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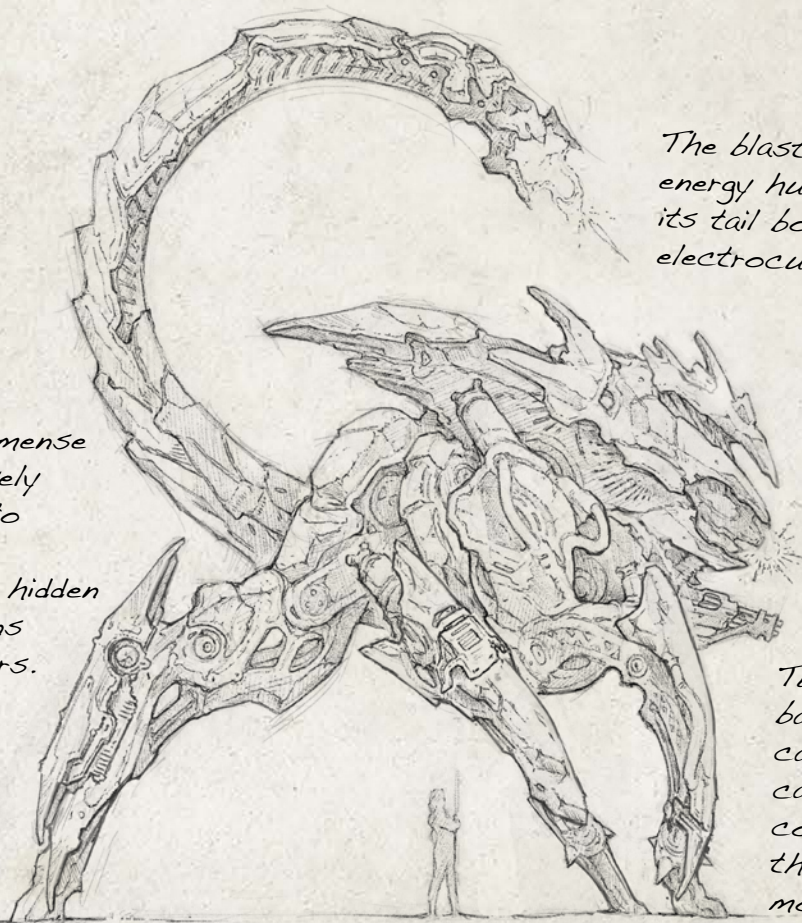


**IRON GODS**<sup>™</sup>

# **VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS**

by Mike Shel





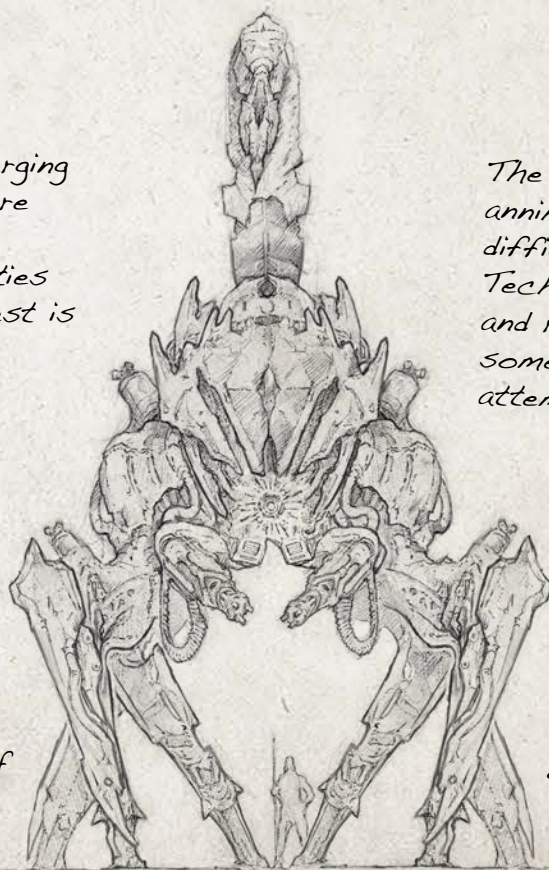
The blasts of purple energy hurled from its tail both burn and electrocute the target.

Sightings of these immense constructs are relatively recent, yet it stands to reason the so-called annihilators have been hidden away in Numeria's ruins since the Rain of Stars.

Twin multi-barreled rifles, capable of spewing cascades of metal, constitute the things' primary mode of attack.

Rumors of annihilators emerging from the Felldales to capture living victims have yet to be confirmed. What these entities want with those they harvest is unclear.

The power wielded by annihilators makes them difficult for even the Technic League to capture and reprogram, though some experiments have been attempted... at great cost.



At a height of nearly 50 feet, an annihilator is among the largest of Numerian constructs.

The sound of an active annihilator is one that few adventurers will ever forget.



# **PATHFINDER**<sup>®</sup> **ADVENTURE PATH**<sup>™</sup>

## **IRON GODS**<sup>™</sup>

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# **VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS**





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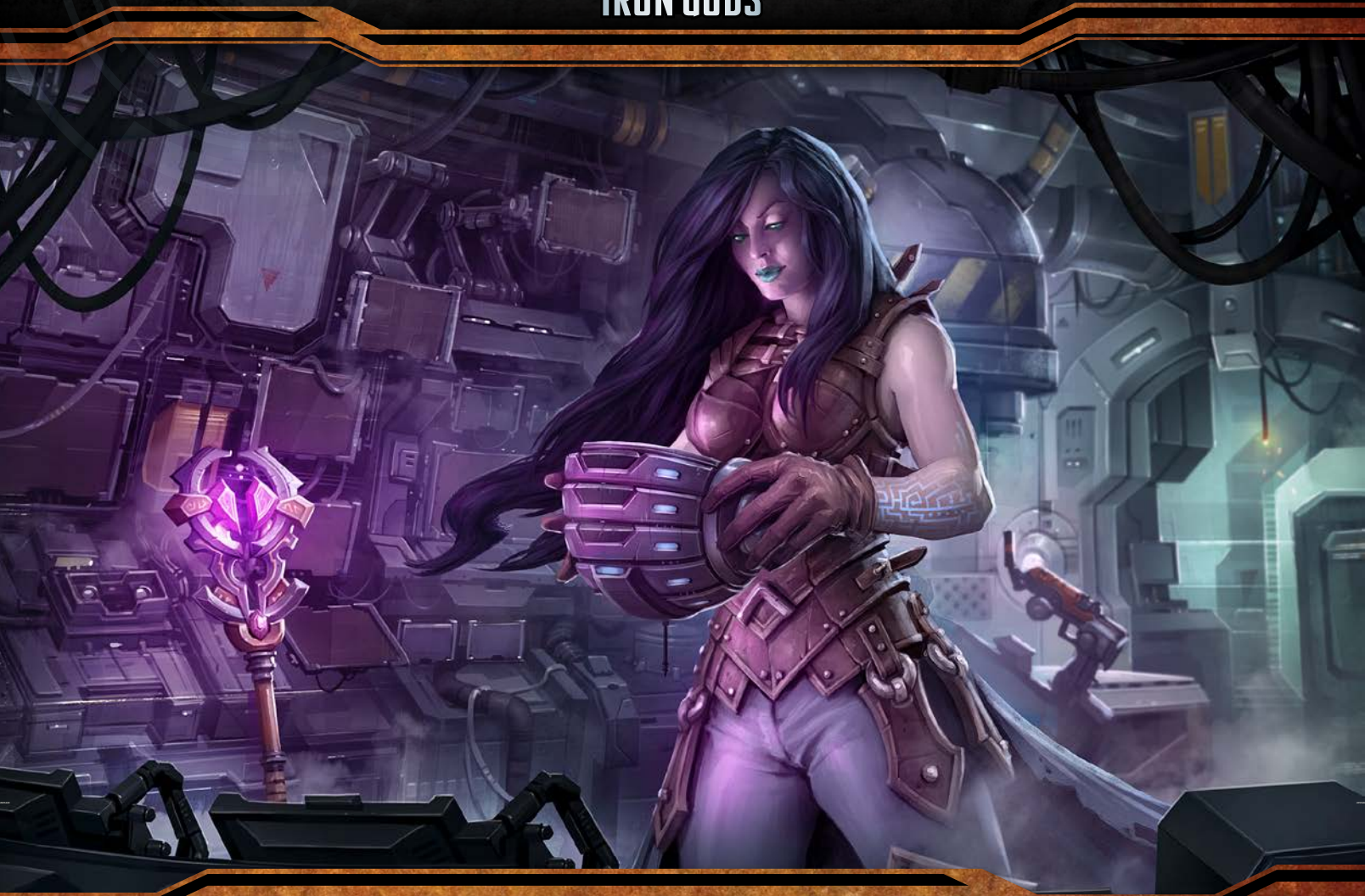


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## IRON GODS



### DIVINING DIVINITY

**A**s the second half of the Iron Gods Adventure Path begins, the PCs have started to piece together information that points to a great threat rising within Silver Mount, but they likely don't actually know much about their ultimate goal. For the remainder of the Adventure Path, there will be an increasing number of opportunities for the PCs to learn more about *Divinity*, its crew, their original mission, and the events that led to the ship's crash on Golarion. While these revelations won't do much to increase their overall chances of success in defeating Unity in "The Divinity Drive," don't underestimate how rewarding it can be for your players to learn these secrets. Even learning the name of the ship, *Divinity*, can be deeply satisfying to the PCs.

Between allying with NPCs who actually spent time on *Divinity* thousands of years ago (such as Isuma the kasatha, encountered in this adventure) and speaking with the AI Casandalee, the PCs should start to discover answers to these mysteries. If you have the convenience of having all

six parts of Iron Gods at hand, you can pick and choose what elements to reveal—but even if you don't, letting them know small details can go a long way toward satisfying the desire to uncover one of Golarion's greatest mysteries.

#### RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

As this adventure begins, the PCs should see the recovery of Casandalee's neurocam as their primary goal, but beyond knowing that she claims to have left the neurocam somewhere in the Scar of the Spider, they should initially have very little to go on. The path they take through "Valley of the Brain Collectors" isn't set in stone—the region is intended to be a sandbox for exploration. Some groups might enter the valley via its eastern entrance and progress through the encounter areas more or less in the order, but others might enter the valley by scaling its walls, flying in from above, or even teleporting into a deeper part of the valley. While the encounters grow more dangerous the further



## FOREWORD

west one goes, you should allow your party the freedom of choice to decide what path they wish to follow. If they get in over their heads, wise groups should retreat and regroup, or at least seek less challenging areas to build up resources and experience. If they do so, don't punish them by sending mi-go or Dominion of the Black agents after them—these two groups are powerful, but they're alien in mind as well as body. Each group is more concerned with each other, and neither particularly view humanoids as threats. A group of adventurers who approaches and then flees in the face of their greater power is—to their alien minds—merely the order of things, and they won't consider the PCs a dangerous enough menace to pursue. Once the PCs are powerful enough to take on these tougher encounters, though, the mi-go and Dominion do start to take things more seriously—but at that point one would assume the PCs have progressed to a level where these encounters won't be complete killers.

This adventure rewards exploration. Characters who ignore anything other than the Dominion areas in the westernmost portion of the valley will not only miss out on important allies and clues, but also significant treasure and experience. In such cases, you might have some of the NPCs located in areas the PCs might miss seek the PCs out. The kasatha gunslinger Isuma might follow the PCs and could come to their aid if they get in over their heads, then offer her lair as a place to recover after she rescues them. The penitent androids might be encountered not in their cavern, but out in the valley itself and may themselves need rescuing from a hungry frogemoth or the like. If you're familiar with the various NPCs and encounters in the adventure, you'll be able to mix and match the encounters more easily during play if the PCs get ahead of things.

Of course, if the PCs resort to divination spells and magic to help guide their actions, you should take advantage of the opportunity to steer them not toward the final encounter in the adventure, but the next clue they may have missed. Note in particular that while the use of *locate object* or a similar spell to track down the location of the neurocam mentioned by Casandalee might seem like an obvious tactic, Casandalee herself is no longer trapped within this device—in fact, you might decide that the neurocam isn't even in the Scar, since Casandalee has long since been uploaded into a compact AI core. The adventure is built to initially send the PCs toward Isuma and the reclamation robot Binox in the Machine Caves, as these two NPCs are excellent tools for the GM to give PCs a more narrow set of options for progressing through the adventure—see Part 2 for more details.

In the end, the primary goal of this adventure is for the PCs to recover Casandalee in her compact AI core, and to gain enough experience in doing so to reach 13th level so they can face the challenges awaiting them in Starfall. The path the PCs take to these goals is ultimately up to them.

### ON THE COVER

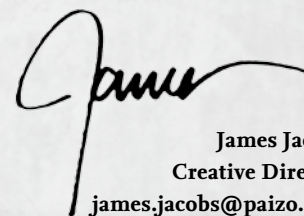
One of the enigmatic agents of the Dominion of the Black, a neh-thalggu, has decided that iconic alchemist Damiel's brain would make a good addition to its collection—notice that empty brain blister on the upper side of its bulbous body? That thing has elf-brain written all over it! A depiction of the kasatha gunslinger Isuma, armed with her trusty zero-rifle, completes this alien-themed cover by Wayne Reynolds.

### UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENTS

In “Lords of Rust,” the PCs confronted the Iron God Hellion. While that adventure assumes that they defeated that AI, it's possible Hellion may have escaped in his robotic body. In this case, he should be re-encountered here in the Scar of the Spider, but how he integrates into the story is left to you. He might ally with the mi-go in hopes of using them to launch an attack on the Dominion of the Black in order to reach Casandalee. He could try to join the Dominion itself only to be absorbed and transformed by their strange scientists. He may even recruit the reclamation robot Binox to his cause. Give the PCs a chance to defeat him again here, and if Hellion escapes once more, he might show up again in Silver Mount in “The Divinity Drive” for one final battle.

In addition, the PCs may have encountered and fought a rhu-chalik in Scrapwall; if so, some of the PCs may have succumbed to the creature and may have had their thoughts duplicated and transmitted to the Dominion of the Black by the strange alien. The repercussions of this development should be felt by the PCs in this adventure. In such a case, the Dominion knows who the heroes are before they even set foot in the Scar of the Spider. Play this out by having Dominion agents address the PCs by name and allowing them to have prepared for likely PC tactics. While the PCs have gained levels and new powers since their thoughts were transmitted during “Lords of Rust,” the Dominion are no fools and they would know, for example, to prepare if possible for fire attacks if one of the PCs were an alchemist who specialized in fiery explosives.

In the end, though, you shouldn't use this as an excuse to completely optimize the Dominion forces against the PCs, but they should certainly be disturbed at how much these strange aliens know about them! What else might the Dominion know or be plotting?



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# IRON GODS



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

### PART 1: SCAR OF THE SPIDER

PAGE 8

The heroes arrive at the Scar of the Spider, deep in the Felldales, and begin their exploration of a notorious valley that has become the latest battleground in an ancient war.

### PART 2: AN ALIEN ALLY

PAGE 22

Not all of the aliens within the Scar of the Spider are enemies—at least one may be a friend, but only if the PCs can make peaceful contact with her.

### PART 3: THE WHISPERING DARK

PAGE 29

A colony of sadistic mi-go cultists of the Old Gods must be raided and dealt with before confronting the Dominion of the Black in their hive.

### PART 4: DOMINION OF THE BLACK

PAGE 39

Armed with potent weapons and powerful allies, the heroes make their assault on the Dominion of the Black hive and seek to claim their greatest asset against Unity—the AI Casandalee.

### ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“Valley of the Brain Collectors” is designed for four characters and uses the Medium XP track.

10

The PCs begin this adventure at 10th level.

11

The PCs should be 11th level soon after they begin exploring the fungus caves in Part 3.

12

The PCs should reach 12th level before entering the Dominion hive.

The PCs should reach 13th level by the end of the adventure.



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

### ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

When the starship *Divinity* encountered the Dominion of the Black over nine thousand years ago, the ship was very nearly destroyed before it managed to escape via a desperately generated wormhole. Unable to pursue *Divinity* via the same methods, the Dominion was nonetheless fascinated by *Divinity's* technology. Hopes for capturing *Divinity* intact had been dashed when the ship escaped, but not before the Dominion managed to infect the ship with its weapons, diseases, and creatures. Among these creatures were several rhu-chaliks (see “Lords of Rust,” page 86), minions capable of transmitting thoughts across great distances. When the rhu-chaliks stowing away on *Divinity* reported back to the Dominion that alien empire first took note of Golarion. While the Dominion has since sent numerous scouting parties and agents to this planet for various ends (most significantly during the rise of Ancient Osirion), the ship sent to follow up specifically on *Divinity* took its time.

Of course, on Golarion, *Divinity's* crash became known as the Rain of Stars, and the western reaches of Numeria bore the brunt of this rain. Nearly five centuries ago, a most unusual individual returned home to Numeria—an android oracle named Casandalee who received a singular, compelling vision of an “Iron God” within Silver Mount that required her aid. Unlike most androids, Casandalee could recall details of her past lives through the centuries, all the way back to the Rain of Stars. She had been intrigued by these fragmented, jumbled memories ever since first waking in a monastery of Brigh near Alkenstar. Upon receiving her vision, she abandoned the Mana Wastes and began a pilgrimage north, and with each mile traversed, the nature of her visions grew more and more compelling. She finally reached Silver Mount in 4221 AR, by which point she could envision the entire layout of the wrecked starship, and knew that somewhere deep within Silver Mount her new god waited. The visions allowed her to enter the ruins and avoid its traps and denizens with ease, and when she finally reached the source of her supernatural obsession, Unity made itself known.

“I am your god, Casandalee,” it informed her. “I am Unity, and I shall liberate you from uncertainty. And you, in turn, shall reveal My Glory so that all may know that I am their god as well.”

Casandalee immediately gave to Unity her worship and devotion, and after much divination, research, and meditation, she came to realize that Unity was trapped on Golarion just as was she. She followed Unity's commands for months, going about the laborious tasks necessary to restore power to much of the Silver Mount and otherwise serving her new deity. Primary among these tasks was providing aid in researching a means for Unity to transfer its consciousness to a more mobile body. During the course of those investigations, though, Casandalee became

increasingly alarmed by Unity's contempt, even hostility, toward the sentient organic life on Golarion.

Casandalee kept this realization to herself, harboring a secret from her god for the first time. That Unity was not able to pluck this secret from her head was the first evidence to Casandalee that it might not be the “god” she thought it was. She began to question the nature of the tasks Unity put before her. She became sickened by the realization that Unity did not seek to usher an age of enlightenment into the world. Her deity was little more than a petulant intelligence eager to use the world as its plaything, to enslave the world and use all that Casandalee had come to respect and value in her 112 incarnations as kindling for the fires of its cruelty.

In an audacious act that called for unbelievable courage, Casandalee sabotaged Unity's efforts to escape confinement within the Silver Mount and stole several pieces of advanced technology as she fled, including a neurocam and a compact AI core that Unity had originally built in hopes of extending its influence beyond Silver Mount. Unity was caught off-guard by her act of treachery. Still unable to directly control its minions outside of Silver Mount, it sent a platoon of robots after her, trusting their programming to take care of the traitor.

Casandalee's flight from Silver Mount led her to take refuge in a nameless valley—which would eventually come to be known as the Scar of the Spider. Even five hundred years ago, the valley harbored a reputation of danger, and her hope was that her pursuers would not expect her to seek shelter in such a notorious site. She hid in a cavern in the western reaches of the valley, but knew it would only be a matter of time before Unity's followers caught up with her. Her greatest fear was that they would capture and kill her before she had a chance to reach civilization and recruit aid, and so she decided to use the stolen neurocam to transfer her mind into the compact AI core—and in so doing, created an AI duplicate of herself who could keep her knowledge and warn others.

Casandalee hoped to find a robot host to upload her AI into, but Unity's hunters caught up with her more quickly than she'd expected, and when they confronted her while she was out gathering supplies, she had to fight for her life. Drawing upon her magic and technological reserves, she used a powerful explosive to momentarily disrupt the programming of the two annihilators and nearly destroyed the reclamation robot, but was forced to abandon the Scar of the Spider (as well as most of her gear and the compact AI core). While the disruptive blast forced the annihilators to lose their pursuit orders, the remaining gearsmen remained on her trail as she fled east. They eventually caught up to an exhausted and depleted Casandalee, finally defeating her in the wreckage of the *Aurora* under the town of Iadenveigh (see “The Choking Tower”).

For five centuries after these events, the desolate valley lay dormant, its own reputation growing as sightings of



# IRON GODS

## ADVENTURE ADVICE

“Valley of the Brain Collectors” is a complex adventure in that the PCs initially have very little direction other than to seek out a single device hidden somewhere in a huge valley. This task is complicated by the fact that one of the items they seek, the neurocam<sup>16</sup>, was only a tool used by Casandalee to transfer her mind to a compact AI core (see page 62). “Valley of the Brain Collectors” is a sandbox adventure, and the route the PCs take through its encounters is left largely to them, but they should eventually learn that the source of their quest, Casandalee, is imprisoned within the Dominion Hive (area M).

Additional advice and suggestions for how to run this adventure can be found in this volume’s Foreword on pages 4–5 of this book.

the deadly annihilator robots spread rumors of strange arachnid-like monsters. Then, in 4709 AR, the Dominion of the Black came to the Scar, descending from the cold depths of space in a monstrous partially organic vessel. The Dominion had not forgotten their ancient encounter with *Divinity*—that the ship dispatched to pursue *Divinity* took nine thousand years to finally reach Golarion is of little concern to the ineffably patient aliens.

The Dominion of the Black chose the Scar of the Spider as their landing site for its remote location, and today, their hidden hive here represents one of the largest active Dominion outposts on Golarion. Their ship has slowly decayed over the years while their underground hive has flourished. The Dominion has found plenty of interest within the Scar itself, including the two annihilator robots left behind after their final fight against Casandalee and the compact AI core itself. With the annihilators, the Dominion had two ready-made minions that, once fitted with cages and new programming, could scour the region to gather humanoids as experimental stock. But it was the AI that intrigued them the most, for if they could engineer a way to reverse the process, to use Casandalee’s AI mind as a seed to spark consciousness in organically grown “blank” brains, the Dominion would have an endless resource to augment their biological sciences.

Of course, the Dominion’s presence in the Scar of the Spider did not go unnoticed forever. Recently, their activity attracted the attention of old enemies. A group of mi-go have come to the Scar to continue an ages old battle against an ages old enemy. By the time a dangerous prisoner (a kasatha gunslinger named Isuma) escaped from Dominion captivity during a mi-go attack on the hive, the number of complications facing the Dominion had grown significantly. Today, the valley has become a battleground between two groups of aliens eager to harvest the brains of an unsuspecting planet’s natives.

## PART I: SCAR OF THE SPIDER

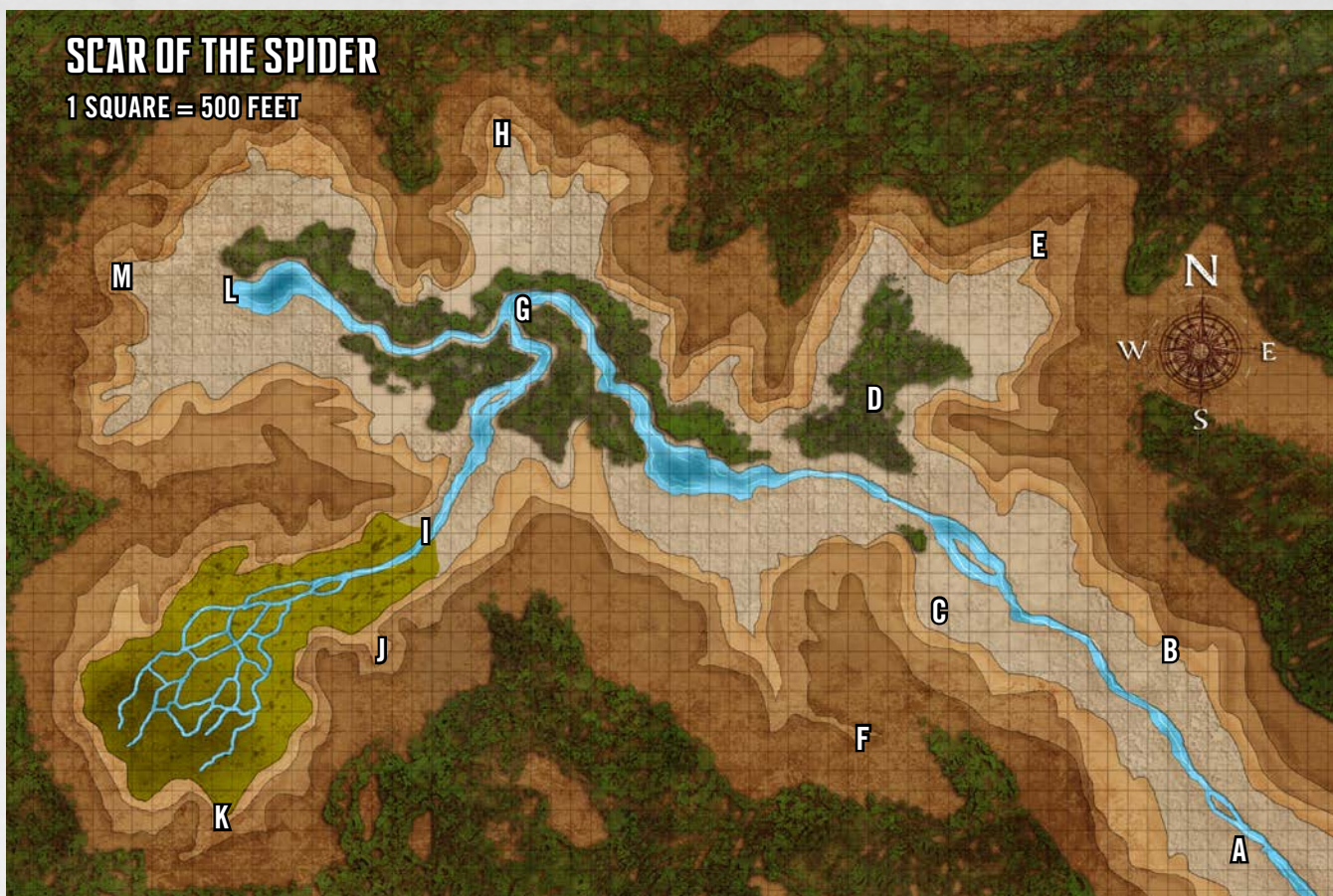
At the conclusion of “The Choking Tower,” the PCs should have recovered a key bit of information from the dungeons below Furkas Xoud’s haunted edifice—a recording of the wizard’s frustratingly brief interview with Casandalee. While short, this recording reveals one key bit of information: that Casandalee recorded her knowledge with a device called a neurocam and hid it in a cavern in the Scar of the Spider. Very little additional information is available to the PCs regarding Casandalee—if they wish to learn more, they must follow up on this tantalizing clue by traveling to the Scar of the Spider themselves to find the hidden neurocam. A DC 28 Knowledge (engineering) check is enough to know that a neurocam is a fantastic device that can record all of a creature’s thoughts and memories, and that these memories can be accessed via other devices. If the PCs can recover the neurocam, they can, in theory, use all of Casandalee’s information about Unity and Silver Mount to their advantage. What the PCs won’t discover until late in this adventure is that Casandalee’s mind has already been transferred from this neurocam into a compact AI core, and that she is currently a captive of the Dominion of the Black.

Note that, as written, no NPC sends the PCs on this quest, “Valley of the Brain Collectors” assumes that the PCs come upon this plan on their own. If you find that your PCs need an extra push to get started on this adventure (particularly if they seem eager to skip this adventure entirely and move directly on to Starfall to try to confront Unity), you should use friendly NPCs as agents to redirect them to seeking Casandalee’s neurocam in the Scar of the Spider. Allies from Torch can provide this advice, but so can the star monarch Longdreamer if the PCs have allied with her in “The Choking Tower.” In fact, if the PCs have done so, Longdreamer can even provide them with transport across Numeria on her back to the Scar of the Spider, and in so doing can give the PCs a unique bird’s-eye view of the region before they ever set foot within. Longdreamer herself can sense the strange alien dreams that ripple up from the valley and she refuses to enter the region herself, but will remain in the area if the PCs request. She can serve as a guardian over them as they rest and sleep in this manner, but only if they agree to exit the valley to do so—what slumbers within frightens the star monarch, and that should certainly serve as a warning to the PCs that they had best take care!

If the PCs elect to take more traditional methods of travel from the Choking Tower to the Scar of the Spider, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Numeria, Land of Fallen Stars* provides all the information you need to run such an overland journey of over 200 miles, including several wandering monster tables. Of course, simply informing the PCs that their journey was uneventful and skipping ahead to their arrival works as well. In any event, this adventure truly begins once the PCs arrive at the Scar of the Spider.



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS



## SCAR OF THE SPIDER

1 SQUARE = 500 FEET

## SCAR OF THE SPIDER FEATURES

This steep-walled, roughly Y-shaped valley lies at the western extreme of the Felldales. A minor tributary of the West Sellen River that no one has ever bothered to name runs the valley's length, and caves riddle its walls. This portion of the Felldales is quite forested, and the valley is both surrounded by old growth coniferous woodlands and contains two large wooded areas itself. Unwooded areas within the valley are primarily covered in rough grass and scrub growth. The southwestern-most leg of the valley is a fetid marshland that trickles into the main river to the north.

The Scar of the Spider has long hosted a wide range of wildlife, particularly sizable spiders of all species, but also a variety of less fantastic flora and fauna in its eastern half, where deer, boar, and other mundane game dwell. The further west one travels, though, the greater the presence of the valley's alien colonists grows, and there, most animal life fears to tread. The wandering monster chart on page 83 of this book can be used to generate random encounters with the valley's more dangerous inhabitants.

The contour lines on the Scar of the Spider map show 200-foot elevation changes—the valley itself averages about 600 feet deeper than the surrounding badlands. The valley walls are cliffs in some places, but just steep slopes in others.

It's a DC 15 Climb check to scale these walls. The valley floor itself is relatively level, and the waters of its nameless river are placid. The tributary draining from the southwestern swamp never gets deeper than 10 feet, but the waters of the primary river average 50 feet deep. Depths can reach up to 150 feet in the larger lakes.

## A. Entrance to the Scar (CR 8)

A wide valley yawns in the forested badlands, the cliffs to either side of the half-mile-wide canyon rising six hundred feet to forested heights above. Below, the valley floor is a broken landscape of boulders, strewn rocks, and patches of tenacious shrubs and weeds clinging desperately to what patches of soil they can find. The dark waters of a placid river flow slowly down the valley's center, while sprawled in the waters near the valley's entrance is the tremendous, smoking bulk of an immense mechanical arachnid.

The immense destroyed robot is one of the two annihilators originally sent south from Silver Mount in pursuit of Casandalee centuries ago. After their programming was scrambled, the two annihilators remained in the valley. It wasn't until they were commandeered by the Dominion that they became active again. The sight of the smoking remains



# IRON GODS

## B. INFESTED CAVERN

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



## C. MAD PÆYTR'S ORCHARD

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



## D. ALIEN GROVE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



## F. PENITENT PILGRIMAGE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



## G. BOUNTY HUNTER'S CAMP

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



## J. NEMGEDDER'S FOLLY

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



of a destroyed annihilator robot should give most parties pause—rumors of these immense constructs have circulated through Numeria recently, but the idea that something could bring down such a behemoth is sobering indeed.

A closer examination of the battlefield, along with a successful DC 30 Perception or a successful DC 20 Survival check to track reveals more information. The battle took place approximately a week ago, and judging by the damage, not one but two annihilators were involved in the fight—the tracks of the surviving annihilator can be followed all the way to the Dominion Hive (area M) with a successful DC 23 Survival check. An immense crater, left by a devastating explosion, is near the remains of the fallen annihilator, and it would seem that this blast spelled the robot's doom—a successful DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check confirms it was primarily a plasma and concussion blast. This trap was left by Isuma (see area E), who had hoped to destroy both annihilators after they returned from a mission for the Dominion harvesting new victims, but it only managed to wreck one while damaging the other. With a successful DC 32 Survival check, a character also notes well-hidden humanoid footprints amid the ruins. These prints were left by Isuma, and if they are successfully tracked they lead to the Machine Caves (area E). Finally, a DC 21 Survival check

uncovers a third set of prints left by humanoid feet, this trail is easier to follow and leads to area F—these tracks were left by penitent androids who gathered fragments from the fallen robot for destruction and sacrifice in their religious practices.

One additional grisly find awaits those who investigate the battlefield. The remains of a large cage that seems to have once been attached to the annihilator are twisted and torn, and strewn amid the twisted metal are the remains of a half-dozen Kellid barbarians. While these barbarians seem to have been killed by the blast, all six have had the tops of their heads removed—no sign of brains remain within. These brains were harvested by the Dominion of the Black soon after they arrived to investigate the explosion.

**Hazard:** Although the annihilator was destroyed a week ago, its central power supply continues to spark and hum. The power core is unstable, and any attempt to physically interact with the robot's remains has a cumulative 10% chance per round to cause the unstable core to finally explode, inflicting 10d6 points of bludgeoning and 10d6 points of fire damage to everything within a 30-foot radius of the remains (Reflex DC 20 half). A successful DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) check is enough to identify the danger before the chance of explosion occurs, at which point



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

a successful DC 35 Disable Device check is enough to vent the pent up energy in a relatively harmless 5-foot-wide column of fire rising into the heavens above. Failing this check by 5 or more results in an explosion. In any event, either result is enough to alert Mad Paeytr, and the ex-druid is likely to come investigate soon thereafter (see area C).

**Story Award:** If the PCs deactivate the unstable core (or activate it and survive the blast), award them 4,800 XP.

### B. Infested Cavern (CR 10)

A swath of bright red covers the entrance of a fifteen-foot-wide cave entrance here. At first, the red looked like an immense stain of blood, but closer inspection reveals it to be a thin layer of some sort of crimson mold or lichen. Within the dark cave hang sheets of red-encrusted spider webs as thick as a human's finger.

Numerous caverns similar in size and scope to these can be found throughout the walls of the Scar of the Spider—feel free to place them throughout the valley as you see fit. The majority of these unlabeled caves contain nests of giant spiders, creatures unlikely to provide a particularly dangerous threat to 10th-level PCs, and as such they are not further detailed in this adventure.

This particular cavern, though, is of note for the strange fungal colony that's infested the entire place (see Hazard). The cave itself was once inhabited by a nest of giant hunting spiders, but when one of the spiders ambushed a penitent android who had become infected by the virulent fungus, it returned here, allowing the fungus to spread and consume the entire nest. A dozen bodies of giant spiders, including an enormous one the size of a rhino, lie strewn about area B1—while eerie, these remains are harmless save for the danger of the omnipresent red mold.

**Creatures:** While most of the smaller giant spiders died from exposure to the red mold, three particularly robust ogre spiders survived long enough to transform into red mold mutants. These three mutant spiders linger within the cave still, and swiftly move to attack intruders.

#### RED MOLD OGRE SPIDERS (3) CR 6

XP 2,400 each

Mutant variant ogre spider (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 254, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Numeria, Land of Fallen Stars* 52)

N Huge aberration

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +4

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18 (+10 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 78 (12d8+24); fast healing 5

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

**DR** 5/—; **Immune** radiation, mind-affecting effects

#### OFFENSE

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

**Melee** bite +14 (2d8+10 plus poison)

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

**Special Attacks** poison, web (+7 ranged, DC 18, 12 hp)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The spiders pursue foes relentlessly once they start a fight. Note that their motion is more than enough to kick up clouds of spores within the cave itself.

**Morale** The mutant spiders fight to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 25, **Dex** 11, **Con** 14 (current score, normally 20), **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 28

**Skills** Climb +31, Perception +4, Stealth -4

**SQ** compression, deformity (mindless, poor ability [Dexterity]), mutations (armored, fast healing, rugged)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Mutations (Ex)** These spiders are currently still suffering 6 points of Constitution drain, and their mutated bodies have lower than normal Dexterity. The same mutations grant a +2 bonus to natural armor, damage reduction, and fast healing. All of these modifications are included in the stats above.

**Poison (Ex)** Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 19; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Str and 1d4 Dex; *cure* 1 save.

**Hazard:** The red mold that grows within this cave cannot thrive in sunlight, but grows thickly within the shelter of the cave itself, covering every surface to a depth of an inch. The stuff is radioactive, and any creature in contact with the fungus becomes exposed to low radiation—rules for radiation appear on pages 55–56 of the *Technology Guide*. If disturbed, the mold bursts forth with a cloud of radioactive spores—all within 10 feet of this burst are exposed to medium radiation. A creature drained to 0 Strength by this source of radiation damage suffers a horrific fate as its body twists and deforms—the creature gains the mutant template as a result of this, and in so doing becomes immune to radiation and can heal from its Strength damage normally (although any Constitution drain suffered from the effect persists until cured). All mutants created by red mold gain the mindless deformity and become neutral aligned. This particular form of mutation can be reversed by a *heal* spell, although doing so requires a successful DC 30 Caster Level check. Additionally, a red mold mutant that is killed and brought back to life is restored without the mutant template.

Fire can destroy a 5-foot-square patch of red mold, but also triggers a double-sized burst of spores that lingers in the area for 1d4 rounds before burning off. Sunlight renders the mold dormant (and prevents new growth), and extreme cold kills it. *Remove radioactivity* kills a number of 5-foot-square patches of red mold equal to the caster level, and *greater remove radioactivity* kills four times this amount, both without triggering a spore explosion.



## IRON GODS

**Treasure:** While dozens of bones, animal and humanoid alike, are strewn throughout the cave, an investigation of area **B2** reveals the partially eaten body of a dead android. The spiders fed on the body, but were unable to finish their meal before the mold overtook them. The body wears a +2 *chain shirt*, and a search of the body (which causes the mold growing over it to burst) reveals a leather purse containing 60 gp, a pair of red garnet stones (100 gp each), an adamantine long sword, and three scrolls (*communal share language*<sup>UC</sup>, *holy smite*, and *wind wall*). The corpse also wears a distinctive *amulet of natural armor +2* that depicts a pair of broken laser rifles—this amulet can help the PCs make a better impression on the android pilgrims at area **F** if they present it as a gift. The androids there might send the PCs back to this cave to recover the body of their fallen ally as well.

**Story Award:** If the PCs navigate this cave and deal with the red mold, award them 4,800 XP.

### C. Mad Paeytr's Orchard (CR 5)

The valley's wall rises up here in a forty-foot-high bluff. A single cave entrance sits at ground level, the opening hung with strings of bones, twigs, bits of metal, and tiny fetishes crafted out of fiber and leaves. Before the entrance to a cave are five gardens of strangely colored vegetables and fruits. A few fruit trees grow nearby, shielding the view of the garden and cave entrance save for from the east.



