused cousins, there are whispers of giants disappearing to serve shadowy Hierarchy interests. Harrowing tales from the Belt speak of ships with nether giant passengers disappearing, leaving behind only garbled farcaster transmissions of screams and

panic. Most travelers to the Amrita Belt ascribe these attacks to the Taur, though rumors persist of creatures native to the Shadow reaching out into lone aetherships. Investigations into these disappearances returned inconclusive results.

## Nether Giant Fighting Styles

Nether giants invented a style of necrotic melee combat.

### NETHER STORM STYLE (COMBAT, STYLE)

Your melee attacks are drawn to the undead.

**Prerequisites:** Con 13, base attack bonus +1 or monk level 1st, aether subtype.

**Benefit:** When in nether storm style you gain a +1 competence bonus to all melee attacks against undead but take a -1 penalty on saves versus negative energy effects. When your base attack bonus reaches +4, and every 4 points thereafter, the bonus to attack provided by this feat increases by +1 and the penalty to saves increases by -1.

### NETHER STORM SURGE (COMBAT, STYLE)

Your melee attacks channel negative energy.

**Prerequisites:** Con 15, base attack bonus +4 or monk level 4th, aether subtype, Nether Storm Style.

**Benefit:** When you score a critical hit against an undead creature while in Nether Storm Style, that creature takes a penalty to its Will saves equal to your Constitution bonus for 1 minute. Each successive critical hit against the same creature within the 1 minute duration increases the penalty to Will saves by 1.

### NETHER STORM SHIELD (COMBAT, STYLE)

Your melee attacks channel negative energy.

**Prerequisites:** Con 17, base attack bonus +8 or monk level 8th, aether subtype, Nether Storm Surge.

**Benefit:** While in Nether Storm Style you gain a deflection bonus to AC equal to your Constitution bonus against all melee and ranged attacks made against you by creatures of the undead type.

# HEXHOUND

*This six-legged wolf-like creature possesses six blood red eyes.*

## HEXHOUND

CR 4

XP 1,200

N Medium animal

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, eldritch scent; **Perception** +13

### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+5 Dex, +3 natural)

**hp** 37 (5d8+15)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft.

**Melee** bite +6 (1d6+3), 2 claws +6 (1d4+3)

**Special Attacks** rake (2 claws +6, 1d4+3)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 20, **Con** 16, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** [Dodge](#), [Run](#), [Skill Focus](#) (Perception)

**Skills** Perception +13, Stealth +9; **Racial Modifier** +4 Perception

**Special Qualities** eldritch scent, perceptive tracker

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any cold (Orbis Aurea)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or curse (3–12)

**Treasure** incidental

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Eldritch Scent (Ex)** A hexhound can detect the presence of magic auras by scent. By spending a move action, a hexhound is able to detect the presence of magic within 60 feet (120 feet if downwind of a magic source). With a successful DC 20 Handle Animal check, a hexhound can be trained to pick out a specific school of magic by being exposed to the aura as a hunting dog can be trained to track specific animal scents. This ability otherwise functions as the scent universal monster ability.

**Perceptive Tracker (Ex)** Hexhounds may track by scent using Perception rather than Survival.

A hexhound is a six-legged white-furred wolf-like animal with six eyes native to Orbis Aurea's harsh climates. Hexhounds measure six feet in length and weigh upwards of 300 lbs.

## Ecology

Wild hexhounds have roamed the tundra of Orbis Aurea further back than recorded history. They are voracious hunters with specialized sensory organs that give them incredibly keen abilities to track and hunt magical beasts and other prey capable of utilizing magic in any form. Most of a wild hexhound's diet does not come from supernatural sources, however, lending natural philosophers to question whether hexhounds were specially bred prior to the Collapse to develop their magic-sensing abilities.

## Habitat & Society

Hexhounds are typically pack-dwelling creatures, only existing as solitary hunters when their pack has thinned from predation. Unlike wolves, hexhounds do not create dens but instead create shallow burrows in snow and ice, huddling together for warmth. These gatherings of hexhounds buried under a thin crust of snow also serve as points of ambush for prey. Few sights are as terrifying as a pack of hexhounds erupting from under the cover of freshly fallen snow.

Hexhounds are traditional okantan hunting animals with oral accounts of their use dating back to the time of Great Hah-Harmarandh. Some okanta spiritual traditions claim that each individual hexhound is a free-roaming echo of a particularly brave okanta hunter's soul. Less traditional but nonetheless industrious okanta began breeding programs to sell hexhounds to Paragon Ascendancy and offworld Hierarchy forces as hunting dogs. The Hierarchy's

Vanguard organization is especially interested in the potential for hexhound application as mage hunters.

## Hexhound Companions

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Medium; **Speed** 40 ft.; **AC** +2 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str 15, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6; **Special Qualities** darkvision, low-light vision, scent.

**7th-level Advancement:** **Speed** 50 ft.; **Ability Scores** Str +2, Dex +2, Con +2; Wis +2; **Attack** 2 claws (1d4); rake (2 claws 1d4); **Special Qualities** eldritch scent, perceptive tracker.

## Alchemical Item

The following alchemical items are created from components that can be harvested from a hexhound.

### HEXDROPS 250 AU

This luminescent crimson fluid is prepared with the ocular fluid of hexhound eyes combined with alchemical oils and unguents and stored in a transparent eyedropper. Each phial of hexdrops contains 5 doses.

A character may apply hexdrops as a standard action. Once applied, hexdrops grant darkvision out to 60 feet or extend the target's natural darkvision to double its normal range. Additionally, the hexdrops grant a +2 alchemical bonus to Perception checks. These bonuses last for 10 minutes, after which time the affected creature gains the light blindness universal monster weakness for 1 hour.

#### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 1 (250 au); **Spells** divination

**Effect** Grants darkvision 60-ft for its duration and light blindness for 1 hour after the spell's duration ends.

## Power Components

### HEXHOUND EYE 60 AU

Though rare, a set of hexhound eyes can be used to enhance divination magic.

#### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 6 (360 au); **Spells** divination

**Effect:** +1 caster level for the purposes of the effect and affected as though by the Extend Spell metamagic feat.



# HOVMARHA

*This tiny, shaggy creature carries itself on eight stubby legs. A black beak protrudes from its furry, eyeless head.*

## HOVMARHA

CR 1/4

XP 100

N Tiny animal

**Init** +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +3

### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 size)

**hp** 5 (1d8+1)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

**Melee** slam +3 (1d3)

**Space** 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** rolling curl

### STATISTICS

**Str** 11, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 11

**Feats** [Weapon Finesse](#)

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Perception +3, Stealth +11 (+15 in snow); **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception, +4 Stealth in snow

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** cold forests and plains (Orbis Aurea)

**Organization** solitary, pair, bank (3–6), or avalanche (7–10 plus 2d4 young)

**Treasure** none

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Rolling Curl (Ex)** A hovmarha can curl into a ball as a standard action and uncurl as a move action. While curled, it gains a +20-foot bonus to speed and can no longer make natural attacks, or burrow. Instead, the hovmarha gains a +2 bonus to CMB when performing a dirty trick combat maneuver.

## FAMILIAR

The master of a hovmarha familiar gains a +2 bonus to CMB when performing a dirty trick combat maneuver. A hovmarha familiar can deliver touch spells while curled into a ball.

The hovmarha is a small, eight-legged Orbis Aurean mammal with dense white fur and an inquisitive, ferret-like demeanor. While commonly considered a pest by okanta and Requiescat farmers, the hovmarha's fur has made them fashionable among the higher echelons of human society for winter coats, and their pleasant demeanor has brought them to the attention of humans who left beloved pets behind in order to travel to Orbis Aurea.

The name “hovmarha” translates from okanta as “little avalanche” or “the smallest disaster,” but Requiescat humans have taken to calling the animals snowballs because of the hovmarha's white fur and ability to curl into a ball. Hovmarha can grow up to two and a half feet long and typically weigh between ten and fifteen pounds.

## Ecology

Hovmarha are burrowing omnivores whose diet consists mainly of smaller



burrowing animals, tree roots, and vegetables. With front claws strong enough to dig into loose snow and dirt, hovmarha burrow to seek out prey and roots that they scent beneath the surface.

A hovmarha's eight short legs give them a sinuous, winding gait that lets them cover ground adequately, but their flexible spines and unique leg jointing allows hovmarha an incredibly effective method of locomotion. By curling themselves into a ball, they can flex and kick off the ground, reaching speeds of nearly 10 miles per hour. While most creatures that curl up use the procedure purely for defense—to persuade a predator that the meat inside is not worth the effort of breaking through the shell—hovmarha have no such shell and use this spherical form in a more aggressive manner.

Usually, a hovmarha rolls into a ball to evade predators or give pursuit to burrowing prey that escape to the surface. By performing quick spins, sudden bounces, and other acrobatics maneuvers, a hovmarha can sling dirt at their foes, knock them off balance, or even daze them. These aggressive hunting tactics become exceptionally useful when a hovmarha is domesticated and serves as a familiar, utilizing their great mobility to deliver touch spells.

## Habitat & Society

Hovmarha dwell in forests and sheltered valleys in family groups of up to ten, pushing snow or dirt around and packing it into small defensive forts to defend against predators. A member of the family is always on guard atop the wall of the fort, and when danger threatens, the nursing mothers herd their young to safety out of one of the two entrances to the fort, while the remaining members curl into tight balls and begin harrying the predator: Throwing snow into its face, weaving between its legs, and tackling it bodily to knock it off balance.

Some hovmarha have even been witnessed using the walls of their forts or the trunks of fallen trees as ramps to launch into the air after flying predators like hawks. Even a lone hovmarha is more likely to attack a predator and attempt to drive it away rather than simply flee, although when a hovmarha does decide to flee, its speed and agility make catching it a challenge for all but the fastest of predators.

A family group of hovmarha will train their young in the rolling type of combat unique to the species, with an adult looming tall on its hindquarters and allowing the young to tackle and hurl snow at them. Such a hovmarha family will stop treating a young hovmarha as a child in need of protection whenever the young hovmarha takes the initiative and joins in driving a predator away from the fort. After this, the adolescent hovmarha is expected to hunt and forage to feed itself and the young it was so recently part of.

Hovmarha are a common pest around farming communities throughout the temperate belt of Orbis Aurea. Farmers will regularly form or hire small parties to hunt down stray hovmarha and kick over their forts whenever the tiny creatures wander too close to their fields. This does provide opportunity for profit, as a hovmarha's fur is dense and warm, and the young accept training easily.

Domesticated hovmarha can fetch upwards of 50 au on Orbis Aurea, and the Malinan Menagerie in Wighthaven will usually have at least one available for purchase at any given time. A live hovmarha draped around one's neck has been a status symbol among the socialites of Wighthaven on and off for the last decade. Usually this style falls out of favor when someone decides that wearing a ten-pound furry animal around their neck at a party is a stupid idea, whereupon everyone praises the bold challenging of contemporary fashion the next time someone makes the daring fashion choice.

# ICHPARYA

## ICHPARYA

CR 2

XP 600

N Small animal

**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +8

### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 16 (3d8+3)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 30 ft. (ice and snow only), climb 10

**Melee** bite +5 (1d4+1 plus attach)

**Special Attacks** heist

### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +2 (+5 steal<sup>UC</sup>); **CMD** 16 (24 vs. trip)

**Feats** [Skill Focus](#) (Perception), [Weapon Finesse](#)

**Skills** Climb +9, Perception +8, Stealth +11

**SQ** prehensile tails

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any urban (Orbis Aurea)

**Organization** solitary, pair, gang (3–12), or filching (13–30 plus 8d6 young)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Heist (Ex):** As a swift action an ichparya can perform the Steal combat maneuver as a swift action against an enemy it is flanking or grappling.

**Prehensile Tails (Ex):** Ichparya have flexible tails they use to carry objects. An ichparya cannot wield weapons with its tails, but the tails allows an ichparya to retrieve and carry unattended objects weighing no more than 5 lbs as a swift action. An ichparya can carry 4 such objects at once, or use multiple tails to hold heavier objects.

Ichparya are small, mischievous animals native to the tundra of Orbis Aurea around settlements. These creatures are cunning thieves, stealing food,

baubles, and whatever else they can get their many paws and tails on. Though mistaken for nuisances, ichparya are generally perceived as charming and are highly social creatures who developed behaviors that engender them to many humanoid species. A typical ichparya stands 2 feet tall and weighs 75 lbs.

## Ecology

The ichparya (*eek-par-ya*; lit: “snow thief” in Giant) are scavengers and carrion eaters who have adapted to living on the fringes of humanoid society. Ichparya are smart and adaptable animals undeterred by humanoid presence—often to their own detriment—and are frequently found stealing untended food or other goods to squirrel away in their snowy dens outside of human reach. Hexapedal creatures, ichparya are remarkably fast for their size and furiously fast burrowers through snow and ice.

Ichparya have a crepuscular activity cycle, favoring the dim illumination of dawn and dusk. During daytime hours an ichparya basks in warm places like hot springs or atop idiling aetherdrives, preferring areas of both warmth and relative isolation, then become active in the two hours around dusk. At night ichparya retreat to their dens and return to activity around the hours of dawn to scavenge and play before basking again. A domesticated ichparya can be active during other cycles, but tend toward lazy or cantankerous behavior outside of dawn and dusk hours.

Ichparya have many mates over the course of their life and while social creatures enjoy a plethora of attachments, all of which have a bonded importance. Ichparya are also likely to imprint a bond on mobile objects that they identify with like creatures, such as aethercraft, coming to visit and “play” with their favorite ships time and again, even if they don’t like the crew much.



Ichparya gestation cycles last roughly three months, during which time the creatures are active for longer periods of time and spend most of that scavenging for food. An ichparya litter typically consists of 4–8 offspring and the species has a high survival rate.

## Habitat & Society

Ichparya are social creatures that are a recorded part of all Orbis Aurean civilizations dating back into the oldest giant oral histories. Ichparya are symbiotic to civilized peoples, lending them to easy domestication. They utilize humanoids (historically, giants and okanta) to protect them from predators and root out more disruptive animals and vermin like rats.

Poor hunters, but excellent scavengers, ichparya were never domesticated for tracking and hunting, but fill the role that housecats do on planets like Akasaat, serving as mousers and companion animals. Feral ichparya, such as they are, form tightly-knit family units consisting of dozens of mates and offspring. Due to their curious and scavenging nature, many settlements that recognize the value of native ichparya strive to better cohabitate, adopting ancient giant

traditions of leaving offerings on stoops or in gardens for the inquisitive creatures. Typically these shiny baubles are little more than trash to their owners (broken aetheric capacitors, spools of wire, old pottery) for the ichparya to collect for their dens. Many off-worlders misinterpret this as ichparya stealing trash from residences, but the truth of the matter is that the ichparya are enshrining these offerings as cherished keepsales.

Non-domesticated ichparya often fare poorly on worlds other than Orbis Aurea as they are acclimated to the planet's gravity and climate.

## Ichparya Companions

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Small; **Speed** 30 ft., burrow 30 ft. (ice and snow), climb 10 ft.; **AC** +1 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d4); **Ability Scores** Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 14; **Special Qualities** low-light vision, prehensile tails.

**4th-Level Advancement:** **Attack** bite (1d6 plus attach); **Ability Scores** Str +2, Dex +4, Con +2, Cha +2; **Special Attacks** attach, heist.

# PARAGON

*This towering figure is clad in heavy armor and carries a mighty glaive.*

## INFUSED, PARAGON

CR 6

XP 2,400

LN Large humanoid (aether)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +9

### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+10 armor, +1 Dex)

**hp** 63 (8d8+27)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

**Immune** aetherite

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor)

**Melee** +1 *Huge glaive* +12/+7 (2d6+9/x3)

**Ranged** *thundergun*<sup>ACS</sup> +7/+2 touch (2d6 electricity/x4)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with glaive)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +11)

At will—*mage hand*, *open/close*, *telekinetic projectile*<sup>MA</sup>

3/day—*command*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17), *shatter*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17)

1/day—*discordant blast*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18), *force punch*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** A Paragon attempts to get into melee range as soon as possible, using their *thundergun* if they cannot reach enemies. They use *shatter* on the weapons of physically strong opponents and *force punch* or *discordant blast* to push back opponents adjacent to them. If surrounded, they use *command* to attempt to force foes to drop their weapons.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 20 hp, a Paragon will step back to regroup and heal, unless their orders indicate otherwise. If required to do so by superiors, they fight to the death.

**Base Statistics** Without their power armor, a Paragon's statistics are as follows: **AC** 11, touch 11, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dex); **Melee** none; **Str** 21; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

### STATISTICS

**Str** 23, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 20, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Armor Proficiency (power armor)<sup>ACS</sup>, *Power Attack*, Shock Trooper<sup>ACS</sup>

**Skills** Diplomacy +6, Fly +5, Intimidate +6 (+4 to demoralize opponents in melee combat of equal or smaller size that are not wearing power armor), Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Survival +11

**Languages** Auran, Draconic, Erahthi, Hymnas, Okanta

**SQ** ascendant magic, martial paragon, psychic mindlink

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other**

**Gear** *MK I power armor*<sup>ACS</sup> (with redundant power supply accessory), *thundergun*<sup>ACS</sup>, +1 *Huge glaive*, *standard aetheric capacitor*<sup>ACS</sup> (80 au)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Ascendant Magic (Su)** A Paragon's spell-like abilities are far more powerful than those of the infused. These spell-like abilities function as the mythic version of the spell, where applicable, as though affected by the *Ascendant Spell*<sup>MA</sup> metamagic feat. This does not count as a mythic spell for the purposes of effects that interact with the spell. A Paragon cannot use augmented versions of mythic spells with this ability, unless they possess another source of mythic power that allows them to do so. This ability does not affect the spell's level.

**Martial Paragon (Ex)** A Paragon is innately proficient with all types of armor (light, medium, and heavy) and all martial weapons.

**Psychic Mindlink (Su)** A Paragon can create a psychic bond with another creature that has the aether subtype. Creating this bond requires that both creatures remain in physical contact for 1 minute. An unwilling target of a psychic bond may negate the effect with a successful Will save (DC 15). After a successful bond, both creatures gain a +4 racial bonus on Sense Motive checks against one another and a +4 racial bonus on Bluff checks to pass secret messages between them. As a swift action, a Paragon can share thoughts with one or more creatures they are psychically bonded with

as though they are all under the effects of [mindlink](#)<sup>OA</sup>. A Paragon can be bonded to a maximum number of creatures equal to 3 + their Intelligence modifier.

## Ecology of the Paragons

Artificially created with a combination of scientific and magical methods, a Paragon is humanoid in shape but much larger than a human, the tallest of them standing nearly 16 feet in height. In appearance, they resemble humans, though like the infused, their eyes and veins glow light blue as a result of the aetherite in their bodies. The strength of this illumination varies based on their emotional state, flaring when they charge into battle or experience strong emotion and dimming slightly when they are calm.

Paragons were created to be both incredibly strong and extremely intelligent, as the Hierarchy wanted powerful soldiers who could serve as squad leaders and envision tactics on the fly during the battles of the Century War. As their units were often far from the Hierarchy's command structures and farcaster communications could be intercepted, the intent was for the Paragons to carry out the Hierarchy's battle strategies with minimal oversight. Though a gamble both in initial creation and in the cooperation of its hyper-intelligent subjects, the Paragon Project paid off well for the Hierarchy, and gave humanity a terrifying new weapon against the *erahthi*.

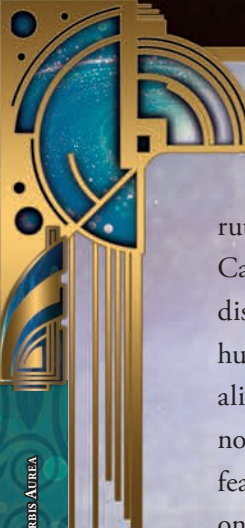
In addition to their physical strength and their intellects, the Paragons also possess the ability to psychically communicate with one another and the infused, which was not an intentional element of their original design. Their magical abilities to manipulate force also serve them well on the battlefield, each one carefully chosen by Hierarchy scientists and honed over a long period of experimentation. The Paragons also have an innate capability to wield weapons and armor, in order to enhance their martial abilities and cut down on the amount of training time they required.

## Society of the Paragons

The Paragons were originally created in 3927, and even at their peak were not a large group. Only 100 Paragons in total were ever operational; the second generation of experimentation was halted when the Hierarchy became aware of the psychic links the Paragons could create and the implications this had for the lives they'd created. Given their small number and origins, it is perhaps not surprising that the Paragons never created a full-fledged society of their own, independent of humanity's traditions and customs.

At the outset of the Paragon Project's expansion after the success of the infused, there was heavy debate among its scientists as to whether the Paragons should be fully sentient; after all, creation of a race of beings developed for war carried a significant amount of risk should the resulting creature not wish to cooperate or even turn against its creators. Eventually, the contingent arguing for a less intelligent—and therefore more tractable—Paragon was overruled by those who held that a race of brutes might be feasible for shock troops, but would be unable to strategize or lead units as would be required in the rapidly changing conditions of the Century War's battles. Still, the scientists did not begin the project without taking some precautions. The Paragons were instilled with a sense of deep loyalty toward the Hierarchy, both in their design and with thorough conditioning during training.

The most notable common traits of the Paragons were those common to soldiers as a whole; as they were created and trained solely for war, martial concerns took up a large part of their attention. After creation, the Paragons received intensive basic training to prepare them for their duties, but individual Paragons' skills and tactics developed differently based on their experiences and the units they commanded. Like many soldiers during the time of the Century War, the Paragons tended to value practicality over showiness, and emphasized survivability and combat readiness above all else. Most Paragons showed a



ruthless streak in battle, exemplified by attacks such as Captain Aksadar's suicidal dreadnought attack on the district of Kir-Arkhal in 3939, killing more than two hundred thousand combatants and non-combatants alike. This apparent indifference to war atrocities did not endear the Paragons to the erahthi forces, who feared seeing a Paragon appear on the battlefield not only due to their skill, but also their lack of mercy or regard for consequences, including loss of their own lives.

Though they all began with the same basic training, the experiences of the Paragons quickly diverged. Initially, the Paragons were each assigned to serve as a squad leader for a battalion made up of infused soldiers. These "Crescendo Units," as they came to be known, were intended as elite units for operations beyond the capabilities of most ordinary human soldiers. Their initial missions were wildly successful, for a time turning the tide of war against the erahthi. Emboldened by this success, the Hierarchy scientists set about creating a second generation of Paragons, but these experiments were put on hold in 3929 with the discovery of the psychic link the Paragons could share amongst themselves and the infused.

Such findings sent a ripple of uneasiness through the Hierarchy elite. The creation of the Paragons had been somewhat controversial, and the realization that the Paragons had additional unintended abilities only bolstered the arguments of those who feared the super-soldiers would one day turn on the Hierarchy. These concerns were not aided by the fact that none of the Paragons had reported the existence of the psychic link until it was observed by human lieutenants embedded within the Crescendo G Minor Unit during an assault on an erahthi mining operation, leading to uncertainty about the Paragons' true loyalties. The Paragon Project was suspended, and the Hierarchy turned their attention back to creating more infused, and later, the phalanx.

This shift in attitude did not bode well for the Paragons. The Hierarchy had long viewed them as tools rather than individuals, albeit valuable ones, and

the notion that their creations had done something unexpected was unsettling. Though the Hierarchy was loath to discard them completely, as they were still very effective, operations involving the Paragons began getting riskier and backup appeared less frequently. This did not escape the notice of the Paragons, whose reactions ranged from stoic acceptance to resentment. None openly rebelled, but the increasing frequency of missions that they privately viewed as suicidal, as well as the removal of many from their original units, did not help their morale. In 3944, the *H.A.V. Ray of Dawn* was sent to investigate Orbis Aurea for aetherite, with a squad of Paragons including then-Lancer-Colonel Lietka, who had been openly critical of the Hierarchy's recent strategies. This was viewed by the Paragons, by then numbering only thirty, as a suicide mission, reinforced by the ship's failure to return.

Until the end, though, the Paragons obeyed orders, accepting missions that they knew would likely end in their deaths. Some viewed it as a small price to pay for defeating the hated erahthi. Some hoped to prove their loyalties in battle and win the Hierarchy's full trust. Most had been so thoroughly conditioned by their training and years of service that they could not conceive of a life outside the Hierarchy military. The reports sent back from the Paragons' final missions carried a sense of stoicism, a determination to fulfill one's duty even at the cost of one's life. By the end of 3949, the last of the Paragons had been lost, putting the coda on the Hierarchy's most ambitious project... or so they believed until 3974, when the surviving Paragons on Orbis Aurea revealed themselves.

## Dark Secrets

Though the Paragon Project was a Hierarchy scientific endeavor, the inspiration for this groundbreaking work did not originate in the minds of the promethean alchemists who set fire to the blood of aetherite poisoned test subjects. While the capacity for both ingenuity and cruelty existed within these scientists, whispers of the path to reach their

goals was insidiously implanted through dream manipulation by a phobetor, an enigmatic kind of kyton that can access the Dimension of Dreams. The inspirations bestowed by phobetors led first to the development of the infused, then later in the horrifying laboratory-sepulchurs of the Choir of the Machine, the creation of aloadai kytons (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 513). Later, phobetor insinuator would further inspire the creation of the paragons themselves, and quite likely a yet unseen horror from their nightmarish labs on the Shadow.

The Hierarchy only became aware of potential manipulation in the creation of the Paragons after the project was halted on discovery of their telepathic bond. Though inquisitions into what may have influenced the minds of their operatives returned positive evidence of mental tampering, the Hierarchy is unaware who or what was behind the manipulation of their scientist's wills, and many within the Protectorate blame the Erahthi, though there is little means to prove how the creation of the paragons would have benefitted the Tritarch Dominion and the erahthi people. Knowledge of the interference in the Paragon Project is a highly classified secret within the Protectorate and remains, at present, an unsolved mystery. The Paragon Ascendancy on Orbis Aurea has not yet learned of the kyton involvement in their creation, and there is no telling how they might react to such a dark revelation.

## Paragon Magic

The following spell was devised by Paragons to emulate their powerful psychic network.

### PSYCHIC NETWORK

**School** divination; **Level** bard 3, mesmerist 3, psychic 3, occultist 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3

**Casting Time** 1 standard action; see text

**Components** V, S, M (a grid of copper wire)

**Range** short (25 feet + 5 feet/level)

**Targets** 1 creature per caster level; see text

**Duration** 10 minutes./level (D)

**Saving Throw** Will negated (harmless); **Spell**

**Resistance** yes

You create a short-lived psychic network capable of sharing thoughts through. When this spell is cast you may select a number of creatures with an intelligence of 4 or greater, up to your caster level, to include in the network. If you do not reach the maximum number of participants, you may add another creature that is within range to the network as a free action on your turn. Creatures may not be removed from the network once invited until the spell ends.

The psychic network is not stable enough to allow for full conversations, but emotions and general attitudes can be conveyed to the entire network as a free action. A character can spend a standard action to communicate in a telepathic speech through the network, or a full-round action to narrow that communication down to one known member of the network. Additionally, psychic network provides a number of additional bonuses to affected creatures.:

While affected by *psychic network* if multiple recipients of the spell are in the same combat encounter, they cannot be caught flat-footed if at least one of them can act in the surprise round.

Targets of *psychic network* gain a +1 competence bonus on all Intelligence and Wisdom-based skill checks for every 2 members of the network.

If at least one member of the network possesses a Teamwork Feat, all members of the network are treated as possessing the same feat while the spell is in effect.

### MYTHIC

If you expend one use of mythic power when casting this spell, it also grants each member of the psychic network a +1 competence bonus on attack rolls and saving throws for every three members in the network.

**Augmented (6th):** You can expend two additional uses of mythic power when casting this spell. This allows members of the psychic network to shift their vision to see through the eyes of another member, as if they were affected by *witness*<sup>UM</sup>.

# PARAGON, EKANDER

Crowned with a metal ram's skull helmet blazing with blue eyes, this heavily-armored figure fights blends organic and artificial aesthetic.

## MARSHAL OF RESOURCES EKANDER

CR 23

XP 819,200

Male Paragon druid (aether-touched<sup>ACS</sup>) 15/hierophant<sup>MA</sup> 4

CN Large humanoid (aether, mythic)

Init +10; Senses low-light vision; Perception +38

### DEFENSE

AC 41, touch 18, flat-footed 38 (+17 armor, +5 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 379 (8d8+88; 15d8+196)

Fort +25, Ref +17, Will +24; +4 vs. aetherite radiation, force effects, and telekinetic effects

Defensive Abilities hard to kill<sup>MA</sup>; DR 10/adamantine;

Immune aetherite, poison; Resist cold 20

### OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor); fly 30 ft.

Melee +2 scimitar +26/+21/+16 (1d10+9/18-20 x2)

Ranged *The Sage* +29/+24/+19 touch (12d6+2 energy/19-20 x3)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks aether-warped shape 5/day (Diminutive or Huge animal or Tiny or Large plant), aether-warped summons, aether influence 2/day (DC 25), inspired spell<sup>MA</sup>, mighty summons<sup>MA</sup>, mythic power (11/day, surge +1d8)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +11)

At will—*mage hand*, *open/close*, *telekinetic projectile*<sup>MA</sup>

3/day—*command*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17), *shatter*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17)

1/day—*discordant blast*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18), *force punch*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +23)

11/day—*icicle*

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 15th; concentration +23)

8th—*earthquake*<sup>M</sup>, *horrid wilting*<sup>D</sup> (DC 30), *reverse gravity*, *stormbolts*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 30)

7th—*control weather*, *elemental body IV*<sup>D</sup> (water only), *enemy hammer*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 29), *heal*<sup>M</sup>, *summon nature's ally VII*

6th—*cone of cold*<sup>D</sup> (DC 28), *find the path*, *overland flight*, *summon nature's ally VI*, *terraform*<sup>MA</sup>, *unerring tracker*<sup>UI</sup>

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 27), *call lightning storm* (DC 27), *cure critical wounds*, *ice storm*<sup>D</sup>, *old salt's curse*<sup>ARG</sup> (DC 27), *stoneskin*, *summon nature's ally V*, *telekinetic charge*<sup>UC</sup>

4th—*control water*<sup>D</sup>, *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*<sup>M</sup>, *flame strike*<sup>M</sup> (DC 26), *fly*, *geyser*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 26), *summon nature's ally IV*, *thorn body*<sup>APG</sup>

3rd—*cloak of winds*<sup>APG</sup>, *environment sphere*<sup>ACS</sup>, *hydraulic torrent*<sup>APG</sup>, *insect spies*<sup>UI</sup>, *plant growth*, *summon nature's ally III*, *thorny entanglement*<sup>ACG</sup>, *water breathing*<sup>D</sup>

2nd—*barkskin*, *chill metal* (DC 24), *frost fall*<sup>UC</sup> (DC 24), *fog cloud*<sup>D</sup>, *pilfering hand*<sup>UC</sup>, *slipstream*<sup>APG</sup>, *summon nature's ally II*, *verdant embrace*<sup>ACS</sup> (DC 24)

1st—*calm animals* (DC 23), *endure elements*, *entangle* (DC 23), *feather fall*, *goodberry*, *hydraulic push*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 23), *obscuring mist*<sup>D</sup>, *snowball*<sup>UW</sup>, *summon nature's ally I*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *light*, *spark*

D Domain spell; Domain Water

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If Ekander expects combat, he casts *stoneskin*, *barkskin*, and *overland flight*.

**During Combat** Ekander stays at range if possible, casting spells such as *entangle* to hinder enemies' movement while flying out of their reach. He casts his most powerful *summon nature's ally* spells on the first few rounds of combat, giving them the aether-warped template and expending his mythic power to summon additional creatures with his aetheric infusion ability. He uses *The Sage* to target enemies that look vulnerable to touch attacks, adjusting the type of energy damage dealt as needed.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 80 hp, Ekander retreats to heal before returning to combat; if reduced below this point a second time, he attempts to escape via flight.

**Base Statistics** Without his power armor, Ekander's statistics are: **Fort** +23; **hp** 323 (8d8+72; 15d8+151); **Melee** none; **Str** 21; **Con** 28; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 41

### STATISTICS

**Str** 25, **Dex** 28, **Con** 32, **Int** 20, **Wis** 36, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +17; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 43

**Feats** [Armor Proficiency \(power armor\)](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Clustered Shots](#)<sup>UC</sup>, [Dodge](#), [Extra Path Ability](#)<sup>MA</sup>, [Improved Precise Shot](#), [Mythic Spell Lore](#)<sup>MA</sup>, [Point-Blank Shot](#), [Power Attack](#), [Precise Shot](#), [Shock Trooper](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Squad Tactics](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Weapon Focus](#) (rifle), [Wild Speech](#)<sup>UM</sup>

**Skills** Diplomacy +7, Fly +31 (-5 if not piloting aethership), Handle Animal +26, Heal +25, Intimidate +7 (+4 to demoralize opponents in melee combat of equal or smaller size that are not wearing power armor), Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (geography) +18, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nature) +35, Linguistics +6, Perception +38, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +23, Survival +38

**Languages** Auran, Draconic, Druidic, Erahthi, Hymnas, Okanta, Sylvan

**SQ** a thousand faces, aether magic, aetheric empathy +18, ascendant magic, eldritch breach<sup>MA</sup>, enduring blessing<sup>MA</sup>, longevity<sup>MA</sup>, martial paragon, nature bond (Water domain), psychic mindlink, timeless body, tongue of the land<sup>MA</sup>, trackless step, woodland stride

**Combat Gear** *potion of* [cure serious wounds](#) (2); **Other Gear** +3 *wild*<sup>UE</sup> [MK III power armor](#)<sup>ACS</sup> (with agile frame, emergency trauma system, and large redundant power supply accessories), Huge +2 *scimitar*, *The Sage*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *belt of physical might* +6 (Dex, Con), [greater aetheric capacitor](#)<sup>ACS</sup> (1,000 au), *headband of inspired wisdom* +6, *ring of protection* +5



## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Aetheric Attunement (Su)** Due to his deep connection with metallic minerals and aether, Ekander is able to wear aethertech power armor. He cannot wear other types of metal armor.

**Aetheric Infusion (Su)** As a swift action, Ekander can expend one use of mythic power when casting a *summon nature's ally* spell to summon an aether-warped creature to transfer 20 au charges from his power armor to the spell. If he does so, he no longer treats the spell as one level lower for the purposes of which table he can choose the creatures from. If he chooses to expend an additional 20 au, he can summon one more creature from the applicable table with the casting, but he cannot summon the highest level creature available for the spell in this way (though he could summon one highest-level creature while adding one lower-level creature when using this ability).

## THE SAGE (MINOR ARTIFACT)

**Slot** weapon **CL** 20th

**Aura** strong evocation and conjuration

**Type** two-handed firearm; **Dmg** 12d6 energy damage (see text)

**Critical** 19-20 x3; **Misfire** 1 (10 ft.); **Range** 60 ft.; **Capacity** 40; **Usage** 1 charge; **Special** touch; **Weight** 15 lbs.

The Sage is an experimental weapon reverse engineered from a piece of elemental energy manipulating Progenitor technology harvested from an interior chamber of the Akasaat Gate Hub. Hierarchy engineers believed that this machine was a part of some sort of elemental attunement function of the Gate Hubs, but were unable to divine its full function. Instead, they discovered that the machine, when reverse-engineered to accept aetheric power, could channel tremendous amounts of raw elemental energy from the planes houses in a kinetic shell of force. Originally intended to be mounted on an aethership, it was modified to be wielded by the tremendous strength of a Paragon when Ekander requested a heavy weapon for use in an engagement on one of Kir-Sharaat's moons.

The Sage's original name, "Elemental Charge Conduit" was supplanted by its more evocative name when

Ekander, after being asked for his judgment against a traitor found within his squad, wryly suggested he "consult a learned sage," and immediately shot the traitor dead at point-blank range, leaving behind an ashen skeleton.

The Sage is a +2 two-handed firearm that deals 12d6 points of energy damage on a successful hit. As a swift action, the wielder can determine what type of energy damage to deal, selecting from: cold, electricity, fire, or sonic damage. Additionally, half of the damage dealt by The Sage is force damage and bypasses energy resistance and allows the weapon to fully affect Once the decision is made, The Sage continues dealing that type of damage until the wielder spends another swift action to change the type.

On a critical hit the the fired blast explodes into a 10-foot radius explosion that persists for 1 round, continuing to deal damage to creatures that remain in or enter the area of effect. A successful DC 30 Reflex save halves the damage of the explosion (but the initial target of the shot is not permitted a saving throw).

If a druid using The Sage uses wild shape or aether-warped shape, the weapon does not meld with the wielder. It automatically resizes and reshapes itself to suit the wielder's new form but still deals the same damage. The wielder must take a shape that has some form of hand or paw or other appendage capable of otherwise manipulating an object for this to work.

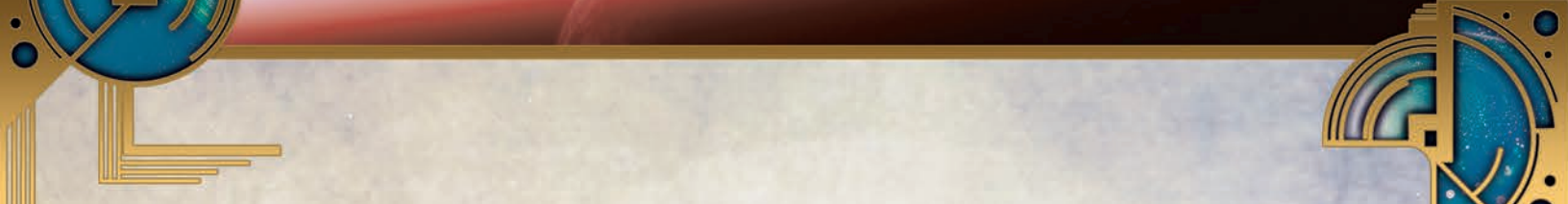
## DESTRUCTION

If *The Sage* is used to kill a mythic air, earth, fire, and water elemental within the same year the weapon will crumble to ashes.

## Marshal of Resources

Almost as soon as he completed his basic training, Ekander found himself drawn to the natural world and the ways it could be made an ally. He was fascinated by the erahthi's command over plant life and wanted to turn that knowledge to use for the Hierarchy.

Once one of the strongest proponents of the Hierarchy's strategies during the Century War, Ekander grew disillusioned as the years passed and



the conflict dragged on with no end in sight. He eventually became frustrated with the Hierarchy's endless proclamations that the next battle was sure to be the decisive one and was contemplating desertion when he was assigned to the *H.A.V. Ray of Dawn*. This suicide mission turned out to be the escape route Ekander had been looking for, albeit not in a way he could have predicted. Ekander was quick to back Lietka as leader, seeing him as a skilled strategist, but in the past several years he has again grown restless with his position. As the Paragon Ascendancy's official ecologist, his duties require a nomadic lifestyle, and he leads a group of followers who are more loyal to him personally than the Ascendancy. Persistent rumors have circulated that Ekander hopes to replace Lietka as Emperor Marshal, but the truth is quite the opposite. Ekander is eager to leave the Paragon Ascendancy and live apart from the civilization he and his kin have constructed, but the responsibility he feels to maintaining the cohesion of the Ascendancy keeps him from actually acting on these thoughts.

Before the Paragons crash-landed on Orbis Aurea, Ekander was accompanied by sandstorm skate (page 28) animal companion named Eki. This beloved friend perished in the crash and Ekander found himself unable to replace them. Curiously, after several weeks of time on Orbis Aurea, Ekander began to gain access to a new reservoir of magical energy attuned to the element of water. Ekander feels as though Orbis Aurea itself reached out to him, and part of the Marshal's long-journeying missions includes personal research into his connection to Orbis Aurea's elemental aura and what this means for his future.

Ekander is not always an easy man to get along with. He is quite friendly with those whom he likes, but has a selfish streak that is readily apparent in most of his interactions. Though he cares deeply about the natural world, he is less interested in the well-being of others and will usually prioritize his own agenda and goals above all else. In conversation, he comes across as rather devil-may-care most of the time, except when he's not getting what he wants.

If crossed, he is not averse to throwing tantrums, though these can take the form of thinly veiled barbs utilizing his finely honed sense of snark just as easily as his louder outbursts. He is a passionate man in all areas of his life, and dedicates himself to all his convictions wholeheartedly, even at the expense of his relationships with others. But once his passion has run its course, Ekander struggles to commit to tasks that once inspired him.

These tendencies do not always endear Ekander to the other Paragons. He and Lietka have a sometimes-tense relationship, as Lietka is well aware that Ekander may be hoping to abandon his position, and this knowledge manifests with a shortness in Lietka's patience with Ekander and a wariness in his activities. Still, they work together well most of the time, as each values the other's capabilities. Ekander enjoys Karbaros's company and views her as a good intermediary between him and Ngiri, whom he does not particularly care for. He views Ngiri as too careless with the Ascendancy's mining operations and often accuses her of running them in an unsustainable and damaging way. Ekander is closest to Henerik, whom he visits whenever he is able. He sees Henerik as a breath of fresh air amidst the political machinations of governing, with which he has little patience, and usually relies on him to smooth things over with the others if necessary. Ekander and Suembaro typically get along well, though he finds her neutral attitude and refusal to take sides frustrating when he finds himself fixated on a particular argument.

Though the Paragons' intense mental link over the years has mitigated most serious potential conflicts between them, a recent intrusion into their psychic network all of the Paragons on edge, and Ekander is more susceptible to this than most of the others. It is this weakening of the psychic link, more than anything else, that has made him contemplate whether the Ascendancy is truly best off being run by Lietka, and whether Lietka actually has the best interests of all of them—rather than only himself—in mind.