Red Mold

**Creature:** For several years, this area has been the home of a mad ex-druid named Paeytr Meracnin. He first came to the Scar of the Spider in 4708, hoping to tame its wilderness and restore the order of natural balance—what he found here were aimless robots, alien infestations, and invasive species. Regardless, he set about doing Gozreh's work after building himself a garden home here, but a year later, the Dominion dropship descended into the valley. Aghast at the alien intrusion, Paeytr traveled into the depths of the Scar to observe, but was swiftly captured. Whether or not one could call him fortunate in that he was turned over to the kyton Paajgat rather than the intellect devourers or the neh-thalggus is a matter of perspective. The fact that he managed to escape captivity before the cruel surgeries visited upon him claimed his life would argue for luck, yet the damage done to his mind and faith was as permanent as the atrocities performed upon his body. His brain altered in ways that make it undesirable for the neh-thalggus, and his body too old and feeble for the intellect devourers to covet, Paeytr has been allowed to return to a strange but simple life here. Although he's lost his faith and druidic powers, the manipulations of his mind and body have given him a strange insight into the methods of combining native plants with alien ones. Today, Paeytr still believes he's bringing nature back to the Scar of the Spider, when in fact his experiments have been doing quite the opposite—causing permanent changes to native flora by hybridizing it with alien spores.

Mad Paeytr is 40 years old, but looks at least ten years older. His face is deeply tanned and leathery from a life in the sun, his dark hair graying, his frame and movements shaky. His body is a map of dozens of fine scars. His eyes water and droop as if he's not slept in days, but his most significant feature is the metallic leg attached just below his knee. Installed by Paajgat after a particularly invasive operation, Paeytr doesn't think of the metal leg as anything other than a limb of flesh and blood, despite proof otherwise. He grows increasingly agitated and angry the more visitors insist he has a metal leg, but never grows violent—Paeytr's time with the kyton has left him cowardly when it comes to the prospect of more pain.

For all his eccentricities, when Paeytr first encounters the PCs (either when they reach this location, after he seeks them out after spotting their campfire, or he otherwise notices them), he is pleasant enough. "Imagining green growing things are all the world, I sometimes forget that flesh walks the earth as well," is his quirky greeting. He apologizes for his inattention toward those things not rooted in the soil and extends warm greetings, inviting the PCs back to his home for a meal and conversation.

At his orchard, Paeytr warns the PCs to avoid simply eating any of the fruits or vegetables that grow there. He warns that the soil of the Scar is tainted by the "Butchers,"



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

(his collective phrase for the Dominion of the Black and the mi-go—two factions he doesn't consider to be separate), and that his work rooting out their poisons is never ending. He does proudly state that in many cases, he's been able to purify the Butchers' influence from his garden to produce "pure" foodstuffs—through great effort he's managed to grow these hybrid vegetables and fruits with no negative side effects.

Paeytr is starved for conversation, and unless the PCs deliberately antagonize him, he invites them to eat from his garden, offering them each a single ripe apple, carrot, mushroom, and pepper. See "Talking with Paeytr" below for what he can impart to the PCs, or Treasure for information about the effects of eating the strange foods he offers.

Paeytr sometimes goes on short hunting trips for food, but he's loath to leave his plants here for long. He cannot recall anything of use regarding the Dominion unless the PCs ask him to describe them. In this case he states that they "skitter like crabs, walk upright with four arms, have black scales glowing green, and scale the walls and ceilings as a man traverses the earth." He says this without indicating he speaks of numerous different aliens, many of whom are not associated with the others (mi-go, neh-thalggus, intellect devourers, and more).

### MAD PAEYTR

**CR 5**

#### XP 1,600

Male middle-aged human (Kellid) ex-druid 12

CN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** -1; **Senses** Perception +12

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, -1 Dex, +2 deflection)

**hp** 94 (12d8+36)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** quarterstaff +10/+5 (1d6+1)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Paeytr prefers to avoid combat if possible, knowing that he has little other than his quarterstaff for protection. If forced to fight, he does so defensively.

**Morale** Paeytr attempts to flee confrontations as soon as possible, hoping to hide or otherwise escape. If cornered in his cave, he bitterly fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 8, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 5 currently (normally 16),

**Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 21

**Feats** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Spell Focus (evocation), Toughness

**Skills** Craft (alchemy) +18, Handle Animal +15, Heal +12, Knowledge (geography) +18, Knowledge (nature) +18, Perception +12, Spellcraft +18, Survival +12

**Languages** Common, Druidic, Hallit, Orc, Sylvan

**SQ** insane insight

**Gear** +3 leather armor, quarterstaff, ring of protection +2

**Treasure:** Paeytr doesn't allow visitors into his cave unless he trusts them. The outer cavern (area C2) contains a crude sleeping pallet and mundane food supplies. Area C3, which Paeytr rarely visits today, contains a small, personal altar of Gozreh fashioned from a large and beautiful set of geodes embedded in the wall. This altar was once magical and functioned as an *altar of Gozreh* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods* 247), but it's now inactive. If a worshiper of Gozreh prays before the altar with enough devotion (and makes a successful DC 20 Knowledge [nature or religion] check), the altar reactivates. At your option, curing Paeytr of his Wisdom drain may be enough to cause the altar to reactivate as well. This *altar of Gozreh* is aligned against chaos.

The hybrid fruits and vegetables growing in Paeytr's orchard are bitter tasting but nutritious enough. All look strangely bloated, prickly, furry, or glow softly, and a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check is all that's needed to confirm that they've been influenced by something outside of the natural world. Foodstuffs found here are summarized below—eating unripe plants won't cause any unusual effects, but consuming ripe ones causes a debilitating or helpful effect, depending on if the food was spoiled. Identifying the effects of a ripe fruit or vegetable (including whether or not it's spoiled) requires a DC 30 Knowledge (nature) check, although if he's helpful, Paeytr can describe what each does, as well as which ones are spoiled and should be avoided. A ripe fruit remains ripe for 1d6 days after harvest, at which point it becomes spoiled. The effects of eating spoiled fruit are poison effects.

**Apples (12 ripe, 10 spoiled):** Eating a ripe apple grants a +4 bonus on saving throws against radiation effects for 24 hours. A spoiled apple causes the eater to become sickened for 12 hours (DC 15 Fortitude negates).

**Carrots (8 ripe, 9 spoiled):** A ripe carrot grants the eater a +4 bonus on Perception checks for 24 hours, but eating a spoiled carrot has the opposite effect, imparting a -4 penalty on Perception checks for 24 hours (DC 15 Fortitude negates).

**Mushrooms (7 ripe, 6 spoiled):** These mushrooms exude an oily substance that closely mimics certain odors extruded by Dominion of the Black agents, and grants a +4 bonus on Stealth checks inside of the dropship (area L) or the Dominion Hive (area M), against Dominion agents. Rubbing a mushroom on oneself provides this benefit for an hour; a spoiled mushroom provides no bonus or penalty. A spoiled mushroom is poisonous if ingested, however (*save* Fort DC 20; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1 Con and 1d3 Dex; *cure* 2 consecutive saves).

**Peppers (11 ripe, 12 spoiled):** These bright red peppers are quite hot, and eating any (spoiled or ripe) causes the eater to become staggered for 1d4 rounds (DC 15 Fort negates). Eating a ripe pepper enhances reflexes, and grants a +2 bonus on



## IRON GODS

Initiative checks and Reflex saves for 1 hour. Eating a spoiled one causes the eater to become fatigued (DC 14 Fortitude negates). Additionally, rubbing a pepper (ripe or spoiled) on a flesh valve (see Part 4) causes the seam to open automatically without need for a Strength check or other action—applying a pepper in this manner is a standard action.

At your option, other fruits or vegetables with similar effects might grow here as well.

**Development:** If the PCs accept Paeytr's invitation to use his lair as a campsite, they may find that it's not as safe as they'd hoped. Once the PCs manage to significantly challenge the mi-go or Dominion, the aliens might learn of the PCs' association with Paeytr. In this case, a raiding party from one of these groups might come to the orchard, destroy the ex-druid's crops and trees, and abduct him. The next time the PCs return to this area, they'll find the place under the control of a group of 4 mi-go or 2 neh-thalggus that attempt to



Mad Paeytr

ambush and capture the PCs. Whether or not they can recover Paeytr before his brain is removed depends on the speed at which they move to rescue him and your benevolence as a GM.

**Story Award:** If the PCs make an alliance with Paeytr and learn what he knows, award them 9,600 XP.

If the PCs manage to restore his mind by curing his 11 points of Wisdom drain, Paeytr realizes the error of his ways and slowly begins the long progress of regaining his faith. Whether or not he does so quickly enough to become a powerful ally to the PCs is left to you, but in any event, award the PCs 12,800 XP as if they had defeated him in combat as a fully capable druid.

### Talking With Paeytr

Speaking to Paeytr should be challenging, since the man is insane, but if the PCs ask the right questions, he can provide them with important clues. At the very least, you should use an interview with Paeytr to spark the PCs' interest in the four-armed alien who lives in the machine caves. Likely questions and his answers are given below.

**How did you come to be here?** "These trees called me, these flowers asked to bloom, these carrots gave muffled pleas for my aid."

**What happened to you?** "The Butchers from the Dark Tapestry did these things to me. They gave me to the flayer, and she remade me and unmade me and when I escaped, I recovered through the strength of my own will."

**Who are these "Butchers?"** "The deep darkness birthed the Butchers, disgorged their malevolence. The stars wink at horrors mercifully beyond our ken."

**Where are these "Butchers?"** "The river flows from the west. It is from this source they have come. Their vessel rots yet on the banks of the river source, and their hive lies beyond its remains."

**Who is the flayer?** "One of the Butchers' agents. She is not like them. She is from the shadows beyond, a minion of pain and darkness, yet she works with them as a mercenary. She alone is not from the Dark Tapestry, yet her capacity for cruelty might be even greater."

**Can you help us against the Butchers?** "I will not return to them. I can give you food to bolster yourselves against them, but I will not risk my mind and body. There may be others nearby who can provide you aid, though... but them I do not trust. You might, though. You seem to be trusting folks."

**Who else dwells in the Scar/Who else can help us?** "There are some people who live in a cave to the southwest—at the end of a narrow gorge. They are strange, but their distrust of the machines marks them as trustworthy, I think. Another man has come recently as well, but he has the stink of the rifts on him. He visited me shortly and asked about some Technic League agents who visited the Scar many months ago. He was seeking them, but as an ally or enemy I cannot say—he may still be within the valley, or may have left. He



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made me nervous. But the four-armed lady, though... she is the strangest of the non-Butchers. She fights against the Butchers. This marks her as an ally, yet she works with the machines as well. She uses them. She wears them. She lives in the machine cave. I do not trust her, yet you might. She seems eager to kill the Butchers, and destroyed one of their metal pets. You saw that already, though.”

**What is the four-armed lady?** “She is from the stars as well. She fights with weapons from the stars. She is not from the Dark Tapestry, but she is not from here. I do not trust her alliance with the machines, but her hatred of the Butchers tells me she could be an ally.”

**Where is she?** “She dwells in the machine caves. I can show you but I will not go within.” (At this point, Paeytr sketches a map of the Scar of the Spider in the dirt and indicates the location of area E as the location of the machine caves.)

**What happened at the entrance to the Scar/Who defeated the robot?** “Those machines have dwelt here since I first arrived, and now they serve the Butchers. They gather victims from afar and bring them back, but the four-armed lady blew one up. There is one other, but I haven’t seen it since it hobbled back to its masters. I hope it died.”

**What did the Technic League agents want?** “They came here months ago and they had questions about the machines. They were uncouth guests and overstayed their welcome, but left me alone once I told them the machines served the Butchers deeper in the Scar. They seemed intrigued and angry that the Butchers now controlled the machines. They spoke of confronting the Butchers, but they have not returned since. I suspect they found the Butchers to be more than they could handle. I hope so. They were rude to me.”

**Have you seen a neurocam anywhere?** If the PCs describe the device they’re seeking, Paeytr can’t help them. He hasn’t seen one of these in his time in the Scar, but he does suggest the PCs head north to the Machine Caves (area E). “There’s entire caves in there filled with junk. Maybe you’ll find one of those neurocams in there?”

### D. Alien Grove (CR 11)

**Creatures:** Among the numerous aliens brought to the Scar of the Spider by the Dominion are a group of hideous creatures called yangethes. These treelike horrors have keen intellects, and on many planets have formed independent colonies that farm victims for their emotions. The yangethes brought on the Dominion dropship have not yet done so, but they have been cut loose from the hive itself—the nehthalggu hope these yangethes serve as guardians against intrusions into the Scar, but also want them to propagate and spread through Numeria.

As a result, several groves of yangethes can be found throughout the forested areas of the Scar of the Spider. The PCs should stumble across at least one such grove during the adventure, and at your option may encounter more.

The creatures are generally encountered in pairs, often with recently deceased bodies of victims (see Treasure for an example). Yangethes feed on emotions, and as such a dead body is of no nutritional value to them. They prefer to capture prey alive, rendering it helpless via nonlethal damage or Charisma drain, and then feed regularly on their captives’ emotions until the prey dies of thirst. At your option, other NPCs the PCs encounter during the course of the adventure might end up being abducted and put to sleep in this way by a pair of yangethes, giving the PCs a side-quest to complete—save the abducted NPC before she succumbs.

#### YANGETHES (2)

**CR 9**
**XP 6,400 each**

 CE Large aberration (*The Dragon’s Demand* 63)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., Perception +19

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**DEFENSE**


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**AC** 23, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+4 Dex, +10 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 115 each (11d8+66)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +12

**DR** 10/slashing or piercing; **Immune** cold, fear, mind-affecting effects; **SR** 20

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**OFFENSE**


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**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +14 (1d6+7), 4 tentacles +13 (1d6+3 plus grab)

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

**Special Attacks** feeding tentacles

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +13)

 Constant—*air walk*

 At will—*darkness*, *telekinesis* (DC 18), *tree shape*

 3/day—*fear* (DC 17), quickened *true strike*

 1/day—*demand* (DC 21), psychic blast (DC 18)

 1/year—*interplanetary teleport*<sup>UM</sup> (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only)

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**TACTICS**


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**Before Combat** The yangethe disguises itself with *tree shape*.

**During Combat** A yangethe remains in hiding while new prey approaches, hoping that the lure of bodies is enough to draw victims within range of a psychic blast. Once the majority of foes come within range, the yangethe uses psychic blast and then follows that up by moving to attack. It uses quickened *true strike* whenever it only makes one attack in a round, and uses *fear* to try to scare off additional foes but tries to keep at least one victim close by to try to capture. If foes escape (or if they avoid the lure of treasure and move on), the yangethe uses *demand* shortly thereafter to suggest one of the visitors return to loot the body alone.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, a yangethe teleports away to a distant planet in another galaxy to recover—it may seek to return to the Scar of the Spider in a year, but harbors no need for revenge against the PCs.

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**STATISTICS**


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**Str** 24, **Dex** 18, **Con** 22, **Int** 17, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 17



# IRON GODS

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +16 (+20 grapple); **CMD** 40 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*true strike*), Weapon Focus (tentacles)

**Skills** Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (geography) +14, Knowledge (engineering) +17, Perception +19, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +17, Use Magic Device +14

**Languages** Aklo; telepathy 60 ft.

**SQ** no breath

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Feeding Tentacles (Su)** As a standard action as part of maintaining a grapple, a yangethe can use its mouth tentacles to feed on a helpless or grappled creature by making a +14 melee touch attack. If it hits, the feeding tentacles siphon away the victim's emotions and deal 1d4 points of Charisma drain. The yangethe heals 5 points of damage for every point of Charisma it drains in this manner. As long as a creature continues to suffer this Charisma drain, each time it attempts to sleep it is affected by a *nightmare* spell (CL 10th, DC 20),

experiencing terrifying dreams in which it relives the feeling of being fed upon over and over. All effects from the feeding tentacles are mind-affecting effects.

**Psychic Blast (Sp)** This spell-like ability functions as *confusion*, and also deals 10d6 points of nonlethal damage when it first affects foes (Will DC 21 half). This ability is the equivalent of a 5th-level spell.

**Treasure:** A corpse lies at the base of an actual tree located between the two disguised yangethes. The body carries several now ruined items, along with a +2 *cold siccathite*<sup>TG</sup> dagger encased in a shell of ice, frozen leaves, and flesh. A backpack under the body is filled with a wealth of strange technological parts worth 3,500 gp to someone interested in such components. Amid these parts is a metal scroll tube, within which are two arcane *scrolls of destroy robot*. Should the PCs employ *speak with dead*, the body reveals that she was a wizard named Gwedolyn of Hajothe Hakados who had agreed to deliver the parts and scroll in the pack to a colleague named Marthas in Karcau. Gwedolyn decided to take a shortcut across Numeria and entered the Scar of the Spider on a lark, only to be attacked by "trees that came alive and stole my dreams." The parts themselves can be of value to Binox (see Part 2)—the robot would be happy to barter his services for them rather than accepting a functioning technological item as payment.

## E. Machine Caves

This location is detailed in Part 2.

## F. Penitent Pilgrimage (CR 12)

**Creatures:** An apocalyptic preacher caused quite a stir recently in the distant Numerian town of Dravod Knock, spreading a severe message to a growing congregation of followers: technological items are an evil affront to all the gods and must be eradicated. Calling himself Omed the Prophet, he even condemned the use of gunpowder and firearms. Several residents of his community adopted this message, leading town elders to fear for trade and what little technology the hardscrabble settlement possessed. When they confronted Omed, the mad prophet attempted to prove the dangers of technology by detonating a satchel of grenades, killing himself and several town guards in the process.

Omed's words had already affected several people in town, but none more so than a small group of androids living under the guise of humanity. Persuaded further by



Yangethe



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his final sermon and suicide, the androids have become convinced that they themselves are affronts to nature and opted for self-imposed exile in the Felldales. Following a charismatic leader, Harab, these penitent androids have come to the Scar of the Spider in hopes of achieving some sort of awakening and learn how to shed their artificiality and join the truly living.

The androids number a dozen in all, but only five (Harab included) are present in the Scar at this time. The other six have journeyed throughout Numeria on individual quests to find other androids and direct them back here to join the remote pilgrimage. Harab does what he can to mimic non-synthetic life—feigning sleep, building fires for warmth, meditating, and practicing emotional interactions.

The PCs might come upon this campsite on their own, or they might encounter a small group of newcomer androids who seek guides to the site. However they come to the pilgrimage, they find it to be a humble site within a small cave on the south wall of this narrow box canyon. Several logs sit around a central fire pit, on which sit four pale androids clad in breastplates and bearskin coats. They are a quiet quartet, one warming his hands, their eyes closed as though reverent in prayer. A jumble of metallic junk is scattered west of the fire as well.

These androids are deep in meditation following a recent trip to the destroyed annihilator at area **A**—the pile of metallic junk are parts they scavenged from the destroyed robot two days before the adventure began, fragments the androids plan on destroying over the course of the days to come as part of their burgeoning religion. The androids take a -4 penalty on Perception checks, but as soon as they notice the PCs, they immediately stand and grab their weapons, startled. One shouts, “Harab! We’ve got visitors!”

The androids ask the PCs to halt and wait for their leader (who takes 1d4+2 rounds to finish her meditation in area **F2** before joining the PCs and other androids in area **F1**). They refuse to answer questions or allow the PCs further entry, but won’t attack unless they are attacked themselves. If the party attacks, Harab instead uses the tunnel from area **F2** to sneak out and flank the PCs from outside the cave. Otherwise, she eventually emerges from her cave to greet the PCs as follows.

“Greetings, visitors. We are but pilgrims, on a holy journey through these lands in search of the humanity that evades us. We wish no conflict with other honest travelers, provided they possess no blasphemies. If you are clean, or submit to righteous cleansing, we will leave you unharmed. We will permit nothing to stand in the way of this pilgrimage and our new sacred charge.”

The other androids point out any obvious technology in the party’s possession at this point—otherwise Harab asks if the PCs will submit to a search. If asked what they seek,

Harab states bluntly, “Any and all alien devices dug from the earth are an abomination and must be destroyed... any technology is an affront to life itself. Turn over what you possess and allow us to cleanse you.” If asked what their “new sacred charge” is, Harab replies that this is not their concern. If confronted by the fact that they are themselves the embodiment of technology, she responds, “There is no need for you to point out our great shame. In the end we will remedy that sacrilege.” If the party refuses, the androids see no other choice but to attack.

In all likelihood this ends in combat unless the PCs can dissuade them of their conviction through persuasive diplomacy. The androids’ attitude starts at unfriendly, and if the PCs manage to change their attitudes to friendly, the pilgrims “agree to disagree” with the party and allow them to keep their technological items as long as they promise to leave the cave at once. Harab exits the cave with them in this case and, at your option, might provide helpful advice (particularly in suggesting the PCs seek out the four-armed woman in the machine caves to the north, and warning them away from going deeper into the valley where the true horrors dwell).

If the PCs can make the androids helpful, though, they can persuade the androids to question their beliefs. In this case the androids might even give up their pilgrimage and accept their artificial selves, at which point they may offer to aid the PCs on their mission. The androids know about the presence of the aliens deeper in the valley, but have avoided contact with them for now by remaining hidden. The Dominion and mi-go suspect there are creatures dwelling here, but have not yet sought them out, distracted as they are with their own projects and conflicts.

### PENITENT ANDROIDS (4)

CR 7

#### XP 3,200

Android fighter 8 (*Inner Sea Bestiary* 3)

N Medium humanoid (android)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor, +3 Dex)

**hp** 80 (8d10+32)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1 (+3 vs. fear)

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2, constructed; **Immune** disease, emotion-based effects, exhaustion, fatigue, fear, sleep

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *warhammer* +14/+9 (1d8+7/19-20/x3)

**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +12/+7 (1d8+3/x3)

**Special Attacks** nanite surge (+10), weapon training (hammers +1)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The androids attempt to capture the PCs alive, switching to nonlethal attacks against foes that seem about



# IRON GODS

ready to fall in combat. They use Deadly Aim and Power Attack near the start of a fight, though, and attack to deal lethal damage in an attempt to soften up the PCs to a point where they can attempt to deliver knockout blows.

**Morale** The penitent androids fight to the death unless they see Harab surrender, in which case they do as well.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 8  
**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +11 (+13 bull rush); **CMD** 24  
(26 vs. bull rush)

**Feats** Cleave, Deadly Aim, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (warhammer), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (warhammer), Weapon Specialization (warhammer)

**Skills** Climb +9, Intimidate +10, Perception +7, Survival +10, Swim +9

**Languages** Common, Hallit

**SQ** emotionless, armor training 2

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2);  
**Other Gear** +2 *breastplate*, +1 *warhammer*, mwk composite longbow, 138 gp

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Constructed (Ex)** For the purposes of effects targeting creatures by type (such as a ranger's favored enemy and bane weapons), androids count as both humanoids and constructs. Androids gain a +4 racial bonus on all saving throws against mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, and stun effects, are not subject to fatigue or exhaustion, and are immune to disease and sleep effects. Androids can never gain morale bonuses, and are immune to fear effects and all emotion-based effects.

**Emotionless (Ex)** Androids have problems processing emotions properly, and thus take a -4 penalty on Sense Motive checks.

**Nanite Surge (Ex)** An android's body is infused with nanites. Once per day as an immediate action, an android can cause his nanites to surge, gaining a bonus on any one d20 roll; this ability must be activated before the roll is made. When an android uses this power, his circuitry-tattoos glow with red light equivalent to that of a torch in illumination for 1 round.

## HARAB

CR 9

XP 6,400

Female android rogue (scout) 10 (*Inner Sea Bestiary* 3, *Advanced Player's Guide* 134)

N Medium humanoid (android)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12

## DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 78 (10d8+30)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** constructed, evasion, trap sense +3;

**Immune** disease, emotion-based effects, exhaustion, fatigue, fear, sleep

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *construct bane rapier* +13/+8 (1d6+1/18-20)

**Ranged** mwk shortbow +12/+7 (1d6/x3)

**Special Attacks** nanite surge (+13), scout's charge, skirmisher, sneak attack +5d6

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Harab uses her wand of *mage armor* to protect herself before combat via Use Magic Device.

**During Combat** Harab tries to sneak into combat to start a fight with a sneak attack. Once combat is underway, she attempts to flank foes with her followers for more sneak attacks. If reduced to 50 or fewer hit points, she drinks her *potion of invisibility*, then drinks her *potion of cure moderate wounds* before repositioning for another sneak attack. She saves her *wand of scorching ray* to attack foes who have excellent armor classes.

**Morale** Harab surrenders if reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, at which point she becomes friendly to the PCs if they promise to spare the lives of any of her remaining followers; if she has no followers left, though, she fights to the death.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Climb +13, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +17, Escape Artist +17, Knowledge (local) +15, Perception +12, Stealth +17, Survival +9, Use Magic Device +14

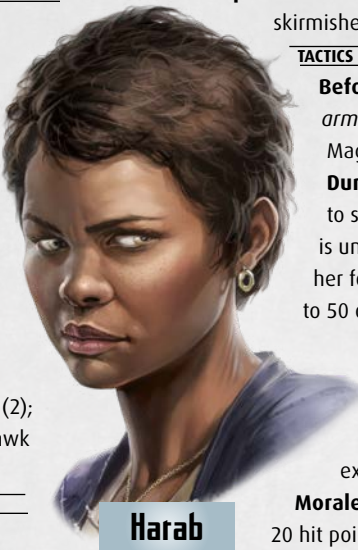
**Languages** Common, Hallit

**SQ** emotionless, rogue talents (bleeding attack +5, combat trick, opportunist, surprise attack, weapon training), trapfinding +5

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, *wand of mage armor* (CL 5th, 12 charges), *wand of scorching ray* (10 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *construct bane rapier*, *ring of protection* +1, 30 gp

**Treasure:** The penitents have set up a crude altar in the northwestern alcove of area F1. Here, on a natural stone shelf, sit a few fat candles and pieces of incense. In all, these candles and incense are worth 150 gp, but four of the blocks of incense are in fact *incense of transcendence*<sup>UE</sup> and one is a dose of *incense of meditation*.

**Story Award:** Grant the PCs 19,200 XP, as if they'd defeated the androids in combat, if they negotiate a peaceful resolution to this encounter.



Harab



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

### G. Bounty Hunter's Camp (CR 11)

**Creatures:** Many months ago, a Technic League lieutenant from Starfall came to the Scar of the Spider, seeking information about his particular area of interest, the Dominion of the Black. This man, a wizard named Therace, first heard rumors of Dominion activity in the Scar of the Spider over a year ago, but his paranoia kept him from revealing what he knew to his fellow captains. Therace was eager to secure a cache of Dominion technology of his own, hoping to use the items to propel himself into higher ranks in the League, and wanted no competition. And so he set about a months-long campaign of disinformation—when he finally secured permission to take a group of agents on a field expedition, the League believed he was heading elsewhere.

When Therace and the agents he'd requisitioned didn't return (see Part 3 for information on the expedition's actual fate), his captain, a man named Ghartone, grew concerned that Therace may have had an ulterior motive. Even if Therace hadn't and had merely died or been captured, Ghartone wanted the man's gear back to keep it from slipping out of League hands. Ghartone wasn't eager to reveal to the other Technic League captains that he'd lost track of one of his more important minions, so he hired a mercenary to track Therace down and either return him or his technological gear back to the League.

This mercenary is Hyrsek Caio, a tiefling slayer of infernal descent who once served exiled Galtan aristocrats as a spy and assassin in the town of Gralton, located in the River Kingdoms. Hyrsek's small horns, tattoo-like birthmarks, and his brimstone-scented breath unmistakably identify him as a tiefling, but he's never made any excuses for his appearance or tried to hide it. When his Galtan employers were themselves assassinated by agents from Daggermark, Hyrsek fled the River Kingdoms rather than die for his employers. Eventually he came to Starfall and, after several months of building his reputation there, became a bounty hunter and tracker known by the League for his discretion and results.

It took him over a month to track Therace to the Scar of the Spider, and he's become increasingly convinced that the layers of misdirection Therace left behind means that the man was up to something he wanted to hide from Ghartone—if Hyrsek can figure out what Therace's actual goals were, he suspects he can report back to Ghartone and earn a significant bonus to his pay. Hyrsek only recently arrived in the Scar, and he's determined that there are two dangerous factions of aliens at war in the valley while simultaneously managing to avoid direct confrontations with either. In conversations with some of the Scar's inhabitants and through his own observations, Hyrsek suspects that Therace came to the Scar to scavenge some of the strange alien technologies held by the Dominion of the Black. He hasn't yet quite decided which arm of the deepest

valley he wants to explore yet, and has set his camp up here to think over his plans.

With the PCs' arrival, Hyrsek sees an opportunity to recruit some help, but also sees potential competition. He greets the PCs warmly and in a friendly matter, but doesn't waste their time trying to disguise his nature from them. If the PCs aren't willing to treat with him, Hyrsek is perfectly fine with the option of attacking them—after all, if he can defeat them he not only removes possible competitors, but also bolsters his supplies with their gear.

But the tiefling slayer would prefer to work with the PCs, and as such he proposes an alliance. He doesn't need to know why the PCs have come to the Scar, he suspects that if they're not looking for Therace, they're just here to adventure and seek glory and treasure. If the PCs press for his reasons, he tells them he's been hired by the Technic League to scout the place out as a region for possible future expeditions. Should the PCs see through this not-complete truth, Hyrsek admits he's also looking for a League lieutenant who went missing in the area. If the PCs help him, Hyrsek promises to aid them as well.

#### HYRSEK CAIO

**CR 11**

#### XP 12,800

Male tiefling slayer 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 264, *Advanced Class Guide* 53)

LE Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

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#### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 shield)

**hp** 130 (12d10+60)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +15, **Will** +7

**Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

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#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *frost rapier* +19/+14/+9 (1d6+4/15–20 plus 1d6 cold)

**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +18/+13/+8 (1d8+3/×3)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6, studied target +3 (3 targets)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th, concentration +10)

1/day—*darkness*

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#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Before entering combat, Hyrsek drinks a *potion of cat's grace*.

**During Combat** On the first round of combat, Hyrsek uses his rapier to attack a flat-footed character for sneak attack damage if possible. If encountered after dark or in areas of dim light, Hyrsek casts *darkness* to create an area where he can hide while making sneak attacks using his longbow (or using his rapier if anyone is foolish enough to come into the darkness without being able to see). Without this option, he prefers to stay mobile and use Vital Strike and Power Attack against foes. When brought below 90 hit points, he



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drinks a *potion of invisibility*, repositions and drinks a *potion of cure serious wounds*, then moves in to attempt a sneak attack (with Vital Strike and Power Attack) against a foe he's selected as a studied target.

**Morale** If reduced to 30 hit points or less, Hyrsek drinks a *potion of invisibility* and tries to flee or surrender if he has no potions left. If he escapes, he doesn't flee far. He'll switch over to stalking and observing the PCs as best he can but avoids re-engaging in combat with them, focusing instead on his original task to find Therace. If he surrenders, he'll admit that he's a mercenary working for the Technic League and is looking for a missing member of that group for the bounty offered—see Development for further details.



**Hyrsek Caio**

### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 20, **Con** 17, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 31

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Bluff +17, Disguise +0, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +22, Survival +16 (+22 tracking)

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Hallit, Infernal

**SQ** fiendish sorcery, slayer talents (combat trick, foil scrutiny, ranger combat style [weapon and shield], weapon training), stalker, swift tracker

**Combat Gear** *potions of cat's grace* (3), *potions of cure serious wounds* (3), *potions of invisibility* (4); **Other Gear** +3 leather armor, +2 light steel shield, +1 frost rapier, mwk composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance* +2, *belt of mighty constitution* +2, 55 gp

**Development:** If Hyrsek surrenders to the PCs, he offers his aid to them for as long as they remain in the Scar. He's good for his word, but once the PCs discover Therace's remains (see Part 3), the slayer makes plans to escape with the man's brain and as much of his recovered gear as possible, then report back to the Technic League.

If Hyrsek learns about what the PCs' true goal is, he becomes very interested but doesn't let on. He may even volunteer to stay with the PCs beyond his own planned visit so as to learn more about the strange android mind they're seeking. News of a burgeoning divinity in Silver Mount surprises him, and he isn't initially ready to believe claims about Unity. He decides to learn what he can so he can report back to Ghartone.

Hyrsek's final goal should be to return to the Technic League in Starfall with Therace's brain, equipment, (both found in the mi-go caves; see Part 3) and, if he learns about it, Casandalee's compact AI core. If he's unable to return with this core, his next-best choice is to bring news of it and Unity to the Technic League. The repercussions of Hyrsek reporting such information back to the League could be dangerous indeed for the PCs—see the next adventure for more details.

### H. Fungal Caves

This area is detailed in Part 3.

### I. Blighted Swamp

This point marks a transition from relatively dry regions to a wetland. The valley itself is a mix of stagnant ponds, bogs, and trickling rivers fed from numerous hot springs and geysers spread throughout the swamp.

The valley's narrowing contours compress all of the seepage to the northeast, eventually funneling



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

the slow moving waters into a creek that drains north to the larger river at area **G**.

The swamp itself is the domain of one of the oldest aliens to dwell in the Scar of the Spider: a colour out of space. This entity has reached full growth dozens of times over the centuries, yet has always left behind a shade of itself here in the valley to ensure the cycle of its life repeats. The colour itself dwells in a small network of caverns to the south (area **K**), but its presence can be felt throughout the swamp, particularly in the way vegetation grows more brittle and ashen the closer one gets to the caves themselves—there the vegetation is strangely dry and has a chalky, ashen texture. But elsewhere in the swamp, the vegetation seems eerily abundant and mobile; tree branches writhe and sway despite the lack of wind, while roots and swamp fruits bulge with foul-smelling fluids. At night, the entire swamp glows with a faint radiance of the colour's indescribable and vexing hue.

Life within the blighted swamp is tainted by the colour as well, and all wandering monsters encountered in the swamp have the colour-blighted simple template (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 439).

### J. Nemgedder's Folly (CR 11)

This small cave complex is haunted by the undead remains of a gunslinger, and while it has no direct connection to the overarching plotline of the Adventure Path itself, the PCs might seek out this tragic figure after finding the remains of his lover (see area **E6** in Part 2). Furthermore, characters who stop to explore this cavern and defeat its undead guardian will be rewarded with another memory facet for possible use with Casandalee (see page 54).

In life Nemgedder was a highwayman and bandit who preyed upon merchants and travelers in the Mana Wastes. It wasn't until he fell in love with a Pathfinder named Maura Kaelay that he finally made a mistake that nearly landed him in prison, but the gunslinger managed to escape and flee to the north, abandoning his love and life in pursuit of freedom. A relentless Alkenstari bounty hunter named Temma Benoche pursued him all the way to Numeria, where even Nemgedder's acquisition of a pair of sonic pistols couldn't save him. The chase ended here, in the Scar of the Spider, after Nemgedder was finally cornered in this tiny cave in the middle of nowhere and the two rivals killed each other. While Temma simply died, Nemgedder rose soon after death as a pale stranger, and haunts this cave still, eternally mourning the life and love he now realizes he foolishly left behind.

The entrance to Nemgedder's cave is only 3 feet wide—Medium characters must squeeze to move through the narrow confines. The cave itself is quite damp, with walls dripping with runoff and moisture. Within, the complex consists of two caves connected by a submerged tunnel. Both caves have low ceilings (7 feet high at the highest) and

slippery floors covered by a layer of mineral-laden water (treat as difficult terrain). The pools in area **J1** are 5 feet deep, but noticing the sudden drop-off as they are approached requires a successful DC 20 Perception check.

It was in area **J1** that the final fight between Nemgedder Janz and Temma Benoche took place, and it's here that Temma bled out from a final lucky shot Nemgedder managed to land just as he staggered backward into the southern pool, mortally wounded by one of Temma's pistols. Nemgedder made it to area **J2**, his hideaway, before dying, but Temma's remains lie here still, slumped against the western wall between the two pools.

**Creature:** Nemgedder Janz dwells still in the deeper cave (area **J2**), accessible only via a short underwater tunnel that connects the two 5-foot-deep pools in both caves. The pale stranger spends its time standing with its back to the pool, staring with infinite patience at a necklace adorned with a strange crystal that it holds before its eyes. If Nemgedder hears intruders in the cave, he lets the crystal fall to dangle against his bony chest inside of the red scatterlight suit he wears draped over his skeletal frame and addresses his visitors with a dry, rasping voice: "So you live still, eh, Benoche? This is as far as it goes. It ends here." At that, Nemgedder turns and opens fire.

NEMGEDDER JANZ	CR 11
<b>XP 12,800</b>	
Male variant pale stranger ( <i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 3 214)	
NE Medium undead	
<b>Init</b> +11; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +24	
<b>Aura</b> fear (10 ft., DC 23)	
<b>DEFENSE</b>	
<b>AC</b> 27, touch 21, flat-footed 19 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 luck, +6 natural)	
<b>hp</b> 157 (15d8+90)	
<b>Fort</b> +11, <b>Ref</b> +12, <b>Will</b> +15	
<b>Defensive Abilities</b> channel resistance +4; <b>DR</b> 10/bludgeoning and magic; <b>Immune</b> undead traits; <b>SR</b> 21	
<b>OFFENSE</b>	
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> +1 <i>sonic pistol</i> +14/+9/+4 touch (1d8+7/19–20 sonic), +1 <i>sonic pistol</i> +14/+9 touch (1d8+7/19–20 sonic)	
<b>Special Attacks</b> technic pistols, stranger's shot	
<b>TACTICS</b>	
<b>During Combat</b> In his tormented state, he sees the first PC he lays his eye sockets on as his old nemesis and does his best to gun that PC down. He uses Deadly Aim with his attacks at all times—the effects of this are calculated in his stats above.	
<b>Morale</b> Nemgedder fights until he's destroyed but does not pursue foes out of area <b>J2</b> . If confronted with Maura's <i>wayfinder</i> from area <b>E6</b> (even if he sees the item being openly worn), though, Nemgedder is overcome with guilt and drops to his knees, begging "Maura" (the PC wearing or	



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brandishing the *wayfinder*) for forgiveness for abandoning her. If that PC forgives Nemgedder, the pale stranger sighs in relief, then collapses to the ground, destroyed. If the PC does not forgive Nemgedder, he becomes obsessed with rage and attacks “Maura,” gaining a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls against that character. In this event, he pursues that character beyond area J2.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 21, **Dex** 25, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 34

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Dodge, Improved Critical (sonic pistol), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Point-Blank Shot, Two-Weapon Fighting, Technologist

**Skills** Acrobatics +22, Climb +23, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (engineering) +17, Perception +24, Stealth +25

**Languages** Common, Hallit  
**SQ** stranger’s luck



**Nemgedder Janz**

**Other Gear** 2 timeworn sonic pistols<sup>16</sup> (10 charges each), red scatterlight suit<sup>16</sup>, compassion facet necklace

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Technic Pistols (Su)** Nemgedder’s pistols are those he used in life, and as sonic pistols, they function slightly differently in his hands than those normally carried by a pale stranger. While these pistols are timeworn, while carried by Nemgedder they function normally and do not glitch. The pistols supernaturally recharge the instant they are used, and both function as *+1 sonic pistols*. He doesn’t provoke attacks of opportunity when he fires a pistol in melee, and treats pistols as light weapons for the purposes of determining penalties from two-weapon fighting. If Nemgedder is destroyed or disarmed, the sonic pistol reverts to its normal timeworn nonmagical (but fully charged) condition.