# PARAGON, HENERIK

*This face of this heavily-armored giant is hidden behind a gold-trimmed metal mask bestowed with a permanently smug expression.*

## MARSHAL OF WAR HENERIK

CR 25

XP 1,638,400

Male Paragon cavalier<sup>APG</sup> ([aethertech pilot](#)<sup>ACS</sup>) 17/  
marshal<sup>MA</sup> 4

NG Large humanoid (aether, mythic)

**Init** +13; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +27

### DEFENSE

**AC** 42, touch 17, flat-footed 40 (+19 armor, +5 deflection, +2 Dex, +3 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 418 (8d8+80; 17d10+203)

**Fort** +25, **Ref** +13, **Will** +22

**Defensive Abilities** hard to kill<sup>MA</sup>; **Immune** aetherite

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor)

**Melee** *Nova Lance* +41/+36/+31/+26 (2d6+24 plus 8d6 aetheric plasma/x3)

**Ranged** +2 [thundergun](#)<sup>ACS</sup> +31/+26/+21/+16 touch (2d6+2 electricity/x4)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with lance)

**Special Attacks** challenge/ship challenge 6/day (+17 damage, allies receive +5 on melee attack rolls vs. challenged target whenever he is threatening the target [regular challenge only]), decisive strike<sup>MA</sup> +4, demanding challenge, directed assault<sup>MA</sup>, mythic power (11/day, surge +1d8), ship emblem +4/-1

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +11)

At will—[mage hand](#), [open/close](#), [telekinetic projectile](#)<sup>MA</sup>

3/day—[command](#)<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17), [shatter](#)<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17)

1/day—[discordant blast](#)<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18), [force punch](#)<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If he expects melee combat, Henerik drinks his *potion of shield*.

**During Combat** In aethership combat, Henerik keeps the *Nova Lance* integrated with

his aethership and focuses on aerial bombardment of targets, making full use of his ship challenge and ship emblem abilities. On the first round of combat, he always challenges the most imposing aethership or foe. He keeps in touch with allied ships via his psychic mindlink, if the battle involves the other Paragons, or his [Intership Rally](#)<sup>ACS</sup> feat. He tries to keep Cry Victory as mobile as possible, using ship maneuvers to evade foes and gain an advantageous position. If he expects melee combat, such as if his ship is boarded, he extracts the *Nova Lance* and wields it against foes in melee, prioritizing getting intruders off the ship. He typically uses [Power Attack](#) unless he is having trouble hitting an enemy. If a foe surrenders, Henerik usually accepts, unless he has reason to believe the surrender is not being made in good faith or the enemy is an azaka (though an azaka surrender would be a rare event indeed).

**Morale** If Henerik is reduced to fewer than 75 hp, or his aethership is in danger of decompressing, he retreats to heal or repair the damage unless doing so would involve abandoning allies. If so, he will fight to the death to secure their escape.

**Base Statistics** Without his power armor, Henerik's statistics are: **Fort** +23; **hp** 359 (8d8+64; 17d10+169); **Melee** *Nova Lance* +39/+34/+29/+24 (1d8+18 plus 2d6 plasma/x3); **Str** 36, **Con** 26; **CMB** +36; **CMD** 51

### STATISTICS

**Str** 40, **Dex** 20, **Con** 30, **Int** 26, **Wis** 28, **Cha** 32

**Base Atk** +23; **CMB** +38; **CMD** 52

**Feats** [Ace Mechanic](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Aethership Mastery](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Armor Proficiency \(power armor\)](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Chief Engineer](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Coordinated Charge](#)<sup>UC</sup>, [Coordinated Maneuvers](#)<sup>APG</sup>, [Coordinated Shot](#)<sup>ACG</sup>, [Cunning Mechanic](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Intership Rally](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Pilot's Intuition](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Point-Blank Shot](#), [Power Attack](#)<sup>M</sup>, [Shock Trooper](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Skill Focus](#) (Fly), [Squad Tactics](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Toughness](#)<sup>M</sup>, [Weapon Focus \(thundergun\)](#)<sup>ACS</sup>

**Skills** Appraise +18, Bluff +22, Craft (mechanical) +21, Diplomacy +41, Disable Device +31, Fly +43, (+35 when piloting aethership), Intimidate +28 (+4 to demoralize opponents in melee combat of equal or smaller size that

are not wearing power armor), Knowledge (engineering) +23, Knowledge (geography) +30, Knowledge (local) +22, Perception +27, Sense Motive +30, Survival +37, Use Magic Device +21

**Languages** Aklo, Auran, Azaka, Draconic, Erahthi, Giant, Hymnas, Ignan, Okanta

**SQ** act as one, aethership bond, aid allies +5, ascendant magic, longevity<sup>MA</sup>, martial paragon, master tactician, order of the dragon<sup>APG</sup>, psychic mindlink, resurging words<sup>MA</sup>, strategy, tactician/aethership tactician (4/day, 11 rounds, swift action), words of hope<sup>MA</sup>

**Combat Gear** *potion of [cure serious wounds](#)* (2), *potion of [shield](#)*; **Other Gear** +4 *rallying*<sup>UE</sup> [MK III power armor](#)<sup>ACS</sup> (with agile frame, emergency trauma system, and large redundant power supply accessories), *Nova Lance*, +2 [thundergun](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, *amulet of natural armor* +3, *belt of physical might* +6 (Str, Dex), [greater aetheric capacitor](#) (1,000 au), *headband of mental superiority* +6, *ring of protection* +5

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Aethership Telepathy (Su)** Rather than the gunship base hull ordinarily possessed by an aethertech pilot of his level, Henerik's bonded aethership is a specially modified battleship hull. Henerik possesses a strong connection with his bonded aethership that enables him to telepathically fill every role in piloting his ship. He can have passengers on the ship, but additional crew members are not required for its operation. Henerik is counted as filling all the requisite roles for the purposes of all rolls made by his aethership while he is inside. He does not need to physically move about the aethership to do so, though he is still limited in the number of actions he can take per round as normal.

**Fleet Commander (Su)** Henerik can utilize his mythic abilities to aid allies, such as decisive strike, from his bonded aethership as long as allied aetherships or creatures are within line of sight from his ship. An ally for this purpose can be considered either an individual creature or aethership. The ally must be able to see his bonded aethership and hear Henerik, whether through telepathy or his [Intership Rally](#)<sup>ACS</sup> feat. During

aethership combat, he considers abilities that require allies to be within 30 feet (whether of him or an enemy) to instead have a range of 300 feet, as his aethership tactician ability.

## CRY VICTORY

CR —

Colossal construct (aether, aethercraft, capital) bonded aethership

**Crew** Henerik; **Passengers** 190 (30 aft, 60 center, 100 fore)

**Sections** Aft, Center, Fore

**Init** +21

## DEFENSE

**AC** 36, touch 2 (36 vs. firearms), flat-footed 32 (+34 natural, -8 size)

**hp** 987 (56d10+780)

**Aft Section hp** 343 (16d10+255)

**Center Section hp** 385 (21d10+270)

**Fore Section hp** 359 (19d10+255)

**Fort** +21, **Ref** +16, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** co-pilot dodge (70% miss chance, immediate action), hardness 20; **Immune** construct traits

## OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 100 ft. (clumsy), space 8 sq. (poor)

**Ranged** *Nova Lance* +29/+24/+19/+14 (20d6 aetheric plasma/x2) or [arc cannon](#)<sup>ACS</sup> +26/+21/+16/+11 (8d6 electricity/x2)

## STATISTICS

**Aetherdrive** 4, **Fore Slots** 6 (fore); **Aft Slots** 2 (aft); **Broadside Slots** 7 (1 aft, 4 center, 2 fore); **Internal Slots** 10 (2 aft, 5 center, 3 fore); **Max Dex** +1

**ACMB** +19; **ACMD** 33

**SQ** crash landing, divert power, easy riding, redirect power, reinforced hulls, ship luck 4/day, stubborn hull, tactical (+7 dodge bonus to AC or +7 to attack, move action)

**Modules** aetherdrive booster (internal, center), aetherdrive IV (internal, center), astrogation center, engineering bay (broadside, center), medium armor plating (broadside, fore), shuttle bay (aft), shield generator IV (internal, aft), super heavy armor plating

(internal, fore), super-heavy turret weapon mount with integrated *Nova Lance* (fore), super-heavy turret weapon mount with integrated arc cannon (fore)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Reinforced Hulls (Su)** At the beginning of its turn, *Cry Victory* can redirect some power from the aetherdrive to improve the defense of the ship. Henerik can select a single ship section and increase the hardness of that section by 5. He can change the affected section by spending a move action at the beginning of his turn, acting in the Engineer role.

## NOVA LANCE (MINOR ARTIFACT)

**Slot** weapon **CL** 20th

**Aura** strong evocation

The *Nova Lance* is an adaptable weapon reverse-engineered from Progenitor technology harvested from the Akasaat *Gate Hub*. The Hierarchy researchers who first stole away into the gate hub orbiting their world discovered massive arrays of conical spines within a spherical chamber of inscrutable purpose. The spines, pointing toward the hub's center, served an inscrutable purpose. Before the explorers were driven back by a ravenous mass of incorporeal undead, they were able to disengage one of the spines for further research. This conductive spine was discovered to serve as a channel for aetheric energy. Unable to discern how best to utilize the spine, Henerik requisitioned that it be removed from storage and fashioned into a weapon. Designers could not determine whether it could be best served as an aethership-mounted weapon or something the paragon could carry into battle. In the end, they chose both, creating an adaptive weapon of unique design that can be utilized both as part of an aethership's armaments and in melee combat.

When used in melee, the *Nova Lance* functions as a Huge +3 *lance* that deals 8d6 aetheric plasma damage (half fire and half electricity that affects incorporeal creatures as if it were a force effect) in addition to its regular damage. Though it is a Huge weapon, and Henerik usually wields it in this form in melee, it can resize itself to its wielder, decreasing or increasing its

damage dice the corresponding amount. In its melee form, the Nova Lance appears as a glowing white lance with a laser-focused tip.

The *Nova Lance*'s true power, however, is seen when it is integrated into an aethership. A aethertech pilot cavalier can install and uninstall the *Nova Lance* onto a weapon mount or turret of their bonded aethership as a full-round action. As the *Nova Lance* is capable of fusing entirely with an aethership's systems, the cavalier does not need to be physically next to the mount, as long as they are on the ship. When installed onto a ship, the *Nova Lance* functions as a [plasma cannon](#)<sup>ACS</sup>. If an aethership takes damage from the *Nova Lance*, all pilots, crew members, and passengers aboard that ship take a -2 penalty on all attack rolls and saving throws against effects generated by the bonded aethership or allied ships within 600 feet of the bonded aethership. This penalty stacks with the penalty granted by the cavalier's ship emblem, but does not stack with itself.

#### DESTRUCTION

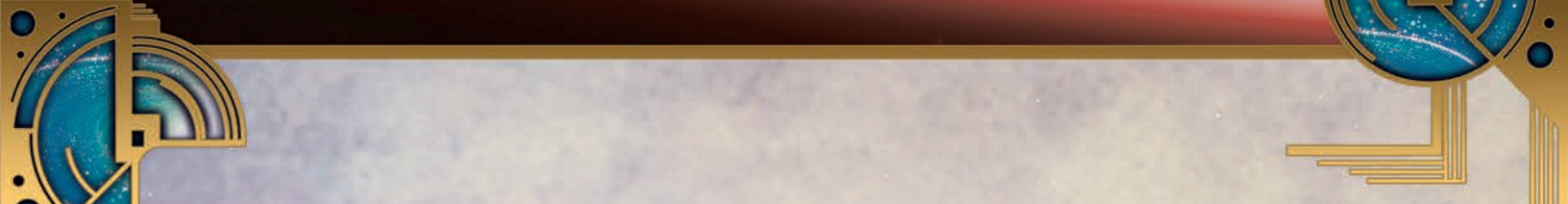
If the *Nova Lance* is transported into the center of a star it will be destroyed.

## Marshal of War

Henerik's career with the Hierarchy military began with an inauspicious start, as he was nearly killed on his very first battle with the erahthi. Spotting what he believed was an opening in the enemy force, Henerik impulsively charged in, only to find that the setup was a trap, and the overly confident paragon barely escaped with his life. After that near-disastrous foray, Henerik decided to change tactics. Instead of fighting on foot, he would fight on a speeder-sized ship, riding it into battle like a mount. He fixed up a small speeder, optimistically named it *Cry Victory* (a name he has bestowed to every ship he has commanded since), and set about becoming a master of the lance. Henerik's efforts paid off, and he was soon well known as a fierce combatant on the battlefield. His ability to command and inspire units was unparalleled, and the Hierarchy greatly valued

his abilities to snatch victories from the jaws of near-hopeless situations. For his part, Henerik prized battle for the chance to grow stronger; although he lacked the brutal streak of some of his peers, he thoroughly believed in protecting Akasaat and fighting for its future. Though he was aware of the suspicions amongst some of the Paragons that the Hierarchy had grown to distrust them, he believed that his record of faithful service would speak for itself.

After being assigned to the *H.A.V. Ray of Dawn*, Henerik became close with the other Paragons on board, including Lietka. Upon hearing of Lietka's suspicions that the Hierarchy had been throwing the Paragons' lives away on purpose, and this was intended to be a suicide mission, Henerik was horrified. For the first time in his life, he experienced a crisis of confidence: was the cause of the Hierarchy, for which he had been created and given his entire existence, truly worthwhile? Was the Hierarchy just? Such considerations were temporarily suspended by the *Ray of Dawn*'s crash and the subsequent struggle to establish the Ascendancy on the harsh and alien world of Orbis Aurea. It was during the early days of their marooning on Orbis Aurea in which Henerik made a decision. He would no longer act as a pawn devoted to a cause, but instead work to protect those around him, regardless of their station, race, or rank. Foremost were his fellow Paragons, victims of the Hierarchy's caprice and the last of their kind. By devoting himself to protecting others, Henerik believes that he can help prevent thoughtless loss of life like the type of atrocities that occurred during the Century War. He now serves as the Ascendancy's Marshal of War, overseeing the Sentinel security forces, which are mainly tasked with dealing with the threat posed by the azaka. In the early days of the Ascendancy, he also assisted in forming a training school for Sentinel officers, named Henerik Academy in his honor. Though he has little personal interaction with the school these days, he still takes an interest in its activities when he is able, and occasionally



sponsors a promising young recruit who could not otherwise afford to undertake such education. Henerik also commands the Ascendancy's terrestrially-bound flagship Cry Havok, an unusual capital class aethership built from the wreckage of the *H.A.V. Ray of Dawn*. The ship is able to maintain a comparatively slow speed in atmosphere (a feat normally impossible for aetherships of its size) and is a part of Henerik's psychic bond, able to control the vessel with a thought from any distance.

Henerik is a man of strong convictions, and is not afraid to be openly compassionate to others. He is dedicated to protecting the Ascendancy and his fellow Paragons, seeing this as a chance to influence a government to operate for the benefit of all, and not simply a privileged few. He views himself as a champion of the common folk, which sometimes causes him to clash with the other Paragons, but due to his strong connection with the others over the years, he rarely takes such squabbles to heart for long. He usually comes across as cheerful and friendly, unless he views something as unjust or cruel. In such cases, he is quick to anger, but also quick to forgive when appropriate amends are offered, and usually tries to interpret others' actions in the best light once he cools off. Both in combat and interpersonally, Henerik always does things in the showiest way possible. Due to his early experiences, he is very careful to avoid potential traps; he is well aware that his desire to protect the weak could be exploited to enemy advantage, and always makes sure to evaluate a situation before going in.

As the most openly empathetic of the Paragons, Henerik's relations with the others are sometimes colored by a sense of affectionate exasperation. He values Lietka greatly as a leader, and knows that the Ascendancy would not have attained the power it has without his skill. However, he often disagrees with Lietka's ruthless tactics, particularly what Lietka considers "acceptable" losses. Lietka's callousness does not anger Henerik so much as sadden him, as

he believes he could have very easily gone down that path if his sense of betrayal by the Hierarchy had hardened into bitterness likelike it has with Lietka. Henerik understands why Lietka is the way he is, even if he doesn't agree with him, and does his best to temper Lietka's more brutal tendencies with limited success. Henerik views Karbaros as having a much better chance at that than he does, and the two get along very well, though he wishes Karbaros would lighten up a little, and often tries to tease her into a sunnier mood. Such attempts are usually greeted with bemusement by Karbaros. Henerik and Ngiri are also quite good friends, and can often be found drinking and chatting about old war stories on her occasional visits to Wighthaven. Their discussions often devolve into—usually friendly—competitions or debates, and though Henerik sometimes finds Ngiri's cool demeanor frustrating, his irritation rarely lasts long. He finds Suembaro's company relaxing and privately thinks that Lietka is asking too much of her in sacrificing her time and mind to the investigation of their psychic link's intrusion. He understands that this is a necessary task, however, and views it as his own duty to lighten her burdens whenever he can. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly given their very different dispositions, Henerik gets along extremely well with Ekander, and the two spend their free time together whenever they can. Henerik views Ekander as a sort of kindred free spirit, and though he sometimes views Ekander's outbursts as unwarranted or overly harsh, he admires the man's passion for defending what he believes in, even if it is inconvenient. Though Henerik is devoted to protecting all the Paragons, he would probably come to Ekander's defense against the azaka the most quickly, though he would try to remove any element of favoritism from his strategies. This dedication does have its limits, however, and Henerik wouldn't endanger the safety of others or the greater good even for Ekander's sake.

Henerik views the intrusion into the Paragons' psychic link with great concern; this is due to the

knowledge that anything capable of such a feat is powerful and cunning beyond any adversary the Paragons have yet faced, rather than any mistrust of the others. Although he does not trust blindly, Henerik is confident in his own estimation of his longtime companions' character. He is not sure what to make of the recent intruder, but like Ngiri, is inclined to suspect the azaka over the Hierarchy, as he does not believe the Hierarchy would take the risk of acting so directly in the absence of any way to exert their military power over Orbis Aurea, and suspects they are too battered by the long years of the Century War to attempt an open conflict even if they wished. What truly worries Henerik is the prospect that another force as yet unknown is interfering with the link for its own ends, whatever those may be. Naturally impulsive though he may be, Henerik has learned not to jump into something with incomplete information, and the link's disruption troubles him more than he admits, even to himself.

## The Paragons at War

Henerik's position as Marshal of War is a surprisingly self-aware appointment by Lietka. As the moral compass of his compatriots, placing someone like Henerik in the sole position of advocacy and development of military application and technology immediately differentiates the Paragon Ascendancy from the Hierarchy's Protectorate. Henerik is not only a compassionate leader of the Paragons' military might, but also one who considers the ethical implications of war and the way wars are waged.

Now that he is ostensibly giving the orders, Henerik has instilled a profoundly deep code of conduct within the Ascendancy's troops. He has prohibited the development of biological weapons capable of eradicating entire species, he has advocated for peace talks with the erahthi and is working to convince Lietka to offer reparations to the erahthi for the damage caused by paragon shock troops during the

Century War, an offer that Lietka has been extremely reluctant to entertain.

Under Henerik's leadership, the armed forces of the Paragon Ascendancy operates on a strict code of conduct that governs not only how soldiers treat one-another, but also how they treat their enemies. While the Ascendancy Codex of War is an exhaustive text its primary tenets boil down to compassion in the face of war. Compassion for their comrades in arms expressed in their continued medical care after traumatic injury, compassion for soldiers who wish to leave the military for physical or psychological reasons, compassions for soldiers to be able to live their lives how they see fit so long as it does not compromise the integrity of the Ascendancy's military. Furthermore, the articles go into the care and treatment of prisoners of war, forbidding torture (which is entirely ineffectual and barbaric, given the Ascendancy's access to spellcasters capable of reading minds), and ensuring that prisoners are cared for emotionally and physically and treated with respect should they surrender.

While the Ascendancy Codex of War is a comprehensive guide for waging war ethically, Henerik's ability to enforce it beyond the boundaries of Orbis Aurea is more challenging. Many of the Ascendancy's military operatives are former Hierarchy soldiers and their willingness to change behavior from what they were indoctrinated into during their service is a long and challenging battle. Paragon forces that fought offworld during the end of the Century War often broke these laws and the vast majority never saw trial or punishment. Those that did faced grave consequences for their actions, but the imbalance of those who met justice and those who didn't is great.

Further muddying the waters is Lietka's resistance to loss of military efficiency with regards to codes of conduct. Lietka is a cold and pragmatic individual who reluctantly accepted Henerik's codex only after substantial revisions. Even still, Lietka sees blanket bans on certain biological weapons as a net loss to the Ascendancy, rather than a gain for their humanity.

# PARAGON, KARBAROS

*This tall woman is clad in heavy armor fringed with red feathers. Her face is concealed behind an eternally-placid mask of metal.*

## MARSHAL OF THE PROTECTORATE KARBAROS

CR 26

XP 2,457,600

Female Paragon brawler<sup>ACG</sup> 18/guardian<sup>MA</sup> 4

LN Large humanoid (aether, mythic)

**Init** +14; **Senses** low-light vision, blindsense 30 ft. (only for creatures with Intelligence score susceptible to mind-affecting effects); Perception +39

### DEFENSE

**AC** 44, touch 21, flat-footed 38 (+18 armor, +5 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 dodge, +5 natural)

**hp** 535 (8d8+104; 18d10+272)

**Fort** +32, **Ref** +23, **Will** +22; +4 vs. mind-affecting, +5 vs. enchantments

**Defensive Abilities** adamantine mind<sup>MA</sup>, hard to kill<sup>MA</sup>; **DR** 5/epic; **Immune** aetherite

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor)

**Melee** *Aetherclaws* +43/+38/+33/+28 (4d6+1d10+20 plus [aetherite poison](#)<sup>ACS</sup>) or *Aetherclaws* flurry of blows +41/+41/+36/+36/+31/+31/+26 (4d6+1d10+20 plus [aetherite poison](#)<sup>ACS</sup>)

**Ranged** +2 *seeking*<sup>UE</sup> [thundergun](#)<sup>ACS</sup> +30/+25/+20/+15 (2d6+2 electricity/x4)

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

**Special Attacks** absorb blow<sup>MA</sup>, avenging maneuver<sup>MA</sup>, awesome blow, brawler's flurry, brawler's strike (adamantine, cold iron, lawful, magic, silver), knockout 3/day (DC 33), martial flexibility 12/day (1 feat as immediate or 3 as swift), mythic power (11/day, surge +1d8)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +11)

At will—[mage hand](#), [open/close](#), [telekinetic projectile](#)<sup>MA</sup>  
3/day—[command](#)<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17), [shatter](#)<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17)

1/day—[discordant blast](#)<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18), [force punch](#)<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** On the first round of combat, Karbaros activates her aetheric overdrive ability. She generally targets the most physically-imposing opponents first, attempting to trip or disarm them before flurrying. She'll use her spell-like abilities to soften up foes and frequently uses martial flexibility, preferring to obtain three feats as a swift action when possible. She often chooses [Befuddling Strike](#)<sup>ACG</sup>, [Counterpunch](#)<sup>ACG</sup>, and [Improved Awesome Blow](#)<sup>ACG</sup>, though will adjust these depending on the circumstance. She typically uses her knockout ability on spellcasters or healers, hoping to take them out of the fight quickly.

**Morale** If fighting alone, Karbaros retreats to drink her *potions of cure serious wounds* when reduced to fewer than 75 hp, then returns to the fight. If fighting alongside another Paragon, she fights to the death.

**Base Statistics** Without her power armor, Karbaros's statistics are: **Fort** +26; **hp** 480 (8d8+88; 18d10+236); **Melee** *Aetherclaws* +41/+36/+31/+26 (3d8+1d10+16 plus [aetherite poison](#)) or *Aetherclaws* flurry of blows +39/+39/+34/+34/+29/+29/+24 (3d8+1d10+16 plus [aetherite poison](#)); **Str** 36, **Con** 30; **CMB** +38; **CMD** 52

### STATISTICS

**Str** 41, **Dex** 22, **Con** 34, **Int** 26, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +24; **CMB** +40 (+4 to trip, +3 to grapple, +2 to bull rush, +1 to disarm); **CMD** 58 (+4 vs. trip, +3 vs. grapple, +2 vs. bull rush, +1 vs. disarm)

**Feats** [Armor Proficiency \(power armor\)](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Bodyguard](#)<sup>APG</sup>, [Combat Expertise](#), [Combat Reflexes](#)<sup>MA</sup>, [Greater Trip](#), [In Harm's Way](#)<sup>APG</sup>, [Improved Bull Rush](#), [Improved Disarm](#), [Improved Grapple](#), [Improved Initiative](#), [Improved Trip](#), [Power Attack](#)<sup>MA</sup>, [Running on Fumes](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Shock Trooper](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Standby Mode](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, [Toughness](#), [Weapon Focus](#) (unarmed strike), [Weapon Specialization](#) (unarmed strike)

**Skills** Acrobatics +34, Bluff +19, Climb +33, Diplomacy +27, Fly +32 (-2 if not piloting aethership), Intimidate +34 (+4 to demoralize opponents in melee combat of equal or smaller size that are not wearing power armor), Knowledge (dungeoneering) +31, Knowledge (local) +35, Perception +39, Sense Motive +44, Survival +27

**Languages** Auran, Draconic, Erahthi, Hymnas, Okanta

**SQ** ascendant magic, close weapon mastery, longevity<sup>MA</sup>, maneuver training 4, martial paragon, martial training, psychic mindlink

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds* (3);

**Other Gear** +4 moderate fortification<sup>UE</sup> [MK III power armor](#)<sup>ACS</sup> (with agile frame, boost thrusters, emergency trauma system, and large redundant power supply accessories), *Aetherclaws*, +2 [thundergun](#)<sup>ACS</sup>, *amulet of natural armor* +5, *belt of physical perfection* +4, *cloak of resistance* +4, *circlet of mindsight*<sup>UE</sup>, *gem of seeing*, [greater aetheric capacitor](#)<sup>ACS</sup> (1,000 au), *headband of inspired wisdom* +4, *instant fortress*, *ring of protection* +5, *ring of telekinesis*<sup>UE</sup>, *seducer's bane bracelet*<sup>UE</sup>

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Aetheric Overdrive (Su)** Karbaros can expend one use of mythic power to supercharge her power armor for 1 minute. During this time, the armor grants her an additional +4 bonus to AC. Any creature that confirms a critical hit against her in melee during this time causes the excess energy in the armor to discharge. This deals 8d6 points of force damage to all creatures within a 20-foot radius. All creatures who take damage from this explosion must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or be affected by [aetherite poison](#)<sup>ACS</sup>. Karbaros does not take damage from this effect.

**Power Armor Training (Ex)** Karbaros retains her brawler dodge bonus to AC and CMD while wearing her power armor, as she is adept at being quick on her feet even in heavier armors.



### AETHERCLAWS

**Slot** weapon  
**CL** 20th

**Aura** strong evocation  
and transmutation

**Type** melee weapon

**Dmg** 1d10 bludgeoning and  
slashing plus aetherite poison

**Critical** x3; **Capacity** 50; **Usage** 1  
charge per round; **Special** touch;  
**Weight** 3 lbs.

The *Aetherclaws* are powerful prototype power armor components designed by—as with other weapons given to the Paragons—reverse-engineering Progenitor technology. The *Aetherclaws* are constructed

from components salvaged from the interior of the Akasaat *Gate Hub* in a massive chamber filled with crushed stone and crystals and tremendous grinding gears. The metal from these gears was retrieved and fashioned into multiple weapons, all now lost with the deaths of the Paragons they were given to, save for the *Aetherclaws*. The exact composition of metal used in the creation of these gauntlets is unknown but they possess the same rigidity and penetration of adamantine.

These legendary weapons were crafted for Karbaros as a reward from the Hierarchy during the Century War after she single-handedly took out an entire erahtli platoon during a combat insertion onto an erahtli warship. The *Aetherclaws* are a pair of metal gauntlets with sharp clawed fingers, blue aetherite veins running across their surface. In the years since she landed on Orbis Aurea, Karbaros has found them to be an increasingly useful weapon, particularly since she can link them directly to her power armor.

The *Aetherclaws* are both +3 *ghost touch gauntlets* that has the same hardness and hardness penetration properties of adamantine. They are charged with aetheric energy and deal an additional 1d10 points of force damage damage on each hit. A brawler wearing the *Aetherclaws* adds this damage to the normal damage they do with their unarmed strikes. Any creature struck by the *Aetherclaws* must make a DC 24 Fortitude save or be affected by [aetherite poison](#)<sup>ACS</sup>.

If the *Aetherclaws* are worn along with a set of power armor, the two items can share au with one another. This does not require any action on the part of the wielder, as the armor and gauntlets can reallocate their charges independently. If they have no charges, the *Aetherclaws* instead deal 1d6 bludgeoning and slashing damage and do not poison foes with aetherite.

#### DESTRUCTION

If the *Aetherclaws* are used to choke the wielder's most beloved to death they will crumble away to a rusted heap.

## Marshal of the Protectorate

From the beginning of her training, Karbaros stood out as an extremely strong combatant. Eschewing the weapons used by most of the Paragons, she instead opted for an unarmed style that made her instantly recognizable on the battlefield. Quickly attaining the rank of Captain, she spent as much time on solo missions as on commanding her battalion before being assigned to Lancer-Colonel Lietka's Crescendo C Major Unit. The unit's string of victories against the erahtli gave it a reputation for being untouchable, and Karbaros proved herself a capable right hand to Lietka's command. The unit's luck ran out, however, during a mission they had been told was a routine infiltration, as the target outpost deep within the Amrita belt, was much more fortified than they had believed. Of the unit, Karbaros and Lietka were the only ones to make it back to Akasaat alive.

The experience, a catalyst for Lietka's bitterness against the Hierarchy, instead instilled a strong protective streak in Karbaros regarding her fellow Paragons and a belief that they would have to look out for one another because no one—especially not the Hierarchy—was going to. She accepted her subsequent assignment to the *H.A.V. Ray of Dawn's* mission to investigate Orbis Aurea with tranquility, suspecting that whatever happened, this would be her last mission for the Hierarchy Protectorate. The ship's crash and the formation of the Paragon Ascendancy proved her correct, and from the ashes of that tragedy Karbaros arose reborn in her convictions that no one cared about her kind, that no one would look out for the castoffs of the Hierarchy, other than those who had lived under that boot heel.

Karbaros now serves as the Marshal of the Ascendancy Protectorate, overseeing the Paragon Ascendancy's various law enforcement agencies as well as acting as Lietka's personal bodyguard, often interfacing with Henerik due to his station as Marshal of War. As a part of Karbaros' responsibilities, she

sets the individual training requirements for Orbis Aurean self-defense forces and coordinates diplomatic relationships not only with the okanta, but also itinerant giant tribes that choose to reside within close proximity of Ascendancy settlements. Karbaros is very careful to observe social traditions and respect the culture of the indigenous peoples of Orbis Aurea, often lending military aid and relief to tribes beset by frost giant aggression. Karbaros also coordinates with Henerik to develop plans to combat the encroaching Azaka menace, though to mixed results.

Karbaros is a relatively quiet woman who prefers action to words, though she is by no means impulsive. She typically likes to observe a situation or conversation before jumping in herself. Those who speak with her get the impression that she weighs every word carefully before she speaks. This gives her an even-tempered, serious air, though she also has a very dry sense of humor that is easily missed. She has gained a reputation on Orbis Aurea as a ruthless enforcer of the Ascendancy's mandates, and she does have very little patience for treachery or foolishness, but she is also known to have moments of kindness at unexpected intervals.

Of the Paragons, Karbaros is the second most likely (after Henerik) to speak up on behalf of the less privileged inhabitants of the Ascendancy's territory, though her strong utilitarian streak tempers this at times. She has observed the growing tensions and distrust between the Paragons as a result of their link's infiltration with quiet unease, particularly in Lietka's case. Being more cut off from her fellow Paragons than she has ever been is proving uncomfortable for her. She does not fear, as Lietka does, that another Paragon may have deliberately compromised the link; she is concerned that the azaka have found a way to infiltrate and have been using this to gain a tactical advantage in their skirmishes with the Ascendancy forces.

Her long-standing romantic relationship with Lietka dates back to the earliest days on Orbis Aurea,

as the two had always had a spark but had not felt free to follow through with their feelings due to the professional nature of their positions in the Hierarchy Protectorate and the war raging around them. It was not until the crash landing on Orbis Aurea and the Paragons' early days struggling to survive and connect with the Requiescat humans living on Orbis Aurea that she allowed herself to open up to Lietka. Though she is well aware of Lietka's darker tendencies, Karbaros trusts him to do what is right for the Paragons as a whole.

Karbaros is next closest to Ngiri, whom she considers her best friend, though the two rarely get to see one another in person anymore due to their duties though they remained in constant contact through their psychic network. Karbaros did not mind this, as little changed between the two even if they spent years apart, but their recent avoidance of the psychic link since its intrusion has made this bond feel lonelier than it once did.

Karbaros and Henerik get along well, as they often agree on matters of policy, but she views him as quite impetuous, almost as an excitable younger brother. She admires Henerik's compassion and concern for the downtrodden and his bold tactical choices.

Out of all the other Paragons, she understands Suembaro the least, as her duties and habits conflict with Karbaros' preference to deal with things more straightforwardly. However, Karbaros realizes the other woman has a complicated history and set of responsibilities, and does not really hold this against her.

Karbaros enjoys seeing Ekander when he's around, though she sometimes has to mediate between him and Ngiri when they disagree. She sees his frequent outbursts as childish, however, and prefers his company in small doses. To Karbaros, the other Paragons are the closest thing to a family she has ever known, and she would gladly lay down her life to protect any one of them.

# PARAGON, LIETKA

*This towering man is clad in heavy powered armor and his face concealed behind a perpetually-scowling iron mask.*

## IMPERATOR MARSHAL LIETKA

CR 27

XP 3,276,800

Male paragon psychic<sup>OA</sup> (lore) 19/archmage<sup>MA</sup> 4

NE Large humanoid (aether, mythic)

**Init** +11; **Senses** low-light vision, *true seeing*;

Perception +40

### DEFENSE

**AC** 44, touch 19 (35 vs. firearms), flat-footed 43 (+19 armor, +5 deflection, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 416 (8d8+88; 19d6+240)

**Fort** +22, **Ref** +14, **Will** +28

**Defensive Abilities** mirror dodge<sup>MA</sup>, hard to kill<sup>MA</sup>;

**Immune** aetherite; **SR** 19

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor)

**Melee** +3 *keen dagger* +27/+22 (1d4+12/17-20 x2)

**Ranged** *The Synapse Coil* +26+21 touch (3d6+5 force/19-20 x4)

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

**Special Attacks** major amplifications (mimic metamagic<sup>OA</sup>, synaptic shock<sup>OA</sup>), mythic power (11/day, surge +1d8), phrenic amplifications (focused force<sup>OA</sup>, mindtouch<sup>OA</sup>, ongoing defense<sup>OA</sup>, overpowering mind<sup>OA</sup>, psychofeedback<sup>OA</sup>), phrenic pool (19 points), wild arcana

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +11)

At will—*mage hand*, *open/close*, *telekinetic projectile*<sup>MA</sup>

3/day—*command*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17), *shatter*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17)

1/day—*discordant blast*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18), *force punch*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18)

**Psychic Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 19th; concentration +33)

1/day—[detect thoughts](#) (DC 24), [telepathic bond](#)

**Psychic Spells Known** (CL 19th; concentration +33)

9th (5/day)—[divide mind](#)<sup>[OA]</sup>, [psychic image](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 35),  
[telekinetic storm](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 35)

8th (9/day)—[moment of prescience](#), [orb of the void](#)<sup>[UM]</sup>  
(DC 34), [power word stun](#), true [prognostication](#)<sup>[UI]</sup>

7th (9/day)—[forcecage](#) (DC 33), [greater arcane sight](#),  
[mind blank](#), [psychic crush III](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 33)

6th (9/day)—[forceful hand](#), [legend lore](#),  
[prognostication](#)<sup>[UI]</sup>, [psychic crush II](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 32)

5th (9/day)—[greater synaptic pulse](#) (DC 31), [mind thrust V](#) (DC 31),  
[psychic crush I](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 31),  
[retrocognition](#)<sup>[OA]</sup>, [synapse overload](#) (DC 31)

4th (10/day)—[create mindscape](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 30), [divination](#),  
[mind probe](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 30), [mind thrust IV](#) (DC 30),  
[telekinetic charge](#)<sup>[UC]</sup>

3rd (10/day)—[dispel magic](#), [fly](#), [id insinuation II](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 29),  
[mind thrust III](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 29), [synaptic pulse](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 29)

2nd (10/day)—[anticipate thoughts](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 28), [augury](#),  
[hypercognition](#)<sup>[OA]</sup>, [enthral](#), [id insinuation I](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 28),  
[mental block](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 28)

1st (10/day)—[aphasia](#)<sup>[UI]</sup> (DC 27), [comprehend languages](#),  
[mind thrust I](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 27), [psychic reading](#)<sup>[OA]</sup>, [shield](#), [telepathic projection](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> (DC 27)

0 (at will)—[arcane mark](#), [daze](#) (DC 26), [detect magic](#),  
[detect poison](#), [detect psychic significance](#)<sup>[OA]</sup>, [light](#),  
[prestidigitation](#), [read magic](#), [resistance](#)

**Discipline lore**<sup>[OA]</sup>

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If Lietka expects combat, he casts [shield](#), [psychic image](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> and [fly](#).

**During Combat** Lietka stays at range if possible, flying out of reach of enemies while attacking with his spells and *The Synapse Coil*. He uses [orb of the void](#)<sup>[UM]</sup> and his [psychic crush](#)<sup>[OA]</sup> spells against spellcasters, while attempting to imprison melee combatants with [forcecage](#). Whenever possible, he spends his phrenic pool points when he hits a target with *The Synapse Coil* to confuse opponents or increase the damage dealt. If

attacked, he uses mirror dodge<sup>[MA]</sup> to escape opponents and keep them at range.

**Morale** If Lietka is reduced to fewer than 50 hp, he attempts to retreat into his memory palace to recover. If faced there or in one of the Ascendancy's strongholds, he fights to the death.

**Base Statistics** Without his power armor, Lietka's statistics are: **Fort** +20; **hp** 373 (8d8+72; 19d6+202); **Melee** +3 *keen dagger* +23/+18 (1d4+8/17-20 x2); **Str** 24; **Con** 28; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 35

### STATISTICS

**Str** 28, **Dex** 24, **Con** 32, **Int** 42, **Wis** 30, **Cha** 28

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 37

**Feats** [Armor Proficiency \(power armor\)](#)<sup>[ACS]</sup>, [Craft Aethertech](#)<sup>[ACS]</sup>, [Dodge](#), [Efficient Recharger](#)<sup>[ACS]</sup>, [Expanded Phrenic Pool](#)<sup>[OA]</sup>, [Extra Amplification](#), [Mythic Crafter](#)<sup>[MA]</sup>, [Point-Blank Shot](#), [Power Attack](#), [Precise Shot](#), [Scarring Spell](#)<sup>[OA]</sup>, [Squad Tactics](#)<sup>[ACS]</sup>, [Shock Trooper](#)<sup>[ACS]</sup>, [Weapon Focus](#)<sup>[MA]</sup> (pistol)

**Skills** Bluff +39, Craft (mechanical) +39, Diplomacy +39, Fly +35 (-5 if not piloting aethership), Intimidate +39 (+4 to demoralize opponents in melee combat of equal or smaller size that are not wearing power armor), Knowledge (arcana) +46, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +36, Knowledge (engineering) +38, Knowledge (history) +36, Knowledge (local) +36, Knowledge (nature) +36, Knowledge (planes) +46, Knowledge (religion) +36, Linguistics +37, Perception +40, Sense Motive +40, Spellcraft +46, Survival +26, Use Magic Device +26

**Languages** Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Azaka, Draconic, Erahthi, Giant, Hymnas, Ignan, Okanta, Sylvan, Terran; telepathy (100 ft.)

**SQ** ascendant magic, deep understanding<sup>[MA]</sup>, flash of omniscience<sup>[MA]</sup>, illuminating answers, longevity<sup>[MA]</sup>, martial paragon, memory palace (Knowledge [arcana, dungeoneering, engineering, history, local, planes, religion] +4), mythic memory palace, mnemonic cache, psychic arcana, psychic mindlink, superior automatic writing

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds* (4); **Other Gear** +5 *spell resistance* (19)<sup>[UE]</sup> [MK III power armor](#)<sup>[ACS]</sup> (with ballistic armor plating <sup>[MK II]</sup>, emergency trauma

system, environment seal, and large redundant power supply accessories), +3 *keen dagger*, *The Synapse Coil*, *amulet of natural armor* +5, *belt of physical might* +6 (Str, Con), *greater aetheric capacitor*<sup>ACS</sup> (1,000 au), *headband of mental superiority* +6, *ring of protection* +5, *truesight goggles*<sup>UE</sup>

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Mythic Memory Palace (Su)** Lietka has constructed a permanent memory palace to which he can travel as a standard action, rather than constructing it once per day. He adds his tier to his psychic level for the purposes of determining the size of this memory palace. If he wishes to reshape the appearance or layout of his memory palace, he can do so as a full-round action. Each other Paragon can also travel to this memory palace as a standard action. Lietka does not need to be present to facilitate this travel, as long as they are included in his psychic mindlink. All those within the memory palace are affected by a permanent *nondetection* as long as they remain there.

**Psychic Arcana (Su)** Lietka's extensive training has enabled him to benefit from mythic abilities referencing arcane spells, though his spells are still considered psychic magic.

### THE SYNAPSE COIL (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Slot weapon CL 20th

Aura strong evocation

Type one-handed firearm Dmg 6d6 force

Critical x4; Misfire none; Range 60 ft.; Capacity 50; Usage 1 charge; Special touch; Weight 4 lbs.

*The Synapse Coil* is a one-handed firearm similar in construction to a pistol, that began as a piece of misguided medical equipment. Among the prototype technology derives from reverse engineering Progenitor technology, the *Synapse Coil* contains an original and mysterious mechanical coil capable of interfering with a target's cognitive functions. It was originally integrated into a memory altering device intended to erase traumatic experiences from infused war veterans so that they could perform effectively on the field. But repeated exposure

to the coils resulted in rapidly diminishing cognitive capabilities and ultimately brain death.

Cruel Hierarchy engineers, recognizing the potential for such an effect in the battlefield, had the coil converted into a weaponized form fit for their Paragon soldiers. Then-Lancer-Colonel Lietka, who had testily submitted a request for a weapon that wasn't "scavenged off an assembly line," was granted access to the *Synapse Coil* to field test its capabilities. The resulting weapon is a marvel of aethertech engineering, one that compliments Lietka's powerful psychic abilities.