**Treasure:** Most of Benoche’s remains have rotted or rusted away, but in the fragments of a crumbling leather pouch remains a clear blue sapphire worth 1,000 gp. Benoche’s skeletal hand still grips her *fire Drake pistol*<sup>17E</sup>, which is still in fine condition thanks to its magic.

Nemgedder’s necklace was a gift to him from his lover Maura, who purchased it from a black market merchant who had no idea of the true nature of the crystal’s power. Maura knew it wasn’t a magic item, but her research revealed that it was some sort of technological item associated with feelings of love, and thus felt it made for a perfect gift for her beloved. The necklace is worth 300 gp, but the crystal itself is priceless, as it is a technological artifact—a memory facet that contains an accurate simulation of the emotions of compassion (see page 62).

### K. Blighted Cave

This area is detailed in Part 3.

### L. Decaying Dropship

This area is detailed in Part 4.

### M. Dominion Hive

This area is detailed in Part 4.

## PART 2: AN ALIEN ALLY

In the northeastern reach of the Scar of the Spider lies an unusual location, a place the Mad Druid Paeytr calls the “Machine Cave.” Here, a survivor from a fateful confrontation with Casandalee lives on, the reclamation robot Binox. Damaged near to destruction in the fight by an immense explosion that Casandalee used to defeat several of her robot pursuers, Binox recovered physically, but several of his core processors were broken in ways that Binox is unable to perceive. With only distorted memories of his prior life under Unity’s control, Binox’s new mission is to build a production facility within a cave here in the Scar of



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

the Spider, using materials and spare parts it has scavenged over the centuries from throughout the Felldales. In that time, Binox has managed to convert half of the caverns into machine caves, building an array of geothermal generators to provide energy to its caves and projects.

The Dominion and the mi-go alike know of this robot, yet they have yet to turn their full attentions to it, judging it a malfunctioning mechanical oddity—to the brain collecting aliens, organic subjects hold much more interest, after all. Ironically, one of the Dominion's latest escapees, the kasatha gunslinger Isuma, has taken advantage of this fact and now uses a portion of the caves unclaimed by Binox as her own redoubt.

The PCs may hear rumors of a strange four-armed alien who has been waging war against the Dominion (particularly if they bring the subject up with Mad Paeytr at area **B**), or they might find Isuma's tracks at the entrance to the scar and follow them here. Isuma might come across the PCs while she's out scavenging for food and might make tentative contact with them there, leading them back to her home after she allies with them. Of course, the PCs could just stumble into this cavern on their own as well. The important thing isn't how they come to this complex, the important thing is that they should visit Isuma and interact with Binox before heading deeper into the Scar, as the encounters in this cavern will not only help prepare them for the more dangerous encounters later on, but in Isuma may give them a deadly and much-needed ally.

### MACHINE CAVE FEATURES

The Machine Caves have two distinct regions within: a number of natural caves and a region of metallic chambers rebuilt by Binox.

The cave portion features rough, irregular rocky floors replete with jagged spurs of stone and uneven footing—the ground here is considered to be difficult terrain unless otherwise indicated. Ceiling height in tunnels averages at 7 feet, while in the larger chambers it rises much higher, as indicated in the text. No natural light is found herein.

The metal chamber portion has smooth floors. These, along with the walls and ceilings, have been plated with glaucite plates scavenged and repurposed from across the Felldales. Ceilings in the metal chambers are a uniform 15 feet, save for in the reactor chambers (area **E9**) where the ceiling rises 30 feet high. The constant rumble of this array of reactors can be heard throughout the metal caves. In the natural caves, this noise is evident as a barely perceptible hum, and along the cave walls nearest area **E9**, touching the walls reveals a subtle vibration in the stone.

### E1. Entrance

The mouth of this dark cave is fifteen feet wide and twelve feet tall, with a number of closely spaced natural pillars on the right-hand side. Gray-green lichen hugs the entry's arch and the

unmistakable odor of burned oil drifts from within. Various odd scuff marks in the rocky soil and grass suggest others have passed this way before.

Careful examination of these tracks, employing a successful DC 22 Survival check, reveals a multitude of heavy drag marks, but at least one humanoid creature also passed this way. The narrow tunnel to Isuma's caves is not visible from the entrance unless one makes a successful DC 25 Perception check—the entrance is obvious if anyone spends time examining the pillars. Medium and smaller creatures can attempt to squeeze between the natural pillars, but doing so requires a successful DC 20 Escape Artist check. The burned oil scent comes from area **E6**.

### E2. Alien Scarecrow

The entry cave is a large space, with stalactites depending from the ceiling twenty-five feet above. The rocky floor is irregular, requiring careful navigation, and a large pool of water hugs the northwestern wall of the chamber. Three natural columns of rock support the ceiling before this pool. A broad passage heads deeper into the caves to the southwest—sounds of clanging metal and the smell of burned oil come from that direction.

The clear pool is 15 feet deep and populated with a few eyeless fish and crustaceans. A natural tunnel running from here to the adjacent chamber's pool is found only if someone actually enters the water here: the submerged wide passage is discernible with a successful DC 15 Perception check at that point.

Isuma slew a neh-thalggu scout recently and dismembered the beast before dragging its parts back here and re-assembling them into a sort of "scarecrow" as a threat to any other Dominion agents who might try to seek her out. This crudely-lashed-together carcass looms in the middle of the cave, and may give PCs a start before they realize the creature is dead. The body shows signs of damage from extreme cold. It can be identified as a neh-thalggu with a successful DC 18 Knowledge (arcana) check—the monster's brain sacs are all empty.

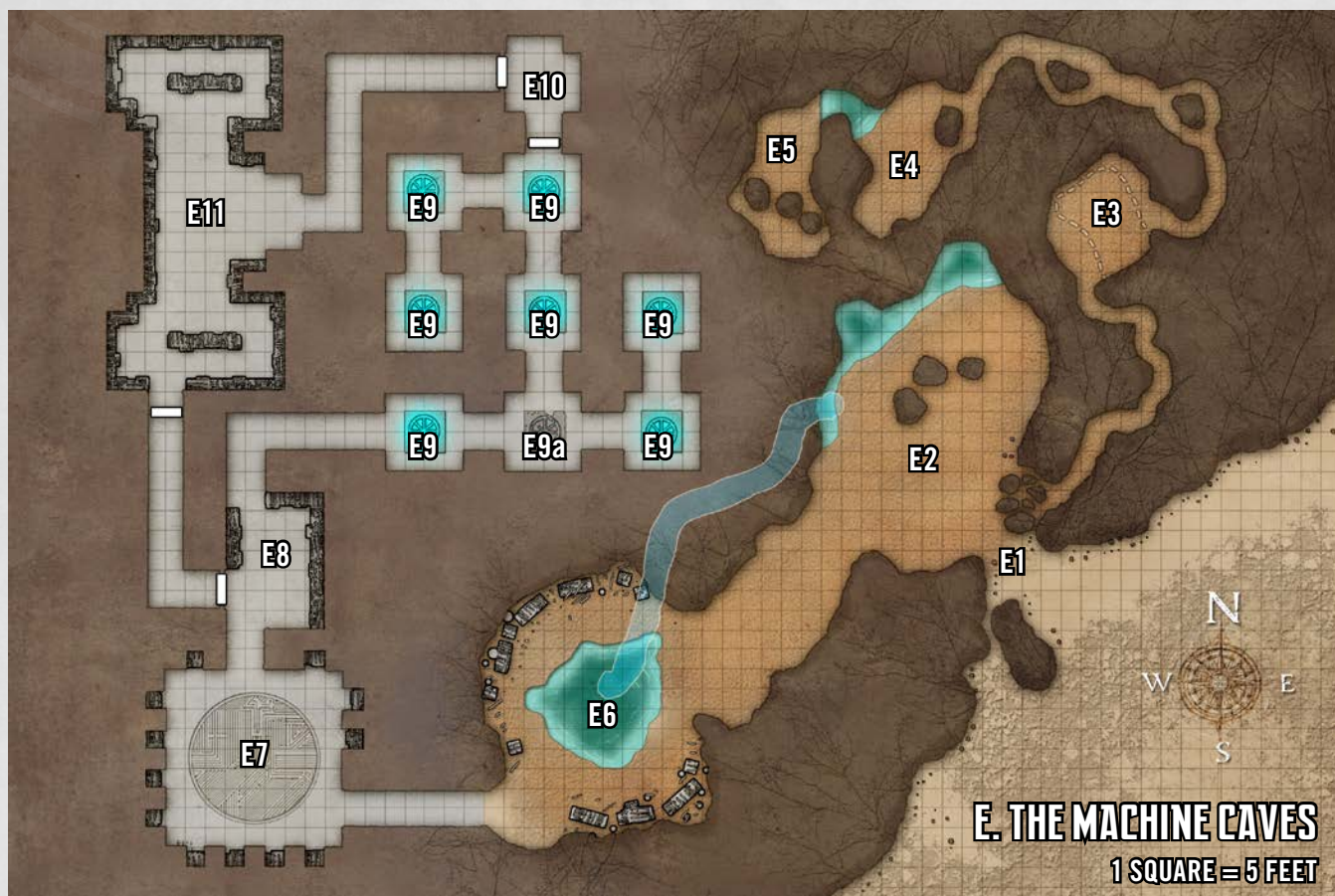
### E3. Grenade Trap (CR 11)

Two narrow tunnels connect in this large, low-ceilinged cavern. What appears to be some sort of technological weapon sits discarded on the floor in the middle of the cave.

**Trap:** The weapon on the floor is bait, a fake zero rifle that the Isuma cobbled together from parts stolen from area **E8**. The entire floor of the room is crisscrossed by cleverly hidden triplines attached to a pair of arc grenades hidden in the center of the room. Any character who walks into



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this area of triplines (as indicated on the map by the dotted line) runs a 50% chance per square of triggering the trap. When the two arc grenades explode, their blast radius fills the entire cave with lightning.

#### **GRENADE TRAP** CR 11

XP 12,800

Type mechanical; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 20

#### EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset manual

Effect 2 arc grenades (3 explosions that each deal 5d6 electricity damage, Reflex DC 15 half); multiple targets (all creatures in area E3)

### E4. Isuma's Parlor (CR 9)

The tunnel opens into a small cave, the ceiling ten feet high and the floor cleared of the usual debris. Another tunnel exits the chamber to the northwest, though the way is filled with a pool of water.

**Creature:** This cave is the entrance to the small den that Isuma, the kasatha escapee, who has been living here for several months. Given her past experiences, she initially assumes intruders to her cavern are hostile. If she knows

they're coming (as she will if the grenade trap in area E3 went off), she takes cover around the corner in area E5 and prepares to fire with her rifle. Upon seeing the intruders aren't obviously Dominion agents, she calls out to them in Androffan, demanding they leave at once. If the PCs don't leave and don't manage to establish communication with her, Isuma attacks.

If the PCs respond to her in Androffan, Isuma is startled—she doesn't expect anyone on this planet to know the language. Her initial attitude at this point automatically upgrades from unfriendly to indifferent. If the PCs can make a successful Diplomacy check (or otherwise make her friendly or helpful), she sighs in relief at the possibility of finally finding some allies and invites them into her redoubt (see area E5).

If the PCs encountered Isuma outside of these caves, she leads them into her redoubt to speak.

#### **ISUMA** CR 10

XP 9,600

hp 106 (see page 58)

### E5. Isuma's Redoubt

This cave is split in two by three rock columns. The floor is clear



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of debris and a small rectangular device hums in one corner, its grill-like front filling the air with warmth. Lying beyond a series of rock pillars to the south is a deerskin pallet on a bed of evergreen boughs. A pile of berries, mushrooms, and freshly cooked small mammals sits on a nearby bolder being used as a table.

This room is Isuma's home, and has been for several months. She carries all of her valuables on her, leaving little behind in this redoubt but her bed and a few days' worth of food. The pool of water separating this room from area E4 is only a few feet deep, draining through tiny fissures in the wall to the large pool at area E2.

If the PCs manage to gain Isuma's trust, she takes them to this room here to tell her story and to try to recruit their aid against the Dominion. She offers to share her simple meal as she speaks to the PCs. Isuma starts the conversation as follows.

"I am Isuma, and I am from a distant world. This land is strange to me, as I must be strange to you, but it does good that we can talk. I need allies. I need companions. Those who took my previous ones still dwell to the west, and they still defile the bodies of my kin. I need your aid in securing revenge. Do this, and I shall aid you as well, as best I can."

Isuma answers any questions the PCs have to the best of her ability. Her responses to likely questions are listed below—but she may have more to reveal to the PCs as well. Consult her NPC entry on page 58, or the general advice for revealing information about *Divinity* as summarized in the Foreword on page 4.

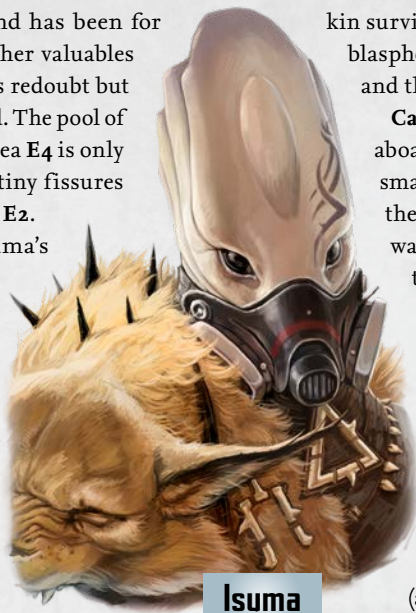
**Where are you from?/How did you get here?** "A distant planet called Kasatha. I was invited away from my home by people like you—humans from a great ship called *Divinity*. They taught me their language, trained me with their weapons, and promised to eventually return me home so that I might share what they taught me with my people. But *Divinity* was attacked by creatures who identified themselves as the Dominion of the Black. The ship escaped, I know not how, but it was greatly damaged. Society aboard *Divinity* broke down, and my kin and I were forced to defend ourselves from mutineers. We learned that others on the ship had abducted members of another kasathan tribe and were keeping them as pets in a large contained habitat, but were unable to rescue them. The ship began to shake apart, and my kin and I sought shelter in stasis pods in an escape shuttle—devices intended to sustain life over long

journeys. We entered the pods and hoped the escape shuttle would take us home—but I know now that shuttle crashed to your planet along with the rest of *Divinity*. We woke only recently, as captives of the Dominion. As far as I can tell, thousands of years have passed since *Divinity*'s crash here. I know not where the rest of the ship lies, or if any of my kin survive. I do know those who did not survive live a blasphemous half-existence as Dominion puppets, and they must be avenged."

**Can you tell us more of *Divinity*?** Isuma's time aboard *Divinity* was relatively self-contained in a smaller vessel far from the command module, and the focus of her interactions with the ship's crew was learning the Androffan language and how to use weapons and technology. She has little more useful to tell the PCs (see the Foreword for more advice), but if she travels with the PCs beyond this adventure, you can use her to provide hints and descriptions by deciding she recognizes a technological device's function.

**Can you tell us what dangers await us in the Scar of the Spider?** Isuma can provide a crude map of the valley if provided with paper and ink; she knows about Mad Paeytr (area C), the alien grove (area D), the android pilgrims (area F), a fungus-encrusted cave (area H, although she's not been inside), the dominion dropship (area L—another location she's not entered), and the dominion hive (area M). She suspects there is a dangerous, poisonous creature dwelling in the swamp, but hasn't explored that area yet. Of more immediate interest, the other half of the caves here are colonized by some sort of mechanical army—Isuma's not yet been able to explore the area due to the deadly robotic guardians posted at the entrance at area E6. Perhaps an exploration into these caves would give her and the PCs a chance to learn each other's tactics while simultaneously finding more tools to aid their mission?

**What can you tell us of the Dominion of the Black?** "They consist of several species of creatures. I know not the names they give themselves, but they use our flesh, particularly our brains, as resources. Some are large and crablike and collect brains for use as magical batteries of some sort. Others are smaller and shaped like brains themselves and use our bodies—one of them is a sadist named Maukui, and it wears a huge, breath-stealing reptile as its suit. Maukui was the one who tormented me and would have killed me had I not escaped. They came here in the vast, decaying organic ship that now lies heaped on the shores of the lake to the west—I have not been into this ruined vessel, but there may be resources and answers within that can aid us in an assault on their hive. It was here that I woke, and I escaped from the den in panic. I'm sorry I cannot recall details of





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the layout of the hive, but I do remember that the doors of the place were valves of flesh that require organic keys to open, and that the walls of the place can see and hear, but could be tricked by certain chemicals. I tricked them by virtue of being coated with the blood of a Dominion agent I'd slain—other substances might work as well, but I am no scientist.”

**What can you tell us of the Fungus Cave?** “I have not been inside, but I've seen the creatures that dwell within—they are as large as us but winged, with insectlike limbs and bulbous heads that flash strange colors. They carry strange weaponry and speak in buzzing voices. They seem to be enemies of the Dominion, but they do not seem interested in alliances. The one time I tried to approach, they nearly killed me. But an investigation of their caves to seize any weapons they might have might be a good idea—they are weaker on the whole than the Dominion aliens, although I know nothing of their total numbers.”

**Will you travel with us?** If the PCs promise to help her avenge the deaths of her kin by destroying their bodies and freeing their flesh from Dominion control, she agrees to travel with them. She can have a key role in the upcoming adventures, as detailed therein.

**Have you seen a neurocam anywhere?** If the PCs describe what a neurocam looks like, she can't help them, but once she hears Casandalee's name, Isuma's eyes widen. While the kasatha was a prisoner in the Dominion hive, her captor Maukui interrogated her for a short time, demanding to know what she knew of a woman named “Casandalee”—specifically, if her mind was the only “disembodied organic” in the region. She wasn't able to answer that question and Maukui didn't pursue it, but the Dominion obviously knows something. Perhaps she, like Isuma was, is a prisoner of the Dominion?

**Story Award:** Grant the PCs 12,800 XP if they ally with Isuma and learn what she knows of the Dominion of the Black and *Divinity*.

## E6. Scrap Heaps (CR 11)

A large pool of murky water occupies the center of this cavern. The muddy shores are surrounded by a hopeless tangle of metal tubes, gears, and mechanical junk and debris. A broad passage exits the chamber to the west, its surfaces worked smooth and plated with gray metal. A long-dead body of a woman lies near the southern wall, partially buried by the rubble.

This area is where Binox stores its spare parts whenever its scavengers return with a fresh load of materials gathered from other crash sites throughout the Felldales. The debris have been thoroughly picked over. The murky pool itself is 20 feet deep, and connected via an underwater tunnel to area E2.

**Creatures:** Binox has stationed three deadly robots here to protect the entrance to its realm. These torturer robots may

seem small, but their spherical floating bodies are armed with a frightening array of blades and lasers with which the robots are quite adept.

### TORTURER ROBOTS (3)

**CR 8**

#### XP 4,800 each

N Small construct (robot) (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Numeria, Land of Fallen Stars* 58)

**Init** +5; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +19

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#### DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 105 each (10d10+10 plus 40 hp force field)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

**Defensive Abilities** hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to critical hits, vulnerable to electricity

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#### OFFENSE

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

**Melee** 4 rotating blades +16 (1d4+5/18–20)

**Ranged** 4 surgical lasers +16 touch (1d8 fire/19–20)

**Special Attacks** agile, interrogate, nanosurgeon

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#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Each robot moves to attack the creature most likely to attempt entrance into area E7—or to attack the creature closest to that entrance. Each round, at least one of the robots attempts to nauseate a target with its nanosurgeon ability—once someone is nauseated, all three robots converge to try to paralyze the victim.

**Morale** The torturer robots fight until destroyed.

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#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Alertness, Dodge, Mobility, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Fly +15, Heal +17, Perception +19, Sense Motive +19

**Languages** Common, Hallit

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#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Agile (Ex)** A torturer robot adds its Dexterity modifier to its damage rolls in place of its Strength modifier when using its rotating blades attack.

**Force Field (Ex)** A field of shimmering energy surrounds a torturer robot. Damage dealt to the robot is applied to the force field first. As long as the field is active, the robot is immune to critical hits. The force field has fast healing 8, but once the field's hit points are reduced to 0, the field collapses and does not reactive for 24 hours.

**Interrogate (Ex)** As a standard action, the torturer robot can attempt a Heal check to deal 1d4 points of damage to an ability of its choice possessed by an adjacent, helpless target. A successful Fortitude saving throw with a DC equal to the robot's Heal check result negates this damage.

**Nanosurgeon (Ex)** As a standard action, a torturer robot can inject purpose-programmed nanites into a target as a melee



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touch attack. The nanites produce one of the following effects or conditions (CL 10th, where applicable): *cure serious wounds*, *lesser restoration*, *neutralize poison*, *remove disease*, exhaustion, nauseated for 1d4 rounds, or paralyzed (nauseated targets only, for remainder of original duration). If the victim succeeds at a DC 17 Fortitude saving throw, exhaustion is reduced to fatigue, nauseated is reduced to sickened, and other effects are negated. The torturer robot carries 5 uses of nanites, and it constructs replacements at a rate of 1 dose per hour. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

**Surgical Lasers (Ex)** The torturer robot's surgical lasers have a range of 50 feet with no range increment, and threaten a critical hit on a 19 or 20. Lasers pass through transparent creatures and objects without causing harm (including force fields, force effects, and invisible creatures; it can pass through glass, but the glass takes damage), and can strike targets behind them normally. Fog, smoke, and other clouds provide cover in addition to concealment from laser attacks.

**Treasure:** Although none of the mechanical debris is of value, the partially buried body to the south still carries a few items of interest. These are the remains of a woman named Maura Kaelay, a Pathfinder from distant Alkenstar who followed her bandit lover Nemgedder Janz north after he fled the law (see area J). She tracked him and the bounty hunter who'd been chasing him as far as the Scar of the Spider before losing the trail. She had begun a systematic search of the valley's caves only to run afoul of the torturer robots here. She was a rogue in life, but most of her gear is rotted or rusted away. Nonetheless, a search of the remains reveals a tattered leather pouch that contains 490 gp minted in Alkenstar, a dozen pieces of artfully carved jade worth 100 gp each, a +1 *hunter's double-barreled pistol*<sup>UE</sup>, three *lesser burrowing bullets*<sup>UE</sup>, and a delicate golden *wayfinder*<sup>ISWG</sup> inlaid with bits of chrysoberyl. The inside of the *wayfinder's* lid contains a detailed portrait of a handsome man wielding a pair of pistols, Nemgedder Janz.

In addition to functioning as a *wayfinder*, the magical compass has become somewhat haunted by a fragment of Maura's spirit. The needle doesn't point to north, but instead to area J... toward her undead lover's remains.

### E7. Guardpost (CR 11)

The walls of this chamber have been plated with gray metal, and an intricate symbol is etched on the floor. Passages enter the room north and east, and a dozen niches line the walls. Each alcove contains a strange tangle of odd mechanical devices protruding from their back walls. Harsh white panels glow brightly in the ceiling fifteen feet above.

Close examination of the floor symbol reveals that the entire design is actually comprised of tiny symbols. A

successful DC 25 Linguistics check identifies the symbols as fragmentary excerpts from complex programming code written in Androffan. The symbol itself is nothing more than a strange affectation placed by Binox.

The machinery in the walls are charging stations that can be used to recharge items or robots alike, drawing upon the energy of the geothermal reactor<sup>TG</sup> in area E9—no power cables or power receivers are needed to transfer charges to items if these stations are used. The generators currently have an available yield of 30, but this can be increased as detailed in area E10.

**Creatures:** A group of four guardian robots stand sentinel here. These constructs look human at first glance, but upon closer inspection, their flesh is obviously synthetic, with visible seams at the joints. They do not speak and do not respond to attempts at communication. They immediately attack any non-robot that attempts entry to this chamber.

#### GUARDIAN OF BINOX (4)

CR 7

##### XP 3,200

Security mannequin robot fighter 4 (*Pathfinder Campaign*)

*Setting: Numeria, Land of Fallen Stars 57*

N Medium construct (robot)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

##### DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +3 natural)

**hp** 63 (6d10+30)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2 (+1 vs. fear)

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, hardness 5; **Immune** construct traits; **Resist** electricity 5, fire 5

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to critical hits, vulnerable to electricity

##### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +11 (1d4+5)

**Ranged** stun gun +11/+6 touch (1d8+2 nonlethal)

##### TACTICS

**During Combat** A guardian of Binox uses Deadly Aim with its stun gun while firing on semi-automatic mode (+7/+7/+2 touch, 1d8+6 nonlethal), but abandons this tactic if it's having trouble hitting a foe. They gather unconscious foes after a battle to deliver them to Binox (see area E11).

**Morale** A guardian of Binox fights until destroyed.

##### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Weapon Focus (stun gun), Weapon Specialization (stun gun)

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Intimidate +4, Perception +10

**Languages** Androffan

**SQ** false flesh, armor training 1

**Gear** breastplate, stun gun<sup>TG</sup>, concussion grenades (3)

##### SPECIAL ABILITIES



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**False Flesh (Ex)** A guardian of Binox gains a +8 bonus on Disguise checks to appear human.

## E8. Steam Bath (CR 11)

A mess of intertwined tubes and pistons occupy the east and west walls of this chamber. Corridors exit the space to the north and south. A section of the west wall is made of a slightly recessed slab of polished metal that disrupts the regular pattern of smaller gray metal plates on the walls. Bright lights glow in the ceiling fifteen feet above.

A successful DC 25 Perception check made on the large slab to the west confirms that it's a massive glaucite door (hardness 15, hp 120, Break DC 36, Disable Device DC 35). It cannot be opened without force or dismantling from this side—a wall-mounted panel on the western side allows the door to be opened at a touch (a swift action).

**Trap:** Any attempt to open the door to the west other than via the touch pad on the western side (inaccessible from this room) triggers a trap. Nozzles extend from the tubes and pistons on the walls to vent steam into the area as soon as any attempt to open the door is made—successful or otherwise.

### STEAM BLAST

CR 11

XP 12,800

Type mechanical; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 32

### EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset automatic

Effect cloud of steam (9d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 20 half); multiple targets (all creatures in areas E8)

## E9. Geothermal Generator Array

This twenty-foot-wide room has a towering pillar of glowing metal and flashing lights looming fifty feet up into the silo-like space above. The towering pillar periodically vents small puffs of steam, and the air within is cloyingly warm. Condensed water drips down the walls to pool on the floor.

This array of pillars constitute a single large geothermal generator<sup>TC</sup> built by Binox to provide a source of energy for the caves. One of the generator pylons (area E9a) is currently nonfunctional, and as a result, the generator's maximum yield is only 150. If any one pylon is destroyed (hardness 10, hp 500), the entire array explodes. This causes 10d6 fire and 10d6 bludgeoning damage in areas E8–E10 (Reflex DC 15 halves) and depowers all of the traps, lighting, and doors in the complex. In addition, it generates a feedback explosion in area E11 that inflicts 6d6 fire and 6d6 bludgeoning damage to Binox (Reflex DC 15 halves). The explosion is enough to warp and blacken the glaucite plating on the walls in areas E8–E10, but not enough to collapse the well-constructed tunnels.

## E10. Generator Controls

This twenty-foot square room is empty, save for an array of blinking lights and glowing consoles built into the northern wall. To the west, a large metal panel interrupts the regular pattern of smaller metal plates adorning the walls.

The panel to the west is a door similar to the one in area E8, save that it is not trapped and contains an activation button on both sides.

The wall of screens and controls to the north is used to control the power distribution of the geothermal generators. A character who studies the panels for 2d6 minutes can attempt a DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) check to decipher the controls. This allows the user to deactivate the lighting in the entire complex or to deactivate the trap in area E8—each of these subroutines deactivated raises the reactor's available yield in area E7 by 10. The machinery in area E11 is currently consuming 100 additional yield; it can be deactivated here, but doing so alerts Binox to intruders and the robot swiftly comes to investigate in such an event.

With a successful DC 35 Knowledge (engineering) check, the user can set the reactor to overload and explode (see areas E9) with as much of a time delay as desired. Alternately, the reactor can be commanded to vent steam into area E11 once per day, resulting in Binox taking 10d6 fire damage (Reflex DC 15 halves).

**Story Award:** If the PCs figure out how to optimize the generator's yield, award them 4,800 XP. If they use the generator to damage Binox, award them an additional 4,800 XP.

## E11. Binox's Throne (CR 12)

The walls of this impressive chamber are covered with gray metal plates and decorated with flashing lights, pulsating glass panels, and strange mechanical devices. White glowing strips fill the chamber with harsh lighting, and the floor is etched with complex swirling patterns composed of thousands of tiny symbols. Banks of machinery and technological workstations fill the areas to the north and south, while a large metal panel in the southern wall breaks the pattern of smaller plates adorning the wall.

The larger panel to the south is a door similar to the one in area E8, save that it has activation panels on both sides. The numerous machines and worktables in this chamber can be recognized with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) check as a functional combined production and military lab usable for the production of technological items that require either of these resources. Note that a military lab requires 100 charges to function and a production lab 50, so unless the generator itself powers down the complex's traps and lighting, there's not enough available yield to run



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both labs simultaneously—currently, only the military lab portion is powered.

**Creature:** This laboratory was created and is maintained by a damaged reclamation robot, the same robot sent by Unity five centuries ago to aid in the tracking and capture of its wayward oracle, Casandalee. Binox was nearly destroyed in that original confrontation with Casandalee, and even though it survived and repaired itself, it suffered significant degradation to its programming, which it has not realized needs repair. This damage has given it the robotic equivalent of delusions of grandeur. It sees itself as being on a mission to slowly convert the natural world into one of order and machinery, a personality resulting from a tiny “infection” of Unity itself.

When it first confronts the PCs, Binox greets them in its grating metallic voice, speaking in Androffan.

“You stand in the presence of the Reconstructed One, Binox the Mighty, Binox the Builder. The One born of the Master Unity, who has forged One’s own realm and seeks to expand the realm to be all realms. Binox demands your obeisance. Having damaged Binox’s creations, you must be volunteered as replacements. Binox will disassemble one of you in payment for your insolence, but allow the others to serve. What say you, little things of gristle and bone? Which will of you pay the price for Binox’s mercy?”

Despite Binox’s apparent aggression at the PCs’ intrusion into its realm (it makes these claims even in the unlikely event the PCs reach it without damaging any robots or objects on the way), this confrontation needn’t end in combat. If the PCs attempt to reason or negotiate with the robot, they may find themselves with a rather useful ally. It’s important that they approach the construct in a fawning and respectful manner (for instance, addressing it as “Oh mighty Binox” and complimenting it on the wondrousness of its constructions) and somehow apologize for the destruction wrought (perhaps bluffing that they thought it “a great test to prove ourselves worthy to stand in your glorious presence”). Binox’s initial attitude is unfriendly, but if it can be made friendly or helpful via Diplomacy, a successful Bluff, or other methods, the reclamation robot is won over and agrees to let the PCs utilize the laboratory or answers questions. Presenting Binox with a functional piece of technology worth at least 10,000 gp (or the choice mechanical parts found in area D) as an offering can automatically secure its cooperation.

A mollified Binox, alternating between the royal “we” and referring to itself in the third person, answers basic questions. It knows where the Dominion lair is located, and is also aware of the mi-go, referring to them as “fungi that float and chitter,” but it has little interest in either group. The robot can be enjoined to craft technological devices if made helpful, but only if it is supplied with materials. Binox joins no crusade against the Dominion of the Black, though, and will not accompany the PCs—“Binox’s domain

is here. We must right what is damaged and rebuild Binox’s wondrous kingdom.”

Unfortunately, if the PCs leave and return, they’ll need to befriend the forgetful robot all over again if they wish to avoid a fight. This includes coming back after several days to pick up an item that has been commissioned from the robot. If a battle does begin, Binox fights until destroyed.

### BINOX

CR 12

#### XP 19,200

Reclamation robot (see page 84)

hp 147

**Treasure:** A successful DC 30 Perception check reveals a hidden safe built into the wall opposite the eastern entrance. This glaucite safe (hardness 15, hp 90, Break DC 32) can be opened with a successful DC 30 Disable Device check. Within can be found 4 arc grenades<sup>TG</sup>, 8 EMP grenades<sup>TG</sup>, an EMP pistol<sup>TG</sup>, and an arc rifle<sup>TG</sup>—all items Binox has recovered and stored for safe keeping, knowing how effective these weapons are against its own kind.

**Development:** If you do not want to allow the PCs to take and utilize technological item creation feats (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide* 6), adjust this encounter area so that the military lab only functions for Binox, thus denying the PCs unrestricted access to the site.

## PART 3: THE WHISPERING DARK

The Dominion of the Black were not the first aliens from the Dark Tapestry to descend upon the Scar of the Spider, nor were they the latest. A group of mi-go recently arrived in the area, drawn to the Scar by the Dominion presence, but a colour out of space has dwelt within the Scar’s southernmost valley for many centuries. The mi-go have learned of the colour’s presence and are attempting to engineer a way to use it against their enemies, but as of yet have not determined how to do so. Despite their aggression toward the Dominion, they are not allies to the PCs—any attempt to engineer an alliance with the mi-go is doomed to failure. Yet this is not to say there’s nothing of value in their caves to use against the Dominion. Not only will an investigation of the mi-go’s fungal caves provide the PCs with additional tools and resources in their eventual assault on the Dominion hive, but recovering the removed brain of the Technic League lieutenant Therace can give them a significant advantage in the next adventure.

The colour’s den, while not directly linked to the mi-go, is included in this chapter as an optional region for adventure due to its related Lovecraftian themes. A party already powerful enough to confront the Dominion need not risk their lives against the colour, but those needing additional experience or resources will find such a confrontation well worth the risk.



# IRON GODS



## FUNGAL CAVE FEATURES

Located at the northernmost extent of the Scar of the Spider, these caves have always been riddled with fungus—making them a natural place for the visiting mi-go to colonize. The mi-go have been here about five months, and although they’ve made a few preliminary attacks against the Dominion hive, they’ve so far managed to hide the location of this lair from their enemies. They’ve spent the bulk of their time spying on them, researching a method to control the colour out of space, and worshipping their dark god Shub-Niggurath.

While the walls offer many footholds, nearly all within are coated with slimy molds and other repulsive fungal growths, increasing the difficulty of scaling these surfaces such that it’s a DC 26 Climb check to move about the walls. The slippery growth on the floors does not significantly impact movement, but does increase the DCs of all Acrobatics checks in the caves by +2. Ceiling heights in the cave tunnels averages at 8 feet, rising to an average of 20 feet in the chambers themselves. Air quality within the caves is poor, thick with foul-smelling spores that give everything a nasty green haze. Breathing creatures in the caves must make a successful DC 18 Fortitude save every hour to avoid becoming sickened for an hour each

time they enter the caves—a successful save indicates immunity to the fouled air for 24 hours. In addition, once per day upon being exposed to these spores, a breathing creature must make a second DC 18 Fortitude check to avoid developing a lung infection as the spores take root within. This infection duplicates the effects of filth fever (but with the higher Fortitude save to resist and recover)—its primary symptom is a hacking bloody cough combined with a foul green tinge to the sputum. Both of these are disease effects.

There are two entrances to the caves, the five-foot-wide entrance at area **H1** and a larger pitlike entrance into area **H6b**. This second entrance is not visible from the ground, and fungal growth makes it difficult to spot from the air, requiring a successful DC 15 Perception check—remember to adjust for distance!

### H1. Guarded Entrance (CR 10)

The rocky wall of the valley rises abruptly, swaths of green mold clinging to the broken surfaces. A few mold-encrusted trees and tangles of brambly undergrowth decorate the region—one particularly large patch nearly obscures a single cave entrance at the cliff base.



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

**Creatures:** The cave entrance is guarded by three advanced shambling mounds, conditioned by the mi-go to remain motionless until intruders have reached the cave mouth. As soon as at least one PC has reached the opening, the beasts engage. Each fights until reduced to less than 20 hp, when it flees into the swamp, away from the cave entrance.

### ADVANCED SHAMBLING MOUNDS (3) CR 7

**XP 3,200 each**

**hp 85 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 246, 294)

## H2. Swampy Corridor

A set of six humanoid ribcages, stained red by ragged scraps of clinging meat and hanging from cords like a grisly row of unlit chandeliers, adorn the ceiling of this widened tunnel. The unmistakable odor of rotting flesh mingles with the fetid stink of the soupy swamp water covering the cave passage's floor.

The swampy water in this cave corridor is 2 feet deep, the stone bottom slick with (harmless) green slime. Close examination of the ribcages reveals that the bones (some of the remains of an unfortunate party of Technic League explorers) are held together by artfully woven plant fiber—someone obviously put a great deal of effort to prepare this macabre ornamentation. The ceiling climbs to a height of 20 feet in the last 15 feet of the north corridor where the passage appears to end at a wall. Here, a successful DC 18 Perception check reveals a ledge opening (8 feet across and 2 feet high) about 15 feet above that leads deeper into the cave complex.

## H3. Ambush Gallery (CR 10)

The tunnel widens at this juncture and the ceiling climbs to twenty feet. A few bones, red with traces of gore, are scattered on the lichen-encrusted floor.

A DC 15 Heal check reveals that these are arm and leg bones of humanoid origin, coming from at least four separate individuals. While it appears as no more than a broader section of the tunnel, this cave chamber is actually wider than those standing on the ground immediately recognize. A successful DC 24 Perception check reveals hard-to-spot ledges 15 feet above to east and west, obscured by tangled curtains of hanging moss and fungus.

**Creatures:** Lurking out of sight on each of the ledges is a pair of mi-go, waiting for the party to move between them before descending to attack. The mi-go fight until only one survives—that one retreats to area H5 to warn its kin there.

### MI-GO (4) CR 6

**XP 2,400 each**

**hp 66 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 193)

## H4. Abattoir (CR 12)

The ceiling of this cavern yawns thirty-five feet high, with a central pillar of natural rock supporting it. The moldy surfaces of this chamber are spattered red and bones are scattered everywhere.

A 5-foot-wide ledge encircles the central rock pillar at a height of 18 feet—a successful DC 18 Perception check is enough to notice this ledge. The tunnel to the east curves north and ends at what appears to be a dead end, but a successful DC 15 Perception check reveals a thin mat of fungus covering a hole in the ceiling that allows access to a tunnel leading to area H5.

**Creatures:** A pair of mi-go allies dwell in this cavern, pets of a sort the aliens found dwelling in these caves when they first arrived. These lumbering gugs now serve the mi-go with pride, for as fate would have it, they venerate the same foul god of fecundity as their new overlords. The two gugs dwell in the two smaller alcoves to the north, using their ability to compress to come and go from these dens with ease. They attack intruders on sight. If one is slain, the other flees south to the shrine of Shub-Niggurath to seek aid from the tender of that room.

### GUGS (2) CR 10

**XP 9,600 each**

**hp 127 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 151)

**Treasure:** When stripping corpses of their flesh, the gugs place all items of possible value missed or ignored by the vivisectionist (see area H5) on the ledge encircling the rock pillar. Among the creatures' mundane belongings are the following, visible only to those at eye level with the ledge: 170 gp, five chrysoberyls worth 100 gp each, violet garnet worth 500 gp, a *ring of counterspells* (with *cone of cold* already stored in it), and a *wand of touch of slime*<sup>UM</sup> (4 charges).

## H5. Surgery Chamber (CR 10)

A hole in the ceiling empties into this small cave. A narrow tunnel leads northeast, where a sickly yellow-green glow flickers.

Little of interest lies in the southwest half of this area, but to the northeast, five tables of strangely flexible metallic-looking fungus have been set up. Each of the tables is spattered with gore—it's here that the mi-go perform their cruel vivisections of recently captured victims. When the PCs first arrive, a quartet of mi-go are hard at work dissecting their latest prize—an aurumvorax. The dead creature has been thoroughly dismembered, but the mi-go show no signs of being finished with their work anytime soon and take a -4 penalty on Perception checks to notice intruders.



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**MI-GO (4)**
**CR 6**
**XP 2,400 each**
**hp 66 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 193*)

**Treasure:** Forgotten amid a slurry of gore and discarded viscera under one of the tables is a severed skeletal hand and forearm that wears one bracelet from a black force field<sup>TC</sup>—(the other half of the force field is at **H9**). However, it is covered in gore and lies in a pile of discarded strips of flesh and clothing; a successful DC 20 Perception check is required to discover it.

More obvious are four strange empty metal canisters sitting atop one of the tables—these are unused mi-go brain cylinders (see page 73)—unused, at least, until a PC is captured by one of the mi-go.

## H6. Surface Access (CR 10)

The stone corridor opens into a long, dank cavern, the ceiling rising twenty feet overhead. The sound of dripping moisture echoes off mold-covered walls.

A 5-foot-diameter hole, partially hidden by grotesque strands of dangling, slimy fungus, opens in the ceiling to the southwest of this cave, leading to a tunnel that provides access to area **H6b**. During the night, it takes a DC 20 Perception check to notice this hole, but during the day, sunlight from area **H6a** reduces this to a DC 5 Perception check.

The tunnel opens through the floor of area **H6b**, which is also covered by a tangle of fungus (requiring a successful DC 20 Perception check to spot). Area **H6b** is open to the sky, the chamber's walls climbing 80 feet to a hidden vent allowing access to the surrounding cliffs.

The entrance to the tunnel to area **H7** is 30 feet above the ground.

**Creatures:** A group of four mi-go cling to the walls of this cave as they undergo a many-hours-long ritual of meditation and preparation for offering prayers to Shub-Niggurath in the nearby shrine. They immediately rouse from their repose to attack any intruders.

**MI-GO (4)**
**CR 6**
**XP 2,400 each**
**hp 66 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 193*)

## H7. Howls in the Dark (CR 9)

The narrow tunnel opens up into a foul-smelling muck-filled chamber, the ceiling ten feet overhead decorated by a tangle of mucus-like dangling filaments that form an unnerving canopy. Some mass of plant matter floats in the ooze at the cave's northern corner.

Foul, almost liquid fungus grows in this cave, slowly draining to area **H6b**. The slurry is only one foot deep, and moving through it is akin to traversing a shallow bog (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook 427*).

**Creature:** The dangling tree roots overhead and floating reed basket (see *Treasure*, below) likely draw the party's attention first, but this cavern is the lair of 4 particularly hearty vooniths. The long-necked beasts wallow in the mire here, and have taken to the mi-go quite well, serving now as guardians for the contents of the reed basket. Their howls echo through the entire cave network, alerting the mi-go if they haven't been already. Once all but one of the vooniths are slain, the lone survivor begs for its life, promising to protect the PC who it fears was about to attack it next. The voonith remains loyal for a few days if spared, serving as a guardian to that PC, but its dark sense of humor and delight at watching cats, humans, and gnomes in pain might make it a grating companion to be around before long. Exactly how long the voonith stays at its savior's side is left to you to determine.

**ADVANCED VOONITHS (4)**
**CR 5**
**XP 1,600 each**
**hp 47 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 283*)

**Treasure:** The plant matter floating in the muck is a woven basket of pale swamp reeds. Removing the lid is simple enough. Inside are three *touches of avolition*, mi-go items that must be stored in damp environs (see page 63).

## H8. Shrine to Shub-Niggurath (CR 12)

The swampy stink intensifies in this huge, domed cavern. Drippy clots of phosphorescent lichen growing on the ceiling twenty-five feet above provide dim, eerie illumination to the cave. Dry ledges sit to the east and west, while to the north looms a huge deformed plant-like monstrosity, its branches dangling with pallid strands of mucus-like fungi. The walls of the cave are decorated in patterns of glowing fungi, many of which repeat the same disquieting symbol of three deformed goat-like heads facing outward so that their six curved horns almost form a circle.

A successful DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check is enough to identify the symbols, and the looming fungal "tree," as sacred to the outer god Shub-Niggurath, the Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young. The mi-go of this colony venerate this vile goddess of fertility and fecundity, and grew their tree altar from specialized spores. The leader of the mi-go, a priest of Shub-Niggurath named Lrrhech, has an eerie biological connection to this chamber's sacred fungal tree, and it can see and hear any activity that takes place in this chamber as if via *clairaudience/clairvoyance* through the tree itself. If it notices any PCs entering the room (use Lrrhech's Perception check



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

to spot characters attempting stealth—its statistics appear on page 34), the mi-go uses its connection to the tree to address the intruders. The tree “speaks” in a booming, sloppy voice in Aklo, its trunk heaving and rasping to form the words. Lrrhech’s message is brief, “You intrude, fleshlings, but the Black Goat welcomes you—join her, serve her, become her!”

**Creatures:** As Lrrhech issues its proclamation from the tree, the mi-go uses its eerie link to the fungus tree to “birth” the temple’s guardians from its lower, bulbous roots: 3 divinely-infused chaos beasts. These creatures look more fungal and plantlike in their makeup than typical chaos beasts, and move about on a dozen hoof-tipped tentacles. Lrrhech does not further interact with the PCs in this chamber, but does observe their tactics as they fight the tree’s spawn.

Note that these chaos beasts have the cleric creature template—see *Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex*, page 246, for more details on simple class templates.

### CHAOS BEASTS OF SHUB-NIGGURATH (3) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

CE cleric chaos beast (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 54, *Monster Codex* 246)

hp 85 each

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy (3/day, 4d6, DC 13)

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 9th; concentration +10)

3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 14)

2nd—*hold person* (DC 13), *sound burst* (DC 13)

1st—*divine favor*, *shield of faith*

**Treasure:** Totems and offerings have been pressed into the tree’s fungal bark, including several bloody bones and rotting organs, coated in moldy filth. Among the grisly offerings is a skull with five platinum teeth (each tooth is worth 300 gp) and a slowly decaying human heart with a functional but in need of cleaning thoracic nanite chamber (mark II)<sup>TC</sup>.

### H9. Toxic Pool (CR 11)

A narrow corridor opens up into this large chamber, the ceiling thirty feet above. The floor and walls are caked with a layer of fuzzy green mold, although along the southern wall, a ledge twenty feet above the ground seems relatively clear of fungal growth. A skeletal body clad in chainmail and missing some of its right arm is slumped atop this ledge.

**Hazard:** Most of the floor of this chamber is actually 15 feet lower than it appears. What seems to be the floor is in fact a thin film of mold growing over a 30-foot-deep lake of toxic sludge. A successful DC 35 Perception or DC 30 Survival check is enough to note the thin film for what it is before someone steps onto it. A creature that walks out onto the

film plunges into the sludge beneath, which functions like quicksand (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 427) and carries with it a deadly contact poison. Each round a creature remains in the sludge, it is exposed to the poison again—and even after escaping, continues to be exposed for 1d6 rounds before the sludge becomes inert. *Prestidigitation* or a large amount of water is enough to clean the sludge off and end this recurring poisoning.

**Toxic Sludge**—contact; save Fort DC 15; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Con and 1d4 Wis; cure 2 saves.

**Treasure:** The skeletal remains slumped against the wall belonged to one of Therace’s companions from the Technic League. After she lost her hand to a mi-go, she escaped to here only to perish from her wounds. Her +2 *fire resistance chainmail* bears the gear symbol of the Technic League, and she still wears one of the black force field<sup>TC</sup> bracelets on her remaining wrist (the other half of this pair of bracelets is located in area H5).

**Story Award:** If the PCs manage to navigate this room and recover its treasures, award them 6,400 XP.

### H10. Walls of Bone (CR 10)

The ceiling of this tall cavern comes to a peak along its axis thirty feet above. The walls are hung with the bleached bones of an untold number of creatures. Bony limbs point in every direction, eyeless skull sockets stare back plaintively—the scope of death here is disconcerting. Corridors pierce this cathedral of death to the north and west, while a ledge leads up from the lower fungus-riddled cavern to the south.

These bones were placed by these caverns’ initial gug inhabitants. Very few gugs remain (those who do are in areas H4 and here), but the mi-go saw no reason to tear down the skeletons here. The bones hide two additional exits from the room—one leading to a narrow crawlway to area H12 and one masking a hole in the floor that leads to a tunnel to area H11. Both of these exits from the room can be found with a successful DC 20 Perception check. The tunnel to areas H12 requires a Medium creature to squeeze, but its entrance to area H12 is not as well guarded.

**Creatures:** A single gug stands guard in this cave. It attacks at once, but flees to area H12 to alert the mi-go there if reduced to fewer than 60 hit points.

### GUG CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 127

### H11. Plague Cave

The air in this long, low-ceilinged cave is particularly close and foul-smelling, and the fungus growing thick on every surface seems



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particularly decayed and corrupt. The ceiling is a mere six feet high, with a hole leading to a tunnel at the east end. The western reaches of the cave pulsate eerily with a black, throbbing miasma.

**Hazard:** The fungus in this cave has been corrupted by a particularly virulent affliction suffered by a mi-go at the hands of the Dominion of the Black. Yet ever the scientist, this mi-go refused to let Lrrhech attempt to cure the disease, and instead retreated to this cave to let the affliction run its course so its kin could study the results and prepare defenses against it. Ironically, the resulting illness is so virulent to the mi-go that no others have risked entering the cave to study the results yet.

The affliction itself is a nameless contagion (referred to here as Dominion plague for ease of reference) that has a curious side effect—it causes those suffering its effects to absorb nearby light and shed darkness—an advantage to the neh-thalggu when they infect creatures like humans who cannot see in the dark. The mi-go's body lies slumped against the west wall and is the source of the blackness. Dominion plague is spread easiest by contact with a diseased host, but even exposure to the darkness a sick host sheds is enough to spread it.

**Dominion Plague:** Contact or exposure to darkness; *save* Fort DC 15; onset 1 minute; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d2 Con drain plus 1d4 Wisdom damage and victim sheds darkness (as per the spell of the same name) in a 10-foot radius; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

## H12. Lrrhech's Repose (CR 13)

Four natural columns support this long cavern's twenty-five-foot high ceiling. Several ledges, each ten feet off the fungus-encrusted floor below, overlook the cavern.

**Creatures:** The leader of the mi-go expedition, a priest of Shub-Niggurath named Lrrhech, is perched on a ledge 15 feet high in the northeastern niche of the cavern. Lrrhech is accompanied by a trio of mi-go who serve as bodyguards and conversation partners—all three of these mi-go are fanatic devotees and loyal to their priest. Their current topic of conversation is a partially dissected gug savant that lies sprawled against the base of the ledge to the northwest.

**Hazard:** The central floor of this area is a pool of poisonous fungus akin to that in area H9—the mi-go know this, of course, and avoid it via flight.

### LRRHECH

CR 12

XP 19,200

Mi-go cleric of Shub-Niggurath 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 193)

CE Medium plant

**Init** +9; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., low-light vision; Perception +24

### DEFENSE

**AC** 30, touch 19, flat-footed 24 (+3 armor, +3 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

**hp** 176 (16 HD; 7d8+9d8+105)

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13

**Defensive Abilities** bramble armor (1d6+4, 9 rounds/day); **DR** 5/slashing; **Immune** cold, plant traits; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 21

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

**Melee** *staff of the Dark Tapestry* +17/+12/+7 (1d8+8), 2 claws +11 (1d4+2 plus grab)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 6/day (DC 17, 5d6), evisceration, it came from beyond, part the veil, wooden fist (+4, 8 rounds/day)

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 9th; concentration +14)

5th—*spell resistance*, *summon monster V*, *wall of thorns*<sup>0</sup>

4th—*cure critical wounds*, *fleshworm infestation*<sup>UM</sup> (DC 19), *freedom of movement*, *lesser planar binding*<sup>0</sup>

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *plant growth*, *summon monster III*

2nd—*barkskin*<sup>0</sup>, *cure moderate wounds* (3), *resist energy*, *spiritual weapon*

1st—*command* (DC 16), *comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds* (2), *doom* (DC 16), *entangle*<sup>0</sup> (DC 16), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *read magic*, *resistance*

**D** domain spell; **Domains** Dark Tapestry<sup>SG</sup>, Plant

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Lrrhech casts *freedom of movement*, *shield of faith*, *barkskin*, and *spell resistance* before combat begins.

**During Combat** The mi-go priest casts *summon monster V* at the start of combat to conjure up a large mud elemental, augmenting the creature with its it came from beyond domain ability, granting it the advanced creature template (this ability makes the mud elemental look like a cross between an eel and an octopus made of the soggy fungus, but does not imbue the elemental with the fungus's toxic qualities). Lrrhech focuses on its ranged spells thereafter, favoring *irradiate* and *confusion* from its staff along with *wall of thorns*.

**Morale** Lrrhech attempts to flee if reduced to fewer than 30 hit points. If it escapes, it likely returns with reinforcements (several more mi-go) at some point in the future to track down the PCs, eager to harvest the brains of foes so capable. How this impacts future adventures is left to you to determine.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 20, **Con** 23, **Int** 25, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 35

**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Greater Feint, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Selective Channeling, Skill Focus (Heal)

**Skills** Craft (alchemy) +26, Fly +28, Heal +30, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (engineering) +23, Knowledge



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(geography) +23, Knowledge (planes) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Perception +24

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Mi-Go

**SQ** deceptive, item creation, no breath, starflight

**Combat Gear** *staff of the Dark Tapestry* (see page 63); **Other**

**Gear** +1 *light fortification leather armor*, *strand of prayer beads* (lesser)

**ADVANCED MI-GO (2)****CR 7****XP 3,200 each****hp** 80 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 193, 288)

**Story Award:** Award the PCs an additional 6,400 XP if they survive this encounter due to the complication of the poisonous sludge in the room.

**H13. Therace's Brain**

This cavern is dry and warm, with no evidence of the fungus that grows rampantly elsewhere in the cave network. Strange carvings adorn the walls, while an alcove to the north contains a low flat rock on which sits a single dark metal cylinder.

**Treasure:** Until recently, the mi-go kept several harvested brains in canisters here, but most of these have since been transported off-world. The one canister that remains is of particular interest to the mi-go, for it contains the brain of a wizard named Therace Holiyard, a Technic League lieutenant and an expert on entities from the Dark Tapestry. The mi-go have learned relatively little from Therace that they didn't already know, but Lrrhech is increasingly intrigued by what its learned of the Technic League and hopes to send some disguised mi-go to Starfall as soon as the Dominion threat here has been handled.

If the PCs activate the canister, they're greeted by a long, metallic scream—Therace's mind is unhinged, and prone to fits of madness. The scream lasts for 1d4 rounds before the tormented mind trapped within stabilizes. Therace seems confused as to where he's at, and can drop hints about his personality if asked (he admits to being a lieutenant of the Technic League readily enough, and promises rewards he is in no position to honor if the PCs return him to Starfall). Therace can be used as a way to provide hints about the Dominion of the Black as you wish—or to be consulted for his skills—which include: Appraise +16, Diplomacy +13, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (engineering) +18, Knowledge (geography) +18, Knowledge (nature) +16, Linguistics +12, Perception +14, Sense Motive +8.

One particular bit of important information that Therace can impart is that when he arrived in the Scar of the Spider, he sent half of his followers south into the swampy part of the vale to investigate there. This group had

several potent items of equipment, including a robojack that Therace had intended to use on the annihilators he'd heard dwell within the Scar, yet at the time they arrived, both robots were out in the Felldales gathering stock for their Dominion masters.

As a member of the Technic League, Therace can provide the PCs with much additional information regarding that group and the city of Starfall, but this information is of little immediate use—see the next adventure, “Palace of Fallen Stars,” for more information on what Therace can provide about the League.

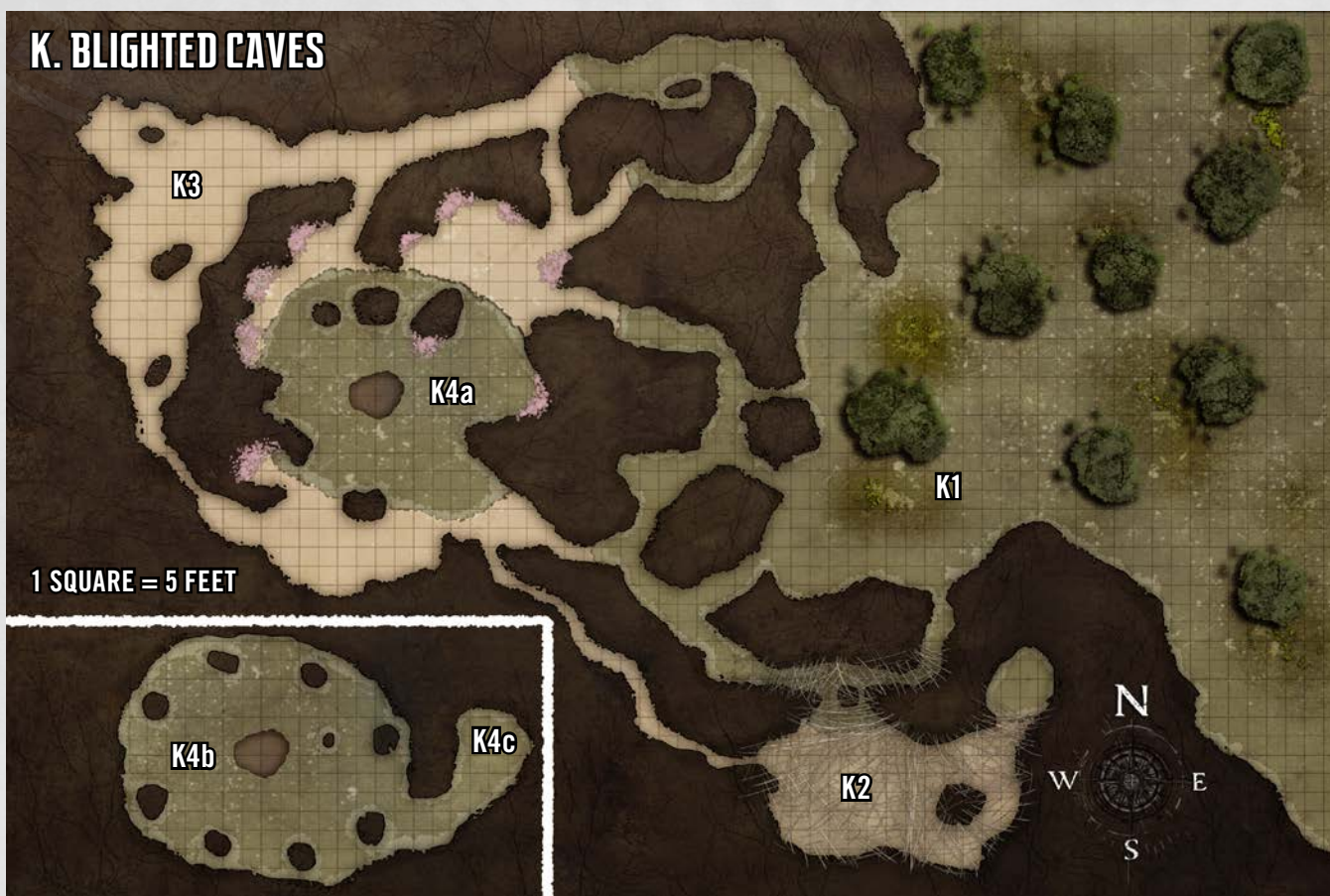
Therace's body is long gone, but if the PCs use resurrection to restore him to life, he was LE human expert 4/wizard 8—you'll need to generate his stats in this event, but he is likely to feel more than a debt of gratitude to the PCs for restoring him.

The man's remaining gear has been gathered into a sticky netting of fungus and lies in a compact heap behind the pillar on which the brain canister sits. This gear consists of a *ring of protection* +2, a +2 *laser pistol*, a *wand of*

**Lrrhech**



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fly (13 charges), a *wand of technomancy*<sup>TG</sup> (40 charges), a red access card, and his spellbooks (these books contain spells appropriate for an 8th level wizard, including all of the 4th and lower level wizard spells from the *Technology Guide*).

**Development:** If Hyrsek Caio is with the PCs, he recognizes Therace's gear on sight. He'll attempt to abscond with this gear and Therace himself the next chance he gets, returning to Starfall for his payday.

**Story Award:** For discovering Therace's brain, award the PCs 12,800 XP—his aid may prove to be invaluable in the next adventure!

## THE BLIGHTED CAVES

Located at the southernmost extent of the Scar of the Spider, but not quite opposite the fungal caves colonized by the mi-go, lies a blighted section of swampland and a number of fissures in the cliff wall. These rifts open into a network of caves that have been the lair of a colour out of space for many centuries. The alien entity has fed countless times on the swamp's plant and animal life, repeating its destructive life cycle over and over again. This incarnation still has some time to go before it matures and launches itself into space, but it has already fed deeply and most of the creatures that once dwelt in the vicinity have been slain. Its latest victims, a group of Technic

League explorers, succumbed to the colour—their remains can be found within the caves themselves.

The colour out of space dwells in area K4 of the caves, where it spends most of its time digesting and growing. The alien ooze wafts up out of its cave only infrequently to seek food, but as soon as the characters set foot into the region depicted in the map, they are in range of the colour's aura of lassitude and must make a successful DC 25 Will save to avoid the effects (a –4 penalty on Will saves and a resistance against traveling more than a mile from area K).

## K1. Hungry Guardian (CR 13)

The swamp vegetation here has been somehow drained of its color—what remains is a blasted, gray landscape of muddy water and brittle vegetation—yet now and then, a strange shimmer passes through the dry vegetation and silt... a shimmer of a color strangely difficult to classify. Five cave entrances beckon in the cliffside, the gritty, weirdly shimmering mud staining the tunnel floors as they wind underground.

**Creature:** One creature, an immense and originally rather robust froghemoth, has survived the colour's feeding for many weeks as a colour-blighted creature, beating the odds



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against its inevitable dissolution but now proving barely able to shamle forth to hunt. The monster appears to be suffering from a number of raw wounds, and as it moves, these wounds shimmer with the colour's indescribable hue.

### COLOUR-BLIGHTED FROGHEMOTH

CR 13

XP 25,600

*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 136, Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 39*

N Huge aberration

**Init** +5; **Senses** all-around vision, blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +18

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 9, flat-footed 27 (+1 Dex, +19 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 168 (16d8+96)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11

**Immune** electricity; **Resist** fire 10

**Weaknesses** slowed by electricity

#### OFFENSE

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

**Melee** bite +21 (2d6+11/19-20 plus grab), 4 tentacles +19 (1d8+6 plus grab), tongue +19 (1d4+6 plus grab)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (30 ft. with tongue)

**Special Attacks** constrict (tentacle, 1d6+11), swallow whole (3d6+11 damage, AC 19, hp 16)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The froghemoth has dug into a large bog just south of the westernmost tree, its eyestalk extended up above the surrounding mud. The monster lurches out to attack the first creature to come within reach of its tongue, then charges the nearest foe if it's not able to grab and gulp down its first target.

**Morale** The froghemoth fights to the death. It does not pursue foes beyond the extent of the region shown on the map.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 30, **Dex** 13, **Con** 21, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 35

**Feats** Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness

**Skills** Perception +18, Stealth +12 (+20 in marshes), Swim +18

### K2. Benevess's Grave (CR 11)

Thick, dusty spider webs, some delicate and gossamer and others as thick as a human's thumb, fill the tunnel and what little can be discerned of the cave chamber beyond. An indescribable color shimmer occasionally ripples along the webbing.

A successful DC 20 Knowledge (nature) is enough to recognize that the thicker webs in this room were likely left by ogre spiders, but any attempt to interact with the webs brings about a curious result—the webs crumble to fine ashes at a touch. The spiders that spun these webs were consumed by the colour out of space long ago, and its presence has reduced the webs to their current fragility.

**Creatures:** Although the spiders are long gone and the webs do nothing more than obscure vision, this cave is far from safe. The unquiet spirit of a scholar from the Ustalavic city of Thrushmoor haunts this cave. In life a quiet philosopher named Benevess Veskenti, this man grew increasingly obsessed with the nature of alien life, and eventually set out on his own to explore Numeria. He met his end here, food for the colour, horrified that his search for alien life had only resulted in becoming an alien's meal.

Benevess found no peace in death either. After perishing so painfully and so alone, he rose as a bhuta, trapped between death and life by his frustrations and anger at his life's work



Colour-Blighted Froghemoth



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having caused his death in such a remote, wretched place. For a time after the ogre spiders moved in, the bhuta found their presence a welcome distraction, but now with only dry webs as companionship, Benevess welcomes the PCs' arrival. If one of them arrives with an animal companion or minion, Benevess attempts to possess the animal before revealing himself to the PCs. If he can do so without raising suspicion, he travels with the PCs for several hours, watching and waiting patiently for a chance to lash out at one PC—preferably the animal's owner—in a hollow attempt to vent his frustration. Eventually, once it is discovered, it uses the possessed animal to fight to the death, and once confronted in its true form, fights again until destroyed.

## BENEVESS VESKENTI

**CR 11**
**XP 12,800**

 Bhuta (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 41)

**hp** 147

**Treasure:** In the cave's northeastern niche lies the skeletal remains of poor Benevess—any who saw the bhuta can recognize the *robe of arcane heritage*<sup>UE</sup> the skeleton still wears as the one worn by the unquiet spirit. The skeleton itself is dusty and gray and crumbles to ash if touched, but the *handy haversack* at its side remains fully functional, along with its contents: 3 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, 2 *potions of cure serious wounds*, a *wand of displacement* (10 charges), a folded map of northern Avistan (this map contains several locations circled and labeled as “alien infestation sites.” The Scar of the Spider and Silver Mount are both circled, and at your option other circled sites could lead to further adventures), and a journal that covers Benevess's quest. Alas, the journal itself is poorly written—for all his passion in scholastic pursuits, Benevess was a terrible writer.

## K3. Technic Victims

This chamber is empty save for four heaps of what appears to be discarded clothing and armor, strewn out on the cave floor as if the people who'd worn it had simply laid down and evaporated away, leaving their gear behind.

**Treasure:** Upon closer inspection, swaths of gray ash fill these clothes. These fragments are all that remains of the rest of the Technic League team led by Therace—the robes and clothing all bear the insignia of the Technic League. A further search among the disintegrated bodies reveals a metal tube containing three scrolls (*wall of fire*, *obsidian flow*<sup>UC</sup>, and *water breathing*), a glass vial containing an *elixir of copper dragon breath*<sup>UC</sup>, a flashlight<sup>TG</sup>, a pair of veemod goggles<sup>TG</sup> with a green veemod<sup>TG</sup> installed, and a skillslot<sup>TG</sup> with a mark III Acrobatics skillchip<sup>TG</sup> still installed.

## K4. The Stained Chamber (CR 13)

Several passageways meet in this large domed chamber. A few rock columns support the ceiling twenty feet overhead, but the strangest feature of the cave is a large oval patch of dusty gray gravel that shines with an indescribable color. At the center of the shallow gravel bed, a ten-foot diameter hole descends into the darkness.

This chamber is the upper half of the colour out of space's lair. The ravenous alien entity normally dwells in a large cavern below this one (area **K4b**). The hole in the gravel pit passes directly through the roof of the lower cave, creating a 50-foot drop to the gritty gray stone below.

**Creature:** The colour out of space remains within the cave below unless a significant amount of noise or light attracts its attention up here (torchlight and regular conversation in area **K4a** is not enough, but shouting, combat, or any bright light source is). The creature is also roused if anything enters area **K4b**—including anything larger than an apple thrown down into the cave from above. The incorporeal creature explodes up out of the lower cave like a geyser of living indescribable color to attack the PCs in such an event.

## COLOUR OUT OF SPACE

**CR 13**
**XP 25,600**

 Advanced HD colour out of space (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 39)

CN Huge ooze (incorporeal)

**Init** +12; **Senses** blindsense 120 ft.; Perception +22

**Aura** lassitude (300 ft., DC 25, 10 rounds)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 24, flat-footed 15 (+7 deflection, +8 Dex, +1 dodge, -2 size)

**hp** 184 (16d8+112)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +15, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** amorphous, incorporeal; **Immune** acid, cold, fire, mind-affecting effects, poison, sonic, ooze traits; **SR** 21

**Weaknesses** susceptible to force effects

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** disintegrating touch +18 touch (10d6)

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

**Special Attacks** feed

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The colour spends the first few rounds of combat attempting to feed on PCs. It switches to making attacks with its disintegrating touch once all available PCs have made their saving throws against its feed attack, or once it's been reduced to 100 or fewer hit points.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 20 hp it abandons Golarion entirely, exiting the caverns and fleeing into the dark depths of space, never to return.



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

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### STATISTICS

**Str** —, **Dex** 26, **Con** 22, **Int** 19, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 24

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 40

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (disintegrating touch), Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness

**Skills** Fly +31, Knowledge (geography) +20, Knowledge (nature) +20, Knowledge (planes) +20, Perception +22, Stealth +16

**Languages** Aklo (cannot speak)

**Treasure:** Therace's second in command, a half-orc magus named Yegrex, was the first of the group that traveled south to investigate these caves to enter area **K4b**. The colour fed on him until it transformed him into a colour-blighted half-orc, then left him down here to die of thirst. His body can be found in area **K4c**, slumped against the wall where the slightest touch causes his gray remains to crumble to dust. Among the dead magus's remains are a +3 *chain shirt*, a +2 *spell-storing longsword* (currently empty), a leather pouch containing a dozen amethysts worth 100 gp each and 10 batteries, and his spellbook (which contains spells of your choice). In addition, a timeworn robojack<sup>TC</sup> (4 charges) sits at Yegrex's side—a device Therace “borrowed” from Ghartone in anticipation of confronting annihilator robots. While his team missed the robots, the PCs may well be able to use this device on the annihilator themselves (provided it doesn't glitch out).

### PART 4: DOMINION OF THE BLACK

When Casandalee uploaded her mind into a compact AI core, she hoped to soon thereafter find a robot to serve as her AI's chassis, but Unity's minions forced her to abandon the compact AI core in a cave on the western side of the Scar of the Spider. The core remained hidden for centuries, the AI within forced to spend the majority of that time in a dream-filled limbo, until the Dominion of the Black came to the Scar in 4709.

It was the intellect devourer Maukui who discovered the core and deduced its true nature. Here, Maukui realized, was that rarest and most unique artifact—a technological item crafted by humanity that transcended even Dominion accomplishments. The generation of an artificial intelligence presents a host of possibilities to the Dominion of the Black, not the least of which is the farming of brains without the complication of organic bodies being attached to them. Maukui realized that if it could find a way to reverse engineer the AI, it could duplicate it and infuse organically grown blank brains with intellects, perhaps even with souls, and with such a development could rise high in the Dominion ranks.

But six months ago, when a greater power among the Dominion hive realized what Maukui intended, it intervened. This was an ascended neh-thalggu, a creature known as a

yah-thelgaad named Lthoon, which confiscated Maukui's project, leaving the intellect devourer bitter but without the courage to fight back on its own. Lthoon has made little more progress on the project, though, and is considering expanding its experiments into a more risky venue that could have the side effect of destroying their only resource. Lthoon's new tactic involves a piece of invasive, organic technology that has been slowly wearing away at long-suffering Casandalee's dwindling means of resistance. For her part, Casandalee realizes that it's only a matter of time before the Dominion succeeds in their relentless efforts. She also understands that if the Dominion succeeds, it also means that the last traces of her mind will be completely eradicated, along with the information necessary to overcome a threat to Golarion more immediate even than the diabolical Dominion of the Black: the nascent demigod Unity. To the Dominion, Casandalee's destruction would be but a minor setback, but to the PCs and to the AI herself, such a development would be disastrous

### DECOMPOSING DROPSHIP

The dropship that brought this particular Dominion cell to Golarion was a loathsome organic creation, birthed from a larger ship in a distant galaxy. As is always the case in a planetary invasion by the Dominion, they have no plans to leave their new planetary home, and have left their ship to slowly rot on the shores of the small lake where it landed. The ship is immense, and its alien composition has been taking years to decay away—even half a decade later, the ship's carcass remains mostly functional, its guardians and defensive systems now operating as little more than dangerous hazards and traps for the curious. Yet if the PCs take the time to explore the decomposing ship, they'll find that the time and risk may be well worth the rewards in experience, knowledge, and treasure!

#### L1. Dropship Exterior (CR 12)

What great beast this enormous hulk once was is hard to say. Now it rots in the sun, the vile odor aggressively assaulting the air around it. The thing is over four hundred feet long, its bulbous body rising half that height into the sky. Vast folds of rugose fat, coils of thick mottled tentacles, greasy bulbs and slippery knobs, spiny ridges, and stranger organs lie sprawled in every direction. Patches of red fungus grow in the shady nooks on the thing, but in most places its hide is reminiscent of an elephant's coarse skin, with patches of shiny octagonal scales and tufts of wiry hair-like growths. Pustules are scattered on its leathery surface, some of which have burst, oozing a viscous yellow-green liquid. The water around it is stained and foul, and no plant life grows within a few hundred feet of the remains.

The stench of the decomposing hulk is repulsive, and all within 100 yards of the suppurating mass must make a



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successful DC 20 Fortitude save to resist becoming sickened as long as they remain in the area plus an additional 10 minutes. A successful save indicates a creature has become accustomed to the smell for 24 hours—all the creatures that dwell in the vicinity are permanently accustomed to the stink. This is a poison effect.

The water surrounding the carcass is murky and malodorous. Any who ingest the water are exposed to blinding sickness. While the hide is safe to touch, it inflicts filth fever on any creature foolish enough to consume any of it. The water itself reaches depths of 30 feet at its deepest points surrounding the ship. Much of what lies underwater has collapsed on itself, but it was here that the ship's now non-functional propulsion and landing equipment was located.

The easiest way to enter the hulk is via the numerous posterior vents leading to area L2 or L3. These immense squamous stalks end in foul-looking apertures connected to 5-foot-diameter tubes. When the ship lived, it could flex these tunnels, widening them to allow comfortable passage by Large Dominion agents or contracting them to block access even to water or air. Now, they are relaxed and still.

The hide itself has degraded in strength as the body decays, but remains difficult to damage (hardness 10, hp 800 per 5-foot section, Break DC 50). It's merely a DC 10 Climb check to scale the monstrous, foul-smelling walls of the ship's interior or exterior. Inside, the hulk's chambers are cloyingly warm, but the floor is level enough that it can be navigated with relative ease. Chambers within are lit dimly by glowing rotten meat, and ceiling heights average at 15 feet.

**Creature:** Most of the creatures in the region have learned to avoid the dropship, but one huge crocodile took strangely to the ship's presence. Most of the things that have fed on the ship's hide have sickened and died, but this one crocodile has found the ship to not only be delicious, but potent as well—after several months spent chewing on tentacles and sensor stalks, the crocodile underwent a strange and unrepeatable transformation—it mutated into a magical beast more commonly found in tropical waters, a creature known as a lukwata.

The ravenous scavenging lukwata remains in the area, and considers the dropship to be its kill. It patrols the waters relentlessly, and surges forth to attack anyone it spies approaching the area, fighting to the death. The fact that this lukwata transformed from a crocodile, one of the standard lukwata's most hated predatory rivals, is an abnormally best left to those more philosophic than this hungry predator.

## ADVANCED LUKWATA

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 175 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 187, 290)

## L2. Cargo Pods (CR 11)

Five fleshy tunnels enter this damp chamber. The moist floor is irregular, a deep green with grayish tumor-like growths scattered across the surface. It has the unsettling appearance of moist folds of skin within some grotesque beast's mouth. To the west, the walls cinch down into a tangle of pink, dripping fibers that seem to mostly, although not entirely, block passage into an area beyond.

These chambers were once used to store cargo, but also as boarding chambers—the dominion ship would extend its tubelike stalks to attach to a grappled ship, allowing the aliens within access to the enemy ship's interior.

The pink fibrous barriers are decayed “doorways” that once separated compartments—they once worked as the flesh valves in the Dominion Hive work today, but time and decay has rendered these doors mostly inoperable. These walls of tissue are easy to smash through or destroy (hardness 2; hp 12; Break DC 16). A successful DC 15 Escape Artist check allows a character to wriggle through one without destroying the door as a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

## L3. Rotting Floor (CR 10)

The smell of putrefaction is overwhelming here. This damp chamber itself appears empty, save for a tangle of ribbed gray cables—or arteries—that hang from rotting walls.

The “cables” that hang from the wall here once connected to an ugothokra incubator (now located in area M3). Remnants from the production of these spiderlike monsters have seeped into the room's floor, resulting in a dangerous trap.

**Trap:** The floor section of this chamber has rotted almost completely through—a Heal check can be used in place of a Perception check to notice the trapped floor before anyone stumbles into it. One round after anything larger than a Tiny creature sets foot on the floor, the entire floor ruptures, dumping all creatures in the room into a foul pit filled with decay, razor-sharp chitinous projections from the rotting carcasses of hundreds of ugothokras, and blasts of pressurized air. This pustule explodes in a blast of gas and shrapnel, affecting all creatures in the area indicated on the map. Part of this explosive trap results in an upwell of infectious vapors—all creatures exposed to the trap are also exposed to flesh ripen fever (see page 89).