*The Synapse Coil* is a +3 one-handed firearm, deals 3d6 points of force damage, and threatens a critical hit on a 19-20. If the wielder has the focused force<sup>OA</sup> phrenic amplification, they can spend 1 point from their phrenic pool to increase the damage die size as though they had cast a force linked spell. If the wielder has the synaptic shock<sup>OA</sup> major amplification, they can spend 1 point from his phrenic pool to affect the target with synaptic shock as if they had cast a mind-affecting linked spell. Creatures that are immune to mind-affecting spells effects are not immune to this ability. *The Synapse Coil* can only cause one of these effects per hit.

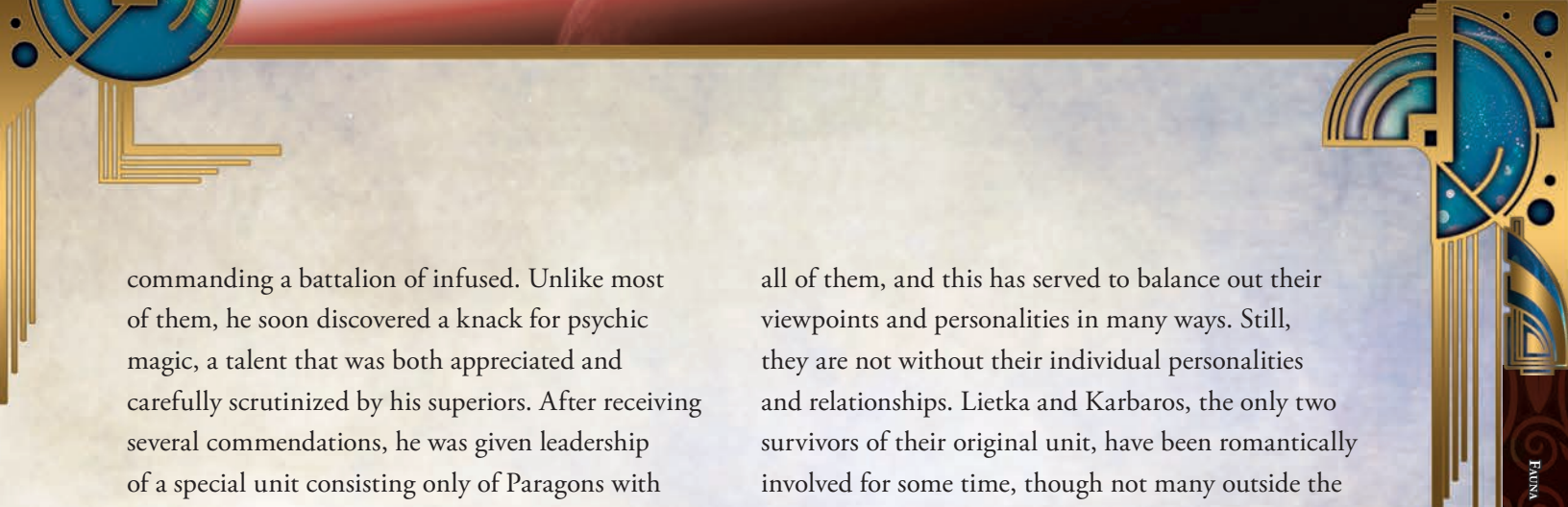
Upon a successful critical hit, the resultant pulse attacks the target's brain directly. This deals 2d6 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma drain. If this would cause any of these to drop below 1, the target's mind is permanently erased, leaving them in a catatonic state. Only a wish can restore a mind erased in such a manner. Creatures in this state do not immediately die, and become highly susceptible to possession by incorporeal undead or other malevolent entities with possession capabilities

### DESTRUCTION

If the wielder of *The Synapse Coil* uses the gun to erase the minds of all those closest to them, then uses it to erase their own mind, the weapon becomes nonmagical and can be destroyed by mundane means.

## Imperator Marshal

Like many of his fellow Paragons, Lietka began his career with the Hierarchy military as a Captain



commanding a battalion of infused. Unlike most of them, he soon discovered a knack for psychic magic, a talent that was both appreciated and carefully scrutinized by his superiors. After receiving several commendations, he was given leadership of a special unit consisting only of Paragons with advanced abilities, including then-Captain Karbaros. Though his Crescendo C Major Unit achieved many victories, he eventually grew to suspect—rightly so—that the Hierarchy was throwing away the lives of the Paragons in increasingly bold attacks with diminishing returns, underlining the Hierarchy’s scrambling military strategy toward the middle of the Century War. To Lietka, his assignment to the *H.A.V. Ray of Dawn* was the final sign that his former masters did not deserve his services, nor his loyalties.

Upon surviving the ship’s crash into Orbis Aurea, Lietka wasted no time in taking leadership of the surviving Paragons and forming the Paragon Ascendancy. Lietka was first among the paragons to broker an alliance with the Okanta beyond the terms the Requiescat humans had. He was the first to organize a successful offensive against the native frost giant population of Orbis Aurea and drive their kind to the fringes of the world. He was the obvious choice, among his peers, to lead.

A pragmatic and canny man, Lietka has proved as adept at out-maneuvering opponents in politics as in battle, and the Ascendancy likely would not have seen the same degree of success without his firm hand. Though he is protective of his fellow Paragons, he would not hesitate to sacrifice any one of them if doing so was necessary to save the group as a whole. In conversation, he is aloof but amiable, his air of unconcerned dignity not quite hiding the ruthlessness beneath.

Though from the outside, the Paragons can appear to be rivals, their squabbles are carefully calculated for political effect. Their psychic link over the years has created a deep, near-unbreakable bond between

all of them, and this has served to balance out their viewpoints and personalities in many ways. Still, they are not without their individual personalities and relationships. Lietka and Karbaros, the only two survivors of their original unit, have been romantically involved for some time, though not many outside the Paragons themselves are aware of this. Of all of them, he values her company most highly, and her presence invokes the closest thing to caring that Lietka knows. He gets along well, though somewhat distantly, with Ngiri, and trusts Suembaro’s capabilities more than anyone else’s save Karbaros. His relationship with Henerik is sometimes strained by disagreement over policies, and he sees Henerik as an impractical bleeding heart at times. Ekander’s insistence on having his own way can cause friction between the two, but Lietka views his talents as useful enough to compensate. As in everything he does, Lietka’s relations with his fellow Paragons are defined by careful calculation.

Recently, the Paragons have noticed a subtle intrusion into their psychic link by an outside source. Lietka assigned Suembaro the task of protecting the link and investigating this intrusion. Until then, they are trying to rely on this connection less than usual until she can determine the cause. As a precaution, the other Paragons now avoid entering Lietka’s memory palace, for fear of bringing their infiltrator with them. This has engendered more suspicion and tensions than typical between them, as they are used to the complete transparency and openness afforded by the link. Not naturally a trusting man, Lietka is particularly inclined toward such increased suspicion, knowing that outside interference with the link should not be possible. He has come up with multiple theories, from azaka sabotage to the Hierarchy attempting to reassert control over their wayward creations, and at the height of such contemplations, he even wonders if one of the Paragons knows more about the link’s intrusion than they are letting on.

# PARAGON, NGIRI

*Hidden behind a golden, polygonal mask this towering woman brandishes a glaive wreathed in azure flame.*

## MARSHAL OF ENERGY NGIRI

CR 24

XP 1,228,800

Female Paragon slayer<sup>ACG</sup> 16/champion<sup>MA</sup> 4

LN Large humanoid (aether, mythic)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +36

### DEFENSE

**AC** 43, touch 21, flat-footed 41 (+17 armor, +5 deflection, +2 Dex, +5 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 445 (8d8+96; 16d10+228)

**Fort** +30, **Ref** +21, **Will** +21; +2 vs. mind-reading spells and effects

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, hard to kill<sup>MA</sup>; **Immune** aetherite

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 70 ft. (60 ft. in armor)

**Melee** *Fortune's Blazon* +40/+35/+30/+25 (2d8+26 plus 1d6 fire/18-20 x3)

**Ranged** +3 *thundergun*<sup>ACS</sup> +30/+25/+20/+14 touch (2d6+3 electricity/x4)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with glaive)

**Special Attacks** blowback<sup>MA</sup>, ethereal assault, fleet warrior<sup>MA</sup>, mythic power (11/day, surge +1d8), slayer's advance 1/day, sneak attack +5d6, studied target +4 (4th, swift action), sudden attack

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +11)

At will—*mage hand*, *open/close*, *telekinetic projectile*<sup>MA</sup>

3/day—*command*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17), *shatter*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17)

1/day—*discordant blast*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18), *force punch*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Ngiri drinks her *potion of shield* if she expects combat, followed by her *potion of invisibility* so she can get into position to assassinate or study a target.

**During Combat** Ngiri is relatively mobile on the battlefield, using her ethereal assault ability to

take foes by surprise. On the first round of combat, she studies the most imposing-looking target, and studies further targets on subsequent rounds. Whenever possible, she flanks or feints enemies in order to deal sneak attack damage, usually choosing to activate *Fortune's Blazon* to befuddle opponents the first time she strikes them so she can continue sneak attacking on subsequent rounds. She saves her assassinate ability for the most serious threats, either powerful spellcasters or exceptionally strong martial foes.

**Morale** Ngiri retreats to regroup and heal if reduced to fewer than 75 hp; if unable to do so, she fights to the death.

**Base Statistics** Without her power armor, Ngiri's statistics are: **Fort** +24; **hp** 397 (8d8+80; 16d10+196); **Melee** *Fortune's Blazon* +38/+33/+28/+23 (2d8+26+1d6 fire/19-20 x3); **Str** 36, **Con** 30; **CMB** +32; **CMD** 47

### STATISTICS

**Str** 40, **Dex** 20, **Con** 34, **Int** 20, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +22; **CMB** +36; **CMD** 51

**Feats** [Armor Proficiency \(power armor\)<sup>ACS</sup>](#), [Blinding Critical](#), [Combat Expertise](#), [Critical Focus](#), [Furious Focus<sup>M</sup>](#), [Improved Critical<sup>M</sup>](#), [Improved Feint](#), [Power Attack](#), [Pushing Assault<sup>APG</sup>](#), [Shield of Swings<sup>APG</sup>](#), [Shock Trooper<sup>ACS</sup>](#), [Weapon Focus](#) (glaive)

**Skills** Acrobatics +25, Bluff +26, Diplomacy +23, Fly +19 (-2 if not piloting aethership), Intimidate +21 (+4 to demoralize opponents in melee combat of equal or smaller size that are not wearing power armor), Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +16, Knowledge (geography) +16, Knowledge (local) +22, Perception +36 (+4 to track while underground), Sense Motive +27, Stealth +36, Survival +36 (+4 to track while underground)

**Languages** Auran, Draconic, Erahthi, Hymnas, Okanta

**SQ** advanced talents (assassinate<sup>ACG</sup>, deadly sneak<sup>APG</sup>), ascendant magic, impossible speed<sup>MA</sup>, longevity<sup>MA</sup>, martial paragon, oversized weapon, psychic mindlink, quarry, slayer talents (bleeding attack +5, foil scrutiny<sup>ACG</sup>, powerful sneak, ranger combat style<sup>ACG</sup> two-handed, weapon training), swift tracker, track +8

**Combat Gear** *potion of [cure serious wounds](#)* (3), *potion of [shield](#)* (2), *potion of [invisibility](#)* (2); **Other Gear** +3 shadow<sup>UE</sup> [MK III power armor<sup>ACS</sup>](#) (with agile frame, emergency trauma system, and large redundant power supply accessories), *Fortune's Blazon*, +3 [thundergun<sup>ACS</sup>](#), *amulet of natural armor* +5, *belt of physical might* +4 (Str, Con), *cloak of resistance* +3, *darksight goggles<sup>UE</sup>*, [greater aetheric capacitor<sup>ACS</sup>](#) (1,000 au), *headband of inspired wisdom* +4, *horn of blasting*, *ring of evasion*, *ring of protection* +5, *sandals of quick reaction<sup>UE</sup>*

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Ethereal Assault (Su)** Ngiri can expend one use of mythic power as a swift action to travel short distances through the Ethereal Plane, as [ethereal jaunt](#). When doing so, she can move up to her speed and re-materialize as an immediate action, then make an attack at her highest base attack bonus as a standard action. The target of this attack must make a Perception check opposed by Ngiri's Stealth check; otherwise, they are considered flat-footed against the attack.

**Oversized Weapon (Ex)** Due to her extensive training with the weapon, Ngiri can wield *Fortune's Blazon* without penalty regardless of whether she is wearing her power armor.

### FORTUNE'S BLAZON (MINOR ARTIFACT)

**Slot** weapon **CL** 20th

**Aura** strong evocation and illusion

*Fortune's Blazon* is an aethertech-enhanced glaive, crafted for Ngiri barely a year before the surviving Paragons' fateful mission to investigate Orbis Aurea. It was the last such weapon custom-created by the Hierarchy for an individual Paragon, and though it is not as flashy as some of the firearms that were made, in capable hands it is an incredibly deadly weapon. The components of *Fortune's Blazon* were harvested from the Akasaat *Gate Hub* during one of the only successful ventures inside the structure. Broken crystalline rods, shaped like tuning forks, were removed from the structure and analyzed along with the mechanical components they were connected to. Hierarchy engineers were able

to reverse-engineer a portion of their original purpose as energy attenuators, and *Fortune's Blazon* is capable of drawing raw aethetic power directly from the star Aethera. Unfortunately, attempts to replicate the creation of such a connection have all failed catastrophically. Unlike many weapons powered by aethertech, *Fortune's Blazon* does not require charges to function, as the weapon draws its power from the star Aethera through the Ethereal Plane.

When the Paragons were sent on their fated mission to Orbis Aurea, they were relieved of their prototype weaponry for "maintenance" purposes, but Ngiri saw through this ruse and forced her way into the laboratory where they were held and stole them back just minutes before their departure. The Hierarchy was not aware of the theft until the *Ray of Dawn* was already in transit to Orbis Aurea in Folded Space. Ngiri believes that with enough time, she could engineer an infinite source of aetheric energy utilizing the technology found in *Fortune's Blazon* though she has made little success in this endeavor thus far.

*Fortune's Blazon* is a Huge +3 ghost touch flaming burst<sup>UE</sup> glaive infused with aetherite. Due to the aetherite in the blade, any creature struck by *Fortune's Blazon* is affected by high level [aetherite radiation](#)<sup>ACS</sup> (DC 22 Fort save negates). Subsequent hits do not further affect a creature already suffering the effects of this radiation. A wielder who is proficient with glaives can choose to shorten their grip on the weapon as a free action to use it against adjacent targets.

If the wielder has the sneak attack class feature, when they deal sneak attack damage to an opponent, they can choose to befuddle the target's senses instead of dealing normal sneak attack damage. The target struck treats the wielder as though they had displacement for the next 2d6 rounds. This duration does not stack if the wielder sneak attacks the target again during that time. The target is treated as being flat-footed against *Fortune's Blazon's* wielder for the duration of the effect, unless they have true seeing or another ability that enables them to perceive the wielder through the displacement. All other creatures can perceive the wielder normally.

## DESTRUCTION

*Fortune's Blazon* must be thrust into the heart of a still-living paragon, and then cast into the heart of Aethera.

## Marshal of Energy

Amidst the battles of the Century War, the battalion led by then-Lancer-Lieutenant Ngiri was renowned among the Hierarchy forces for its infiltration capabilities. Ngiri's typical battle strategy involved her battalion action as a distraction while she slipped behind enemy lines to take out enemy leadership. Ngiri's tactics were highly effective, and she was awarded a number of commendations for her accomplishments.

With her enormous glaive and incredibly fast speed, Ngiri cuts a striking figure on the battlefield, and her sudden appearances behind enemy forces earned her a terrifying reputation amongst the *erahthi*. Unlike most of those on the *H.A.V. Ray of Dawn*, Ngiri was already aware of conspiracy within the Hierarchy to end the Paragon Project and send the last of her kind to their demise. It was Ngiri who disabled communications on the *Ray of Dawn* and made it look like a malfunction, it was Ngiri who delayed engineers from repairing the communication systems. It was Ngiri who delivered an intelligence report to Lietka regarding the Hierarchy's fears regarding the Paragons. It was Ngiri who proved the Hierarchy could not be trusted, and left Lietka determined that no matter what they found on Orbis Aurea, it would be their final mission for their Hierarchy masters. Ngiri had no idea just how true that would become.

Apart from the conspiracy of the Hierarchy, the concept of an exploratory mission to Orbis Aurea appealed to Ngiri's innate curiosity. She was particularly drawn by the idea of answering a long-standing question about the Aethera System no other had been able to. The discovery that the atmosphere itself was anathema to aethership travel, as well as the surviving Requiescat human population below the netherite shroud, provided satisfaction to Ngiri's

curiosity greater than she had ever imagined. But in spite of her pre-existing questions being answered, Ngiri discovered that Orbis Aurea housed more mysteries than she could have imagined. The threat of the azaka, the abundance of subterranean Progenitor ruins, and the great netherite shroud are just the start of new questions she demands answers to.

As the Marshal of Energy for the Ascendancy, Ngiri spends most of her time in the city of Mikawdra, overseeing aetherite mining interests and other energy needs. She takes her duties very seriously, viewing a secure supply of aetherite as vital in the fight against the azaka and continued leverage over the Hierarchy. Ngiri is also pursuing bleeding edge research into refining methods to turn netherite into an alternative fuel source, but such research is in the early days.

Ngiri prides herself on her ability to evaluate situations rationally, without emotional considerations getting in the way, and this sense of calculation pervades her interpersonal relations. Her cool composure can sometimes unsettle her subordinates, who are never quite certain whether the Marshal is displeased with them or not. Those who have occasion to speak with her often come away with the sense that during the conversation, Ngiri was twelve steps ahead of them in a chess game they barely understood, an impression Ngiri privately finds rather amusing. Though she does not attempt to be deliberately intimidating, her capabilities and demeanor speak for themselves, and she sees no reason to mitigate that to make those around her feel more comfortable.

Of the other Paragons, Ngiri is closest to Karbaros, whom she views as a dear friend. Like Karbaros, Ngiri misses the immediacy of their continual psychic connection, but views it as pointless to dwell on such things. She trusts that Suembaro will find the source of the intrusion upon their link in due time, and looks forward to their link returning to normal. She and Suembaro are also quite close, and Ngiri hasn't visited Wighthaven nearly as often since Suembaro went

into seclusion, though they try to remain in touch as much as possible when Suembaro's strenuous duties permit. Ngiri is fond of Lietka, mostly because she knows how much Karbaros cares for him, and thinks of him like a brother and has absolute faith in Lietka's judgment. Due to Henerik's more enthusiastic nature and bouts of impetuosity, the two often butt heads over various matters, but then just as quickly make up again; this is often more on Henerik's end than Ngiri's, who is usually content to patiently wait out his latest burst of fervor. Her relations with Ekander are the most strained of all the Paragons, as Ekander often disapproves of Ngiri's courses of action when it comes to managing natural resources and doesn't hesitate to say so, vehemently. Though this tension does not usually break out into open hostility, the two rarely communicate, and generally do so through surrogates when their duties require them to collaborate. Ngiri finds Ekander's personality somewhat irritating and has little patience for his tantrums, particularly when they interfere with what she views as perfectly sound natural resource management. Though she does care for him in a way, she sees him as a rather annoying relative whom she would prefer not to be around too often.

The intrusion into the Paragons' psychic link is a matter of unending curiosity for Ngiri. While she suspects that it is the azaka who are interfering with the psychic link, she is unsure how they would be doing so. Ngiri has quietly been pursuing research into aethertechnology that could be used to block psychic connections in the event of a second breach, leaving investigation into the breach itself to her peers. A part of this experimentation involves a more robust understanding of her primary suspect for the intrusion, the azaka. Ngiri offers, through proxies, bounties on live azaka captures so that her subordinates can continue their dangerous experimentation.

# PARAGON, SUEMBARO

Entombed within a coffin-like suit of power armor, this figure is more machine than flesh. Its multiple clawed appendages snap and grasp at the air as it hovers silently in the air.

## MARSHAL OF MYSTERIES SUEMBARO

CR 24

XP 1,228,800

Female Paragon alchemist<sup>APG</sup> 16/trickster<sup>MA</sup> 4

N Large humanoid (aether, mythic)

Init +9; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +43

### DEFENSE

**AC** 48, touch 18 (32 vs. firearms), flat-footed 46 (+18 armor, +5 deflection, +12 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 328 (8d8+64; 16d8+160)

**Fort** +23, **Ref** +20, **Will** +21

**Defensive Abilities** hard to kill<sup>MA</sup>, light fortification; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** aetherite, cold, nonlethal, paralysis, poison, sleep; **SR** 28

**Weaknesses** power armor dependent

### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 40 ft.

**Melee** 5 articulated claws +25/+25/+25/+25/+25 (1d10+7 plus 1 bleed)

**Ranged** *Philosopher's Cannon* +28/+23/+18 touch (6d6+15 sonic)

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

**Special Attacks** bomb 28/day (8d6+14 fire, DC 32), mythic power (13/day, surge +1d8), ricochet<sup>MA</sup>, surprise strike

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +11)

At will—*mage hand*, *open/close*, *telekinetic projectile*<sup>MA</sup>

3/day—*command*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17), *shatter*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 17)

1/day—*discordant blast*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18), *force punch*<sup>MA</sup> (DC 18)

**Alchemist Extracts Prepared** (CL 16th)

6th—*heal*, *mislead*, *shadow walk*, *true seeing*

5th—*contact other plane*, *dust form*<sup>UC</sup>, *glimpse of truth*<sup>UI</sup>, *resurgent transformation*<sup>APG</sup>, *sending*, *spell resistance*

4th—*cure critical wounds*, *deathless*<sup>MA</sup>, *eyes of the void*<sup>ACG</sup>, *gambler's bend*<sup>ACS</sup>, *persistent vigor*<sup>ACG</sup>, *stoneskin*

3rd—*arcane sight*, *cure serious wounds* (2), *displacement*, *hypercognition*<sup>OA</sup>, *seek thoughts*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 29), *tongues*

2nd—*barkskin*, *blur*, *bullet shield*<sup>UC</sup>, *cure moderate wounds* (2), *detect thoughts* (DC 28), *enshroud thoughts*<sup>OA</sup>, *see invisibility*, *resist energy*

1st—*bomber's eye*<sup>APG</sup>, *comprehend languages*, *crafter's fortune*<sup>APG</sup>, *cure light wounds* (2), *heightened awareness*<sup>ACG</sup>, *recharge innate magic*<sup>ARG</sup>, *shield* (2)

### Automated Alchemy Alchemist Extracts Known

(CL 16th)

6th—*analyze dweomer*

5th—*elude time*<sup>APG</sup>

4th—*discern lies* (DC 28), *restoration*

3rd—*haste*, *remove curse*

2nd—*ablative barrier*<sup>UC</sup>, *alchemical allocation*<sup>APG</sup>, *false life*

1st—*detect secret doors*, *disguise self*, *targeted bomb admixture*<sup>UC</sup>

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Suembaro drinks her mutagen and her extracts of *stoneskin*, *shield*, *barkskin*, *displacement*, and *spell resistance* if she expects combat. These are factored into her statistics.

**During Combat** Suembaro stays at range during combat, flying out of melee reach and using her *Philosopher's Cannon* against opponents, taking full advantage of her *Overwatch*<sup>ACS</sup>, *Improved Suppressing Fire*<sup>ACS</sup>, and *Suppressing Fire*<sup>ACS</sup> feats. She often uses the *Philosopher's Cannon's* ability to fire her bombs at enemies that are clustered together before firing it normally. She uses her alchemical charge discovery to charge the *Philosopher's Cannon* if necessary, typically by spending mythic power for her automated alchemy ability. She uses her extracts as necessary for healing and defense.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 75 hp, Suembaro uses vanishing move<sup>MA</sup> and her *dust form*<sup>UC</sup> extract to escape.

**Base Statistics** Without her power armor, Suembaro's statistics are: **Fort** +19; **Ref** +18; **hp** 232 (8d8+32; 16d8+96); **Melee** none; **Ranged** none; **Str** 17; **Dex** 20; **Con** 18; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 34

Without her mutagen, Suembaro's statistics are: **Ref** +18;

**Ranged** *Philosopher's Cannon* +26/+21/+16 touch (2d6+15 sonic); **Dex** 20

### STATISTICS

**Str** 25, **Dex** 24, **Con** 26, **Int** 38, **Wis** 28, **Cha** 20

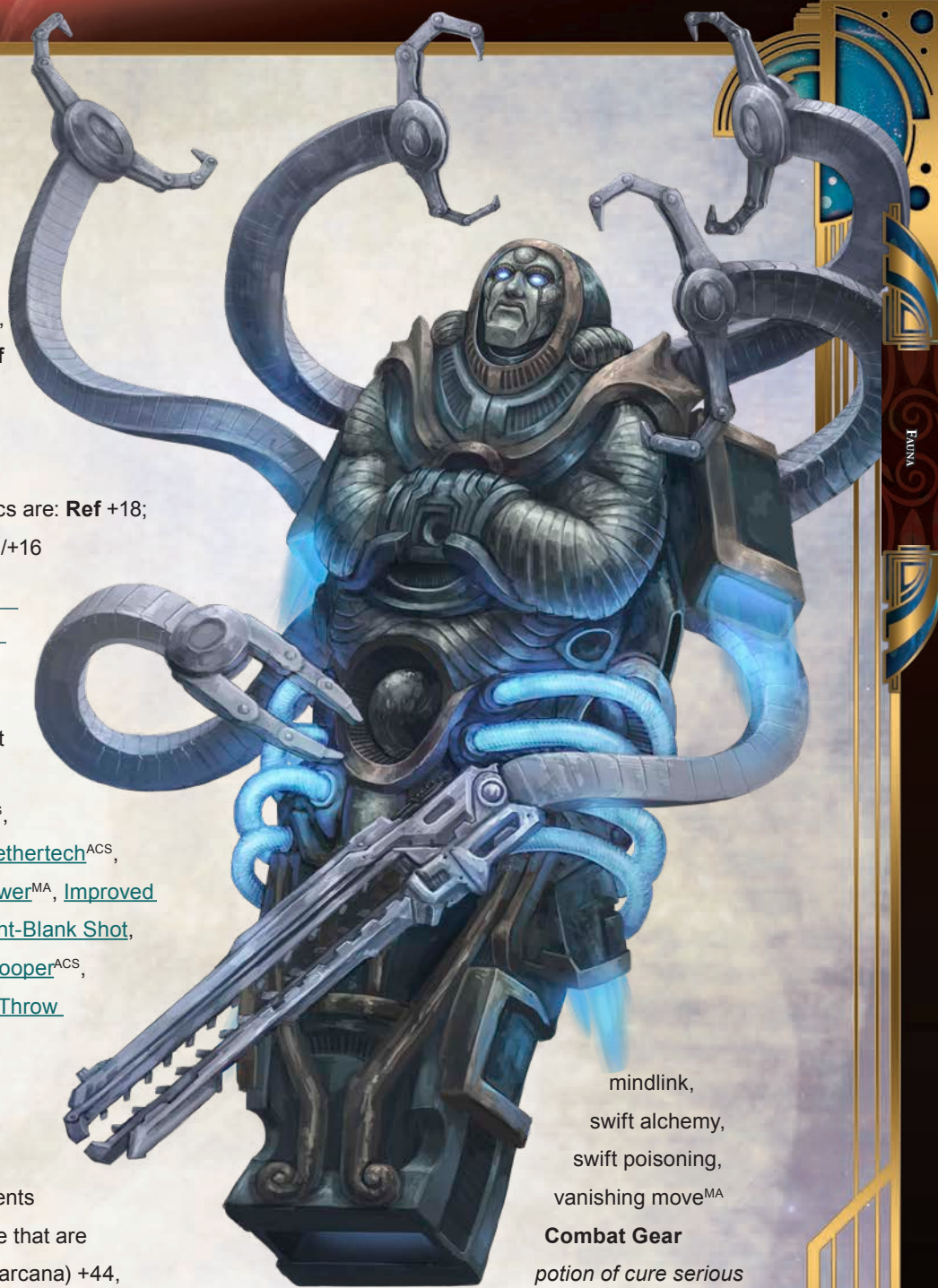
**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 38 (cannot be tripped)

**Feats** *Armor Proficiency (power armor)*<sup>ACS</sup>, *Brew Potion*, *Combat Reflexes*, *Craft Aethertech*<sup>ACS</sup>, *Efficient Recharger*<sup>ACS</sup>, *Extra Mythic Power*<sup>MA</sup>, *Improved Suppressing Fire*<sup>ACS</sup>, *Overwatch*<sup>ACS</sup>, *Point-Blank Shot*, *Potent Surge*<sup>MA</sup>, *Precise Shot*, *Shock Trooper*<sup>ACS</sup>, *Squad Tactics*<sup>ACS</sup>, *Suppressing Fire*<sup>ACS</sup>, *Throw Anything*

**Skills** Bluff +40, Craft (alchemy) +44, Craft (mechanical) +32, Diplomacy +26, Disable Device +38, Fly +39, Heal +19, Intimidate +14 (+4 to demoralize opponents in melee combat of equal or smaller size that are not wearing power armor), Knowledge (arcana) +44, Knowledge (local) +18, Knowledge (planes) +34, Perception +43, Sense Motive +38, Spellcraft +32, Survival +19, Use Magic Device +35

**Languages** Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Azaka, Draconic, Erahthi, Giant, Hymnas, Ignan, Okanta, Sylvan, Terran

**SQ** alchemy (alchemy crafting +8, identify potions), ascendant magic, automated alchemy, discoveries (alchemical charge, enhance potion<sup>UM</sup>, fast bombs<sup>APG</sup>, force bomb<sup>APG</sup>, lingering spirit<sup>UM</sup>, mummification<sup>UM</sup>, preserve organs<sup>UM</sup>, recycle aethertech), longevity<sup>MA</sup>, martial paragon, mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 16 hours), no one of consequence<sup>MA</sup>, poison use, psychic



mindlink,  
swift alchemy,  
swift poisoning,  
vanishing move<sup>MA</sup>

### Combat Gear

*potion of cure serious*

*wounds; Other Gear* +4 *MK III power armor* (with ballistic armor plating MK II), augmented slot (body) (2), articulated claws (3), emergency trauma system, gravitic propulsion system, injector system, and large redundant power supply accessories), *Philosopher's Cannon*, *amulet of natural armor* +3, *headband of mental superiority* +6, *belt of incredible dexterity* +4, *greater aetheric capacitor* (1,000 au), *ring of protection* +4, *vest of stable mutation*<sup>UE</sup>

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Automated Alchemy (Su)** Suembaro's integration with her power armor has automated her alchemical

creation process. Her armor produces extracts as normal for an alchemist of her level at the beginning of each day. Her armor's injector system has been modified to hold a number of extracts equal to her maximum extracts per day, as well as a single mutagen. To consume an extract or mutagen, she utilizes the injector system as if she were consuming a potion. This does not provoke attacks of opportunity. As a swift action, by expending one use of mythic power, Suembaro can direct her armor to produce any one extract she knows, which she can then consume as a move action. She cannot do this if the injector system currently contains her maximum number of extracts per day.

**Power Armor Dependent (Ex)** Suembaro cannot remove her armor, as it completely encases her body in a sarcophagus-like box and she is physically linked to it through a network of tubes and wires. If she is helpless, she can be forcibly removed from the armor. Doing so deals 1d6 points of Constitution damage to her and 4d6 electricity damage to the creature removing her. Until she returns to her armor, she takes a -4 penalty to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution.

#### PHILOSOPHER'S CANNON (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Slot weapon CL 20th

Aura strong evocation and transmutation

Type heavy firearm; Dmg 6d6 sonic

Critical x4; Misfire 1 (10 ft.); Range 80 ft.; Capacity 200; Usage 10 charges; Special automatic, stabilized, touch; Weight 25 lbs.

The *Philosopher's Cannon* is a massive firearm in the form of a cannon, etched lines showing off the glowing blue aetherite gears within its casing. The *Philosopher's Cannon* was reverse engineered from destroyed sonic emitters found within the Akasaat Gate Hub. After several failed attempts at weaponizing the emitters, it was Suembaro herself who perfected the design and devised a means to power the *Philosopher's Cannon* and focus its emitted sound waves into a lethal beam. Suembaro integrated the weapon into her powered armor, and further continued to modify the weapon into the

latest iteration of powered armor that she is ensconced within. As the weapon is fused directly to Suembaro's power armor, it is considered to be stabilized. 2 hours of work and a successful DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) or Craft (mechanical) check are required to remove the *Philosopher's Cannon* from the power armor.

The *Philosopher's Cannon* is an automatic heavy firearm that is considered to be a +3 *two-handed firearm* and deals 6d6 points of sonic damage plus the wielder's Intelligence modifier. On a critical hit, the target must make a DC 26 Fortitude save or immediately be advanced to the next age category, as *sands of time*<sup>UM</sup>. The target immediately takes the age penalties to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution for its new age category, but does not gain the ability score bonuses. If this would advance the target past venerable age, the target immediately dies. This is a death effect.

If the wielder has the bombs class feature (such as from levels in alchemist), they can choose to load the *Philosopher's Cannon* with a bomb as a move action. As a standard action, *Philosopher's Cannon* can fire a loaded bomb instead of dealing its normal damage, targeting a square as if the wielder had thrown the bomb but using the *Philosopher's Cannon's* highest attack modifier. The wielder can only fire one bomb per round (unless they possess the fast bombs discovery), and the *Philosopher's Cannon* cannot be fired normally while holding a bomb.

#### DESTRUCTION

If the *Philosopher's Cannon* is placed in the same container as a *philosopher's stone*<sup>UE</sup> and the container is placed at the very center of a taur maze ship, the *Philosopher's Cannon* is destroyed in a catastrophic explosion that destroys the maze ship and everyone within before collapsing down on itself into a singularity and ceasing to exist.

## Marshal of Mysteries

Of all the surviving Paragons, Suembaro's origins and history are those most shrouded in secrecy, as befits a woman with the title of Marshal of Mysteries. Many details of her life before landing

on Orbis Aurea have disappeared from official (and unofficial) records, including many of the Hierarchy's own archives held on Akasaat.

Some conspiracy-minded Hierarchy officials have speculated that this was accomplished by agents of Suembaro's, but have no evidence to back up their theories. After all, it was not uncommon in the years immediately following the Century War for certain sensitive records to go missing or be redacted, and Suembaro's may simply have gotten lost in the shuffle.

Elder erahthi still tell tales about a mysterious spy, so skilled that none actually saw the individual at work. The only trace of the spy's presence in their encampments would be missing information, sabotage, and a series of targets found dead or simply never found at all. Sometimes no trace of the spy would be found at all, until the Hierarchy suddenly seemed to be in possession of information the erahthi had kept under lock and key. Suspecting this figure to be one of the feared Paragons, the erahthi forces took to calling the spy the Aether Ghost.

Suembaro has never publicly responded to the rumors that she and the Aether Ghost are one and the same, but it is perhaps notable that the Hierarchy has no records of anyone associated with the operations attributed to the Aether Ghost, either.

Suembaro's first appearance in the official record is her assignment to the *H.A.V. Ray of Dawn*, though she just as quickly disappeared from the Hierarchy's records again after the ship's crash. She was quick to support the efforts of the Ascendancy, and her skills at both alchemy and gathering useful information were invaluable during those early years. Though her officially acknowledged role amongst the Paragons is vague, it is widely assumed that she acts as the Ascendancy's spymaster. She has not been seen in public in the past 7 years, having secluded herself in her chambers beneath Wighthaven, which has led to rumors that the Marshal of Mysteries is no longer alive at all. Interior cabinet members within the Ascendancy whisper that Suembaro has transformed

herself into an undead creature, while others believe that she died long ago and her magically-animated armor has been appearing in her place for decades. Some even believe that Suembaro never existed at all, and her place was filled either by the other Paragons or illusions during her rare public appearances in the past.

The truth of the matter is that Suembaro is quite alive, and her seclusion allows her to dedicate her energy to finding the cause of the intrusion on the Paragons' psychic link so that it can be dealt with. Suembaro's lack of personal ambition and favoritism made her the perfect choice to investigate this concerning matter. She is psychically linked to subordinates of all the other Paragons to relay information in case of emergency, as their own psychic link is no longer entirely trustworthy.

In order to dedicate her mind solely to this task, Suembaro has linked herself to her power armor and automated many of her abilities. As of yet, she has been unable to track down the source of the intrusion, which she finds extremely disquieting. In spite of her efforts, the intruder seems to resist all forms of magical, alchemical, and mundane tracking, at times even feeling as though the intrusion itself is alive and resisting her efforts to find the source, rather than the source resisting her. Even with all her expertise, Suembaro cannot account for this, and though she shares the vast majority of her findings with the others, this odd, quasi-sentient opposition is one thing she has not mentioned.

Suembaro was chosen for this task due to her ingenious, if self-destructive, plan to capture the intrusion's source. Through her alchemical skill, Suembaro is slowly undergoing a transformation of mind and body, dramatically altering her paragon form with the hopes of becoming a conduit for the psychic link, permanently securing it. Suembaro hopes to augment herself to become a living hub for the psychic network, not unlike the function of an aloadai kyton. The eventual, full metamorphosis

that Suembaro seeks would cause her to embody the paragon's psychic link and could forever destroy her physical form and render her an inert, immobile mind. Suembaro sees this sacrifice as a necessary one for the future of the Ascendancy, though Lietka worries that she may be taking things too far.

Suembaro has always been fairly introverted, so her seclusion is less of a strain on her than might otherwise be expected. She is completely dedicated to her twin passions of intelligence-gathering and alchemy, and is willing to sacrifice a great deal for the sake of the other Paragons with no expectation of gratitude. She often acts as the inter-group diplomat, taking a mediating role between the others. Suembaro generally appears kind and knowledgeable, though detached. Her neutrality in all things may make her appear to be cold or uncaring, but Suembaro simply takes the view that everything is impermanent and there is no sense in fighting against past events or bemoaning present circumstances. One cannot change the past, and while it is possible to change the future, one cannot always predict the outcome of one's actions. While Suembaro values the other Paragons and hopes to protect them, she knows very well that nothing lasts forever, even a force as strong as the Ascendancy. Though it is a bit fatalistic, Suembaro finds this view comforting rather than upsetting.

This perspective means that while she is closer to some of the other Paragons than others, she has no real quarrels with any of them, at least not ones she takes personally. She is entirely loyal to Lietka, believing that his skills are necessary to ensure the survival of the Paragons. His growing mistrust and suspicions regarding the psychic link has her uneasy, and she hopes that she can contain the situation in time to prevent his fears from causing irreversible damage. Still, she trusts his judgment in most matters and generally defers to him. She and Karbaros get along well, but from Suembaro's perspective, they have little in common and she sometimes views Karbaros' directness as inconvenient. She is closest to Ngiri, and

views her as a good friend. The two stay in contact as much as possible whenever Suembaro's responsibilities allow her a moment's respite. Suembaro's one bit of regret at her potential transformation from her current form is that she would have leave Ngiri behind, but even that does not pain her too much; if she becomes a part of the psychic link in order to stabilize and secure it, she will never truly be gone as long as the other Paragons survive. Suembaro appreciates Henerik's zeal and his kindness in keeping her company when he can, but views his degree of energy with slightly amused resignation. She gets along fine with Ekander as well, though she sees him as impulsive and short-sighted. Still, she does not hold any of the faults she perceives in the others against them; they are who they are, just as she is who she is. Her aloof nature does not prevent her from holding fondness for them, but she does so in a quiet, understated way that is easily missed.

## New Power Armor Accessories

The following are new accessories for power armor. The *gravitational propulsion system* is unique to Suembaro, as it was crafted specifically for her, though it is possible others may develop similar designs.

### ARTICULATED CLAWS 12,500 AU

Slot body Weight 10 lbs. Usage +2

#### Restriction military

A pair of articulated claws on sinuous, metallic arms can be installed onto a power armor frame in order to provide it with extra capability in melee. These claws are considered natural weapons with which the wearer of the power armor is proficient. On a hit, a claw deals 1d10 damage plus 1 point of bleed damage. This bleed damage does not stack.

Additionally, these claws can be used to hold melee or ranged weapons by replacing the claws with a mounting clamp for the weapon. Treat this as a locked gauntlet. An articulated claw that wields a melee or ranged weapon cannot be used to make natural attacks.

### CONSTRUCTION

6,250 AU

[Craft Aethertech](#); Craft DC 20

### AUGMENTED SLOT

4,000 AU

Slot special Weight 6 lbs. Usage +2

### Restriction restricted

Slot augmentation modifies powered armor by replacing one available item slot for another. An *augmented slot* comes in multiple varieties, representing each of the possible accessory slots on a powered armor frame. By attaching an augmented slot, you can change one power armor accessory slot to another: hands slot into an additional body slot, body slot into an additional hands slot, and so on.

You may not create an accessory slot on a power armor frame that it cannot normally possess, nor can you give the power armor frame more accessory slots than it can normally possess. For example, MK I power armor frame can only accept body and head accessories, and only has two accessory slots.

### CONSTRUCTION

2,000 AU

[Craft Aethertech](#); Craft DC 20

### GRAVITIC PROPULSION SYSTEM

7,500 AU

Slot feet Weight 40 lbs. Usage +5

### Restriction unique, Suembaro

A gravitic propulsion system attaches to the base of a power armor frame. This grants the wearer a fly speed of 40 feet with good maneuverability. The gravitic propulsion system functions in any gravity conditions, including zero gravity, as its internal mechanisms recalibrate according to outside conditions. A power armor frame with a gravitical propulsion system attached has no land speed, and the wearer must fly or hover in order to move.

### CONSTRUCTION

3,750 AU

[Craft Aethertech](#); Craft DC 35

## New Alchemist Discoveries

The following are new discoveries available to all alchemists.

## ALCHEMICAL CHARGE

**Prerequisite:** alchemist level 6th.

**Benefit:** As a swift action, an alchemist with this discovery is able to convert prepared alchemical extracts into aetheric units to charge aethertech items. This expends the extract and immediately charges the item with an amount of au equal to twice the consumed extract's level.

Any charges unused at the end of the round are lost, and any charges used by the device that round that aren't provided by the alchemist must come from the device's own power reserves. The alchemist cannot use this ability to power devices that don't use charges.