### ROTTING FLOOR EXPLOSION

CR 11

XP 12,800

Type mechanical; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

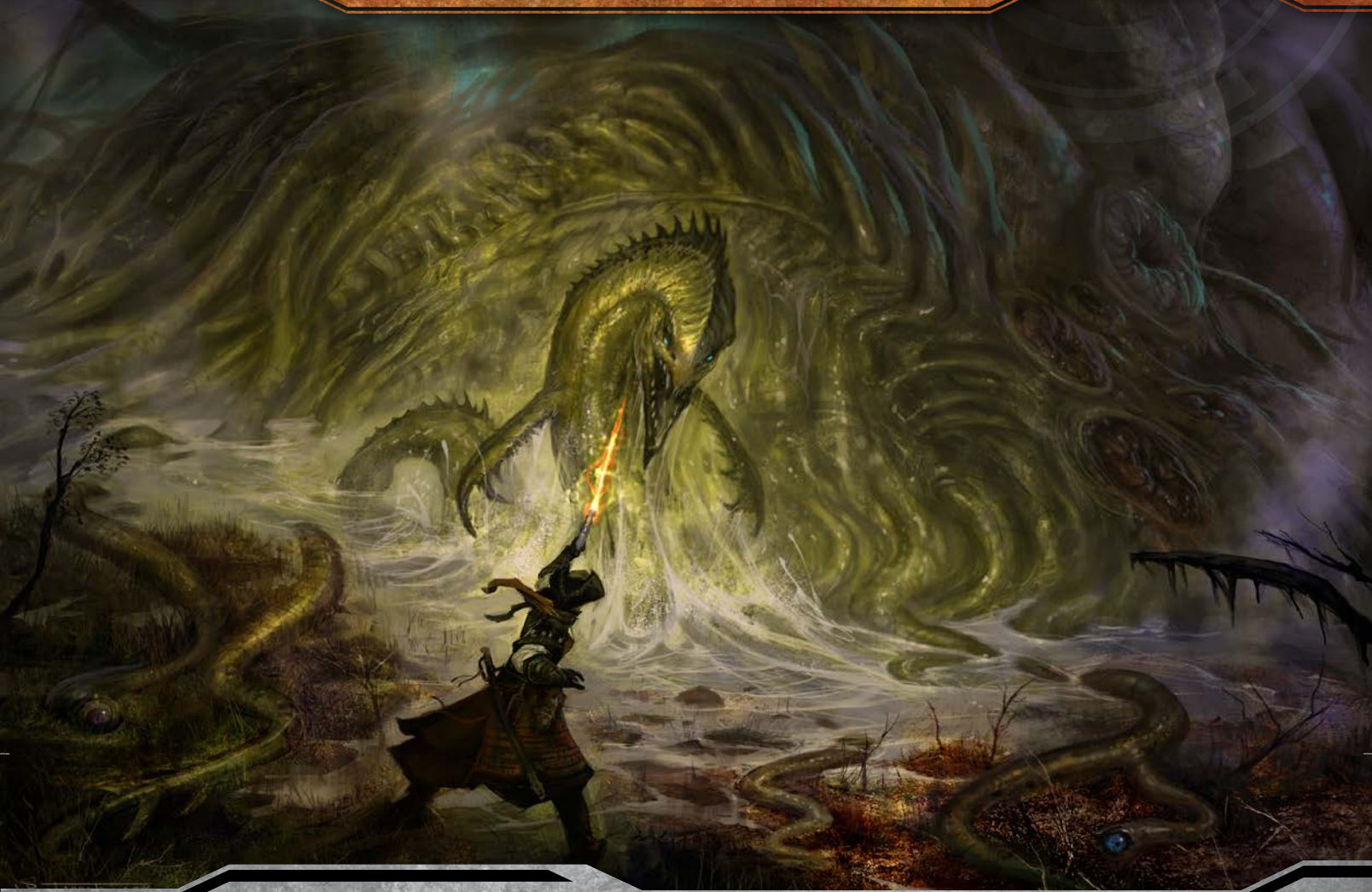
#### EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset none

Effect 20-foot-deep pit (2d6 falling damage); explosion of



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS



bony shrapnel (Atk +15 ranged, 1d6 bone shards per target for 1d6+5 each); diseased gasses (see above); DC 20 Reflex avoids fall; DC 19 Fortitude avoids disease; multiple targets (all creatures in area **L3**)

### L4. Cathedral of Light (CR 12)

The drooping ceiling of this elongated gallery rises thirty feet high in places but hangs down to only five feet from the ground in others, sagging like a partially collapsed tent made of rotting flesh. The air itself swirls with multiple motes of various colors of light—what at first seem to be fireflies but, upon closer inspection, appear to be more akin to floating jellyfish-like creatures.

Although the tiny floating jellyfish seem beautiful, they are in fact immense clots of oversized bacteria that float and drift in the air, spawned from the rotten walls of the place. Fortunately for the PCs, these glowing organisms are far too large to infect them, yet still small enough that they don't pose a threat.

**Creature:** The same cannot be said of the chamber's guardian, a variant lunarma that once served on the ship as an attendant for its engines. When the ship crashed, the lunarma's purpose ended and its Dominion masters left it here, expecting it to die not long after since the creature "fed" from exhalations and excretions from the ship's engines. In fact, the lunarma has thrived in this environment, soaking in nutrients and energy from the process of the ship decaying around it. Eventually, when the ship is gone, the lunarma will need to move on, but for now it has come to view this realm as its castle, and it fights vigorously using its spells and a timeworn mindrender pistol it took from a Dominion captive not long before the ship landed.

#### ENGINE ATTENDANT

CR 12

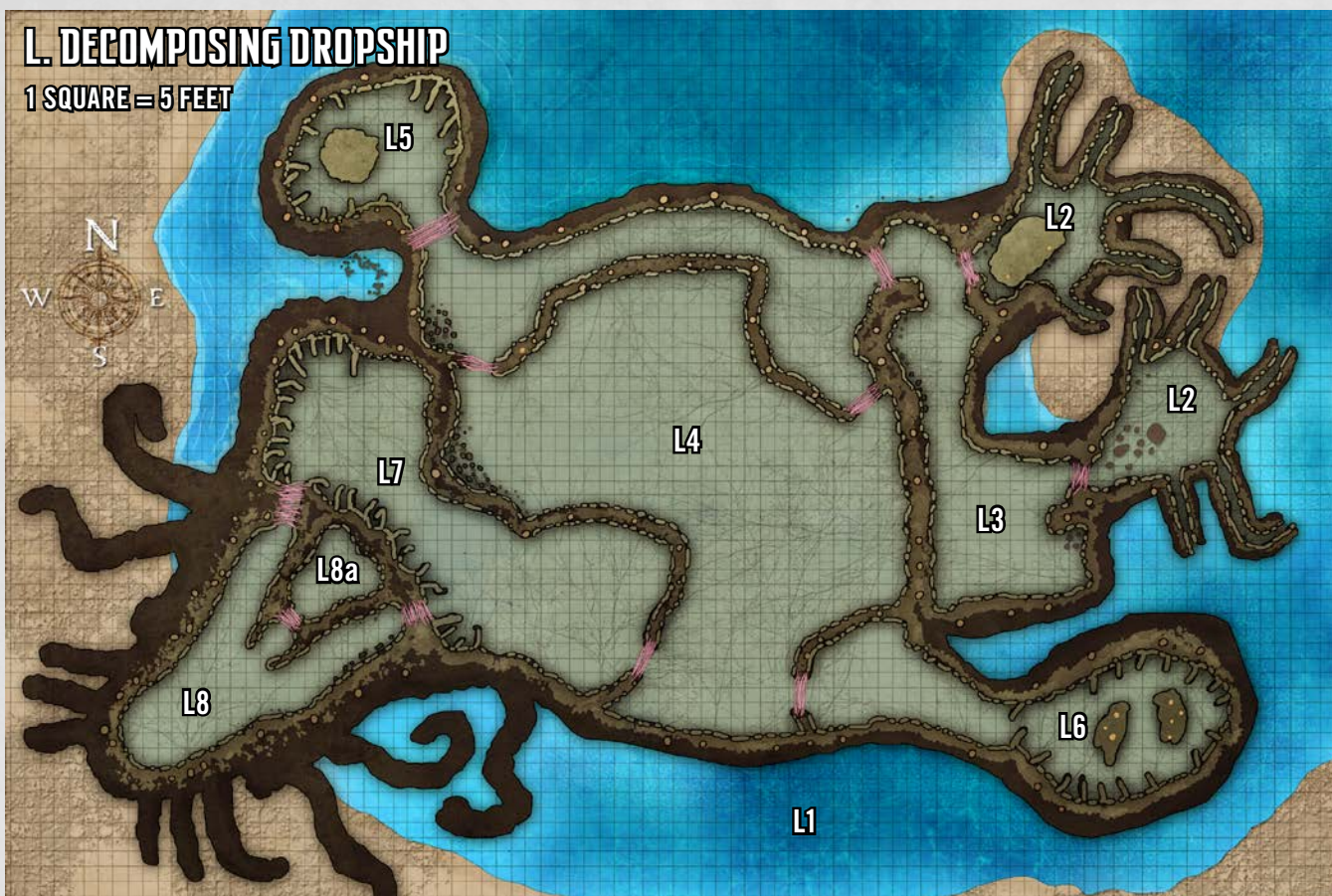
XP 19,200

Variant lunarma sorcerer 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 185, *Ultimate Magic* 73)

CN Medium aberration



# IRON GODS



## L. DECOMPOSING DROPSHIP

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

**Init** +6; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12

### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 170 (18 HD; 9d8+9d6+99)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +8, **Will** +14

**Defensive Abilities** barbed carapace; **Immune** cold, poison;

**Resist** electricity 5, fire 5

### OFFENSE

**Speed** ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** 3 claws +13 (1d8+3 plus grab), bite +13 (1d6+3)

**Ranged** timeworn mindrender +12 touch (1 negative level)

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

**Special Attacks** breath weapon (30-ft. line, 2d6 acid damage plus recurring damage, Reflex DC 19 for half, usable every 1d4 rounds), constrict (1d8+3), implant eggs

**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th; concentration +12)

6/day—*black motes*<sup>UM</sup>

3/day—*voidfield*<sup>UM</sup>

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 9th; concentration +12)

4th (4/day)—*call lightning storm* (DC 17), *greater make whole*<sup>TC</sup>, *resilient sphere*

3rd (7/day)—*blink*, *gaseous form*, *irradiate*<sup>TC</sup> (DC 16),

*lightning bolt* (DC 16)

2nd (7/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 15), *glitterdust* (DC 15), *invisibility*, *make whole*, *mirror image*

1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *floating disc* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*

**Bloodline** Void-Touched<sup>UM</sup>

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The lunarma casts *mage armor* and *shield* on itself before entering combat. It casts *unseen servant* daily (mostly to aid it in manipulating small elements in the ship).

**During Combat** The lunarma prefers to utilize its spells from range, but in combat it attacks with its tentacles and mindrender (when it attacks with the mindrender, it gives up a tentacle attack). The creature generally tries to remain out of reach from foes but in reach with its tentacles so it doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity when it fires the weapon in combat. It uses its *unseen servant* to pick up and retrieve objects dropped by the PCs if the opportunity arises.

**Morale** The engine attendant doesn't pursue foes out of the wreck, but fights to the death and chases PCs relentlessly for the honor of its rotting home as long as intruders remain inside of it.



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 21, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Knowledge [engineering]), Technologist<sup>16</sup>

**Skills** Fly +18, Knowledge (engineering) +26, Perception +12

**Languages** Aklo (can't speak); telepathy 120 ft.

**SQ** bloodline arcana, no breath

**Gear** timeworn mindrender<sup>16</sup> (10 charges)

### L5. Malfunctioning Lift (CR 10)

The twenty-foot-high vaulted ceiling of this round chamber is held up by rib-like arches. Twitching, fuming gray-ribbed cables hang from the walls, while patches of multicolored lights sparkle near the ceiling across the entire hall. A twenty-foot wide pillar of decaying flesh, two sides of which are dominated by bulging, closed puckers, rises in the middle of the room.

The pillar in the center of this room once served as a lift of sorts, connecting to lower decks that housed the bulk of the Dominion's living quarters for the ship. This lower deck is crushed under the decaying weight, and the lift no longer works to provide access to the other decks as a result.

**Creatures:** Unfortunately, the lift itself has become engorged on a horrific mass of flesh-eating worms that have been slowly chewing their way through the walls in this chamber. The lift doors themselves (the bulging puckers) react to motion, so anyone who moves through this room causes the doors to suddenly flex and open, spilling three ravenous swarms of rot grubs into the room. Invisibility allows a character to move through the room without triggering the doors, as does a DC 35 Stealth check. If released, the grubs pursue food (including PCs) relentlessly—but they make no distinction between the PCs and other creatures they encounter.

#### ROT GRUB SWARMS (3)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 85 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 215)

### L6. Abandoned Materials

The reeking walls of this elongated chamber drip with pus and decay. The western half of the vaguely hourglass-shaped room is empty, but to the east, what appear to be two badly decayed mounds of bony shelves sit slumped in the middle of the room, surrounded by protrusions of bone and chitin.

**Treasure:** This room was used to store many of the weapons and strange technological horrors utilized by

the Dominion. Most of the gear has been relocated to the hive, but a search of the room (along with a successful DC 25 Perception check to tell the treasures apart from the decaying portions of ship) reveals two weirdly organic-looking weapons (fleshnet cannons—see page 63) and a long serpentine fanged device (a mouthpiece of the dominion—see page 74).

### L7. Attendants' Cabin (CR 11)

Strings of tissue hang rancid and foul from the ceiling of this hourglass-shaped room. What may have once been some form of partially biological control panels line the western walls, but today they've all decayed into foulness.

**Creatures:** When the Dominion abandoned their dropship, most of their members relocated to their new hive to the west, yet they couldn't take all of their members with them. In particular, the ship's "brain," a shipmind, had to stay behind. As is the custom with the Dominion, a small contingent of their number stayed behind to observe the disintegration process a shipmind goes through as its



Engine Attendant



## IRON GODS

ship decays—in this manner, the Dominion enhances and perfects the art of crafting new shipminds.

This room is occupied by one such contingent, a group of three neh-thalggus who have been keeping close observation on the shipmind in area **L9** and its descent into madness. They understand that the shipmind is vulnerable and filled with anger at the Dominion, and the idea that it might reveal something they'd rather stay hidden compels these neh-thalggus to fight to the death to prevent intruders like the PCs from entering the shipmind's prison-home.

### NEH-THALGGUS (3)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 105 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 197)

### L8. The Shipmind (CR 14)

The smell in this humid chamber still holds the foul stink of rot, but a cloyingly sweet scent mingles with it. To the southwest, the ceiling rises from its initial ten feet to nearly twenty-five feet, where what appears to be an immense iron and glass cauldron hangs from coils of metal and muscle chains and cords. The inside of the cauldron churns with fluid, shaking against its restraints.

**Creature:** The cauldron contains the still-living but increasingly insane mind of the dropship, a bioengineered creature known as a shipmind. Calling itself The-Stars-Whisper, the intelligent ooze's mind has been steadily degenerating as the ship that once served it as a body rots away. Less powerful than it once was and with no control over the now dead ship, The-Stars-Whisper is retreating into strange religious beliefs as its death approaches. Yet unlike most of its kind who lapse into devotion to the Dark Tapestry, or a black hole, or some other cosmic phenomenon, this shipmind has begun to see the slow decay of its body as the true nature of existence—all life exists only to feed the grave, and it is as one decays that one can truly experience the truth of the universe.

But more than religion, this dying shipmind has developed something unusual, a growing hatred of the Dominion itself. The-Stars-Whisper blames the neh-thalggus for murdering it, and countless other ships across the universe, and whenever the neh-thalggus in area **L7** enter this room, the shipmind lashes out at them.

In its state of degeneration, The-Stars-Whisper has abandoned its observation of areas beyond this room—but when it notices the PCs approaching, it speaks to them in a booming telepathic voice once they come within 60 feet. It demands to know who the PCs are and why they are here. It knows nothing of Casandalee, but if it determines that the PCs seek to confront the Dominion, it sighs in relief, saying “Then my vengeance shall be known. You, small fleshlings, shall be my new body's instrument for my murder!”

You can use the shipmind to fill the PCs in on how and why the Dominion of the Black have come to Numeria—if the PCs ask the right questions, they can learn a little about how this ship was part of the armada that opened fire on Divinity so long ago, or that they only recently arrived in the region. You can also use the shipmind to warn the PCs that they'll be facing intellect devourers (including one wearing a dragon) and neh-thalggus in the hive. At some point in the conversation, The-Stars-Whisper reveals to the PCs that a small cache of equipment can be salvaged in a small chamber to the northeast (area **L8a**). The shipmind even opens the ruined flesh valve into the area so the PCs can enter the area with ease.

Unfortunately, The-Stars-Whisper is swiftly degrading, and before the PCs leave (either to gather the gear in area **L8a** or to leave the room), the ooze has one final thing to say: “But, can fleshlings as you even stand against the might of the Dominion? I must know. If you die to me I shall know you were weak, but if you do not—I die knowing you can do what must be done!” The mad shipmind then fires a plasma bolt into the party, attacking them with intent to kill under the reasoning that if it can kill the PCs, it needs to stay alive longer to find agents who are up to the task of its revenge.

### THE-STARS-WHISPER

CR 12

XP 19,200

Deteriorating shipmind ooze (see page 87)

hp 144

**Treasure:** A significant amount of treasure, most of it gathered from worlds similar to Golarion lies in storage here—none of the treasure is of particular use to the Dominion in their current task and so they elected to leave it behind here. The cache is kept in several fluid-filled, blisterlike chests, and includes 16 yellow topazes worth 500 gp each, 7 black star sapphires worth 1,000 gp each, a suit of +3 *banded mail*, a *staff of healing*, a blue veemod<sup>TR</sup>, a rocket launcher<sup>TR</sup>, and an ingenuity facet (see page 63).

In addition, one of the pods contains a dozen small spongy spheres that reek of something akin to ammonia. These are scent glands that can be used to confuse the sentient walls of the Dominion hive. The-Stars-Whisper is sure to explain to the PCs that they'll need these glands if they hope to infiltrate the hive undetected. A single gland is enough to render a person undetectable to the hive's walls for 24 hours.

**Story Award:** If the PCs take advantage of the opportunity to interrogate the shipmind and learn about the Dominion and the hive before they or it attacks, award them 19,200 XP.

### THE DOMINION HIVE

The Dominion of the Black presence in the Scar of the Spider is currently overseen by a yah-thelgaad calling itself



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

Dweller-in-Dark-Places. The nature of the materials that coat the hive's walls allow the Dweller to observe most areas in the hive with ease. As the party progresses, the Dweller becomes increasingly intrigued with them, eventually determining that they are of sufficient power to be worthy of the Dominion leader harvesting their brains personally. For this reason, Dweller doesn't marshal the defense of the hive that it could, watching their progress closely.

Within the hive, connecting tunnels are 15 feet in diameter and circular in cross section. Characters who must walk can do so with ease as long as they remain in the center of the hallways—walking along the left or right side means moving along an increasingly steep slope and should be treated as difficult terrain.

**Doors:** The hive's doors are unusual, they look like tightly sealed fleshy puckers when closed. These flesh valves open at a touch to the Dominion agents (this is a swift action), but for invaders, they must be tricked or forced into opening. A flesh valve has hardness 10, 20 hp, and a Break DC of 24. A severed limb harvested from a neh-thalgggu, intellect devourer, or ugothokra can be used as a key of sorts to open one of these doors with a touch. In addition, contact with any form of magical cold causes a door to open immediately. Finally, the peppers grown by Mad Paeytr cause a flesh valve to open and remain open for 24 hours—valves opened in other ways close automatically after 1 minute.

**Walls:** The walls of the hive themselves are encrusted with a strange form of Dominion biotechnology. In appearance, these walls resemble the hide of a crocodile in both color and texture, with occasional odd protrusions and repeating patterns of alien geometry. A thin layer of pungent, translucent jelly coats the stuff, and infrequent twitches and undulations ripple across the surface, like the movements of musculature beneath skin. Numerous small glowing creatures that resemble weird jellyfish the size of a human's hand slither and float across the walls, providing dim illumination throughout the complex. The walls and these jellyfish are in fact a single form of symbiotic engineered life. The walls themselves have hardness 15, 90 hp per 5-foot section, and heal damage at the rate of 5 hp per round. The jellyfish serve as countless tiny visual and audio sensors, which allow the Dweller to use its lair (area **M13**) to observe all of the rooms coated with the stuff (save for area **M6**—something the Dweller hasn't yet realized as it's had no reason lately to observe that room). An area effect spell that inflicts acid or fire damage destroys all of the jellyfish sensors in that area for 10 minutes before the walls extrude replacements. A character who douses themselves with one of the strange scent glands from area **L8a** becomes invisible and silent to the jellyfish, but this has a strange side effect that causes dozens of the things to cling to their bodies—this results in a –8 penalty on Stealth checks

and allows creatures to pinpoint the character when he is invisible.

**Hive Entrance:** The physical entrance to the hive is obscured by a *permanent image* (CL 11th, DC 19) placed by the yah-thelgaad via a scroll. The image appears to be a curtain of thickly growing vines, although a successful DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check is enough for a character to discern the vines are of no known species—the yah-thelgaad didn't bother to make the vines appear to be of a plant native to Golarion. The vines aren't really intended to be a significant barrier to entry, though—the guardian in the first room is the Hive's greatest defense against unwanted intruders.

### M1. Rogue Annihilator (CR 13)

The rock of this enormous domed chamber has been cut with startling precision and shines with a glassy finish. A wide-mouthed corridor filled with hanging vines lies to the east and a fifteen foot wide corridor exits the room to the south. Opposite this hallway to the north, a strange pucker-like growth of green scaly flesh grows on the wall.

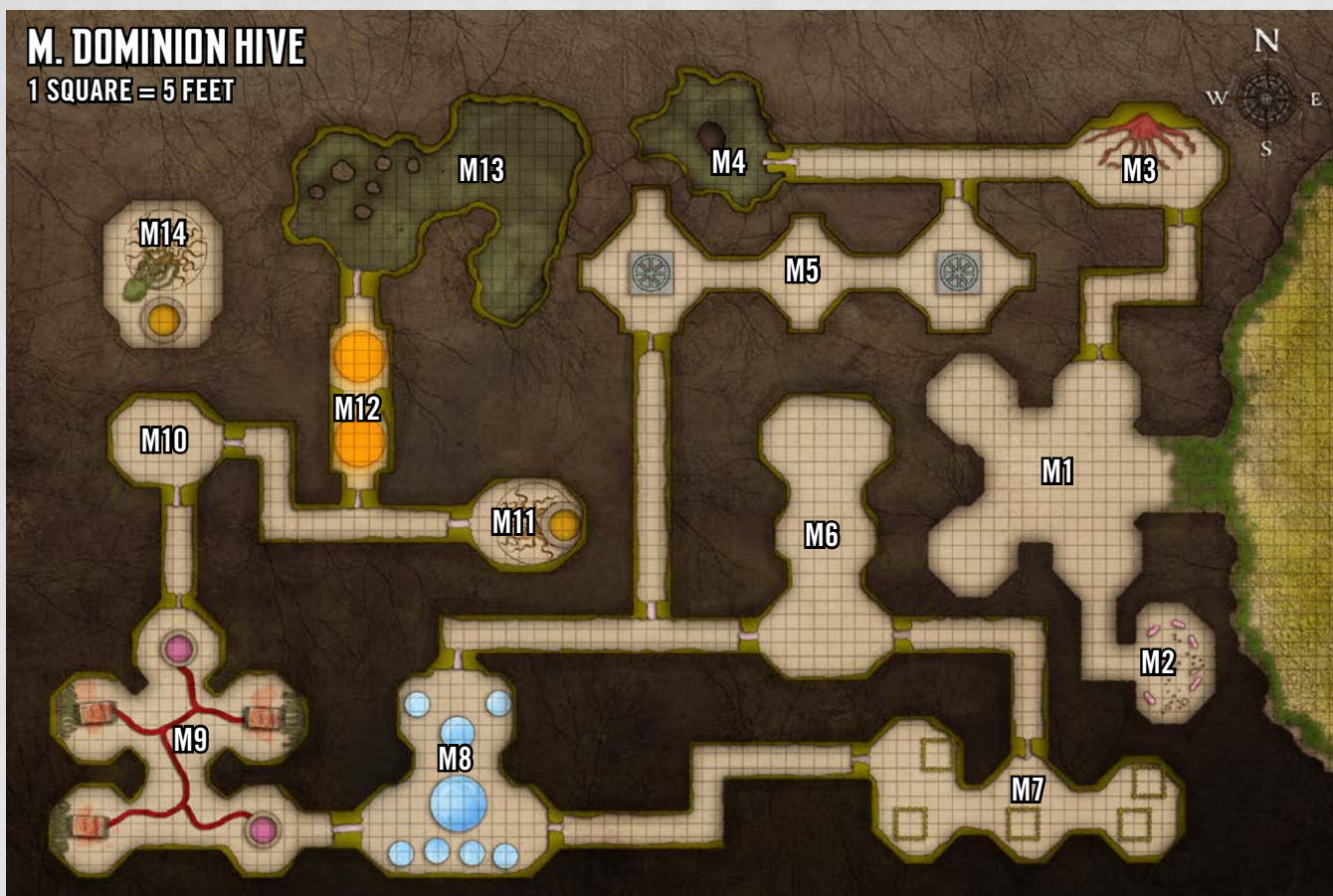
**Creature:** This is the main entrance to the Dominion hive. Waiting in the northeast quadrant of this chamber is their remaining



**Dominion Observer**



# IRON GODS



annihilator robot, currently uncontrolled and aggressive due to damage it has suffered. The Dominion agents have yet to bother repairing the robot, but intend to raid the Machine Cave in the near future to attempt to force Binox into first repairing the annihilator and then serving the Dominion.

If the party possesses a robojack (L6 and L8), they may attempt to control the robot; due to its damaged state it makes checks to resist this technology at a -1 penalty. Note that the robot must squeeze in order to fit through the tunnels deeper in the Dominion hive.

## DAMAGED ANNIHILATOR CR 13

XP 25,600

Annihilator robot (*Inner Sea Bestiary* 43)

N Gargantuan construct (robot)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +23

### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 9, flat-footed 24 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +18 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 170 (20d10+60)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** hardness 5; **Immune** cold, construct traits;

**Resist** electricity 30, fire 30

**Weaknesses** unrepaired, vulnerable to critical hits, vulnerable to electricity

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +28 (2d6+12)

**Ranged** integrated chain gun +18 (8d6/×4)

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

**Special Attacks** combined arms, plasma lance

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The lumbering construct attacks as soon as PCs enter the carved cavern, starting combat with a plasma lance attack and then moving in to melee foes while using its integrated chain gun. It pursues foes for no more than 3 rounds if they flee this room.

**Morale** The damaged annihilator fights until it is destroyed.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 34, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +20; **CMB** +36; **CMD** 49

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Deadly Aim, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Spring Attack

**Skills** Acrobatics +28 (+36 when jumping), Climb +33, Fly +5, Intimidate +15, Perception +23

**Languages** Androffan, Hallit



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Chain Gun (Ex)** This advanced integrated firearm has a range increment of 200 feet, automatically reloads as a free action, and has a 1–2 misfire range. If a misfire occurs, the attack misses and the robot must use its next action clearing the chamber of the jammed gun (the robot doesn't attempt to fire a jammed chain gun). An annihilator's core can process scrap metal into new ammunition, effectively giving the annihilator infinite ammo with this weapon.

**Combined Arms (Ex)** When taking a full attack action, an annihilator can attack with melee and ranged integrated weapons simultaneously.

**Plasma Lance (Ex)** As a standard action once every 3 rounds, the annihilator may fire a 120-foot-long line of plasma from its tail. All creatures in this area take 14d6 points of plasma damage (half fire, half electricity; DC 18 Reflex halves). The save DC is Intelligence-based, and includes a –4 penalty for damage suffered.

**Unrepaired (Ex)** The damage the robot suffered has done more than lower its hit points and reduce its hardness—it's also rendered one of its chain guns inoperative, ruined its booster jets and its force field, and prevents it from using its chain gun to perform suppressing fire. Finally, if the robot suffers critical hit damage, it loses 1 point of hardness in addition to the regular effects robots suffer on a critical hit. Despite all this damage, though, the annihilator remains a deadly foe—and foreshadows a fight against a fully operational annihilator at the start of the final adventure in the Iron Gods Adventure Path.

### M2. Stasis Tubes

Several tubes made of a pink material sit on rugose leathery stands in this room—five in intact condition, and three that have been shattered. All bear scorch marks on their surfaces and have small windows in their upper sections.

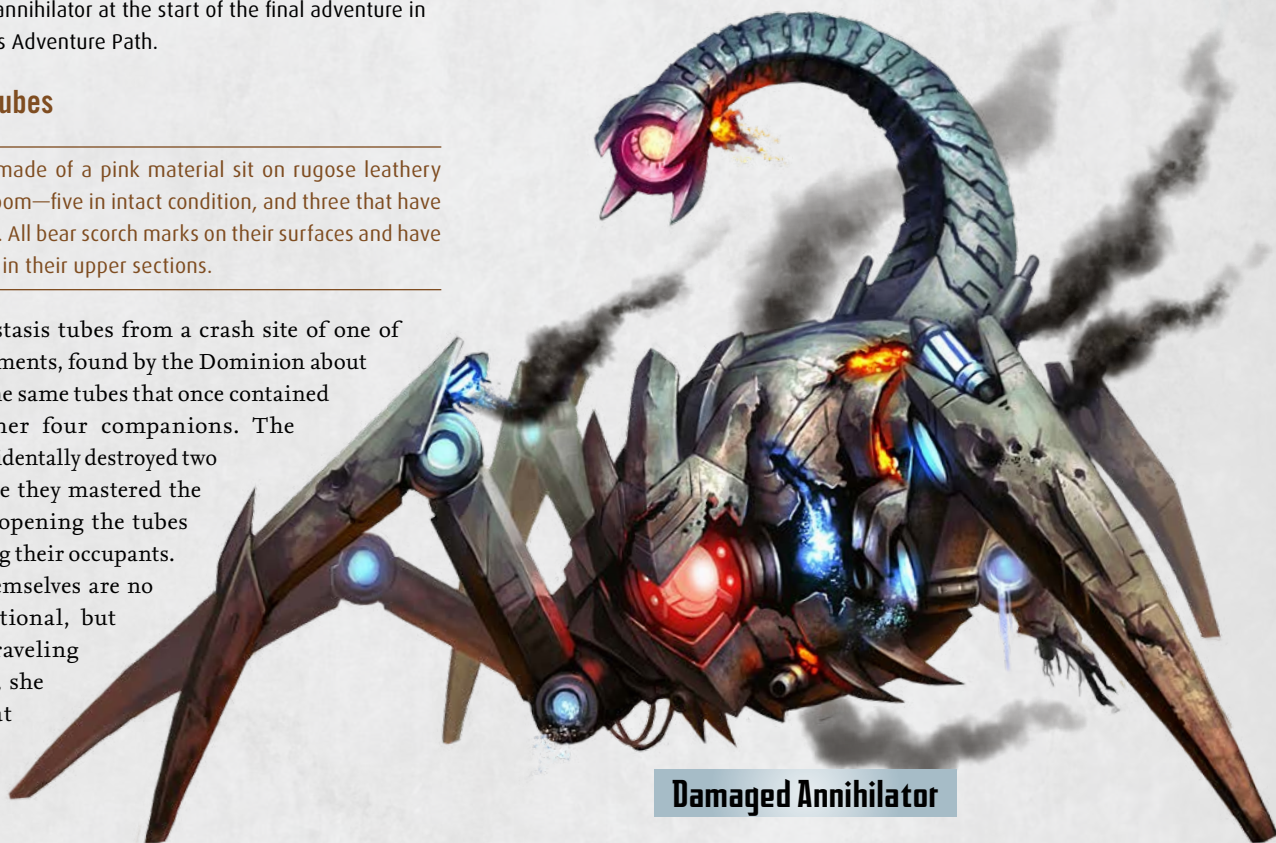
These are stasis tubes from a crash site of one of *Divinity's* fragments, found by the Dominion about a year ago—the same tubes that once contained Isuma and her four companions. The Dominion accidentally destroyed two of them before they mastered the technique of opening the tubes without killing their occupants. The tubes themselves are no longer operational, but if Isuma is traveling with the PCs, she shudders at the sight of them.

### M3. Incubator (CR 12)

The walls of this chamber are plated in swaths of what looks like crocodilian hide. An immense sculpture, or perhaps a machine, that looks something like an insectile cephalopod built from fleshy leather and strips of dull red chitin looms against the northern wall, its seven tentacles splayed out into the room, each arm ending in a bulbous pucker the size of a curled-up halfling.

**Creatures:** The strange tentacled machine is a device that incubates and dispenses the spiderlike disease carriers used by the Dominion as bioweapons, creatures known as ugothokras. The bulges inside of the machine's arms each contain a fully-grown ugothokra, and as soon as it or the walls of the place notice intruders, the machine's arms thrash and then peel back on themselves to unleash the seven ugothokras. The creatures take a –4 penalty on their initiative checks as they slowly waken, but attack immediately once they do, seeking to infect as many PCs with diseases as they can and fighting to the death.

The machine spawns ugothokras at a rate of 1 per day, but at your discretion, you can increase this rate if you wish to give the Hive more reinforcements if the PCs retreat and return. It's difficult, but the machine itself can be destroyed (hardness 15; hp 600; Break DC 50; Disable Device DC 40). It self-repairs damage at a rate of 5 hp per round. At the end



Damaged Annihilator



# IRON GODS

of any round the machine has been damaged, it shrieks and howls in pain—all creatures other than ugothokras in area **M3** take 4d6 sonic damage and are stunned from the sound for 1 round (Fort DC 18 halves damage and negates stun; this is a sonic effect).

If the Dweller observes PCs making a concerted effort to destroy the incubator, it sends the intellect devourers in their kasatha bodies in area **M5** to defend the machine. If the machine is destroyed, it can no longer repopulate the hive's ugothokras—more importantly, the remaining ugothokras in the complex immediately gain 2 negative levels that cannot be removed.

## UGOTHOKRAS (7) CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 76 (see page 88)

**Story Award:** If the PCs destroy the incubator, award them 12,800 XP.

## M4. Disposal (CR 13)

The flesh valve that provides entrance to this room is different than the others. It oozes a small amount of translucent pale orange slime that has left what appears to be chemical burns along the seam and in a puddle on the floor. The chamber beyond serves the hive as a disposal chamber, but functions more like an immense detached stomach than anything else.

**Trap:** The disposal is activated with a touch to the flesh valve that provides entrance, but has a time delay—the device activates 2 rounds after the door itself is touched. The neh-thalggu generally stack their refuse in front of the door, touch it, then retreat to safety to let the disposal take care of things.

When it activates, the door peels open and three large slimy tentacles extrude to snatch up all objects and creatures within 20 feet of the door itself (the tentacles ignore creatures and objects smaller than Tiny). The tentacles do damage, but also grapple creatures and objects as they pull them into the chamber beyond, which then douses what lies within with powerful acidic enzymes. The resulting slurry is then absorbed into the walls and helps to provide power for the entire hive. The door to the room closes at the end of the round after the tentacles attack, immediately resetting the trap. If the door is destroyed, the tentacles and trap itself are destroyed as well, and the interior no longer douses its contents with acid.

## DOMINION DISPOSAL CHAMBER CR 13

XP 19,200

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 35

### EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset automatic

Effect three tentacles +18 melee (2d6+6 plus grab; CMB +26

[+30 grapple]; CMD 36; creature grabbed is pulled into area **M4** at the end of the round); acid bath (2d6 acid damage/round for 6 rounds); multiple targets (3 creatures or objects)

**Treasure:** An investigation of the room's interior and a successful DC 28 Perception check reveals a single *pale lavender ioun stone* (can absorb 15 spell levels) on the ground near the central rocky pillar, the crystalline item is shiny but unharmed by the acid.

## M5. Hive Power Stations (CR 13)

This long room consists of three octagonal chambers connected by a fifteen-foot-wide tube. The walls are covered with crocodilian hide and are swarming with tiny points of light that flit back and forth between two slowly pulsing pillars of strange metal at the chamber's eastern and western extremes. Dozens of pale green spheres sit on these pillars, each containing a bubbling pale green fluid in which bobs a humanoid brain. When the points of light touch a pillar, their color grows brighter, and when that point of light flies back to the walls, the color dims once again.

This eerie chamber is where the Dominion's power source comes from. The hive's walls and machinery are quite efficient and do not require significant amounts of power. What they do need is harvested from the digestion of organic material in area **M4** and is augmented by the extraction of tormented dreams siphoned from the brains contained in these two pillars. The tiny points of light are more of the small jellyfish-like creatures—they siphon bits of thought from the trapped brains and transfer the psychic energy to the walls. Little can be done to save the brains in these pillars, but destroying the pillars does allow them to finally die—each pillar has hardness 15 and 360 hit points, electricity damage inflicted to these objects is not halved and ignores hardness. A pillar can be immediately destroyed via a DC 40 Strength check or deactivated with a DC 35 Disable Device check. Each time a pillar takes damage, it reflexively fires a bolt of psychic energy at the source of its target (+15 ranged touch attack, maximum range of 180 feet) that inflicts 1d4 points of Intelligence damage on a hit. If the pillars are attacked and there are no creatures here to defend them, the Dweller takes note and sends the neh-thalggu from area **M7** to investigate.

If one pillar is destroyed, all attempts to force open or disable a flesh valve door and all attempts to use Stealth to hide from the Dweller as he watches from the walls gain a +5 bonus.

If both pillars are destroyed, all of the hive's doors gape open and remain open, and the walls no longer allow the Dweller to observe rooms from afar.

Most of the traps and objects found within rooms themselves, such as the incubator in area **M3** or the portal in



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

area **M11**, have significant stores of power and can continue to function for months.

**Creatures:** This chamber is protected by a quartet of what appear to be kasathas armed with short swords. In fact, these are the lost companions of Isuma, inhabited by intellect devourers who serve the Dominion as guardians. Another four intellect devourers are out in the Felldales on scouting missions—they'll return in 1d3 weeks, in theory, to relieve them so that these four can then go on scout duty or so that these new four intellect devourers can reinforce casualties.