## EXPEDIENT MANUFACTURE

**Prerequisite:** alchemist level 14th, Recycle Aethertech.

**Benefit:** The alchemist can recycle aethertech with astounding speed. Each hour of crafting when using his recycle aethertech discovery is equivalent to 8 hours of uninterrupted crafting; he can perform up to 8 hours of such amazingly efficient work per day.

## RECYCLE AETHERTECH

**Prerequisite:** alchemist level 10th.

**Benefit:** The alchemist can dismantle existing aethertech items and construct new ones from the parts. He trades in each item for an amount of crafting potential based on its crafting cost (not price), as described below. He can use this potential and his aethertech crafting feats to make a new item. For example, the alchemist could use a *thundergun* in place of 500 au for crafting aethertech items. He then follows the normal rules for crafting an aethertech item (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 387), except that he must pay at least 50% of the crafting cost using recycled aethertech. If he pays 100% of the cost in this fashion, he crafts the item at double the normal speed. In the process of cannibalizing the old items they are destroyed and any excess au value is lost.

# SLAUGHTERMAW LAMPREY

*This enormous serpentine creature has a circular mouth of serrated teeth.*

## SLAUGHTERMAW LAMPREY

CR 10

XP 9,600

N Large animal (aquatic)

Init +4; Senses low-light vision; Perception +12

### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19 (+0 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 142 (15d8+75)

Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +8

Defensive Abilities from the depths; Resist cold 10

### OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +17 (2d6+7 plus attach and bleed; 19-20x2),  
tail slap +12 (1d8+3 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks bleed (1d6), feed, poison (DC 21),  
shattering fangs

### STATISTICS

Str 24, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 12

Base Atk +11; CMB +19; CMD 29 (cannot be tripped)

Feats [Diehard](#), [Endurance](#), [Improved Critical](#) (bite),  
[Improved Initiative](#), [Improved Natural Attack](#) (bite),  
[Power Attack](#), [Toughness](#)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +12, Stealth +11, and  
Swim +18; Racial Modifiers +8 Swim, +4 Stealth

SQ from the depths

### ECOLOGY

Environment cold aquatic

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Feed (Ex):** When a slaughtermaw lamprey makes a successful bite attack and attaches itself, it gains fast healing 5 so long as it is attached.

**From the Depths (Ex):** The lamprey primarily lives within the ocean trenches of Orbis Aurea. They have cold

resistance 10 and are immune to the crushing damage of the deepest parts of the ocean.

**Poison (Ex)** type Injury; save Fort DC 21; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d6 Con damage; cure 1 save

**Shattering Fangs (Ex):** The teeth of a slaughtermaw lamprey are extremely tough and razor sharp, fully capable of penetrating the thickest of hides or armors with ease. Their powerful teeth have a natural ability to bypass hardness when sundering weapons or attacking objects, ignoring hardness less than 15. Furthermore, their bite deals an additional 2d6 points of damage to objects.

Whether feeding on sea life in the deepest parts of Orbis Aurea's ocean trenches or nesting in the shallows along the world's temperate coasts, the slaughtermaw lamprey is a fearsome predator that inspires fear and respect in seafarers and land-dwellers alike. While stories of megalodons, giant squid, and whales tend to be more prevalent, those who have encountered a slaughtermaw lamprey while at sea spin harrowing tales of survival against one of the harsh planet's most voracious hunters. Despite being jawless, a slaughtermaw lamprey's powerful bite can pierce through even the toughest of hides and sailors speak of a slaughtermaw lamprey's bite being capable of sinking waterborn aethercraft as they tear through hulls seeking a meal.

Slaughtermaw lampreys seem to fear no creature and many a sea creature has been seen sporting the ring-shaped scars left by their attacks. Fortunately, slaughtermaw lampreys are rare during most of the year, only coming into contact with humanoids during their mating season when they venture from the icy depths to shallower reaches of Orbis Aurea's oceans. A slaughtermaw lamprey can grow to reach an impressive fifteen feet in length and typically weigh about nine hundred pounds. Slaughtermaw lampreys typically live ten to fifteen years, though older (and



frighteningly, larger) members of their species are a part of Okantan seafaring tales.

## Ecology

The slaughtermaw lamprey is a long, scaleless fish that superficially resembles a jawless eel with many rows of barbed teeth and hair-fine poisonous spines along their tail fins. Slaughtermaw lampreys are well acclimated to the icy waters and crushing depths of the ocean trenches of Orbis Aurea when they are adults, but they have to travel vast distances to create coastal nests for their eggs within tide pools of the rocky shores of coastal Orbis Aurea. Adult slaughtermaw lampreys remain to protect their eggs, but typically travel back to the depths after their eggs hatch, abandoning their young. After hatching, young slaughtermaw lampreys burrow into the sediments along the coast to filter feed for several months until they enter a metamorphosis to become adults. A slaughtermaw lamprey reaches adulthood in 1 year, whereby they make their first

foray out of coastal shallows and into deeper and colder oceanic water. It is during this first deep water migration that slaughtermaw lamprey gain their resilience to pressure damage. When the slaughtermaw lampreys finally mature, they shed a leathery outer husk of their skin, much like a landborne snake.

## Habitat & Society

A slaughtermaw lamprey spends much of its time feeding within the ocean trenches or along the ocean floor, attacking squids, sharks, and whales that swim by them. Typically slaughtermaw lampreys prey upon whales, but they do attack larger predators such as megalodons and giant squids alone. Rare occurrences of multiple slaughtermaw lampreys feeding and hunting together to bring down larger prey is the stuff of nightmares. While squids can easily fight back, whales and sharks have a harder time defending themselves against even a solitary slaughtermaw lamprey. Both whales and sharks will

often rise to the surface quickly, which typically causes the lamprey to detach as the rapid pressure change causes them to become confused and disorientated.

Slaughtermaw lampreys have a habit of seeking out anything that radiates bright light or warmth, luring slaughtermaw lampreys toward the alluring glow of aetherdrives, especially those of water-traversing aethercraft like icebreakers and sea exploration vessels. This occurrence leads to an increased likelihood of slaughtermaw lampreys attacking oceanfaring vessels. Given enough time to adapt, slaughtermaw lampreys can rise to the surface to hunt, but it must be done slowly.

While they focus on larger prey that can give them a larger meal, slaughtermaw lamprey have been known to attack smaller prey during their mating season, when they congregate along the shore and come into contact with humanoids and giants. Ships are particularly vulnerable as they resemble whales to slaughtermaw lampreys, and their teeth can easily puncture through armored hulls. As a ship begins to take on water, slaughtermaw lampreys will feast upon anything that tries to swim to safety, or in the case of larger ships swim inside the flooded cabins to snatch up stragglers.

A mixture of fear and reverence surrounds the slaughtermaw lamprey. Many Orbis Aurean giants see them as powerful creatures of the deep and possess elaborate rituals around interacting with them. Sea giants<sup>B4</sup> especially see slaughtermaw lamprey as living expressions of the cycle of life and death and will intentionally feed their dead to slaughtermaw lampreys in the belief that this act returns the deceased's soul into a cosmic cycle. Ocean giants believe that within each lamprey is the soul of a powerful warrior who died outside of battle, destined to hunger for glory and bloodshed but never quite sating urges they no longer understand, shackled forever as servants of life and death. Despite a rather gruesome coming-of-age ritual involving stealing lamprey eggs from a nest guarded by two mated lampreys, several more traditions exist

to honor the lampreys, including blood sacrifice and offerings of live food. Artifacts originating from hill and stone giants, such as scrimshawed whale bones and shells depicting great battles or attacks made by lampreys and other creatures, can be found across coastal Orbis Aurea.

Okanta hold slaughtermaw lampreys in mixed regards. While okantan elders and spiritual leaders view them as representatives of predation and hunger, worthy of respect, younger generations more concerned with the livelihoods they can earn through shipping, trade, and personal advancement view the destruction these lampreys cause as the acts of pests. Okanta working for Hierarchy or Paragon interests often actively hunt slaughtermaw lamprey spawning grounds or offer bounties for the destruction of such places.

The cold resistance of slaughtermaw lamprey hide and its value as raw material for non-metallic armor invites poachers and hunters to the coasts of Orbis Aurea where lamprey hunting during spawning season has become an all-too-common sight. Slaughtermaw lampreys are powerful creatures easily underestimated by offworld hunters, leading to many deaths of foreign hunters whose remains lay scattered across remote Orbis Aurean shores.

## Slaughtermaw Lamprey Companions

Despite their rarity, some humanoids and giants have taken it upon themselves to raise slaughtermaw lampreys to serve them as animal companions, especially in for the purpose of breeding them later in life. It's a risky proposition, but the chance to collect their valuable eggs has created a lucrative and dangerous business that is unsavory to some, but quite profitable to those who can accomplish it.

Domesticated slaughtermaw lampreys are highly uncommon and substantially exotic creatures.

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Medium; **Speed** 15 ft., swim 60 ft., **AC** +2 natural armor, **Attack** bite (1d6), tail slap (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 12; **Special Attacks** attach, bleed (1d6); **Special Qualities** from the depths, low-light vision

**7th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Large; **AC** +4 natural armor, **Attack** bite (1d8), **Ability Scores** +8 Str, -2 Dex, +4 Con; **Special Attacks** feed, poison

## New Alchemical Items

The following alchemical items are crafted from the organs of a slaughtermaw lamprey.

### SLAUGHTERMAW OIL 5 AU

**Craft DC 20**

Refined from the fatty tissues of slaughtermaw lampreys, this oil is quite sticky and highly flammable, creating a noisome green fire when burned. Torches and lanterns can burn this alongside their normal fuel to double how long they last. Additionally, it can be combined with alchemist's fire to create a hotter and longer lasting fire. One pint of slaughtermaw oil burns twice as long as an ordinary pint of oil, and can be combined with the contents of a flask of alchemist's fire to increase the fire damage of alchemist fire by 1d6 and increase the save DC to resist catching on fire by +2. Alchemist fire modified in such a fashion must be held in a larger container and weighs twice as much as ordinary alchemist's fire.

#### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 5 (25 au); **Spells** fire spells

**Effect:** +1 caster level for the purpose of the effect.

## Drugs and Poisons

The following drug is created by harvested and specially-prepared slaughtermaw lamprey eggs.

### DRIED SLAUGHTERMAW EGGS 1,000 AU

**Type** ingested

**Addiction** minor, **Fortitude** DC 16

**Effects** 1 hour; +1 alchemical bonus on attack and damage rolls, +1d8 temporary hit points, +2 alchemical

bonus on Fortitude saves

**Damage** 1d4 Wis damage

When raw eggs are quickly dried and eaten, the toxins in the eggs cause the user to experience intense feelings of euphoria, coupled with feelings of greater strength and stamina than normal in oneself. However, this takes its toll on the user's mind, causing them to make progressively poorer decisions and can lead to periods of aggression or confusion with overuse.

### SLAUGHTERMAW POISON 1,800 AU

See poison entry above for statistics.

## New Special Materials

Slaughtermaw teeth are an exotic material found in traditional ceremonial okantan and giant weapons.

### SLAUGHTERMAW TEETH +1,000 AU

**HP/inch 30** **Hardness 10**

Slaughtermaw teeth are extremely strong and when preserved properly can be used when crafting weapons. Piercing or slashing weapons fashioned from slaughtermaw teeth have a natural ability to bypass hardness when sundering weapons or attacking objects, ignoring hardness less than 5.

Slaughtermaw teeth are a costly material, due in part to the danger around harvesting it and weapons made from it are always of masterwork quality; the masterwork cost is included in the price.

### SLAUGHTERMAW HIDE +1,200 AU

**HP/inch 10** **Hardness 5**

Slaughtermaw hide is exceptionally resilient and is more durable though less flexible as traditional sources of leather. Slaughtermaw hide offers as much protection as leather, but is more durable and when properly treated is resistant to cold. Leather, hide, or studded leather armor can be produced with slaughtermaw hide. The armor bonus of armor that uses slaughtermaw hide is +1 higher and the maximum Dexterity bonus of the armor is lowered by 1. Additionally, wearing slaughtermaw hide grants the wearer cold resistance 2.

# SNOWCLAW, BRISTLEBACK

A strong musk proceeds this heavily furred beast that possesses powerful digging foreclaws, tusks, and a ridge of spiky fur.

## BRISTLEBACK SNOWCLAW

CR 6

XP 2,400

N Large animal

Init +4; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +13

### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+10 natural, -1 size)

hp 76 (9d8+27)

Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +4

Defensive Abilities overpowering musk

### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.

Melee claws +12 (1d6+6), gore +12 (1d8+6)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

### STATISTICS

Str 23, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 9

Base Atk +6; CMB +13; CMD 23 (31 vs. trip)

Feats [Diehard](#), [Endurance](#),

[Improved Initiative](#), [Skill](#)

[Focus](#) (Perception),

[Toughness](#)

Skills Perception +15,

Survival +13

### Special Qualities

icewalk

### ECOLOGY

Environment frozen

forests and tundra

(Orbis Aurea)

### Organization

solitary, or bevy

(4–7)



Treasure standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Icewalk (Ex)** A bristleback snowclaw can move over snow or ice at its normal speed and heavy snow at half-speed (instead of one-quarter). Spells and abilities like *ice slick* or similar environmental hazards (supernatural or not) do not knock a bristleback prone, they move at full speed and do not need to make Acrobatics checks to navigate through affected areas.

**Overpowering Musk (Ex)** The stink of a bristleback, up close to it, is nearly suffocating. Any creature other than another bristleback snowclaw that starts their turn within 5 feet of a bristleback snowclaw is sickened for 1d4 rounds. A DC 17 Fortitude save negates. A creature cannot use the scent ability as long as it is affected by this musk. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Trackless (Ex)** A bristleback sweeps its tail behind itself in a way that obscures its tracks. Attempts to track a snowclaw have their normal DC increased by +10.

Bristleback snowclaws (translated from *owharo panhdvara* “spinefur snowclaw” in okantan) are large, gregarious omnivores long ago domesticated by the Okanta and were once found virtually everywhere the giantkin gathered on Orbis Aurea. Their long, six legged bodies are ideally suited for moving on top of or burrowing through snow, and they have incredibly sensitive noses able to detect mushrooms and plants hidden beneath the snow crust or permafrost. A bristleback snowclaw stands 13 feet tall when upright and weighs 800 lbs.

## Ecology

These creatures excrete an oil from their cheeks that they comb throughout their fur, giving their shaggy coat a protective layer that keeps moisture from penetrating to the skin underneath. The oily

substance has a distinct and powerful smell to it that is repellant to most animals and smaller predators.

In the wild, bristlebacks are the smallest and least aggressive variant of snowclaw, an increasingly rare predator that hunts giants and other megafauna in the most remote reaches of Orbis Aurea's frozen tundra. Bristlebacks were domesticated centuries ago by the world's itinerant giant populations (typically by stone giants) and found themselves adopted into okantan culture. Wild bristlebacks are usually runaways from domesticated herds, only one or two generations removed. They are pack animals that hunt in groups of four to five in order to cooperatively take down slow-moving megafauna like their larger and more aggressive kin.

## Habitat & Society

Though raised as pack animals and trusted companions when domesticated, wild bristlebacks are also common throughout much of Orbis Aurea. Foraging alone or in family units called be vies, they generally avoid other animals as much as possible, but will become quite ferocious if cornered or in protection of their young. Their tusks and digging claws are formidable weapons, and a mother bristleback will not hesitate to give her life in defense of her children. Be vies are lead by one bristleback matriarch and her consort, who are the only breeding pair, with the rest of the group consisting of children and siblings of the alpha couple, though rarely more than 5–7 individuals in total. Gestation takes 7 months, after which the mother gives birth to a single offspring, or more rarely twins. Able to walk within moments of birth, bristlebacks mature in just a year, and remain fertile until old age at 10.

Early Requiescat humans hunted snowclaws for fur, but the extremely negative reaction of okanta to this practice, as well as the inferior quality of the fur (which quickly loses the protective oil coating of a

living bristleback), not to mention the lingering odor, mostly ended this practice. Anyone encountering okanta while wearing such a coat will quickly find themselves ostracized at best, if not fought outright for the social gaff.

For much of their history the okanta have had a strong bond with bristlebacks and domestication likely happened early in okantan society, fostered by their giant allies. An okanta child's first bristleback is often regarded as an important rite of passage, signaling that they have crossed over into young adulthood and taken responsibility for their new companion. Popular adventure stories among the okanta feature the unbreakable partnership of an okanta hero and their loyal bristleback, fighting evils and traveling the tundra together.

Use of bristlebacks as domesticated animals has fallen off since the first Requiescat humans brought off-planet technology to Orbis Aurea and as younger generations of okanta seek to leave Orbis Aurea their numbers within tribes also thin. It's rare, now, to see bristlebacks in or near Wighthaven, as aethercraft have largely replaced the need for such beasts of burden. Far enough away from the territory of the Paragon Ascendancy, though, the role of the loyal bristleback remains an iconic okanta tradition.

## Bristleback Snowclaw Companion

**Starting Statistics:** **Size** Medium; **Speed** 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; **AC** +2 natural armor; **Attack** 2 claws (1d4), gore (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str 17, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 15, Cha 10; **Special Qualities** low-light vision, icewalk, scent.

**7th-Level Advancement:** **Size** Large; **AC** +3 natural armor; **Attack** 2 claws (1d6), gore (1d8); **Ability Scores** Str +8, Dex -2, Con +4; **Special Qualities** overpowering musk, trackless.

# ORBIS AUREA FLORA

Far from the binary stars of the Aethera System and lost beneath an eternal shroud of polluted netherite, the icy world of Orbis Aurea should be barren of most plant life. Yet, in spite of its extreme celestial placement and against all reason, the planet boasts a lush ecology of exotic flora not found anywhere else in the system. Orbis Aurea's unique environment of aetherite-rich terrain, extreme tectonic activity from the gravitational pull of its moon Orbis Argenta, and former alignment to the Plane of Wood has provided the world with a unique circumstance to foster life where none should thrive.

## PETRIFIED FORESTS

The ancient past of Orbis Aurea is lost even to the world's indigenous giant inhabitants. Oral stories from taiga giant clans speak of the Pre-Collapse world in mythic terms of elemental energy and infinite bounty, a lush world of endless gardens and towering forests not entirely unlike descriptions of modern-era Kir-Sharaat. The veracity of these stories would be impossible to ascertain, were it not for the petrified remnants of ancient Orbis Aurea sticking up from the tundra. On the continent of Pah alone, forests of towering flash-petrified trees are haunting reminders of the sudden and catastrophic effect of the Collapse. These forests spread for thousands of miles in some instances, formed of the broken trunks of once majestic and ancient trees looking more like broken fingers grasping at the sky than the verdant towers of old. New forests grow in their shadow, though these stunted pines and firs are a far cry from their primordial cousins.

The most famed of these petrified forests is almost the most dangerous. Located thousands of miles west of the city of Pahnahadra on the continent of Pah, the Shattered Forest is not only a petrified forest but a shockwave from the Evermorn frozen

in time. The forests towering trees are flash-frozen, crusted over in thick armor of solid ice and partly consumed in crashing waves of turbulent sea frozen in an instant when the Collapse struck the planet. This unfathomable wilderness is a tempest frozen in ice, where waves hundreds of feet high crashed into coastal forest and then stayed eternally locked in that epoch of destruction.

Within the Shattered Forest, living islands ([see page 210](#)) roam pockets of liquid ocean and colossal tree-like creatures called sard<sup>B2</sup> twisted by evil fey from the Evermorn stalk the boreal darkness. Little is known of what may lie within the shattered forest beyond these horrors, and even they are but a sample of what this mythic and dangerous realm has to offer.

## EXTREME ENVIRONMENTS

Many natural philosophers of the modern age have long debated the means by which Orbis Aurean plants sustain themselves without sunlight. The dim illumination that does manage to filter through the Shroud is insufficient to sustain most plant life and the harsh climate is anathema to many hardy species from barren worlds like Akasaat or void-flourishing plants from the Amrita Belt. It wasn't until the conclusion of the Century War that scholars from across the Aethera System were able to truly study and begin to understand the diverse ecosystems at play that permit the world's flora to flourish.

In spite of this low-light and extreme cold, Orbis Aurea is home to numerous vascular and nonvascular plants, algae, fungi, and lichens. Orbis Aurea's tundra regions which encompass much of its equatorial area is characterized by permafrost; a layer of soil and partially decomposed organic matter that is frozen year-round. At the equator only a thin layer of soil thaws and refreezes each year. Typically this would prevent trees from taking root in these regions as trees

need a certain amount of days well above freezing temperatures to complete their annual growth cycle. However, Orbis Aurea is home to many variations of pine and other species of conifer with surprisingly deep root systems. Additionally, Orbis Aurea is home to a bewildering amount of colorful flora that has adapted its photosynthesis to feed off of aetherite radiation rather than sunlight. Species of bromeliads, dracaena, hosta, and maidenhair fern are among the most common on the continent of Karkhota, beyond even the temperate equatorial regions.

Most of Orbis Aurea's plant life grow close to the ground and to each other, which helps to resist the effects of cold weather and reduce damage caused by wind-blown snow and ice. Many of the planet's plants can grow under a layer of snow, and virtually all polar plants are able to aethersynthesize (the act of absorbing aetherite radiation to stimulate growth) in extremely cold temperatures.