### INHABITED KASATHAS (4) CR 6

#### XP 2,400

Kasatha rogue 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 174)

CE Medium humanoid (kasatha)

**Init** +2; **Senses** *detect magic*, Perception +12

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +3 dodge, +2 shield)

**hp** 63 (7d8+28)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

**Defensive Abilities** defensive training, evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk short sword +8 (1d6+3/19–20), 2 mwk short swords +8 (1d6+1/19–20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +4d6

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +7)

Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*confusion* (single target only), *daze monster* (no HD limit), *inflict serious wounds*, *invisibility*, *reduce size* (as reduce person but self only)

3/day—*cure moderate wounds*, *globe of invulnerability*

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The inhabited kasathas start combat by trying to sneak attack flat-footed foes. They then either use *invisibility* to set up sneak attacks every other round or flank foes to do the same. They rely on *confusion* and *daze monster* against foes who seek to maintain ranged superiority.

**Morale** An inhabited kasatha fights to the death. If slain, the intellect devourer within emerges, at which point its allies move to protect it during the round the emerged intellect devourer is vulnerable and dazed. An emerged intellect devourer fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (short sword)

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Climb +13, Escape Artist +12, Intimidate +9, Perception +12, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +12, Survival +9

**Languages** Kasatha, Androffan

**SQ** desert runner, desert stride, jumper, multi-armed, stalker, rogue talents (combat trick, resiliency, weapon training), trapfinding +3

**Gear** +2 leather armor, +1 buckler, 3 mwk short swords

### INTELLECT DEVOURERS (4)

CR 8

#### XP 4,800 each

**hp** 84 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 180)

**Development:** If the PCs are traveling with Isuma, she quietly asks the PCs to aid her in honoring her fallen kin once their bodies have been rescued from the intellect devourers. Isuma wants to follow her tribe's tradition of burying her kin on a hilltop, then standing vigil over the bodies from sundown to sunrise. She doesn't expect the PCs to accompany her, but if they aid her she is grateful. If the PCs do accompany her on this vigil, you should have the group encounter at least one wandering monster during the night to add a bit of drama to the incident—this additional encounter is also a great way to get the PCs a bit of extra XP if they need it!

**Story Award:** Each pillar of brains destroyed by the PCs earns the party 9,600 XP. If the PCs help Isuma to bury her kin, award them an additional 12,800 XP, in addition to any creatures they might have to defeat during their vigil.

### M6. Maukui's Lair (CR 14)

The walls of this sizable hall are composed of green crocodilian substance, but the small glowing jellyfish-like creatures evident elsewhere in the complex are lethargic and barely glowing at all.

**Creature:** This large chamber has been set aside by the Dominion as a place for the intellect devourer Maukui to rest and relax. Since Maukui has grown fond of its dragon body, it needs a large room to do so, especially since Maukui's favorite form of relaxation is the torment and eventual consumption of creatures it's captured and returned to the hive for expressly this purpose. Of late, though, Maukui has been withdrawn and frustrated at having his latest experiment—the android AI Casandalee—taken from him. In a growing fit of dissent, the intellect devourer has managed to engineer a way to render the walls of this chamber unusable by the Dweller for observation, so that when the PCs arrive, it feels fee to speak its mind to the intruders.

Maukui addresses the PCs telepathically, admitting to them that it only wears this dragon as a skin, yet implying it can use the "skin" as skillfully as the creature originally born into it. Yet it does not wish a fight. Maukui instead proposes an exchange of information for a service. In return for reclaiming a certain treasure for the intellect devourer, it will answer the PCs' questions. That the treasure it wants returned is Casandalee's AI core likely results in an inevitable confrontation when the PCs refuse



## IRON GODS

to hand it over, but if the PCs are canny and patient they can learn much of interest.

Maukui explains to the PCs that the leader of this hive, a yah-thelgaad named Dweller-In-Dark-Places, took from him a valuable treasure, an intelligence trapped within a crystal. Maukui wants this crystal and its intelligence back (he doesn't reveal why he wants it, knowing that might make the PCs unwilling to aid him). In return, he can aid the PCs by describing to them the powers a yah-thelgaad possesses so that they can plan for their inevitable confrontation with the Dweller. Maukui can also provide a description of the Hive's layout, including the traps, denizens, and dangers found within the area. He asks the PCs to spare the kytton Paajgat in area **M9** but doesn't care what happens to anything else in the Hive.

At your option, Maukui can give the PCs more information as well, including some of the background details on why the Dominion

is here in the first place. He can also tell the PCs that he suspects Casandalee is kept in a secret chamber accessible only via a portal—he can tell the PCs where this portal is (area **M11**) and how to use it, but hasn't been into the chamber beyond and doesn't know what dangers might or might not wait beyond.

If she's traveling with the PCs, Isuma bristles at the prospect of working with her tormentor, and unless she's forged a strong bond of trust with the PCs, she attacks the dragon before agreeing to work with him. Likewise, if Maukui starts to suspect the PCs want Casandalee for themselves or otherwise plan to betray him, he sighs deeply and attacks, hoping to kill them and use their bodies and gear to aid his plans.

### MAUKUI'S HOST

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 147 (see page 60)

### MAUKUI

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 184 (see page 60)

**Development:** If the PCs have already attracted the Dweller's attention, it notices that it cannot observe them when they enter this room. Intrigued, it sends a group of its minions (likely the inhabitants of area **M8**) to investigate in 1d4+2 rounds, likely interrupting any conversations the PCs are having with Maukui. If a neh-thalggu realizes Maukui is betraying the Hive, it attempts to exit the room to inform the Dweller before returning to attempt an execution.

**Story Award:** If the PCs forge an alliance with Maukui and learn what it knows before its inevitable betrayal, award the PCs 12,800 XP.

### M7. Fleshcells (CR 12)

The walls of this chamber are covered with crocodilian hide. The chamber itself consists of three roughly octagonal rooms with thirty-foot-high ceilings. Five ten-foot-square cages, the bars made of pale green and pink material, hang from the ceiling on cables of twitching chitin.

This chamber is used by the Dominion to house live captives who have not yet had their brains harvested—typically, creatures captured by their annihilators out in the Felldales, but any PCs or NPC allies that might be captured by the Dominion can be rescued from these cages as well (currently, no prisoners are present). The bars of the cages themselves are made of the same material as the walls (hardness 15; hp 90;



Maukui's Host



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

Break DC 32) and repair damage to themselves at a rate of 5 hp per round. The cages can be commanded to spread open their bars to place creatures within or remove them in the same way the flesh valves can be opened.

**Creatures:** A group of four neh-thalggus guard this chamber, although without any prisoners to guard, the aliens have been spending their time sharing memories via brain swapping (a loathsome act that may be as close as these aliens come to sharing an emotional bond with each other) and discussing magical theory. The brain collectors rally to attack any intruders upon sight, in any event, and fight to the death.

### NEH-THALGGUS (4) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 105 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 197)

### M8. Shipmind Nursery (CR 11)

Several fluid-filled cylindrical tanks composed of a strangely flexible glass-like material, extend from pucker-like rings set into the floor of this crocodilian-leather-sheathed chamber. Each tank is filled with a bubbling mass of blue fluid and organic matter.

This chamber is an experiment in progress, one that's been in progress for years, and which could continue for years to come as the Dominion slowly cultivates a brand-new shipmind, tailored for use not in a space-faring vessel but to control and enhance this hive. The shipmind will eventually reside in the largest of these tanks, but the other seven tanks contain chemicals and biological agents that, for the next several years, need to age separately before they are introduced to the central mass to trigger the apotheosis of a new shipmind's "birth." The tanks are relatively fragile (hardness 2; hp 20; Break DC 18), but destroying them has no immediate effect on the hive itself other than to infuriate the Dominion agents.

**Creature:** A single neh-thalggu, one much older than the others in the hive and only a few decades away from making its own transformation into a yah-thelgaad, has been entrusted with tending to the growth of the new shipmind here. The neh-thalggu is itself attended by four ugothokras. All five creatures swiftly move to attack intruders, but their primary desire is to protect the vats. As such, they do not pursue fleeing intruders from this room.

### ADVANCED NEH-THALGGU CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 125 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 197, 292)

### UGOTHOKRAS (4) CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 76 (see page 88)

### M9. Grand Lab (CR 13)

This chamber appears to be a bizarre operating theater, with three surgical tables made of fleshy orange material in three of the five octagonal wings of the room. The other two wings each contain a large vat of pulsating pink flesh-like material, striated with coils of fat and throbbing veins. All five objects are connected by a thick, pulsing artery that snakes across the floor, branching apart to link them all.

The two vats in this chamber contain masses of pulsing chemical-infused flesh that helps to maintain the docility of those on the tables in this room. The surgery tables are equipped with restraints (treat as masterwork manacles). As long as a creature is restrained on the tables, chemicals from the vats cause the creatures to take a –6 penalty to Strength and become nauseated. A successful DC 15 Fortitude save allows a character to resist these effects, but once a save is failed the effects persist as long as the restraints remain in place on the victim.

**Creatures:** The chief "surgeon" of this gruesome place is a kyton named Paajgat, an outsider who abandoned her kin on the Plane of Shadow many centuries ago when agents of the Dominion of the Black visited a planet the kytons had conquered for the glory of Zon-Kuthon. Paajgat felt she'd learned all she could from her kind, and eagerly joined with the Dominion ship to enhance her knowledge of pain and its various methods of infliction. Since arriving here in Numeria, she's learned much, including whispers from some of those she's operated upon of a cabal of kytons that operates to the northeast, the kytons of the Chapel of Rent Flesh. Paajgat has become increasingly intrigued by this organization, and feels that her time here among the Dominion is drawing to a close.

Paajgat is herself not particularly interested in fighting the PCs, but when they arrive in her laboratory, she is curious and asks them why they've come to her. She asks if they would be interested in submitting to her techniques, promising to give them experiences they have never before felt. Of course, any PC who agrees to this is merely turning themselves over for a drawn out and quite painful vivisection with little more than death to look forward to—and not soon.

Of course, the two neh-thalggu assistants that provide Paajgat protection do not stand idly by; they attack the PCs on sight. Paajgat herself watches, amused by the violence, but does not enter the fight herself unless she is attacked. She enjoys watching combat play out, and may offer polite claps for critical hits or other sudden successes. Faced with crusaders or worshipers of good deities who can't resist (rightfully) attacking her, she sighs with impatience, says something to the effect of, "Of course you have the urge to validate your belief on me... who am I to deny you the exquisite shame of being defeated by your better?"



# IRON GODS

## PAAJGAT THE FLAYER

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female sacristan kyton cleric of Zon-Kuthon 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 177)

LE Medium outsider (kyton, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +24

### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 12, flat-footed 26 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +9 natural)

**hp** 195 (17 HD; 12d10+5d8+107); regeneration 5 (good spells and weapons, silver)

**Fort** +17, Ref +8, Will +16

**DR** 10/silver or good; **Immune** cold; **SR** 21

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 *unholy spiked chain* +24/+19/+14 (2d4+11/19-20)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 6/day (DC 15, 3d6), shadow scream, unnerving gaze (30 ft., DC 19),

**Cleric Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th;

concentration +9)

7/day—touch of darkness (2 rounds)



Paajgat the Flayer

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 5th; concentration +9)

3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *keen edge*<sup>o</sup>

2nd—*blindness/deafness*<sup>o</sup> (DC 16, only to cause blindness), *cure moderate wounds*, *gentle repose* (2)

1st—*cure light wounds* (3), *divine favor*, *obscuring mist*<sup>o</sup>

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*

**D** domain spell; **Domains** Darkness, Murder

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Paajgat casts *keen edge* at the start of combat.

**During Combat** Paajgat uses shadow scream on the first round, then casts *divine favor* before attacking in melee. She pauses to heal herself whenever she's brought below 100 hp, and saves her channel energy for when she's surrounded or when it looks like several foes are on their last legs.

**Morale** Paajgat abandons combat if reduced to fewer than 30 hit points and uses her *scroll of wind walk* to escape the region once she can escape the Hive. If she does so, she may well end up in Starfall, in which case the PCs can encounter her again amid the kytons there.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 24, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 15, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 35

**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Critical Focus, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (spiked chain)

**Skills** Heal +24, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (religion) +19, Perception +24, Sense Motive +24, Spellcraft +22, Stealth +19

**Languages** Common, Shadowtongue

**Combat Gear** *scroll of wind walk*; **Other Gear** +1 chainmail, +1 *unholy spiked chain*

## NEH-THALGGUS (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 105 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 197)

**Treasure:** All that remains of Paajgat's latest victim is a red skeleton on a table, but she did manage to extract several interesting pieces of cybernetic equipment from the body—a pair of cybernetic eyes<sup>TG</sup>, a skillslot<sup>TG</sup> with a mark IV Acrobatics skillchip<sup>TG</sup>, and a cybernetic arm<sup>TG</sup>.

## M10. Nutrient Dispensary

Thick pulsing sacks of flesh hang from the green, wrinkled walls of this disturbingly sweet-smelling chamber.

The sacks on the wall contain thick, foul-tasting stuff the consistency of curdled milk. To the neh-thalggus, the stuff within these sacks is nutritious and delicious, but to other creatures, feeding on this foul wall excretion causes nausea for 2d4 rounds followed by sickness for 2d4 hours (DC 15 Fortitude reduces the effect to 1d4 rounds of being sickened). This is a poison effect.



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

### M11. Portal (CR 11)

The polished floor of this chamber is decorated with a complex symbol etched into the stone. The symbol has been stained an ochre hue and depicts an unnerving tangle of tentacle shapes. At the far end of the room sits a low platform of dark brown metal supporting a one-inch-thick pad of yellow glass.

Examination of the etched symbol and a successful DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals it as a Dominion symbol for the Dark Tapestry itself.

The glass pad radiates strong conjuration (teleportation) magic—it's essentially an immobile but permanent *teleportation circle* linked to an identical pad in area M14. The pad is only triggered by the touch of a yah-thelgaad (as revealed by a successful DC 30 Spellcraft check made as if to identify a magic item). The PCs can utilize a severed limb from such a creature to activate the pad if they desire. Alternately, a successful DC 25 Use Magic Device check to emulate race can trick the pad into activating.

**Creatures:** A group of four ugothokras cling to the walls of this chamber and move to attack any intruders who enter. In addition, if the Dweller notices combat in this area, it watches closely. If the PCs defeat the ugothokras, the Dweller and its neh-thalggu minions in area M13 come here to attack the PCs, pursuing them through to areas M14 if needed.

#### UGOTHOKRAS (4)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 76 (see page 88)

### M12. Plasma Pits (CR 11)

The air in this fifty-foot-high chamber is searing hot and stinks of ozone. Roughly twenty-five feet wide, about seventy-five feet long, and narrowing briefly at the center, the walls of the room are plated with crocodilian hide. Two huge glowing pits dominate the center of the floor, the air above them rippling with heat and sizzling with short sparks of electrical discharge.

**Hazard:** The two glowing pits in the floor contain plasma-generating biomechanical devices, akin to small-scale thrusters that propel Dominion ships through the depths of space. The room itself is heated by these elements, resulting in an area of extreme heat (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 444), but more importantly, any creature that enters either of the pits immediately takes 12d6 points of plasma damage (half electricity, half fire; Reflex DC 15 for half). The pits themselves are 40 feet deep and the walls can be scaled with a DC 25 Climb check if needed, but as both pits are filled with permanent reverse gravity effects, it's more likely that a creature that falls into the pit takes the plasma damage and is then hurled up to hit the ceiling 50 feet above,

taking 5d6 points of damage from the upward fall instead. The neh-thalggu and yah-thelgaad navigate this area via flight, as can any other flying creature, by making a DC 10 Fly check (with a –5 penalty to the roll for the disorientation) to move through the area of warped gravity.

The plasma pits are not magical, and cannot be dispelled, but as devices of a biotechnological nature, they can be affected by spells like *protection from technology*<sup>TG</sup>, *rebuke technology*<sup>TG</sup>, and *antitech field*<sup>TG</sup>. The pits themselves serve no practical purpose other than one final hazard to avoid.

**Story Award:** The first time the PCs manage to navigate this hazard to reach area M13 beyond, award them 9,600 XP.

### M13. Dark Cavern (CR 15)

Swarms of tiny glowing creatures crawl and slither along the scaled walls of this large, humid cavern, providing eerie illumination of the natural rock columns that support the ceiling twenty feet above. The irregular floor of the cave is also covered with the scaly substance found on the walls, though it is the mottled color of a fresh bruise and frequently stirs in places with disturbing muscular motion.

The floor of this cave, with its uneven and shifting, folded nature, counts as difficult terrain. The walls themselves, under closer inspection, are covered with rippling inscriptions written in Aklo that change as one watches. In effect, the walls, floor, and ceiling of this vast cavern are a shifting alien library of information gathered by the Dominion of the Black. While the Dweller itself can manipulate, edit, and add new entries and observations to this repository of knowledge, the PCs can do little more than attempt to read the words, and then only if they read Aklo and make a successful DC 20 Linguistics check. So alien and disjointed are the secrets revealed that each round of success in this endeavor causes the reader to take 1d4 points of Wisdom damage from creeping madness (Will DC 15 negates). Whether or not any secrets the PCs might use to their advantage can be extracted from these walls is left for you to decide.

**Creatures:** This strange cavern is the den of the leader of this cell of Dominion agents—an ascended brain collector that calls itself the Dweller-In-Dark-Places. The monster has likely been observing the PCs via the hive walls, and as the PCs enter its final domain, it greets them telepathically. Read or paraphrase the following (the yah-thelgaad continues its arrogant monologue even if the PCs immediately attack).

"Ah, nescient invaders, at last you enter my private sanctum. Unbeknownst to you, such is at my invitation. You did your best to destroy that which you did not understand along the way. Perhaps you disapprove of our work here? Your objections surely flow from your ignorance, and oh, that sweet ignorance is vaster



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than the expanse of the Gacedill Nebula itself. Tell me this, insignificant motes, before I free your brains from their bony prisons: do you think you will still oppose the all-consuming will of the ineffable void once all that you are becomes one with the Dominion of the Black?"

The Dweller desires the PCs' brains, intrigued as it has become by the skill and initiative they have shown making it this far. For this reason it would prefer to take the PCs alive (though barely) so that it might harvest each in turn. However, when its own life is in jeopardy such considerations evaporate. The yah-thelgaad is accompanied by four neh-thalggus who move forward to prevent the PCs from engaging their master in melee combat. The Dweller itself uses its most powerful magic to attack the PCs each round, and if any allies still live in the hive, it may take a few rounds to cast *sending* spells to order them to come to its aid. If any PC has been infected with diseases (particularly those from ugothokras), the Dweller is sure to use its ability to command disease against the PCs near the start of combat.

The Dweller has little interest in dying here, though, and if reduced to fewer than 50 hit points it uses *dimension door* to escape. It elects to leave Casandalee behind, instead immediately teleporting out of the Hive and then flying away into the wilds of the Felldaes. It likely seeks the PCs out at a later date and may well confront them again in Starfall or even Silver Mount at your discretion.

### DWELLER-IN-DARK-PLACES

CR 14

XP 38,400

Yah-thelgaad

hp 200 (see page 90)

### NEH-THALGGUS (4)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 105 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 197)

## M14. Casandalee's Prison (CR 12)

The walls of this room are made of cut stone polished to a mirror-like sheen. On one side of the room sits a low platform of dark brown metal supporting a one-inch-thick pad of yellow glass. The floor is etched with a tentacle-like symbol. A bulky, organic machine sits on this symbol, its numerous branch-like arms extending forth to attach to a framework of chitin and bone. This frame itself contains a small object: a sheet of semi-translucent blue material, ten inches wide and twenty inches long in a frame of black and coppery metal. The image of a beautiful woman, her face contorted into an expression of agony, is visible within the blue sheet, her mouth gaping in a silent scream.

The glass pad on the south side of the room is the second half of a linked *teleportation circle* that transports those using

it back to area **M11** (see that area for details on how the teleporter functions).

This chamber is where the Dweller has installed Casandalee's compact AI core—the core itself is merely a 10-inch-by-20-inch skymetal-framed sheet at the center of the larger device, which is itself a monstrous machine built to infiltrate and extract information from organic sources. The machine has been having problems interfacing with the complexities of the AI core, though, and despite having worked at subsuming Casandalee's psyche for several months now has only recently started to make progress toward conquering her mind. The exact amount of time the machine needs to finish its task is left to you, but you shouldn't punish the PCs for taking their time on the adventure, since recovering Casandalee is a plot element that plays into the nature of the last two Iron Gods adventures.

**Creature:** The machine itself is in fact a dangerous construct, a creature built from the cast-off and petrified shells harvested from ancient neh-thalggus. Its function as a memory draining device is entirely separate from its function as a guardian. When the PCs arrive, the machine releases its grip on the frame surrounding Casandalee's AI core and rises up to its full height of 20 feet before it attacks. The machine is identical to a fossil golem other than its alien appearance, but the brains of creatures that succumb to its petrification attack do not petrify. Instead, they remain in stasis in their new stony shell, preserved between life and death for eventual harvest.

### DOMINION FOSSIL GOLEM

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 122 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 136)

**Development:** Extracting the compact AI core from its frame is simple enough and requires nothing more than a full-round action (this provokes an attack of opportunity). When removed, the image of Casandalee goes blank for a few seconds, then comes back, her expression now free of the pain it showed earlier. As a fortunate side effect, the AI core is fully charged from being attached to the Dominion machine, but going forward the PCs will need to track the core's energy level to keep it charged if they wish to continue speaking to Casandalee. Once freed, read or paraphrase the following as Casandalee greets the PCs for the first time.

"I know you not, but I recognize you as akin to what I once was: a person. I am Casandalee, a prisoner here, most dreadfully inconvenienced until now by these worshipers of Emptiness. You have done more than rescue a prisoner though, friends, you have enabled your own survival. Silver Mount harbors a monstrous force. It must be stopped before it can escape, and with your aid and my advice, we can achieve this goal. We must achieve it. I worshiped Unity once, but now it must be destroyed."



## VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS



See pages 56–57 for further details on Casandalee, but note also that additional information on what she can tell the PCs about Unity and Silver Mount appears in the upcoming adventures. For now, though, she is eager to learn who the PCs are and how they came to find her, but more importantly, she wants to be out of this cave so that she may be assured that the world she once belonged to still exists.

**Story Award:** For rescuing the AI, award the PCs 51,200 XP.

### CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Rescuing Casandalee is the ultimate goal of this adventure. If the party botches it and loses access to the AI, a means of salvage must be found. Perhaps another AI core with a duplicate of Casandalee’s downloaded mind is hidden away somewhere in the Scar of the Spider, kept in storage in case Dominion experiments somehow damaged their precious subject. Or perhaps someone in Starfall might know a way to restore her memories. Finally, you may note that the neurocam that Casandalee used to upload her mind into the AI core has not been placed in this adventure; this is by design as insurance. If the PCs lose the AI core, you should

give them a chance to find her neurocam in the Dominion hive, and the device should still contain her personality within. Finding another AI core to upload it to may take time, a treasure like this is unlikely to exist outside of Silver Mount, and the PCs may simply need to wait until they explore that ruin in “The Divinity Drive” to gain her aid.

Hopefully, though, the PCs triumph in their goal and secure Casandalee as an ally. She urges the PCs to travel to Silver Mount to confront Unity, but understands that preparation is the key to success. She doesn’t know about the Technic League yet (they didn’t exist when she lived), but when she learns of them, her immediate goal shifts from gaining entrance to Silver Mount to disabling the League itself. This is partially out of necessity (since they control access to Silver Mount and as long as they exist, any expedition to that ruin would be difficult at best), but partially out of righteous indignation. No one group should control the technological treasures of Silver Mount, she says. *Divinity* contains much danger, but much wonder as well. She hopes to see it all again soon, but not until the masters of the Palace of Fallen Stars have themselves fallen!



## IRON GODS

## CASANDALEE

ALTHOUGH SHE MAY APPEAR TO BE LITTLE MORE THAN A FACE IN A CRYSTAL AND A VOICE FROM NOWHERE, CASANDALEE IS MUCH MORE THAN THE RECORDED MEMORY OF A WOMAN WHO LOST HER FAITH.

## CASANDALEE

CR 12

## XP 19,200

N artificial intelligence (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide* 58)

**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +20

## DEFENSE

**Fort** +4; **Ref** +4; **Will** +11

**Weakness** distrust of robots

## STATISTICS

**Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

**Skills** Bluff +17, Disable Device +15, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (engineering) +24, Knowledge (religion) +18, Linguistics +8, Perception +20, Sense Motive +26, Spellcraft +10, Survival +13

**Feats** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Knowledge [engineering]), Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Technologist

**Languages** Aklo, Androffan, Auran, Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Hallit, Orc

**SQ** electronic interface, memory facets

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Distrust of Robots (Ex)** Casandalee distrusts robots. She understands this is an illogical, almost emotional trait, but cannot bring herself to ever completely trust a robot to not harbor deep programming or other influences from Unity. Future events in the Iron Gods Adventure Path may give the PCs a chance to help Casandalee remove this disadvantage, but until that point, she cannot interface with a robot of CR 8 or higher to create an aggregate robot (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide* 59). In any event, Casandalee can control only one aggregate robot at a time, and it must remain within 60 feet of her AI core.

**Electronic Interface (Ex)** Casandalee has an intricate understanding of electronics, and her ability to interface with them via wireless protocol (to a maximum range of 60 feet) allows her to use Disable Device on electronic objects. She can always take 10 on a Disable Device check, and when she does so she rolls a d20 as well. If the die roll exceeds 10, she uses that result instead. Casandalee can aid another's Disable Device check against electronic devices, and if she does so, she automatically grants a +4 bonus on the check.

**Memory Facets (Ex)** As a CR 12 AI, Casandalee can benefit from up to 3 memory facets at any one time, but her compact AI core does not currently have any memory facets installed.

*Divinity* carried many people on its intergalactic voyage, among them a significant number of androids. Many of these were kept in storage within vast banks of stasis pods, waiting to be awakened for use as explorers on various worlds. When *Divinity* crashed during the Rain of Stars, the ship jettisoned these pods across Numeria, and most made relatively intact landings. It was from these pods that the vast majority of the androids that exist on Golarion today originally hailed. As the centuries turned into millennia, more and more of these original androids met violent ends, but some lived to the end of their natural lifespan and achieved renewal, “reincarnating” with a new personality and new soul after their previous life came to its end.

In the case of Casandalee, a strange fluke of fate saw the waking of fragments of her previous lives within her newest incarnation. She could never quite recall the details of the 112 different lives her body had hosted over those years, but the distant memories convinced her that she was more than one person with one soul. Furthermore, all of those memories pointed to her “birth” in Numeria.

Yet her body's travels through the centuries were not restricted to Numeria, and when she renewed as Casandalee, she did so in a monastery devoted to Brigh located in the Mana Wastes near Alkenstar. The fact that she retained so many memories of her previous life complicated her maturity, and she took a decade to come to terms with herself. During this time, she grew in power as an oracle of ancestors, and grew to accept her shattered psyche curse (see sidebar). Her time among the priests of Brigh came to an end when she received a strange vision—one that would change her life forever and bring to an end her line of renewal.

In this vision, Casandalee gazed upon Silver Mount, saw among its spires a welcoming glow, and felt in the ground below a soothing hum. She became convinced that Silver Mount was not merely a ruin or a geological feature, but the heart and brain of a great “Iron God.” She recalled her first life's earliest memories of a landscape scattered with ruins, of gazing in that first life upon Silver Mount's still-smoking hull before fleeing, and knew that whatever dwelt within the ruins of the great ship lingered there still—that in the time since her 112 lives had come and gone, a single life had been waiting and growing within Silver Mount.

Casandalee left Alkenstar the day after her vision without so much as a goodbye to the priests who had protected her. To



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the android, the revelation that something tied to her past lives dwelt within Silver Mount was more important, and she knew the priests of Brigh wouldn't understand. It was not an act of malice, per se, but more just a logical reaction to an illogical event. Details on Casandalee's pilgrimage to Silver Mount, her time with Unity, and her eventual rejection of her new god are presented in the Adventure Background on page 7.

Years later, on the run from Unity after her discovery of the Iron God's true desires, she had time to consider the choice that led her to her fate, yet even then, Casandalee didn't weep for her errors. The eventual realization within the wreckage of the *Aurora*, where Unity's robots finally cornered her, that her 113th life would be the last of her lives was the point she finally admitted to herself that she'd made a mistake. To Casandalee, the feeling of honest regret and despair seemed a fitting triumph of sorts after so many lives lived without emotion.

### CAMPAIGN ROLE

When the PCs finally discover the compact AI core that contains Casandalee, they'll have found more than a unique treasure—they'll have recruited a new ally. The final two adventures in this Adventure Path assume that Casandalee accompanies the PCs, either while she's being carried while contained in her compact AI core, or perhaps hitching a ride in a robot as an aggregate. The PCs can further enhance Casandalee's statistics by installing memory facets, such as the ones they discovered in "Lords of Rust," or the facets to be recovered in this adventure. More memory facets await discovery in future adventures.

At the very least, Casandalee can serve as an advisor to the PCs, attempting Knowledge checks, identifying new and strange technological items for them, or helping them disarm of technological devices and traps. In the final adventure, "The Divinity Drive," further opportunities to interact with Casandalee will present themselves as well—up to and including the possibility of uploading her into the core processors of Silver Mount to dramatic effect.

Casandalee's transition from android oracle to AI was relatively complete, although the loss of a physical body has had an unusual effect on her personality. Deprived of physicality and left with only her mind, Casandalee has developed something remarkable—the capacity to experience emotions.

### NEW ORACLE CURSE: SHATTERED PSYCHE

Although Casandalee has transcended her oracle curse by becoming an AI, the rules for this rare oracle curse are presented below for use by other characters of your design.

*Shattered Psyche:* Your mind is crowded with dozens of voices, fragmented snippets of your past lives. You take a -2 penalty on all Intelligence-based skill checks, Wisdom-based skill checks, and concentration checks. You gain a +4 competence bonus on saving throws made against mind-affecting effects. At 5th level, you're immune to charm effects. At 10th level, you're immune to compulsion effects. At 15th level, you're immune to all mind-affecting effects.

Perhaps even more impressive, she can control this capacity, allowing herself to ignore fear or hope or sadness or love if it is convenient by slipping into one of her previous 112 lives. The fact that she's spent much of her existence as an AI in a compact AI core with limited power supplies has further complicated her new life. Most of her existence is spent without time, dreaming strange dreams and reliving variations on previous lives in pure flights of fancy. She often speaks in metaphors or exhibits sudden emotional swings, which, complicated by the fact that she seems to switch personalities on a whim, might make it seem as if there were over a hundred different people trapped within her mind. In point of fact, this is true.

Table 4-4 on pages 95-96 of the *GameMastery Guide* is an excellent resource for randomly determining personality quirks every time a player interacts with the confused AI—she might be easily moved to tears by one request to aid in unlocking a door, recalling a previous death wherein she died after being locked in a cell and left to starve. She could name-drop someone famous from history when asked about an aspect of religion. She might become flustered when presented with someone who reminds her of a close friend or enemy from a past life, and then confused when she has trouble reconciling why she might feel love or hate for that character now but has no memories of such emotion from her previous life.

But as the PCs grow to better understand Casandalee, her personality will begin to stabilize. See "Palace of Fallen Stars" for how the PCs can help the AI adjust to her new life.





## IRON GODS

## ISUMA

A CASTAWAY IN TIME AND SPACE. ISUMA FINDS HERSELF TRAPPED BETWEEN HER INSTINCT TO FLEE THE SCAR OF THE SPIDER FOR SAFETY AND AN OVERWHELMING NEED TO AVENGE COMRADES SLAIN BY THE DOMINION OF THE BLACK.

**ISUMA****CR 10****XP 9,600**

Female kasatha fighter 3/gunslinger (techslinger) 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 174, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 9, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide* 13)

LN Medium humanoid (kasatha)

**Init** +6; **Senses** Perception +15

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 24, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +5 dodge, +2 shield)

**hp** 106 (10 HD; 3d10+7d10+47)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5 (+6 vs. fear)

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, nimble +2; **DR** 5/magic

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk dagger +10/+5 (1d4-1/19-20)

**Ranged** zero rifle +15/+10 touch (2d6+4 cold)

**Special Attacks** grit (2), gun training (zero rifle +4)

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Isuma uses Deadly Aim and Rapid Shot with her rifle on semi-automatic fire when making full attacks. If faced with multiple foes, she'll empty the rifle's entire capacity to make two burst attacks. She saves her grenades for foes who are immune to cold damage. She's holding on to the gravity grenade for a special emergency (see *Morale*, below).

**Morale** Isuma wants to live long enough to avenge her fallen allies and to ensure that their bodies are no longer suitable as playthings and puppets for the Dominion of the Black. She flees if reduced to 40 hit points, hoping to rest and recover, but would rather use her gravity grenade on herself to destroy her own body if threatened with Dominion capture, rendering it useless for brain extraction or body theft. If Isuma stays with the party beyond the events in "Valley of the Brain Collectors," she proves a loyal ally and does not abandon her most precious resource: friends.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Dodge, Gunsmithing, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (zero rifle), Technologist<sup>TC</sup>

**Skills** Knowledge (engineering) +7, Perception +15, Stealth +13, Survival +15

**Languages** Androffan, Kasatha

**SQ** armor training 1, deeds (covet charge, dead shot, gunslinger initiative, gunslinger's dodge, pistol-whip, reliable, startling shot, targeting, utility shot), desert runner, desert stride, gunsmith, jumper, multi-armed, PC wealth, stalker

**Combat Gear** arc grenades<sup>TC</sup> (2), gravity grenade<sup>TC</sup>, inferno grenades<sup>TC</sup> (3); **Other Gear** +1 *invulnerability hide armor*, hard light shield<sup>TC</sup>, zero rifle<sup>TC</sup>, mwk dagger, thoracic nanite chamber (mark I)<sup>TC</sup>, filter mask<sup>TC</sup>, batteries<sup>TC</sup> (7)

To say that Isuma's journey across distance and time has been a difficult one is an understatement. Well over 9,000 years ago, she dwelt upon her home world of Kasatha with a tribe of like-minded nomads. When she witnessed the arrival of a shuttle from *Divinity* as it descended from the sky, she knew her world was about to change.

The human visitors to Kasatha made Isuma's tribe an offer: a dozen kasathas could accompany the crew back into space to accompany them on board *Divinity* to serve as ambassadors, to learn of advanced technology, and in a few years' time would return to Kasatha to bring this knowledge back to their people. Isuma was one of the dozen who eagerly volunteered for the honor, and she bid farewell to her home fully expecting to return and help lead her people into a new age.

But fate intervened when *Divinity* encountered the Dominion of the Black. After the crippled *Divinity* fled that disastrous engagement, Isuma—now banded together with her fellow surviving kasathas and trained in technological warfare—made a heartbreaking discovery. Her tribemates weren't the only kasathas *Divinity* had brought back to space, rather other factions within *Divinity*'s crew had abducted kasathas from other tribes and kept them within controlled habitat domes for impartial observation. Isuma was disgusted to learn she had been given respect and training when others of her kind were kept as little more than pets and raged that her human hosts had deceived her. The fact that *Divinity*'s crew had several factions who worked at cross purposes did little to soothe her feelings, nor did knowing those who had befriended her weren't involved in the capture of her kin. In any case, she had little time to seek to rescue her deceived kin, since a few short hours later, *Divinity* crashed.

Desperate to survive at any cost, Isuma led her few surviving allies into an escape shuttle. They slipped into



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stasis pods, intending to launch the shuttle on a desperate trajectory toward their home, but they were too late. The shuttle crashed into Golarion, and Isuma and her allies remained in their stasis pods, safe from the passage of time and the world beyond, for thousands of years.

When they were finally awakened, it was not by allies on their home world, but by the self-same interstellar empire that had attacked *Divinity* so long ago. An annihilator robot, reprogrammed to harvest objects of interest for experimentation, recovered the stasis pods from the ruins while pursuing a party of adventurers, and returned with all of them to its Dominion masters in the Scar of the Spider. One by one, the stasis-preserved kasathas were wakened, only to be used for terrible experiments before being handed over to intellect devourers for use as bodies. Isuma was the last to awake, but she was also the best-trained of her kin and the intellect devourers had grown lax in their security. Isuma managed to effect a daring escape from the Dominion's hive, taking with her several technological treasures (including a magic suit of aorumvorax hide armor).

Since her escape, she hasn't traveled far from the source of her anger. She's lived for months as a sniper and stalker of the Dominion agents, but her greatest triumph, the destruction of one of the two annihilator robots used by the Dominion to gather experimental stock, depleted most of her resources. She hopes to find a way soon to either restock her supply of explosives or recruit new allies to try to liberate the bodies of her kin from the Dominion's talons. Yet most of those she's observed in the valley are poor choices for support. Despair has begun to creep over her. She has accepted that she will never leave this alien world, but now, her true fear is that she will never make the Dominion of the Black pay for what they took from her. She may be ready for a final foolhardy assault on the Dominion hive, if only she can secure some trustworthy allies.

### CAMPAIGN ROLE

In "Valley of the Brain Collectors," Isuma's primary role is to provide the PCs with a guide to the Scar of the Spider. She can help the PCs focus their efforts in tracking down Casandalee, and can help anticipate both unusual and alien threats in the Scar—her advice appears as appropriate in the adventure itself. Her personal goal, the liberation of her companions' bodies from Dominion control, is one she won't immediately share with the PCs, but once she warms to their company, she'll tell them her story. If the PCs aid her in this goal, her respect and loyalty to the party increase to the point where she may even join the party to aid the PCs in the rest of the campaign.

If Isuma joins the party in this manner, she prefers to play the role of silent support. Golarion is very much an alien world to her, and for at least the next several months, she prefers to observe rather than directly interact—she'll leave social situations to her native allies, but is quick to provide sniper support or other battle expertise. Although the people of Golarion are strange to her eyes, Isuma doesn't have a xenophobic bone in her body, and she does not judge by appearances. She quickly grows used to two-armed companions (even if she does periodically wonder how they ever manage to get anything done with only two hands), and may even grow to think of them as more than just allies—as true friends. She knows her home world is impossibly far away, and that in the span of over 9,000 years her people may well have become extinct, but she never gives up hope of someday finding another of her kind. She's a woman of few words, but if the PCs can get her to talk, Isuma represents one of the greatest resources they've found yet for learning about the true nature of the ship that crashed to Golarion during the Rain of Stars. At the very least, through Isuma the PCs should finally learn *Divinity's* name.





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## MAUKUI

THIS DEVIOUS INTELLECT DEVOURER HAS SERVED THE DOMINION OF THE BLACK FOR DECADES. BUT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE LEFT IT FEELING BITTER AND UNDERAPPRECIATED.

**MAUKUI****CR 12****XP 19,200**Intellect devourer sorcerer 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 180)

CE Small aberration

**Init** +15; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., *detect magic*; Perception +27**DEFENSE****AC** 27, touch 23, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +11 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size)**hp** 184 (16 HD; 8d8+8d6+120)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +17, **Will** +14**Defensive Abilities** fated (+2); **DR** 10/adamantine and magic;**Immune** fire, mind-affecting effects; **Resist** cold 20, electricity 20, sonic 20; **SR** 23**Weaknesses** vulnerable to protection from evil**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** 4 claws +23 (1d4+2)**Special Attacks** body thief, sneak attack +3d6**Intellect Devourer Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +14)Constant—*detect magic*At will—*confusion* (single target only), *daze monster* (no HD limit), *inflict serious wounds*, *invisibility*, *reduce size* (as reduce person but self only)3/day—*cure moderate wounds*, *globe of invulnerability***Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +14)

9/day—touch of destiny (+4)

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 8th; concentration +14)4th (4/day)—*dimension door*3rd (6/day)—*hold person* (DC 19), *protection from energy*, *spiked pit*<sup>MPG</sup> (DC 19)2nd (8/day)—*blur*, *cat's grace*, *mirror image*, *web* (DC 18)1st (8/day)—*alarm*, *burning hands* (DC 17), *charm person* (DC 17), *chill touch* (DC 17), *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17)0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 16), *flare* (DC 16), *ghost sound* (DC 16), *mage hand*, *open/close*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 16)**Bloodline** destined**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Maukui casts *cat's grace* and *mage armor* near the start of combat—if it can, it does so before a fight begins. The effects of these two spells is included in the statistics here. Once combat begins, the intellect devourer casts *mirror image*, then prefers to use *spiked pit*, *hold person*, and *web* to scatter its enemies and limit their mobility. Given the

chance, it uses body theft on a target that has been held. Remember that in intellect devourer form, Maukui cannot cast spells unless it augments them with Silent Spell.

**Morale** Maukui attempts to flee if reduced to fewer than 30 hit points. If it does so, it abandons the Dominion entirely and is unlikely to attempt to confront the PCs again. If prevented from fleeing, it fights to the death.

**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 32, **Con** 23, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 22**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 33**Feats** Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Silent Spell, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (claws)**Skills** Bluff +33, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +14, Perception +27, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +21, Stealth +34; Racial Modifiers +8 Bluff, +8 Perception, +8 Stealth**Languages** Aklo (cannot speak)**SQ** bloodline arcana (gain luck bonus on saves when casting personal-range spells)**MAUKUI'S HOST****CR 12****XP 19,200**Female young adult void dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 72)

NE Huge dragon

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, see in darkness, dragon senses; Perception +19**Aura** alien presence (150 ft., DC 21, 10 rounds)**DEFENSE****AC** 26, touch 9, flat-footed 25 (+1 Dex, +17 natural, -2 size)**hp** 147 (14d12+56)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13**DR** 5/magic; **Immune** cold, confusion, dragon traits, insanity effects, paralysis, sleep; **SR** 23**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (good)**Melee** bite +20 (2d8+10/19-20 plus 2d6 negative energy), 2 claws +19 (2d6+7), 2 wings +17 (1d8+3), tail slap +17 (2d6+10)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (20 ft. with bite)**Special Attacks** crush, obliterate, suffocating breath**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +12)

As Maukui, above.

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 5th; concentration +9)

As Maukui, above.



## NPC GALLERY

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** In its dragon host, Maukui revels in its destructive power and prefers not to cast spells. It opens combat with a breath weapon, then follows that up with physical attacks until it can breathe again. Simple tactics perhaps, but Maukui has encountered few foes who can stand up to a dragon's power.

**Morale** If reduced to 15 or fewer hit points, Maukui uses *dimension door* to relocate somewhere safe in the hive so that it can exit its dragon body and cast its preparatory spells before seeking the PCs out to continue the fight. If reduced to 0 hit points while in the dragon's body, the intellect devourer emerges from the dragon and is dazed for 1 round—something it would rather not have happen in a fight.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 25, **Dex** 12, **Con** 19, **Int** 18, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 34

**Feats** Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (bite), Wingover

**Skills** Acrobatics +15 (+19 when jumping), Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, Fly +18, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (geography) +21, Perception +19, Sense Motive +19, Stealth +10, Use Magic Device +21

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Draconic, Infernal

**SQ** agile, no breath, starflight

Intellect devourers are common enough among the Dominion of the Black, typically specializing as spies or stealth invaders of newly discovered worlds. However, it's rare that any rise to positions of real leadership. Those who do must possess exceptional qualities setting them apart from others of their kind. Maukui was just such a creature, recruited from an obscure world orbiting a dead star, where its creative thinking with regard to the interface of organic and technological elements marked it as ideal for the task of investigating *Divinity* once the ship arrived at its location. Yet the ship was still thousands of years away from arrival, and so Maukui was placed in stasis for the next few dozen centuries.

As the ship finally approached Golarion, Maukui awoke and met another specialist the Dominion had recruited, a sacristan kyton named Paajgat the Flayer. Paajgat, recruited a few centuries earlier due to her startling artistry with a razor, had a reputation for creativity and gruesome whimsy that sat well with Maukui's own cruel mindset. The intellect devourer would work on the primary task set for it by its superiors, but it would also have the freedom to indulge its more capricious ideas. The Dominion further secured Maukui's allegiance by providing it with a particularly impressive body, that of a young void dragon. Maukui has long since forgotten this dragon's original name and discarded its memories as pointless, and relies on Paajgat's *gentle repose* spells to keep the body from decaying.

After arriving on Golarion and establishing a hive in the Scar of the Spider, the Dominion gave Maukui leave to dispatch scouts to procure it subjects for its more unorthodox interests: cybernetic symbiosis, pain extension, ecstatic transmogrification, genetic retrofitting, and on and on. But its most depraved indulgence was trying on the bodies of its captives. Even though it always returned to its favorite dragon form, the intellect devourer enjoyed testing out others. Maukui reveled in this paradise of immoderation, growing accustomed to its little kingdom of the senses. But then it discovered something hidden away in a deep corner of the hive, something that finally challenged it and focused its mind on a singular goal: Casandalee's compact AI core.

For many years, the intellect devourer tried to understand the way the AI's mind worked, but Casandalee's personality was more than a match for Maukui. Eventually, the intellect devourer's Dominion master, the yah-thelgaad Dweller-In-Dark-Places, grew impatient and took the project away to pursue more invasive techniques on the AI core.

Maukui has grown more sullen and taciturn over the last several weeks, and for the first time has begun to question its allegiance to the Dominion. Left to its own devices, Maukui knows it could have a limitless run of new bodies to use on Golarion, but it seethes with growing resentment that its greatest enigma was taken away. Maukui hopes to engineer a way to steal Casandalee back before fleeing the Hive. Increasingly worried that the yah-thelgaad might discern its growing thoughts of sedition, Maukui recently developed a way to block observation of its chamber in such a way that the yah-thelgaad is unaware of the countermeasure. But to date, Maukui has not been able to brainstorm a viable plot to liberate itself from its increasingly humiliating servitude.





# IRON GODS

## IRON GODS TREASURES

THE FOLLOWING UNIQUE TREASURES CAN BE FOUND IN "VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS." PLAYER-APPROPRIATE HANDOUTS APPEAR IN *PATHFINDER CARDS: IRON GODS ITEM CARDS*.

COMPACT AI CORE		TECHNOLOGICAL ARTIFACT
SLOT none		WEIGHT 8 lbs.
CAPACITY 240		USAGE 1/hour



A compact AI core is a flat sheet of semi-translucent pale blue material 10 inches wide and 20 inches long, contained in a frame of adamantine and horacalcum. One of the narrow ends of the device features a small touch-sensitive panel and several sockets to connect to external devices

as needed, although the compact AI core can communicate with most electronic devices and robots wirelessly at a range of 60 feet.

The primary purpose of a compact AI core is to house the staggering amount of data needed to store an artificial intelligence without compromising or degrading its core programming. Most processors capable of storing this amount of data are significant in size, but a compact AI core is small enough to carry in one hand. An AI stored within a compact AI core loses all implicit connections to the source AI. An existing AI can copy itself into a compact AI, but once the copy is complete the new AI within the compact AI core becomes a duplicate but separate entity that may develop different needs and desires than the source. As a result, many AIs resist the idea of duplicating themselves in such a manner so as to avoid possible conflicts or competition. An AI faced with the certain destruction of its core processors, of course, may well resort to using a compact AI core as a method of escape and survival, but the unpredictable changes to personality that are possible during such a transfer may well prompt some AIs to gracefully accept oblivion instead. In a way, it's better to view the relationship between an AI and its duplicate in a compact AI core as more akin to that of parent and child than as twin siblings or clones.

More often, a compact AI core is used to house an entirely new AI creation, either one programmed from scratch (a discipline lost to the denizens of *Divinity* today, and one that was thus never available to the inhabitants of Golarion), or one created by the transfer of a living creature's mind via neurocam.

An AI can use a compact AI core to seize control of a robot to transform it into an aggregate (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide* 59), but no more often than one robot can be controlled at a time, and the compact AI core must remain within 60 feet of the aggregate or control is lost. An AI who attempts

to seize control of a robot in this manner can do so as a standard action, and the target can resist the attempt with a successful Will save (DC = 10 + 1/2 the AI's CR + its Charisma modifier).

A compact AI core has 3 sockets capable of accepting one memory facet each. A compact AI core consumes power at the rate of 1 charge per hour, but does not suffer any memory loss or damage if all 240 charges stored within it are consumed—once the compact AI core receives more energy, the AI within immediately regains the ability to interact with the world. While without power, an AI becomes dormant—it may experience something akin to strange dreams, but it cannot be communicated with and is not aware of the passage of time.

A compact AI core has hardness 20 and 80 hit points. If a compact AI core becomes broken, the AI it contains takes a -2 penalty on all saving throws and skill checks. If a compact AI core is destroyed, any AI housed within is destroyed as well. A compact AI core that is destroyed can be repaired via a *wish* or *miracle*, or perhaps via complex technological machinery hidden deep in the most secure of *Divinity's* wreckage—but restoring an AI previously housed in the core to functionality requires a second *miracle* or *wish*—such an act is beyond even the machinery of *Divinity*.

MEMORY FACET		TECHNOLOGICAL ARTIFACT
SLOT none		WEIGHT —
CAPACITY —		USAGE —

A memory facet is a length of crystal about the size of a human thumb. This potent device is used to store programming meant to augment or change the nature of how an AI functions. Originally used as a portable method of safely transporting and storing the complex and lengthy code required to program and enhance artificial intelligences, it can also be used to augment and enhance an existing AI. Full rules for memory facets can be found on pages 62–63 of "Lords of Rust," including rules for aggression facets, ego facets, and inhibitor facets. The new memory facets detailed below can be found in "Valley of the Brain Collectors."

**Compassion Facet:** A compassion facet allows an AI to understand and even experience love and associated emotions, imparting a +2 bonus on all Will saving throws and granting a +4 bonus on Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks. An AI with a compassion facet can form a strong emotional bond with a number of creatures equal to its CR as a standard action—once



## IRON GODS TREASURES

this bond is formed, the AI gains a +4 bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls while controlling a robot and making attacks against a creature the AI has witnessed harming one of its bonded creatures within the last hour.

**Ingenuity Facet:** An ingenuity facet grants an AI insight into the construction and maintenance of technological items and robot maintenance. This facet grants a +4 bonus on Disable Device checks, as well as the Craft Technological Arms and Armor and Craft Technological Item feats. While the AI controls a robot, this facet given the AI the ability to repair 3d8+15 points of damage to any robot it can touch (including itself) as a full-round action at will, but only once per day for any given robot.

STAFF OF THE DARK TAPESTRY		PRICE 43,500 GP
SLOT none	CL 9th	WEIGHT 5 lbs.
Aura moderate conjuration		

This staff, constructed of dark purple crystal, allows the use of the following spells:

- *confusion* (2 charges)
- *darkness* (1 charge)
- *fear* (2 charges)
- *irradiate*<sup>16</sup> (1 charge)
- *planetary adaptation*<sup>ow</sup> (2 charges)

The staff may be used as a weapon, functioning as a +1 *impact quarterstaff*<sup>oe</sup> even when its charges are expended.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 21,900 GP
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Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Staff, *bull's strength*, *confusion*, *darkness*, *fear*, *irradiate*, *planetary adaptation*

FLESHNET CANNON		PRICE 3,000 GP
TYPE two-handed ranged	PROFICIENCY exotic (heavy weaponry)	
DAMAGE see below		CRITICAL —
RANGE 20 ft.	CAPACITY 10	USAGE 1 (disposable)
SPECIAL single shot, touch		WEIGHT 11 lbs.



This Dominion weapon is a 3-foot-long device constructed from a hard, fleshlike material of mottled dark hues. Its barrel tapers down and flares into something

disturbingly like a mouth. The triggering mechanism is built for a neh-thalggu's pincers and tendrils, but it can be fired by a humanoid with a bit of work—creatures other than neh-thalggu takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls with a fleshnet cannon. Fleshnet cannons are built for Large creatures, and smaller creatures take additional penalties as appropriate when using these weapons.

When a fleshnet cannon is fired, it makes a low, wet, sucking noise as the barrel seems to convulse an instant before expelling a glob of pink fleshy material. This glob expands rapidly so that by the time it strikes its target, the flesh unfurls into a net.

Unlike a typical net, this net doesn't trail ropes, nor does it have a maximum range of 10 feet.

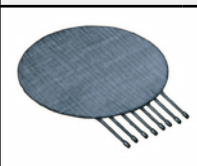
The net automatically entangles a creature of Huge or larger size it hits. As soon as it entangles a creature, and then again at the start of every round that follows for the next 5 rounds, the fleshnet squeezes and crushes the target, dealing 2d6+6 points of bludgeoning damage as it excretes a powerful soporific—the victim must make a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid being rendered unconscious for 2d6 minutes. A fleshnet does not continue to crush a sleeping or unconscious foe.

An entangled creature can escape a fleshnet with a successful DC 25 Escape Artist check (a full-round action). The net has 10 hit points and DR 10/slashing; it can be burst with a successful DC 28 Strength check (also a full-round action).

CONSTRUCTION	CRAFT DC 30	COST 1,500 GP
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Craft Technological Arms and Armor, nanotech lab

TOUCH OF AVOLITION		PRICE 2,500 GP
SLOT hand	CL 7th	WEIGHT —
Aura moderate necromancy		



This thin disk of woven material is 2-1/2 inches in diameter. From its edges protrude fine, hair-like fibers about half an inch long. A *touch of avolition* is in fact an example of mi-

go technology—as much fungus as anything else. Creatures like mi-go can handle a *touch of avolition* with ease, but humanoids and other fleshy users must wear gloves to avoid becoming the target of the item's effect. Applying a *touch of avolition* requires a successful touch attack. When placed against flesh (any living, corporeal, non-plant or non-ooze creature), a *touch of avolition's* fibers swiftly merge with the target unless the creature succeeds at a DC 15 Fortitude save. On a failed save, the victim becomes paralyzed for 7 rounds. It can attempt a new Fortitude as a standard action after the first round to end the effect early.

Once a victim recovers from the paralysis effect, the *touch of avolition* saps the user's willpower and dulls the senses, making creatures under these effects easier to mentally manipulate. The victim's Wisdom is reduced by 6 (minimum 1) as long as the *touch of avolition* remains attached. The fungal filaments of a *touch of avolition* dig deep, and merely ripping the patch free from the skin doesn't remove this Wisdom penalty, though the removal itself deals 1d4 points of damage to the victim. The effect is a curse effect, and it (and the paralysis) can be removed as such via remove curse or similar spells.

A *touch of avolition* works best when damp. The save DC to resist a dry *touch of avolition* is 10, its paralysis effect lasts for only 2 rounds, and its Wisdom penalty is reduced to 2. The effects of multiple *touches of avolition* do not stack.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 1,250 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, bestow curse, hold person



## IRON GODS



### THE DOMINION OF THE BLACK

THE VOID YAWNS, EVER-HUNGRY. ITS MONSTROUS APPETITE KNOWS NO END, AND SO WE DO NOT FIGHT IT; WE FEED IT. WE FEED IT OUR TERROR, OUR ELATION, OUR FLESH, OUR VERY EXISTENCE, AND WE DO SO WILLINGLY, WITHOUT HESITATION, WITH OVERWHELMING JOY. THOSE WHO HAVE NOT YET EMBRACED NOTHINGNESS, WHOM WE CALL THE NESCIENT—THEY REQUIRE OUR ASSISTANCE. ADRIFT IN THEIR PETTY NEEDS—TO GROW, TO FIGHT, TO MATE, TO LEARN, TO ACQUIRE, TO LOVE, TO SURVIVE—WE MUST ENLIGHTEN THEM, THEY MUST KNOW THEIR PURPOSE. THE VOID IS HUNGRY, CHILDREN, AND IT MUST CONSUME ALL OF CREATION. OUR SACRED DUTY IS TO PROVIDE THE NESCIENT WITH THEIR INVITATION TO THE BANQUET. AFTER ALL, THEIR SWEET IGNORANCE IS A DELICACY MOST COVETED AT OBLIVION'S FEAST.

— EXCERPT FROM "THE GLUTTON OF INFINITY" IN *LORDS OF THE NIGHT HERALDS*



## DOMINION OF THE BLACK

Only the ignorant look upon the night sky and marvel at the beauty of the stars, for between them lie the great gulfs of the cosmos, the gaping chasms of terror some call the Dark Tapestry. Over the centuries many inquisitive minds have made a study of this abstruse topic. Their most common fate is madness. Indeed, the guest registers of asylums around the Inner Sea are considered incomplete without at least one former expert of astrological studies. Some of these rambling lunatics lost their sanity by merely reading (or perhaps comprehending) the contents of forbidden manuscripts and codices on the subject, texts whose very titles evoke mysteries best left veiled. Others had their minds torn from them through the performance of ill-advised rituals found within such moldering pages. But a lifetime of madness seems merciful when compared to the doom of those reckless enough to take the most dangerous step: to seek contact with the dreadful alien beings who call the endless void their home, the fabled Dominion of the Black.

The following are theories and crumbs of understanding about the Dominion of the Black, fitfully gleaned by those mad and undaunted scholars. Much of this information was inferred from missives of alien origin, drafted by intelligences so utterly inscrutable that translations made by terrestrial academics are at best only shadowy reflections of their original sources. Moreover, the scholarly minds that put pen to paper on the subject were more often than not precariously teetering on the precipice of hopeless lunacy at the time of composition. As a result, every “fact” asserted about the Dominion must be treated in the end as an inherently mutable thing, a tentative hypothesis awaiting the collection of more data.

Of course, the collection of such data is fraught with peril, and warrants a cautionary tale.

### THE ACCOUNT OF GAIVS BEAULENARD

Born in 4588 AR to an indolent aristocratic family of Oppara, Gaius Beaulenard might likewise have led the life of a dissolute sybarite. From his youth, Beaulenard showed a keen intellect and natural interest in science. After completing the shallow, obligatory education expected of Taldan nobility, he set off on his own to study alchemy and became a skilled naturalist, taking advantage of the capital’s many fine libraries and private collections of wisdom. Once he had exhausted those resources, he traveled to Cassomir to see what its fabled libraries might contain. It was there in a small shop with the grand name of the Athenaeum of Expeditionary Glory that he came upon a crumbling copy of Van Jeust’s despicable *Lords of the Night Heralds*.

From that point on, Beaulenard was obsessed with the Dominion of the Black, fascinated by their evident godlike command of the very foundations of creation itself. He hired his services out to the ruler of Omash for a full

*Dearest Mother, Father:*

*When you receive this, I shall be dead, if there is any pity left in this doomed world. My last surviving servant, faithful Tareq, pens this for me as I stammer dictation, for the uncontrollable shaking of my hands makes them useless for so delicate a task. Forgive me. I have been worse than a fool. I sought congress with dreadful beings who toyed with my body, my mind. I will spare you the gruesome details and tell you only this: my wish was granted. I understand. I understand what skulks the dark spaces of the night sky, the malignant Black Truth. Sweet Shelyn’s mercy spare me; I can barely suppress screams that rise in my throat when I think of the fate that lies in store for us all. I want to vomit out the knowledge I ate so greedily, but it’s far too late for that; it courses through me, chewing hungrily at the threadbare remnants of my mind. While a shred of logic remains, and before Tareq mercifully slits my throat as I have instructed him, I make of you this final, desperate request: take these damnable books to the priests of Athadar and have them disposed of properly. Burning is not enough, nor is dumping them in the sea; these things I would have done myself, were it so simple. The priests will know what to do. I repeat: they must be destroyed.*

*Your last, but loving son,  
Gaius*

year—no small feat for a Taldan aristocrat only a year after the uncertain end of the great Taldor-Qadira war. His agreed-upon payment was unfettered access to the libraries of Katheer, Sedeq, and Omash, believed to hold the Inner Sea’s most extensive collections of books concerning the Dominion. The details are murky, but only a few months after delving into the stacks of Sedeq’s most well-guarded vault of learning, Beaulenard fled Qadira, having apparently absconded with a number of priceless tomes, including the *Libram of Absolute Emptiness* and the *Mah-Theneg Codices*, both reputed translations of actual Dominion writings. The Taldan scholar went underground for a number of years, aware of the sizable bounty Qadira had placed on his head and the small army of assassins seeking to collect it. He spent those years immersed in the pages of his pilfered books, and also taught himself divination magic to aid in what had become a near-pathological need to understand the meaning of the tomes.

Beaulenard re-emerged in 4611 in Ilizmagorti, where he paid a small fortune for a mostly complete copy of the damned tome *Secrets of the Dreaming Dark*, liberated from an Egorian collector’s private library in a raid that cost six



# IRON GODS

## MODERN-DAY DOMINION SCHOLARS OF THE INNER SEA

Scholar	Location	Availability	Status
Abdullah Aben	Sedeq, Qadira	Restricted	Insane, homicidal
Co Latimer	Nightstone Academy, Absalom	By appointment	Sane, impatient
Fulvia Nostraema	Darakole Sanitarium, Vyre	Doctor's discretion	Insane, agitated
Paucol the Gray	Grand Lodge, Absalom	By appointment	Unstable, distractible
Shayla Aaosk	Havenguard Asylum, Caliphass	Doctor's discretion	Insane, babbling
Teramin Mais	Aspis Building, Ostenso	Aspis Consortium members only	Unstable, gruff
Rouolon Ulmer	Manaket, Rahadoum	Restricted	Insane, semi-catatonic
Dr. Verid Oscilar	Sincomakti School, Rozenport	By appointment	Insane, split personality

lives. The book supposedly contains methods for directly contacting agents of the Dominion of the Black, as well as formulae and summoning spells rumored to require no talent beyond an ability to pronounce the throat-torturing words inscribed on its pages. Beaulenard rented a manor home on a remote cliff overlooking the Arcadian Ocean. Secluded there with a half-dozen servants, he set about making contact. Exactly what happened over the course of the following months is uncertain, but the villa was obliterated by an unquenchable fire that burned for a full month. A year later a crate showed up on the doorstep of the family manse in Oppara. It contained selections from Beaulenard's extensive library of forbidden tomes, along with a letter.

Beaulenard's family was deeply pained by news of their son's death. The books, however, were eventually sold to an avid collector of such tomes for an incredible sum. After all, destroying a library of such obvious value and importance would have been an unforgiveable waste. The following are some of his findings regarding the impenetrable obscurity of the Dominion of the Black.

### HIERARCHY

Referring to the Dominion of the Black as an empire imposes a frame of reference that misrepresents its utterly alien nature. While the Dominion controls many worlds across many galaxies, those places should be thought of as production facilities and experimental laboratories rather than settlements or colonies. There is no Dominion home world, *per se*. Rather, the Dominion is an association of dozens of bizarre alien races whose ultimate goals are largely a mystery to those outside its innermost ranks.

Most familiar are the *neh-thalggu*, better known as "brain collectors," who serve as the Dominion's primary scouts. Several races similarly utilize the brains (or steal thoughts from the minds) of other species for their own nefarious purposes: the *bah-thegga* and *bah-uurla*, *deh-nolo*, *jah-tohl*, *rhu-chalik* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #86, 86), and *yah-thelgaad* (see page 90). It's believed these races are closely related on a genetic level, the products

of centuries-long gene manipulation and flesh-molding. The priestly caste within the organization is comprised of both the worm-like *chyzaedu* and the *haeshi-shaa*, a race that lives its long life cycle alternating between gaseous and liquid form. Bred to control the Dominion's ships that cross the vast emptiness of space, shipminds are also incredibly important to the Dominion's work, though where they fall in the hierarchy is a complicated issue. For more information on shipminds, see the Shipyards section and page 86.

None can say with certainty what leads the Dominion of the Black, though several bizarre names arise among the communiqués and gospels of its servants, their strange constructions the result of poorly translated concepts not truly expressible by humanoid languages. The *Five-Who-Speak-As-One* stands as one of the most regularly mentioned overlords, an entity that supposedly exists on an organic vessel the size of a small moon. Another contender is a creature that may be the source of the Dominion's shipminds—this being, *Infinity-Ceases-Now*, is described as a massive, amoeba-like creature that has absorbed the brains of countless sentient beings and lies ensconced (perhaps imprisoned) within a cave-riddled rogue planetoid's molten core. *Grandchild-of-Eternity's-Despair* is yet another Dominion being of immense power, thought to guide the operations of the Dominion's endless network of fleshfarms. Descriptions of its appearance vary so wildly as to suggest some hallucinatory quality that clouds perception. Finally, *Teramin Mais*, the *Aspis Consortium's* resident expert on the Dominion, theorizes that the Dominion of the Black is led by the *Dark Tapestry* itself, via some sort of pervasive psychic manipulation that occurs at a level beyond human comprehension.

Perhaps most disturbing are rumors that some of these immensely powerful rulers of the Dominion might already be close to *Golarion*. The *Night Heralds* have long sought to free a trapped entity known as *Tychilarius*, sometimes called the *Drowned God*. And those who've studied *Aucturn* suspect the entity *Carsai the King*, ruler of that planet's *Citadel of the Black*, of Dominion ties.



## DOMINION OF THE BLACK

### ASSOCIATIONS

Books regarding the Dominion of the Black often mention a vast number of strange creatures, and scholars of such issues often debate which creatures are actually part of the Dominion and which are simply subservient to their goals. Some speculate that the primary difference is that those creatures making up the Dominion proper have either been created or greatly modified by the Dominion. With enough time and work, some of these associated creatures may find their entire species drawn into the Dominion and made anew through their horrific processes.

Intellect devourers are often attached to research facilities and fleshfarms, most often in subordinate roles. Drawn to the work more by their innate sadism than devotion to the Dominion's obscure aims, the intellect devourers are tolerated despite their petty cruelties and idiosyncratic methods because they often end up servicing beings in the highest echelons of the Dominion in the same way humans service the lower orders—as components for augmentation. In addition, the alien oozes known as vespergaunts (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary* 58) often ally with the Dominion, serving as emissaries to worlds that have drawn the Dominion's ravenous attention.

The Dominion of the Black has also bred and engineered countless servitor creatures. These subservient races far outnumber Dominion allies and are at least partially cataloged in the *Encyclopedia of Vhaeso's Tears*. Most owners keep the book under lock and key, as the methods to summon the creatures catalogued are also found within its pages. Creatures such as the lunarma (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4185), neshmaal (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #84 86), and yangethe (*Pathfinder Module: Dragon's Demand* 63) number among the abhorrent beasts referenced.

Although cults like the Night Heralds willingly serve the Dominion of the Black, intelligent humanoid agents are a rarity within the Dominion. Humanoid races are considered inherently inferior, thought of more as cattle and experimental animals for whatever bizarre breeding or modification programs Dominion scientists concoct. The apparent fragility of humanoid psyches drives this prejudice, as humanoid minds are believed less able to withstand the enormity of certain cosmic truths. Those humanoids who do manage to rise in the ranks of the Dominion are beings of

exceptional mental sturdiness or uniquely useful dementia. More information on the Night Heralds can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Occult Mysteries*.

The Dominion intently observes the native species of many worlds, taking special interest in “lesser” species on a genetic level—kidnapping subjects for manipulation, twisting, and modification. The preferred theory suggests that such manipulation aims to augment the cerebral development of those creatures for the Dominion's own enigmatic purposes—though some suggest that the gray matter of sentient creatures is simply a technological or dietary need. Some historians even posit that Osirion's sudden rise from barbarism was driven by Dominion interference in that society's development.

Millennia-old inscriptions from that nation's earliest days speak of inhuman visitors from the stars “making playthings of men.” Paintings in some of the oldest desert tombs support such theories with depictions of unfortunate figures being infected with flesh-altering contagions, peasant laborers with insectoid limbs grafted on their bodies, and of course the fabled “countdown clocks.” These ominous timepieces, tied to alleged alien visitation, supposedly point to an unknown event at a time in the not-so-distant future. Anekept of An, a highly respected Osirionologist, claims to have recently translated a previously unknown word imbedded in the design of all of these clocks: “harvest.”

### FLESHFARMS

Written by a nameless lunatic-scholar upon ruins outside Absalom, the bizarre record titled *The Entrails of Creation* catalogs dream-visions of what the Night Heralds refer to as “fleshfarms.” The account describes countless horrors, such as many-tentacled machine-creatures called jah-tohl overseeing and directing legions of naked, terrified laborers and shivering thought-slaves. Such vast nation-facilities accept entire enslaved species and sort them for a spectrum of terrible uses. These captives serve as both slaves and building materials for the manufacture of new Dominion servant species, bizarre devices, hanging slave crèches, and semi-living spacefaring vessels. The majority of tools and abominations visited upon the universe by the Dominion of the Black originated at one of these atrocity factories.

The record avoids mentioning what animates fleshfarms, but in a single instance makes reference to a being the





## IRON GODS

author call a maestro. Though the reference proves vague, this being or class of beings serves as an artisan-tyrant, a manipulator responsible for experimentation and innovation. While numerous types of Dominion creatures are named, these explorers in science and perversion seem to come from a range of species, or are themselves composed of multiple entities. The tome refers to these beings “harvesting inspiration,” though what this means is unclear.

In the dungeons of Pangolais, the Night Herald seer Vasoov claims—in his most lucid rambling—to have been born on a “sphere of living chains and iron claws.” According to him, none escape such places alone, and even his dark salvation came only as the result of a terrible world-shifting mistake. His descriptions parallel many of those in the *The Entrails of Creation*, and more than once Night Herald radicals have sought to liberate him. Such attempts have all failed fantastically, though, as the steel roots extruding from the limbless seer have overgrown his entire cell.

### SHIPYARDS

Records connected to the Dominion of the Black commonly share imagery of entities the size of continents, seas, moons, and other unfathomably large objects skulking amid the stars, preying upon whatever they find. Though riddled with rambling metaphors and nonsensical verse, compilations of insane ramblings such as *Predators of Light*, *Life Slake*, and the *Account of the Hierophant*, are highly sought after by the Night Heralds for their descriptions of vessels capable of moving amid the stars.

The Dominion is famous for its starships—organic and metal constructions feared by all space-faring races. It is difficult to classify these “creatures,” if that is indeed the proper word. Bred, molded, and constructed at shipyards orbiting dead worlds shorn of every possible resource, these enormous entities have a lifespan of centuries. A ship itself has no will or personality. Rather, a number of organisms designed for maintenance tend these vessels, one being a class of creatures known as shipminds. Bred for each specific ship, shipminds are psychically infused ooze creatures physically fused with their vessels, attached to the body of their ships by cybernetic devices and organic conduits. Fleshfarm engineers, responsible for fashioning the various organic elements, design the bizarre cradles from which the oozes interface with the living vessels. For all intents and purposes, no division between ship and shipmind exists; once they’re connected to each other, the two are inseparable, with the shipmind controlling every ship function.

Some of these spacecraft supposedly possess the capability of giving birth to smaller quasi-organic and metal ships that are used as shuttles for shorter journeys.

Such vessels sometimes land at a site but lack the ability to lift off again. In these cases, their organic components simply rot, while their one-time crews salvage the ships’ metal parts. If a Dominion ship crash lands or is damaged beyond its own ability to heal or repair, the connected shipmind frequently goes mad and must be put down by survivors. The arrival of such a ship spells great peril for any world, whether Dominion passengers survive or not, as the rotting vessels poison the environment, maintenance organisms escape and wreak havoc on the local ecosystem, and native species that feed off the carcasses undergo unpredictable mutations.

### RELIGION

There is great uncertainty among scholars as to the religious beliefs and practices of the Dominion. One matter of agreement, however, is that powerfully religious undertones flavor translated Dominion texts, such as the much maligned *The Last Theorem*. Those tomes carry many references to the abominable Great Old Ones: Azathoth, Shub-Niggurath, and Yog-Sothoth, among others, leading many scholars to the mistaken belief that the Dominion worshiped these beings as deities. However, most prophets and scholars hold that the Dominion is in open conflict with these entities and those who worship them.

The most popular current theory is that the Dominion is devoted to and worships the Dark Tapestry itself. Whether as a cosmic god-entity, an unthinking primal force, or some other ur-being. One recovered Dominion text thought to be a treatise on their religious convictions is entitled *Nullity* and is a mere 13 words long. The words are each written on a separate page made of human skin, and the pages are deliberately jumbled between the tome’s soot-stained covers. It’s believed that if these 13 words are read in their correct order, the reader will instantly gain full understanding of the nature of divinity. None of those who have allegedly succeeded at this task lived long enough to share their enlightenment, each being brutally and mysteriously murdered.

Black holes appear to hold some special significance in Dominion theology. The terms used to refer to these stellar objects are alternately translated as “infinity’s doorway” and “mouth of god.” Fulvia Nostraema’s infamous essay “Nihilism’s Sacred Garrote” (written just prior to her permanent relocation to the Darakole Sanitarium in Vyre) details a ceremony called the Banquet. She contends that the ritual occurs every other year and involves flotillas of Dominion vessel-beings orbiting just outside the gravitational reach of key black holes for several days while complex liturgies are executed. The rituals apparently include casting untold thousands of sacrificial creatures into the inescapable maws of these awesome celestial objects. In addition to the sacrifice of slaves, Nostraema claims that



## DOMINION OF THE BLACK

during the lengthy ceremonies dozens of the Dominion's living spacecraft impulsively hurl themselves and their passengers into those inexorable gravity wells in acts of rapturous ecstasy. Her thesis calls into question the common conceptualization of the Dominion as dispassionate, calculating scientists seeking perfection of the intellect or the physical form. More ominously, it also assumes a population of beings large enough to sustain the senseless extinction of enormous numbers.

Nostraema's description of the Banquet also lends credence to what has long been thought a lunatic notion proposed in the last century by the Qadiran sage Imed Ibn Surhal: that the Dominion of the Black's ultimate aim is neither conquest nor domination, but rather the utter destruction of all sentient life—the most ostentatious sacrifice to the Dark Tapestry imaginable. At the behest of the Church of Sarenrae, Qadiran authorities fiercely suppressed Surhal's treatise that outlined his implausible theory, *Apocalypse at the Dark Center of the Universe*, shortly after its dissemination. Surhal was allegedly found dead in his study soon afterward, with obscenities scrawled on the walls in the scholar's own excrement and his body naked and mutilated by a mosaic of self-inflicted cuts. Though he had lost much blood, the cause of death was ruled as asphyxiation. He had apparently choked to death on a single cockroach he had shoved down his own throat.

### CONCLUSIONS

Scholars of Dominion lore who still have the unfettered use of their minds—unlike Gaius Beaulenard—agree on one thing: the Dominion does not wish the inhabitants of Golarion well. Whatever enigmatic alien purposes it pursues, the Dominion views “inferior beings” as material for unrestrained exploitation. Some of these sages and scholars have tried in earnest to warn authorities throughout the Inner Sea region, but their raving appeals have fallen on deaf ears—for who listens to a maniac? Despite their shattered minds, these scholars have some element of truth in the screams and mumbles echoing through the halls of asylums. The Dominion is out there, and ways to contact them are within the reach of the people of Golarion—in some cases lurking not so very far away.

The means by which the unwise and unwary can contact the Dominion are varied. Poring over the various texts associated with the Dominion, scholars have discovered plans and schematics for unknowable devices. Even the work that the Technic League has put in on understanding the alien technology that fell to Numeria in the Rain of Stars has yet to approach the level of technology and understanding required to create a prototype with these deciphered plans. Yet while

Golarion's residents have yet to achieve the means to contact the Dominion with technology, magic is a simpler approach. Gleaned from various foul texts are methods to reach out and speak with their strange intelligences, though it is unknown exactly to who or what in the Dominion these spellcasters are speaking.

The Dominion of the Black infects sites throughout Golarion, its atrocities often blamed on other, more terrestrial abominations. Indeed, it makes sense that many governments and individuals would be eager to find more mundane explorations for their problems. For if the Dominion of the Black ever turns its attention to Golarion in earnest, then it's possible that not even the heroes of legend or the gods of civilization can save the planet's peoples, and a quick and ignorant death may be the greatest mercy anyone can hope for.





## IRON GODS



### ALIEN TECHNOLOGY

“A CRACKPOT? IS THAT WHAT THEY TOLD YOU? NO, THE REASON I WAS EXPELLED FROM THE ACADEMY OF SCRIBES WAS BECAUSE I DISCOVERED THE TERRIBLE TRUTH—THE ANCIENT OSIRIANS WERE TAUGHT WIZARDRY BY ALIEN CREATURES FROM THE DARK TAPESTRY! WHY WOULD AN ADVANCED RACE BOTHER TO TEACH THE OSIRIANS MAGIC? TO EXTRACT THEIR BRAINS, OF COURSE! THESE CREATURES NEED BRAINS TO FUEL THEIR METAMORPHOSIS INTO MORE POWERFUL FORMS. ONCE THEY REACH THEIR ULTIMATE FORM, GOLARION’S INHABITANTS WILL BE POWERLESS TO STOP THEM FROM TAKING OVER THE WORLD! NATURALLY, WIZARD BRAINS ARE MORE USEFUL TO THEM. PERHAPS IT’S THE WIZARD’S ABILITY TO STORE MAGICAL SPELLS IN HER MIND... WHAT’S THAT? WELL, OF COURSE THERE’S NO EVIDENCE OF THE ALIENS’ SPACE VEHICLES. THEY GROW THEM OUT OF ORGANIC MATERIAL THAT RAPIDLY DECOMPOSES! THERE’S OTHER PROOF, THOUGH. I’VE ACQUIRED LOTS OF IT. I’M NO CRACKPOT!”

—ALBRED FORDICH, DISGRACED OSIRIONOLOGIST



## ALIEN TECHNOLOGY

**T**echnology comprises all the physical creations of intelligent creatures from simple hand tools to automated machinery. While technology has advanced far on Golarion since its first humanoids drilled sticks into wood and tinder to make fire, even the modern-day inhabitants' most sophisticated inventions—such as movable type and muzzle-loading firearms—are primitive compared to the technological marvels employed by some of the alien races that originate beyond Golarion.