## UNDERWORLD PLANTS

Beneath the surface of Orbis Aurea, the Underworld is a honeycomb of caverns, ruins, and volcanic activity. The climate of Orbis Aurea changes drastically below its surface, with steamy jungles of towering fungus sprawling through cavern systems as large as continents. Vents of poisonous volcanic gasses spew sulfur and acid into the air, creating rain storms that can dissolve flesh but do not harm the toxic plant life growing within the sweltering belly of the world.

Rich deposits of aetherite below the surface of the planet means extreme supernatural mutation among plant creatures. Subterranean residents of Orbis Aurea such as morlocks<sup>B1</sup> have little agricultural expertise, but have adapted to these toxic conditions. Many of Orbis Aurea's exotic plantlife—especially those found underground—are often found in dense concentration near Progenitor-era ruins.

## NEW RULES

The below simple template represents plant creatures that have mutated to adapt to life on Orbis Aurea's harshest extremes.

### BOREAL PLANT SIMPLE TEMPLATE (CR +0)

This simple template may be added to any creature of the Plant type to represent an exotic native to Orbis Aurea.

**Subtype:** The base creature gains the aether subtype.

**Immunities:** The base creature is immune to aetherite radiation.

**Resist Cold:** The base creature gains cold resistance 5 and can survive in cold climates as though protected by *endure elements*.

**Aethersynthesis:** The base creature gains fast healing equal to the level of aetherite radiation it is exposed to. Fast Healing 1 in low radiation, 2 in medium radiation, 3 in high radiation, and 4 in areas of severe radiation. Additionally, while being exposed to aetherite radiation the base creature does not need to eat (but still needs to drink).

### AQUATIC PLANT (CR +0)

This simple template may be added to any creature of the Plant type to represent an exotic native to Orbis Aurea that lives in watery environments.

**Senses:** The base creature gains darkvision 60 ft.,

**Subtype:** The base creature gains the aquatic subtype.

**Speed:** The base creature gains a swim speed equal to its highest speed +10.

**Special Qualities:** The base creature gains the amphibious universal monster ability, allowing them to exist both on dry land and in water as necessary.

# DEADLIGHT FUNGUS

*A horrific mass of molten, fleshy fungus exudes a powerful stench of rotting flesh.*

## DEADLIGHT FUNGUS

CR 4

XP 1,200

N Large plant

**Init** -1; **Senses** blindsight 20-ft; low-light vision;

Perception +10

**Aura** choking stench (15 feet; DC 16)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 8, touch 8, flat-footed 8 (-1 Dex, -1 size)

**hp** 42 (5d8+20); regeneration 5 (fire or positive energy)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +0, **Will** +3

**Defensive Abilities** negative energy affinity; **DR** 5/cold iron; **Immune** cold, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep, stunning

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 10 ft.

**Space** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** deadlights (DC 14), engulf (DC 15, 2d6 acid and 1d4 Con damage), rotten flesh (DC 16)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 8, **Con** 18, **Int** 3, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 16 (can't be tripped)

**Skills** Acrobatics -1 (-9 to jump), Climb +11, Perception +10

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any land (Orbis Aurea)

**Organization** solitary or plague (2-8)

**Treasure** incidental

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Choking Stench Aura (Ex):** A deadlight fungus exudes a constant aura of choking stench out to 15 feet. Creatures who breathe that enter this aura must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save or become nauseated for 2d4 rounds. On a successful save a creature is immune to that deadlight fungus' choking stench aura for 24 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Deadlights (Su):** As a standard action a deadlight fungus can create a scintillating, hypnotic pattern of light around itself that entices creatures near. Creatures within 30 feet of this effect must succeed at a DC 14 Will save or become enraptured by the lights. On their next turn, affected creatures must do nothing but move at their full speed toward the deadlight fungus. Creatures affected by deadlights may make a save each round to end the effect. If a creature so affected takes any damage (such as from the deadlight fungus' engulf ability) the effect immediately ends. A creature that successfully saves against this effect is immune to that deadlight fungus' deadlights for 24 hours. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

**Negative Energy Affinity (Ex):** Though a living creature, a deadlight fungus reacts to positive and negative energy as if it were undead—positive energy harms it, while negative energy heals it.

**Rotten Flesh (Ex):** Whenever a deadlight fungus takes damage from a slashing or piercing weapon its flesh exudes a noxious cloud of acrid gas. Creatures within 10 feet of the deadlight fungus must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 16) or take 1d6 points of acid damage and become sickened for 1 round. A successful save halves the acid damage and negates the sickened condition. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Deadlight fungus is a deadly plant native to subterranean reaches of Orbis Aurea. A deadlight fungus measures ten feet tall and weighs 1,600 lbs.

## Ecology

A deadlight fungus is created when mold grows on corpses within the proximity of netherite. Under most circumstances, mold has a considerable difficulty growing in Orbis Aurea's cold environment. But in proximity to hot springs or within deep caves molds of all kinds can flourish. In these specific environments, mold exposed to netherite radiation can absorb and

adapt to the flows of negative energy as they consume the necrotic flesh of a corpse, creating a near-undead abomination that exists only to propagate itself.

A more ready means of propagation comes once a single deadlight fungus is created. Creatures killed by a deadlight fungus' engulf ability are consumed and digested, then turned into another deadlight fungus 24 hours later. Only exposure to direct sunlight, an illumination source not normally found on Orbis Aurea, stops this transformation process.

## Habitat & Society

Deadlight fungus are simple-minded carnivorous fungus that possess a hateful and rudimentary intelligence not entirely unlike that of an undead creature. They are drawn to sources of warmth and moisture, especially dark locations.

A deadlight fungus exists solely to create more of its own kind and knowingly seeks out living creatures to consume and infest. Caverns filled with deadlight fungus are charnel houses filled with the undigestable skeletal remains of their former victims. Often times these skeletal remains will reanimate, typically forming skeletons or bloody bones. Especially large deadlight fungus caverns can also contain ghastrs, ghouls, and undigested<sup>B5</sup>.

Morlocks are known to harvest deadlight fungus and create pit traps containing these voracious fungus, ensuring an excruciating death to interlopers in their subterranean domains. Morlock settlements that do not properly handle their deadlight fungus are sometimes overrun, leaving behind abandoned cave dwellings and ravenous packs of undead morlocks.

The Paragon Ascendancy has classified deadlight fungus as a "Class I Hazard" and seeks to exterminate all occurrences of the fungus wherever it is discovered. The Ascendancy often hires exterminators to traverse the Orbis Aurean wilds to scour remote caves clean of the horrific fungus. Numerous mercenary groups

accepting these seemingly simple contracts have gone missing or had members killed by underestimating the danger these plants represent.

Thankfully, no deadlight fungus has escaped Orbis Aurea, containing the ravenous plantlife to that remote world.

## Alchemical Reagents

A deadlight fungus' spores can be harvested from recently-deceased fungi and sealed in light-proof containers.

|                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| <b>DEADLIGHT SPORES</b> | <b>200 AU</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------|

|                 |
|-----------------|
| <b>Weight</b> — |
|-----------------|

A pinch of deadlight fungus spores can be mixed with any poison that deals Constitution damage, increasing the poison's save DC by 1.

### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 1 (200 au); **Spells** necromancy school

**Effect** +1 caster level for the purpose of the effect and +1 to save DC.



# GLOWGROVE

*This seething mass of roots, vines, and bamboo-like growths has a vaguely humanoid shape and is riddled with glowing pieces of aetherite.*

## GLOWGROVE

CR 1

N Medium plant (aether)

**Init** +1; **Senses** low-light vision, keen scent, tremorsense 10 ft.; **Perception** +4

### DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 7, flat-footed 12 (-3 Dex, +5 natural)

**hp** 10 (2d8+2)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** -3, **Will** +0

**Defensive Abilities** plant traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +3 (1d6+2 plus trip)

**Special Attacks** radiation surge

### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 5, **Con** 13, **Int** 2, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 9

**Feats** [Improved Initiative](#)

**Skills** **Perception** +4

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any cold (Orbis Aurea)

**Organization** solitary or grove (4–8)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Radiation Surge (Su)** Once per minute as a standard action a glowgrove can surge with an intense but low dose of aetherite radiation. The save DC is Constitution-based.—glowgrove radiation; **Fort DC** 12; **Initial Effect** 1 Con damage; **Secondary Effect** 1 Cha damage/day.

A Glowgrove is a hardy example of flora able to survive above Orbis Aurea's baleful surface. And this, like so many marvels, is mostly due to its relationship with aetherite. A glowgrove stands roughly six feet tall and weighs 175 lbs.

## Ecology

Essentially an aggressive form of bamboo, Glowgroves are able to survive in the midst of or fringes around Aetherite deposits, and use the concentrated material for synthesising the nutrients that power its two kinds of blossom.

Glowgroves begin as bamboo-like, tough vertical stems that thicken into trunks and grow in hollow circles. While malleable, they begin to intertwine with their immediate neighbor-stems, which forms an incredibly effective barrier once they harden with maturity. As the grove matures, it begins to need an aether-overflow, and so condenses it into a sap which excretes from small chinks in its fibrous segments. This results in what looks like a flash-frozen, crystalline waterfall or the breaking of a wave, frozen in time. This sap is incredibly aether-rich and is actually able to actively disintegrate into a haze of radioactive gas filled with spores if the grove feels threatened, or if the sap itself has reached maturity and is therefore able to travel on the wind and help fertilize other groves.

Remarkably, once enough of the grove has intertwined up to a certain height, usually approximately 6 ft., the trunks begin to bend inward to form a vaulted canopy. At this point, a mess of roots in the protected, central hollow begin to produce a giant pearl, roughly one foot in diameter. A grove-pearl is rarely glimpsed and poorly understood facet of the glowgrove's life cycle and a point of curiosity to many natural philosophers on Orbis Aura.

Initially, botanists thought the pearl was similar to its aquatic cousins, but recent research has suggested it is not merely a decorative by-product of irritation, but actually contains a primal form of consciousness. Once the pearl itself has matured, the entire grove essentially becomes networked, and may defend itself aggressively with its tensile, willowy

trunks and its sap-spores. However, a mature glowglove will not attack indiscriminately, and seem adept at sensing motives from nearby travelers or creatures.

## Habitat & Society

Glowgroves require aetherite deposits to survive, refining it and balancing the concentration of it in an area with strong-rooted green matter that offers one of the very few havens to smaller species of above-ground flora and fauna.

As a result of this relationship, the okanta are protective of glowgroves and believe they may be manifestations of gestalt spiritual energy contained within aetherite. Frost giants, however, are less sentimental about glowgroves and have actively combatted okanta tribes that protect aetherite deposits where glowgroves thrive. Some off-world collectors will no doubt pay handsomely for a chance to either study or arrogantly display a mature glowgrove. Attempts at fostering them away from Orbis have failed.

As glowgroves' migration is guided predominantly by the nearest aetherite deposit, they act as useful warning markers of aetherite radiation and way-markers for prospectors looking for surface deposits, as the direction of a glowgrove's new root cluster is not hard to deduct, as strong, sheathed stalks can often be seen snaking in and out of the ice or topsoil, growing inches in the space of a few hours.

## Alchemical Reagents

The aether-infused wood of a glowgrove possesses considerable connection to the element of aether and are valuable to alchemists and spellcasters.



**GLOWREED 5 AU**

**Weight 1 lb.**

A specially-preserved sprig from a glowgrove carries a residual aetheric resonance. These sprigs shed light like a torch whenever they are within 30 feet of a source of aetheric energy, such as a powered piece of aethertech, raw aetherite, aetherite radiation, or a creature with the aether subtype. Glowreeds are used on Orbis Aurea by prospectors searching for aetherite veins hidden under snow or rock.

### POWER COMPONENT

**Doses** 10 (50 au); **Spells** force descriptor

**Effect** +1 caster level for the purpose of the effect

# LIVING ISLAND

*A small island of ice, rocks, and trees stirs; unmistakably alive due its movement and strangely shifting mass.*

## LIVING ISLAND

CR 20

XP 307,200

N Colossal plant (aquatic)

Init +3; Senses blindsight 120 ft., low-light vision;  
Perception +24

## DEFENSE

AC 36, touch 1, flat-footed 36 (-1 Dex, +35 natural, -8 size)

hp 465 (30d8+330); regeneration 5 (fire)

Fort +37, Ref +19, Will +22

Defensive Abilities absorption; DR 15/—; Immune cold, plant traits; Resist electricity 20

## OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee slam +35 (4d6+30), 4 roots +33 (2d8+20/19-20 plus grab)

Space 100 ft.; Reach 100 ft. (200 ft. with roots)

Special Attacks capsizes, constrict (2d8+20), trample (4d6+30)

## STATISTICS

Str 51, Dex 8, Con 30, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 6

Base Atk +22; CMB +50; CMD 59 (can't be tripped)

Feats [Blind-Fight](#), [Cleave](#), [Diehard](#), [Endurance](#), [Great Cleave](#), [Improved Critical](#) (roots), [Improved Initiative](#), [Iron Will](#), [Multiattack](#), [Power Attack](#), [Skill Focus](#) (Perception, Swim), [Toughness](#), [Weapon Focus](#) (roots, slam)

Skills Perception +24, Swim +49; Racial Modifiers +8 swim

SQ amphibious, blend, growth, icebreaker

## ECOLOGY

Environment aquatic or plains (Orbis Aurea)

Organization solitary or chain (3–9)

Treasure incidental

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Absorption (Ex)** A living island has a massive body filled with redundant structures and designs, making it incredibly difficult to harm or affect it in any way. It gains a resistance bonus to all saving throws equal to its Constitution modifier.

**Blend (Ex)** So long as a living island remains still, it blends in to its terrain and appears to be an island (or a small hill on land). A successful Perception check (DC 25) picks out the living island from its surroundings.

**Capsizes (Ex)** A living island can attempt to capsize a boat or a ship by ramming it as a charge attack and making a combat maneuver check. The living island must either beat the ACMD of the vessel (in the case of aethercraft) or the result of the captain's Profession (sailor) check for non-aethercraft.



**Growth (Ex)** Living islands maintain natural terrain and fertile surfaces on their backs, small plots suitable for miniature ecosystems. Hidden among the variety of plants they normally host are their own fruit-bearing growths. A living island produces enough fruit each day to feed 2d4 medium creatures, but consuming the seeds causes a new living island to grow inside the unfortunate creature, which affects them similar to a disease (see below for its effects). A Knowledge (nature) or Survival check (DC 25) can distinguish a living island's fruit from any fruit it hosts, and a Survival check (DC 20) can be used to remove all seeds from the fruit so it can be eaten safely.

#### LIVING ISLAND SEEDS

**Type** Unique, ingested

**Save** Fortitude DC 32

**Onset** 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day

**Effect** 5d6 hit point damage, 1d6 Con damage

**Cure** 3 consecutive saves

Living island seeds cannot be removed with effects such as cure disease or neutralize poison, but effects such as heal, limited wish, miracle, and wish can cure the condition. If a creature dies while afflicted with living island seeds, a living island bud sprouts from the corpse.

**Icebreaker (Ex)** Living islands easily plow through ice and snow, even breaking through the solid sheets of Orbis Aurea's frozen oceans. A living island can move across icy or snowy surfaces without penalty and does not need to make Acrobatics checks to run or charge across ice. It can even break through solid ice as if it had a burrow speed, though it treats the ice it moves through as difficult terrain for purposes of determining movement speed. Whenever a living island moves across a snowy surface or ice covering a non-ice surface it clears the ice or snow from the area until weather or conditions cause it to reform.

Living islands are rare flora found only on Orbis Aurea. They migrate ceaselessly through the ice-locked oceans and arctic plains of their planet, gentle bearers of bounty and breakers of otherwise impassable ice. A living island is 100 feet wide and weighs 40,000 lbs.

## Ecology

The main body of a living island is a massive root structure with vine-like growths that form tight plaits and spirals that collect soil and other detritus that helps form its main mass. Detritus gathers in the gaps between root and vine plaits and is supplemented by complex biological processes, together creating an organic landscape of fertile soil and hardened bark. The living island populates the landscape by naturally accumulating other plants and spending long periods of dormancy in areas of abundant flora and wildlife. Below the bulk of its body are its thick, prehensile roots used for locomotion and self defense. When still these roots retreat beneath the island's bulk, but when the living island takes action they spread out to grip the terrain or propel it through the ocean.

Living islands are omnivorous, feeding on microscopic ocean life filtered through fine grasping curtains of barbed vegetation on their undersides that trap these fine organisms and drain the life from them. Living islands are constantly eating, even when stationary or seemingly dormant.

## Habitat & Society

Living islands are regarded with reverence and respect by native okanta and giant traditions, seen as living manifestations of Orbis Aurea and spiritual representations of the will of the planet. Both okantan and giant communities have clustered around living islands since the ancient past, building gardens, homes, and shrines on their mobile surfaces. Giant legends speak of cities built on the backs of living islands far more vast than any known today.

# CREATURE SUBTYPES

## AETHER

This subtype is usually used for outsiders with a connection to the element of aether. It is also applied to creatures with an intrinsic bond to aetherite.

## AUGMENTED

A creature receives this subtype when something (usually a template) changes its original type. Some creatures (those with an inherited template) are born with this subtype; others acquire it when they take on an acquired template. The augmented subtype is always paired with the creature's original type.

## AQUATIC

These creatures always have swim speeds and can move in water without making Swim checks. An aquatic creature can breathe water. It cannot breathe air unless it has the amphibious special quality. Aquatic creatures always treat Swim as a class skill.

## ERIIHU

Eriihu are a race of plant creatures native to Kir-Sharaat. Eriihu possess the following traits (unless otherwise noted in a creature's entry).

**Communal Physiology (Ex):** Eriihu brainblossoms produce pollen that links the physiologies and mental processes of nearby eriihu together in a manner functionally similar to a hive mind. All eriihu within 1 mile of an eriihu brainblossom form a single glade. Members of a glade share their awareness and senses freely, and cannot be caught flat-footed or flanked.

Any eriihu in a glade treats its Intelligence score as equal to that of the brainblossom that is anchoring the glade. An eriihu glade provides bonuses to individual eriihu based on the number of eriihu in the glade. Brainblossom pollen can be dissipated by a strong or stronger wind (See [Table: Wind Effects](#), *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Core Rulebook*), and any effect that provides an airtight seal insulates its area from brainblossom pollen.

| GLADE SIZE       | STAT BONUS     | OTHER ABILITIES                  | CR |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|----|
| Small (2 to 8)   | —              | —                                | —  |
| Medium (9 to 30) | Str/Dex/Con +2 | Fast healing 1, +2 natural armor | +1 |
| Large (31 to 80) | Str/Dex/Con +4 | Fast healing 2, +4 natural armor | +2 |
| Huge (81+)       | Str/Dex/Con +6 | Fast healing 4, +6 natural armor | +3 |

## GIANT

This subtype is applied to giants and creatures related to giants.

## GOBLINOID

Goblinoids are stealthy humanoids who all speak Goblin. Goblinoids treat Stealth as a class skill.

## ZAHAJIN

This subtype is applied to zahajin and creatures related to zahajin.

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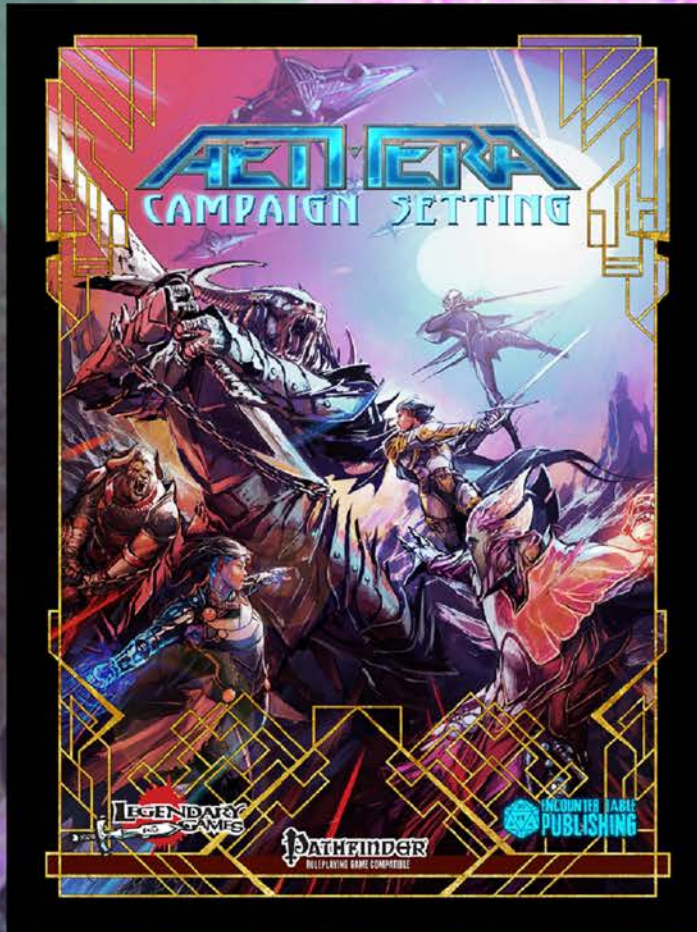
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