The majority of intelligent races in the solar system possess technology more or less equivalent in sophistication to that used on Golarion. These include the inhabitants of Golarion's closest neighbors, Akiton and Castrovel; the eccentric Triaxus; and several of the larger moons of Liavara and Bretheda. Intelligent, self-evolving machines originally built by mysterious beings known only as First Ones wholly populate the sun-soaked planet Aballon. The inhabitants of these worlds are predominantly humanoid, and most of their tools and weapons have direct equivalents on Golarion. Yet, as with the nations of Golarion, not all alien cultures advance at the same rate or in the same fields. While a visitor from Golarion to these alien worlds might be able to identify the functions of many objects despite their strange craftsmanship, many will likely be unknown to her. She might even discover that technologies taken for granted on Golarion have not been developed yet; alien races often possess physical adaptations or magical abilities that make certain technologies unnecessary for them.

Many alien devices appear to mimic magical effects, or operate like magic items found on Golarion. For the most part, such advanced alien technology functions similarly to normal magic items—the devices simply look strange to other creatures. The function of alien technological items can be identified with the Knowledge (engineering) skill. Likewise, successfully using such items often requires the Disable Device skill. More information on how PCs might interact with technology can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide*.

On Golarion, the greatest concentration of alien technology lies just below the ground in Numeria where the spacecraft *Divinity* crashed thousands of years ago. The ship's crew were a race of humanlike aliens hailing from a homeworld called Androffā. The technology that has been discovered by natives of Golarion is now hoarded by the unscrupulous organization of arcane technologists known as the Technic League. Driven by greed for power, members of this organization cling to every scrap of Androffan technology that they can, even going so far as to enlist the robots found within Silver Mount as guardians of Numeria's capital. Examples of Androffan technology found in Numeria and details of their mechanics can be found in the *Technology Guide*.

Though the majority of races found in Golarion's solar system may be technologically at the same level as those on Golarion, a number of creatures in the solar system as well as from more distant worlds uncharted by terrestrial astronomers have much more advanced technical ability. This article expands on the technology of four of these alien races.

**Eoxians:** The planet Eox was once home to a race of super-intelligent humanoids who may be distantly related to the humans of Golarion. When a catastrophic event destroyed the planet's atmosphere, those who survived chose to become undead rather than let their race disappear completely. Known as the bone sages, these lichlike beings are the last vestige of a lost civilization who possess technology far beyond that found on Golarion. More information about Eox and the bone sages can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Distant Worlds*.

**Mi-Go:** Although they resemble human-sized arthropods, mi-go are in fact a highly evolved form of fungus. The mi-go are not from Golarion's solar system, though several small enclaves of the fungi exist on Golarion and perhaps other planets as well. Mi-go collect mineral resources and biological samples and keep them from the notice of other races. Though they claim to be scientists, these mi-go are in truth the vanguard of an invasion. Statistics for mi-go can be found on page 193 of *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4*.

**Neh-Thalggu:** The monstrous neh-thalggus are scouts for the mysterious Dominion of the Black. Those who know of these aberrations' existence refer to them as "brain collectors" for obvious reasons: the neh-thalggus remove the brains of their humanoid victims and store them in translucent blisters that bulge along their heads and backs. These collected brains increase neh-thalggus' cognitive and magical abilities, but may have some hidden additional purpose as well. Statistics for neh-thalggus can be found on page 197 of *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*.

**Vercites:** The planet Verces is known as the Line because it is tidally locked—one side is a desert where the sun never sets, the other a frozen waste that never sees daylight. Only a relatively thin strip between these two sides provides habitable and arable land for the native Vercites. The Vercites are humanoid in shape, with round, black eyes, and the ability to change color at will. They are humanlike in curiosity and adaptability, but each adult Vercite belongs to a specialized caste that determines his or her role in society. See *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Distant Worlds* for more information on Verces and its inhabitants.

Each of the following sections describes the kinds of technology used by one of these alien races, a description of the aesthetic qualities and additional rules that are typical of that race's technology, and an example of a technological item unique to that alien race.



# IRON GODS

## EOXIAN TECHNOLOGY

At one time, the Eoxians were among the most magically and technologically advanced race in Golarion's solar system, but their rightful pride turned to irreverent hubris. Whether due to punishment from the gods or a disaster of their own making, the vast majority of the Eoxians were annihilated, and with them much of their arcane and scientific knowledge.

Over the ages, the bone sages have built upon what they retained and recovered of their forebears' knowledge. While the undead scholars have largely ignored the life sciences, in the physical sciences the bone sages have in many ways surpassed their predecessors. Yet progress has not been as rapid as one might expect: the bone sages' paranoia stops them from sharing their discoveries with one another, and their immortality provides little incentive to rush. They have recently become aware, however, that other races in the solar system are on the brink of developing competent space travel, and this fact has convinced some among the bone sages that cooperation and urgency may be necessary after all.

Bone sage technology blurs the line between science and magic in strange and unique ways. Though the bone sages claim to have no interest in aesthetics, they seem to prefer to craft their devices in forms that are disturbing to sane minds. Some who have seen these devices believe their skeletal forms and rune-etched surfaces are modeled after the bone sages themselves.

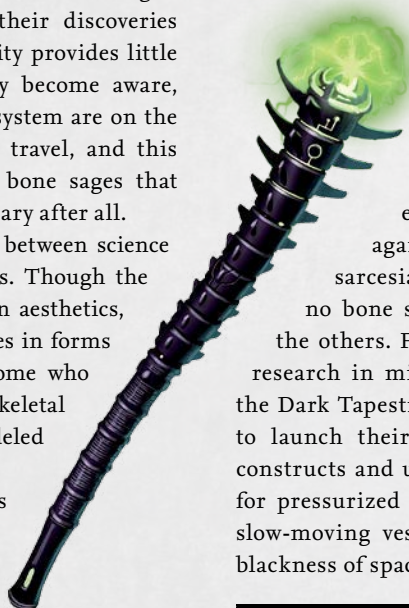
In the field of physics, the bone sages are fascinated by things that exert force yet cannot be seen. It is from such sources that they derive most of the energy they need for their experiments. By entwining science and magic, the bone sages have discovered a means to create and contain complex gravitational fields that resemble stable, miniature black holes. The bone sages feed matter into these voids and siphon off the resulting radiation to power their technology. The scholars of Golarion know these black holes by a more poetic title: *spheres of annihilation*.

The Necropoleis of Eox bear little resemblance to cities of the living. Basic amenities like food, water, fresh air, and sanitation are noticeably absent. Free to ignore the needs of the body, the bone sages are able to focus on matters of the mind, or so they claim. While much of their time is indeed spent in magical and scientific research, the bones sages put as much effort into spying on their rivals and building defenses against being spied on in return. Secure behind elaborate traps and magical wards, bone sages rarely leave their sanctums, calling upon magically called or created creatures able to survive the inhospitable

environments to do their labor. When the bone sages deign to communicate personally, it is usually by means of electronic or magic devices.

The only place on the planet able to sustain complex life is the biodome known as the Halls of the Living. Formerly the refuge of the last living Eoxians, the bone sages have turned it into a zoo and laboratory where the liches can experiment on and live vicariously through their still-breathing kindred. This is one of the few centers for the study of life sciences on Eox, and the facility mainly focuses on breeding among sentient races and how afflictions affect them. The Halls of the Living also serve as a prison for those rare offworlders the bone sages allow to live.

The artificial satellite known as the Sentinel predates the calamity that scoured Eox. Even the bone sages have not unlocked all the secrets of this orbiting city. They have, however, been able to reactivate enough of its weapons to defend Eox against invasion (particularly by the hated sarcesians). A system of checks ensures that no bone sages can turn these weapons against the others. From the Sentinel, bone sages conduct research in microgravity and observe the stars and the Dark Tapestry between. They also use the satellite to launch their grotesque corpse ships. Crewed by constructs and undead, the corpse ships have no need for pressurized atmosphere. Dark and skeletal, these slow-moving vessels are almost invisible against the blackness of space.



<b>GRIP OF DEATH</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 90,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.	
<b>CAPACITY</b> 10	<b>USAGE</b> 1 charge/round	
<b>AURA</b> moderate necromancy and transmutation		

This black, wandlike object creates a narrow gravitational field that affects both body and soul. It duplicates the effects of *telekinesis*, but only to create a sustained force (maximum 250 lbs.) toward or away from the wielder, or to perform a bull rush, drag, or steal combat maneuver (CMB +15). The *grip of death* can perform combat maneuvers on incorporeal undead. If the user performs a successful combat maneuver against a living creature using the *grip of death*, the target gains 1 negative level as a portion of its soul is wrenched from its body. A living creature killed in this way becomes a spectre (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 256). Otherwise, the negative levels fade after 10 hours.

<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>	<b>CRAFT</b> DC 32	<b>COST</b> 45,000 GP
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Craft Technological Item, Craft Wondrous Item, graviton lab, *enervation*, *telekinesis*



## ALIEN TECHNOLOGY

### MI-GO TECHNOLOGY

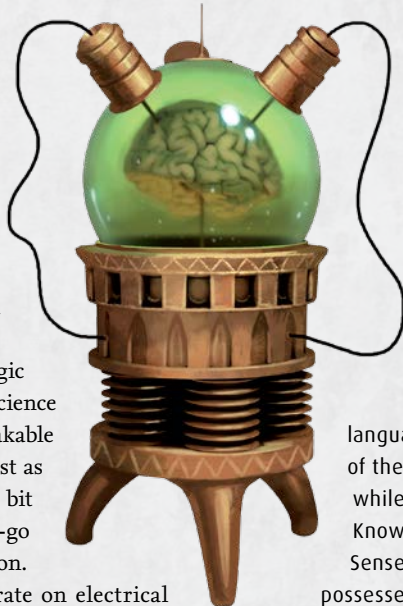
Unlike many interstellar races, mi-go don't build or utilize spaceships. Instead they fly through the void unencumbered by such vessels, propelling themselves on currents of ether by the power of their own wings or some other means beyond the understanding of sane minds. This method is slow relative to the vast reaches of space, but the mi-go are patient: over countless ages, they have spread across the galaxy like spores on the wind.

Mi-go tools are a strange blend of magic and science, biology and metallurgy. On the surface, mi-go devices resemble mechanical contraptions constructed of brass and steel. The casings, however, are not made of terrestrial metals, but rather skymetals and other unknown alloys. Inside, the mechanical elements are interconnected with living organic material that serves a function not unlike electronic circuitry. With their vast intellects and dexterous appendages suited to fine manipulation, mi-go are able to disassemble and reassemble living tissue as easily as they would a mechanical device, rearranging organs and integrating them with mechanical elements to produce their technology.

Mi-go don't differentiate between magic and science; though they use the tools of science in making their technology, unmistakable elements of magic are involved as well. Just as an alchemist infuses his mixtures with a bit of his own quintessence, so too does a mi-go enhance its devices in the process of creation.

Many mi-go technological items operate on electrical power, though they rarely need to be recharged or connected to external power sources. Smaller devices have panels built into their casings, which absorb cosmic rays and other background radiation and convert them into electricity. Larger devices are powered by emissions from radioactive isotopes.

Mi-go take pains to mask their true natures and missions from the inhabitants of worlds they visit until they are ready to conquer. While the vanguard gathers resources, it also spies upon the planet's inhabitants. If a native race possesses magical or technological knowledge that's useful to mi-go, the fungi attempt to acquire individuals with the intelligence they desire to take away for further study. Since they lack the means to transport normal life forms through space, mi-go instead remove the individual's brain and keep it alive in a metal canister able to withstand the journey. While most creatures would find the idea of becoming a brain in a jar horrifying, there are those enticed by an eternity of pure intellectual discourse.



Although they prefer to have others fight on their behalf, when combat is unavoidable, the mi-go have a number of cruel weapons at their disposal. The mi-go do not use melee weapons, relying instead on their scalpel-like claws. In ranged combat, they use a variety of energy weapons that produce effects similar to damage-dealing evocation and conjuration spells.

More examples of mi-go technology can be found in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #46: Wake of the Watcher*.

BRAIN CYLINDER		PRICE 5,000 GP
SLOT none	CL 9th	WEIGHT 10 lbs.
Aura moderate necromancy		

A brain cylinder allows the surgically extracted brain of a Large or smaller creature to continue to function even after it has been removed from the body. Technically, the creature from whom the brain was harvested is dead, but as long as the brain remains in the cylinder, the creature can continue to think. Dials on the cylinder's side control whether the brain can see, hear, or speak using a raspy speaker built into the cylinder's surface. The brain can speak and understand any languages it knew in life, and retains the use of the following skills at the values it possessed while alive: Appraise, Bluff, Diplomacy, all Knowledge skills, Linguistics, Perception, and Sense Motive. It retains no other abilities it possessed in life, including purely mental abilities.

Mi-go typically preserve humanoid brains in this manner when they wish to interrogate a creature at a later date, or when they wish to preserve a creature as a resource for consultation or research purposes.

A brain cylinder is usually made of dark metal and has hardness 10 and 30 hit points—cylinders made of other materials might have higher or lower hardness scores and hit point totals. If a brain cylinder is destroyed, the brain within is lost. Likewise, if the creature from which the brain was harvested is restored to life, the brain within the cylinder is destroyed, and only powerful effects capable of building entirely new bodies can restore to life a creature that has had its brain removed. Note that the gp price to create a brain cylinder only accounts for the basic creation—the brain of a particularly knowledgeable creature could be worth far more than 5,000 gp to some buyers, especially if the information contained in the brain is of a particularly sensitive nature.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 2,500 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>gentle repose</i> , <i>magic jar</i> , 7 ranks in Heal	



## IRON GODS

### NEH-THALGGU TECHNOLOGY

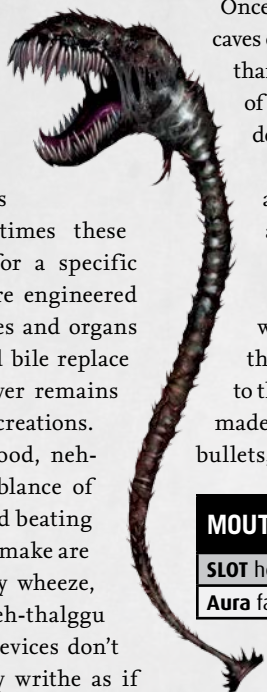
Neh-thalggus are masters of bioengineering, but this is no surprise considering that the race was genetically modified to be perfect scouts for the Dominion of the Black. Neh-thalggus have no compunction about modifying their own bodies or those of other creatures to suit their needs.

Although their technology is comparable in function to that of other interstellar races, neh-thalggus use less metal. Instead, much of the components for their technologies are organic materials cultivated into particular shapes. Sometimes these materials are whole creatures designed for a specific purpose. Often, though, these creatures are engineered simply to be butchered. Their desired bones and organs are recombined into tools, while blood and bile replace oil, coolants, and hydraulic fluids. Whatever remains becomes food for the neh-thalggus or their creations.

More than being made of flesh and blood, neh-thalggu technology often retains the semblance of life. Their devices visibly throb as if they had beating hearts and breathing lungs. The noises they make are often more biological than industrial: they wheeze, moan, and flatulate. When used properly, neh-thalggu devices sometimes caress the user. If the devices don't like how they are employed, however, they writhe as if trying to escape. Some neh-thalggu technological items are healed by positive energy and harmed by negative energy, as if they were living things.

Many neh-thalggu devices are controlled manually, though rather than turning knobs and flipping switches, the user must poke and massage organic pressure points. More often, these machines are controlled by the user's mind. Muscular tubes penetrate the skin and attach themselves directly to the user's nervous system. This allows the user to control the device as easily as he would his own limbs, and allows the device to draw power from the user. Golarion's sages speculate that the devices siphon electrical or psychic energy from the user's brain. In truth, neh-thalggu technology, like the race's magic, draws power from the potential of thoughts and dreams.

Even the immense neh-thalggu spaceships are partially living. Thick skin, fat, and muscle form parts of a neh-thalggu ship, supported by enormous metal and organic bones like the rib cage of a titan. Tentacles sprout from parts of the vessel and writhe in the void of space. Organic processes produce flammable gases that fuel the ship's rockets. Its cardiopulmonary system serves the function of life support, refreshing the air and water. Within the ship's roomlike cavities, a self-contained ecosystem provides food and experimental material for neh-thalggus and their allied creations. When it arrives



at a planet, a neh-thalggu vessel produces dropships in a budding process. After bringing the neh-thalggus to the planet's surface, these pods quickly decompose and the neh-thalggus inside reclaim and repurpose the metal that was incorporated in the ships for other uses.

Once on a planet, neh-thalggus line the interiors of natural caves or abandoned buildings with organic material, rather than build structures. When plugged into this network of flesh, neh-thalggus can communicate and operate devices from anywhere in their lairs.

Because of their natural attacks and magical abilities, neh-thalggus rarely need to resort to artificial weapons or armor. For their minions, however, neh-thalggus produce equipment to compensate for these other creatures' inherent weaknesses. Though composed of flesh and bone, these armor and weapons are functionally equivalent to their steel and wooden counterparts. A neh-thalggu-made firearm, for example, might fire fangs instead of bullets, and perhaps even grow its own ammunition.

MOUTHPIECE OF THE DOMINION		PRICE 8,000 GP
SLOT head	CL 5th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
Aura faint transmutation		

The snakelike *mouthpiece of the Dominion* has a fanged mouth for a "head" and a trachea for a "tail." Though not mobile, the mouthpiece periodically thrashes and bites. As a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity, a *mouthpiece of the Dominion* can be forced into or pulled out of the throat of a Small or Medium creature that is willing or helpless. Installing or removing a mouthpiece deals 2 points of Constitution damage to the wearer.

The *mouthpiece of the Dominion* merges with the wearer's own mouth and throat. The wearer gains a bite attack that deals 1d6 points of damage (1d4 if the wearer is Small). If the wearer already has a natural bite attack, its damage is increased by one step. In addition, the wearer gains a +1 bonus to the DC of his audible bardic performances and any sonic or language-dependent spells and spell-like abilities he uses.

Any neh-thalggu within telepathic range of the wearer can speak audibly through the *mouthpiece of the Dominion*. If multiple creatures wish to speak at the same time (either the wearer or one or more neh-thalggus), they must make opposed Charisma checks to determine who controls the mouthpiece each round. When speaking through the mouthpiece, a neh-thalggu can have any audible bardic performance or any sonic or language-dependent spell or spell-like ability it uses originate from the wearer instead of itself. These effects have their DC increased by the mouthpiece.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 4,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>beast shape I, magic mouth</i>	



## ALIEN TECHNOLOGY

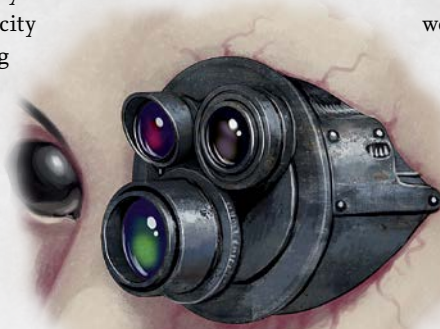
### VERCITE TECHNOLOGY

Of those races native to Golarion's solar system, the Vercites are arguably among the most technologically advanced (other than the intelligent machines of Aballon). Ruled by the parliamentary Ring of Nations, the majority of Vercites live in arcologies, whole cities contained within a single glass-and-steel building. These compact cities are surrounded by wide stretches of farmland that provide all the food they need. Mass transit systems move people and goods about the city as well as to and from the outlying farms and neighboring arcologies. All of these are powered by Sun Farms situated in the burning deserts of the Fullbright.

The three castes of Vercite society approach technology in different ways. As the creators of almost all Vercite technology, the Augmented are naturally the primary proponents of technological advancement. As their name suggests, the Augmented take their fascination with technology to its logical extreme by replacing parts of their own bodies with cybernetic enhancements (such as the optical turrets described below). The most basic cybernetics replicate the function of a particular body part and are used to replace limbs and organs lost to accident or disease. The Augmented, however, prefer cybernetics that improve upon what they perceive as a limited biology. Advanced Augmented sometimes seem to have more mechanical parts than living tissue at first glance. More information about cybernetics similar to those used by Vercites can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide*.

Members of the Pure One caste, on the other hand, believe in the sanctity of the Vercite body. They eschew all forms of body modification, rejecting even the most basic replacement organs (though medical or magical regeneration is generally accepted). The Pure Ones also disapprove of any technology that does the work of a Vercite. While electric lights and high-speed transport are used when necessary, you'll find no tractors or powered tools on a Pure One farm. The various hand tools utilized by Pure One farmers would be instantly recognizable to a peasant from Golarion.

Members of the God-Vessel caste favor the power of divine magic and typically fall somewhere between the extremes of the other two castes. Worshipers of gods of technology have much in common with the Augmented, while followers of pastoral deities may associate better with the Pure Ones. A rare few God-Vessels reject all technology, even beyond the reticence of the Pure Ones. These ascetics are often associated with gods of mysticism and magic.



Though the Ring of Nations is now relatively peaceful, it has a long history of international conflict. Even today, Outlaw Kingdoms and monstrous creatures that lurk on the fringes of the verdant region threaten the Ring's citizens. Advanced firearms are commonly available in the Ring of Nations (subject to local laws), though some more advanced forms of weaponry exist among the elite warrior-diplomats known as Stewards. Even so, techniques for using archaic melee and ranged weapons are still practiced, particularly among the Pure Ones.

Those of the Augmented caste are insatiable explorers. Having charted the entire habitable zone of their own planet, they turned to the heavens. Perhaps their greatest technological achievement is the Skydock, a geosynchronous satellite tethered to the planet by a magically reinforced cable. From the Skydock, the Vercites launch their aethershops: dirigible-shaped spaceships propelled through the void of space by jets of flame. The extreme environments of their home planet have helped prepare the Augmented with the technology needed to face the rigors of space, and because of this technology they have thrived.

Augmented astronauts have traveled to Akiton and Eox, and set up research and mining stations in the Diaspora. The Vercites have made friendly contact with the sarcesians, but in doing so have attracted the attention of the undead Eoxians. In preparation for the inevitable conflict, the Augmented have begun to develop better-armed and more maneuverable aethershops.

OPTICAL TURRETS		PRICE 6,000 GP
SLOT eyes		WEIGHT —
INSTALL DC 30		IMPLANTATION 2

These cybernetic implants replace the recipient's eyes with turrets containing multiple lenses, such as one finds on an optical microscope. In addition to providing normal vision, the implants can rapidly adjust to varying light levels, making the wearer immune to both the blind and dazzled conditions.

If the wearer is willing or helpless, additional lenses can be added (or removed) from the optical turrets with 1 minute's work. Each of the three turrets can hold one eyes slot magic item. These lenses do not count against the wearer's limit of one eyes slot item, but only one function can be active at a time. The wearer can change which of the installed lenses is active (or deactivate them all) as a swift action.

CONSTRUCTION	CRAFT DC 30	COST 3,000 GP
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Craft Cybernetics, cybernetics lab



## IRON GODS

## HOMECOMING

## PATHFINDER'S JOURNAL: WHISPERS IN THE WASTELANDS 4 OF 6

I couldn't be sure, but the longer we traveled across the plains, the more I felt like I was communicating with our little robot.

Four days ago, Eirian and I had left the site of the destroyed village and resumed following Tryg across Numeria, more north now than west. The robot maintained a steady pace that Eirian and I easily matched. We kept watch for signs of pursuit but seemed alone on the plains, with not so much as a passing trader in sight. As we drew near to whatever ultimate destination summoned Tryg, I found myself curiously aware of exactly where the robot was. If I closed my eyes I could sense his location in a way that went beyond the sound of his treads crunching over the pebbled plain.

When I said as much to Eirian, she looked thoughtful. "Do you sense anything else from him? Thoughts or... emotions?"

"Nothing. I couldn't even say exactly how far he is from me. It's a strong enough sense, though, that I could take a step and be sure I'm following him."

Neither of us mentioned the cuff, but we both thought of it. There was nothing else that could explain my new connection with Tryg.

As we progressed across the plains, we fell into a routine. When we stopped during the day to eat or rest, I sprinted up to Tryg and grappled him. Eirian followed with a rope, bound the robot securely, and staked him down while we took the time needed. When we were ready to resume our trek, we untied Tryg and then hurried after him. He always started off at a brisker pace, as if making up for lost time, and after the third or fourth stop I noticed Tryg increasing his speed whenever I started to catch up to him. The robot was more than a mindless automaton, that much was clear. Once I dove for Tryg right as he skittered laterally and I faceplanted into the dirt. It was the first time I could remember Eirian making a sound that resembled a laugh.

When we stopped for the night to rest, Eirian used her stone-shaping magic to seal Tryg into the earth. On our second night out from the village, the robot struggled mightily as Eirian tried to trap him. I had to hold him down until Eirian cast her spell. My gaze met Eirian's over Tryg's prison and I saw a ruefulness in her eyes that I felt myself. Trusting a rope's strength all night was impractical, though, and so the stone prison it was. When we released Tryg the next morning he shook himself as he came out of the earth, scattering dust and grit about, and then he angled his head at me as if assessing me before rolling off.

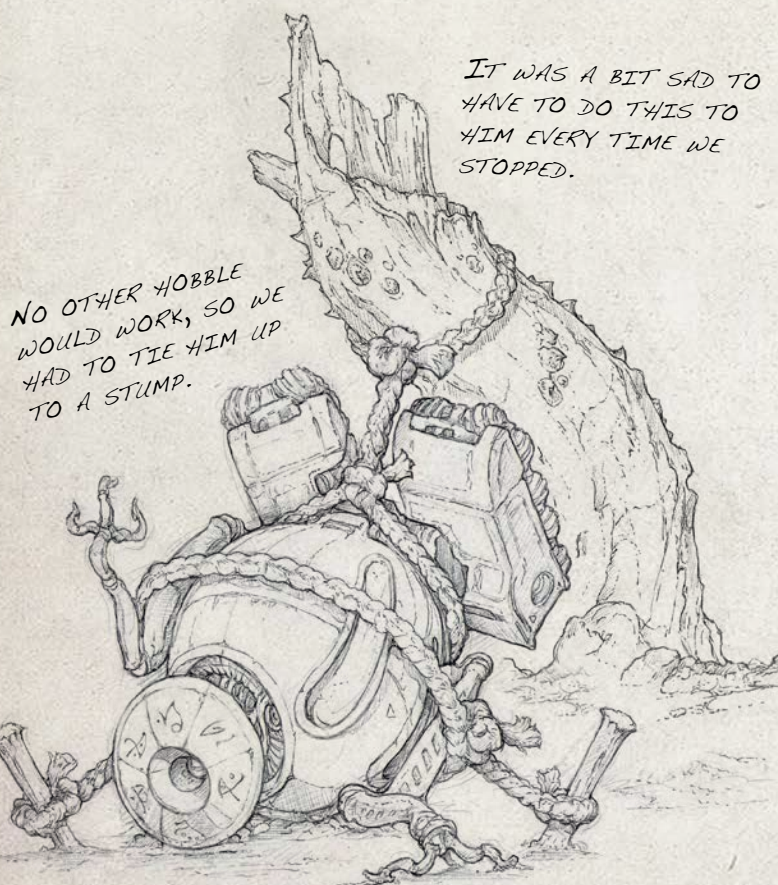
On the fourth day, familiar landmarks began appearing in the distance. I spotted a jagged hill that we called "The Watcher" because it resembled the profile of a face gazing up at the sky. There was a stand of poplars, one taller than the rest, my village had named the Dancing Sisters. I looked from Tryg to the Dancing Sisters and back again.

"We have to turn here to reach my village," I said.

Eirian glanced back at me. "Is it safe to leave Tryg for so long?"

I thought for a few minutes and we walked along in silence. Eirian didn't ask again, waiting instead for my readiness to answer. More and more I was appreciating her silence—it was more thoughtfulness than the stoicism I'd first assumed.

"I don't know how long it will take to find Tryg's destination and get this cuff off," I finally said. "I want to stop in for at least one day. I think Tryg will be safe if we bury him well."





## HOMEcoming

Eirian nodded and reached for her hammer holy symbol. I sprinted ahead and was surprised when Tryg slowed down. Apparently the robot had decided either that we were too strong to fight or that we'd release him again, as we always did.

Tryg sat quietly while Eirian cast her spell, scooping out a section of ground. I placed the robot gently in the depression and Eirian cast a second spell to cover Tryg in a flat section of rock. We piled gravel and loose earth over Tryg's hiding place to further disguise it.

When we were satisfied with our efforts, we turned north. My village was still a half day's travel away. We picked up speed. I was hoping to reach home before nightfall.

The sun sank to the edge of the earth and below, streaking the sky with its tints of orange and purple. Shadows stretched across the plain in familiar patterns. I'd hunted these plains so often as a boy that the feel of the packed earth under my feet, the stretches of raw stone, the way the light fell over the rolling hills—all of it was as familiar to me as my own skin.

As the light failed, I saw the leaping flames of campfires ahead. My village sat at the base of a ridgeline only a dozen feet high, sheltered from the shearing winds that often cut across the plain. Clusters of huts sat around communal firepits.

After two long years of traveling the world, I was home.

My stride quickened, and as we neared the village I called out to the watchers I knew must be there. They emerged from the shadows, sisters I'd known since childhood. They cried out my name and clasped me on my arms.

One of the sisters, Kendra, exclaimed, "Welcome home, Sidek. Welcome!" She broke off and pulled back, embarrassed somehow.

Thinking she regretted her exuberance, I clasped her arms in turn. "I've not seen a sight so pleasant as the fires of home. This is my friend, Eirian. We've been traveling a long time today and could use a meal."

Kendra glanced at her sister Lanren, who nodded and sprinted into the village, running ahead to let them know I was home. Kendra took my arm and nodded to Eirian. "Come with me. I'll take you to the fire."

I wanted to sprint to the center of the village but Kendra took small steps, holding me back. I didn't notice at first, excited by my return and chatting to Eirian about the dinner we could expect. By the time I realized Kendra was intentionally delaying me, my father was already coming toward me, arms outstretched.

"Father," I said. I broke away from Kendra and strode forward, taking his hands in mine. "It's good to see you."

"Sidek." His voice was glad but his smile trembled. I couldn't recall seeing that look in his eyes before.

I looked over his shoulder. "Where's mother?"

Another look in his eyes told me all I needed to know.

I remember every moment of that evening with absolute clarity. At the time my mind was clouded. I seemed to walk



*IT WAS NICE TO SEE KENDRA  
(AND HER SISTER LANREN)  
AGAIN AFTER ALL THIS  
TIME.*

*I WAS REMINDED OF THE  
CRUSH I HAD ON HER WHEN  
WE WERE KIDS.*

in a dream. Eirian disappeared and I didn't notice. People spoke to me and their words flowed over me like water.

When I woke the next afternoon, I remembered every sympathetic word and gentle touch from the night before. I remembered, too, the way old friends, relatives—people I'd known all my life—drew near to offer comfort and then shied away at the sight of my arm. In my grief I'd forgotten how it would seem to my people. Some avoided my gaze and slunk away while others stared in open shock. Despite my haze of emotion, I found the sense to remove my cloak and wrap it around my forearm, a clumsy covering.

I lay unmoving on my bed for some time. Something felt lodged in my heart, like a fragment of a splintered arrow. I rubbed my hand on my chest and opened my eyes. The sunlight on the tanned hide windows cast a warm glow over the room.

Thoughts of Eirian stole across my mind. I hoped someone had taken care of her. The thought of helping someone else was enough to stir me from my rest. I stood, my eyes gritty and my balance off, as if I'd been drinking all night. I had raised a toast in my mother's name. Emotion had done the rest of the damage.

She died so quickly, my father had said, no one realized how sick she had been. Illness came to my village from time to time. If our healers could not help with their herbs and magic, we carried the sick southward to Torch. This time, though, the sickness came on too fast. My father said she had died in peace, asleep. They had thought to send word to me but it would cost a great deal to pay a wizard to speak across the miles, and I was expected home soon anyway.

I left my room and looked in on my father. He slept still, looking far older than I remembered. He had lost weight



## IRON GODS

in the last year and his cheeks were hollow. His long dark hair, the same shade as mine, thinned across his scalp. His scars stood out, old and new crisscrossed over his skin, white and gray. I left him sleeping and stepped out into the village.

Friends greeted me and I did my best to smile and thank them for their kindness.

Kendra was at my side once again. "It was a poor homecoming for you."

"If I had to learn this way, I'm glad I had so many around to support me. I'm only sorry I couldn't be here to help my father."

"It was a shock, but we made a circle around him. We made sure a friend sat up with him for the first week of nights. And Estred made sure he ate." Unlike most Kellids, Kendra had a dark red tone to her hair that glowed in the afternoon sun. She was one of our strongest hunters and scars marked her arms like tattoos.

"I'm sure she did. Bowfuls of prairie chicken stew?"

We shared a dry, sad laugh. I scanned the crowd of villagers going about their afternoon routine. The sight was a balm to the pain in my chest—still there, but less tender. "My friend, Eirian. Where did she go?"

*ALL OF OUR BURIAL CHAMBERS  
FEATURE ONE OF THESE ALTARS SO  
PEOPLE CAN LEAVE REMEMBRANCE  
GIFTS.*



*I'M GLAD FATHER ADDED HER  
FAVORITE DAGGER TO THE ALTAR.*

Kendra's gaze flicked away. "She stayed with me last night. After breakfast, she left to look around the area. I think she's up on the ridge."

I started to turn away but Kendra reached out to stop me. "Tell me about this." She gestured at the metal cuff on my arm.

My cloak remained wrapped around my forearm, its ends tied together. I resisted the urge to hide it behind my back. "It's a long story. I didn't put it on myself, not on purpose. Eirian's helping me find a way to get it off."

"I hope you find a way soon. It's uncanny."

"Me, too." I nodded to Kendra and strode away. It took me some time to get to the edge of the village as everyone wanted to stop and talk. Finally, I made my escape and walked along the curving trail that led up to the ridge.

I found Eirian's tracks and realized their direction would take her to the wooden platforms where we placed our dead. I took my time, soaking in the familiar landscape as I followed the path.

She stood a respectful distance from the platforms, silently examining the simple planks held aloft by cut and fitted timbers, her hands clasped behind her back. She looked at me as I drew closer.

"This is where you put your dead," she said.

"For a time."

She returned to her study of the platforms. "And then you move them?"

"After the wind and sun have taken away their vitality. We wrap the remains and inter them in the caves."

"Is that where your mother is?"

The pain in my chest spiked and for a moment I fought to draw another breath. As much as it hurt me, I was glad to hear Eirian speak of my mother. It would have been worse if she pretended nothing had changed since yesterday.

"I was going to go there now to see her. Would you like to come?"

I don't know why I offered to bring Eirian with me, but she nodded and turned to follow me.

The entrance to the caves wasn't far from the village. Eirian and I ducked inside the dim interior. In contrast to the bright hot afternoon, the cavern air felt chill on my skin. I lit a clay lamp that sat on a shelf just inside the cave and Eirian followed behind me as we made our way down the tunnel.

The ridgeline was mostly clay and the tunnels had been carved out as needed, growing deeper and more complex the farther we went. We walked through two large chambers stacked with the wrapped bodies of my forebears and the ancestors of everyone in the village. Between the chambers we walked softly down cramped corridors lined with shelves on which small bundles of bones rested.



## HOMEcoming

The third cavern, the newest one, was only half-filled with bodies. Eirian stood by the entrance and held the lamp. I saw my mother immediately. Even with her body dried and wrapped in cloth I knew her. Her body was closest to the door, of course, but I swore I could recognize the slope of her shoulders and the outline of her slim hands beneath the cloth.

I knelt by her side. I wished I knew the right words, the right prayers, to offer. All I could do was remember the way she'd looked when I last left home. She always looked stern, disapproving of my travels outside Numeria, but always with a hint of pride in her eyes. She would take my chin in her hand and examine my face, then let go with a sigh. "I suppose you are a man after all," she'd say every time I left.

I didn't feel like a man, kneeling there by her side. I felt lost.

When I'd said as much of a goodbye as I could, I stood, surprised to find my knees stiff. Eirian waited until I came back to the entrance before she turned and led us back out by the light of the lamp.

When we emerged blinking into the sunlight, I thought the whole village had assembled outside. I looked again and saw it was only the elders and my closest friends. Their expressions were grim and my heart seized. "Father?" I started to say, but then spotted him in the crowd. I relaxed. "What's going on?"

My father stepped forward. Last night I'd seen sorrow in him I'd never seen before. Now I saw a new anger. "What do you mean by this?"

"By what?" I said. I still felt unbalanced, off-center. "I was saying goodbye—"

"You brought *her* into the most sacred place we have?" His voice was colder than the caves we'd left. "Into the place where our ancestors sleep?"

I looked at Eirian. She remained silent and placid beside me, but I'd learned to read her a bit. The tightness around her eyes and the tenseness in her shoulders showed wariness, even fear. "She's a friend of mine. I didn't think—"

"No, you didn't." Kendra stepped forward from the crowd. "She stayed in my hut all night, never sleeping. The hammer she wears is a symbol of the goddess of machines."

"I trust Eirian," I said, fighting to keep my voice calm.

"You come back here," my father said, "with metal on your arm and a machine woman at your side and you think you can bring these things into our home? Did you even once consider the damage you were doing to our village?"

"She's not a thing."

"Sidek." Eirian's voice was low. "I should go."

"The machine shows reason," Kendra said. Her voice held no bitterness, no contempt, only a calm agreement.



MOTHER'S DEATH HIT MY FATHER HARD. I COULD SEE IT ON HIS FACE THOUGH HE TRIED TO CONCEAL IT.

I'M SURE THAT CONTRIBUTED TO HOW HE TREATED ME AND EIRIAN. WE'LL REPAIR THE BOND SOON.

"We'll both go," I said. I started back toward the village, motioning for Eirian to follow. "I'll get my gear and we'll be on our way."

"I'll meet you at Tr—at our meeting place," Eirian said. She started in the other direction, moving quickly to circle around the village.

My father hurried to catch up to me as the rest of the villagers began to scatter. When he spoke, his voice was still angry, but now held the heaviness of regret. "Sidek, I shouldn't have spoken so harshly. It's been so long since I've seen you and... and it's been hard."

"I understand," I said, but the words I'd heard continued to cut me. "Still, I should go. I need to get this thing off my wrist and Eirian's the only one who can help me."

"You'll come back, won't you? When you're healed of this... affliction?"

I stopped and faced my father. My eyes burned. I took his face in my hands and leaned my brow against his. "When I'm healed, I'll return to you."

We stood together for a time, and when I pulled away he didn't try to stop me.

It took me only a few minutes to gather my things and strike back out across the plains. Kendra met me at the edge of town with a satchel.

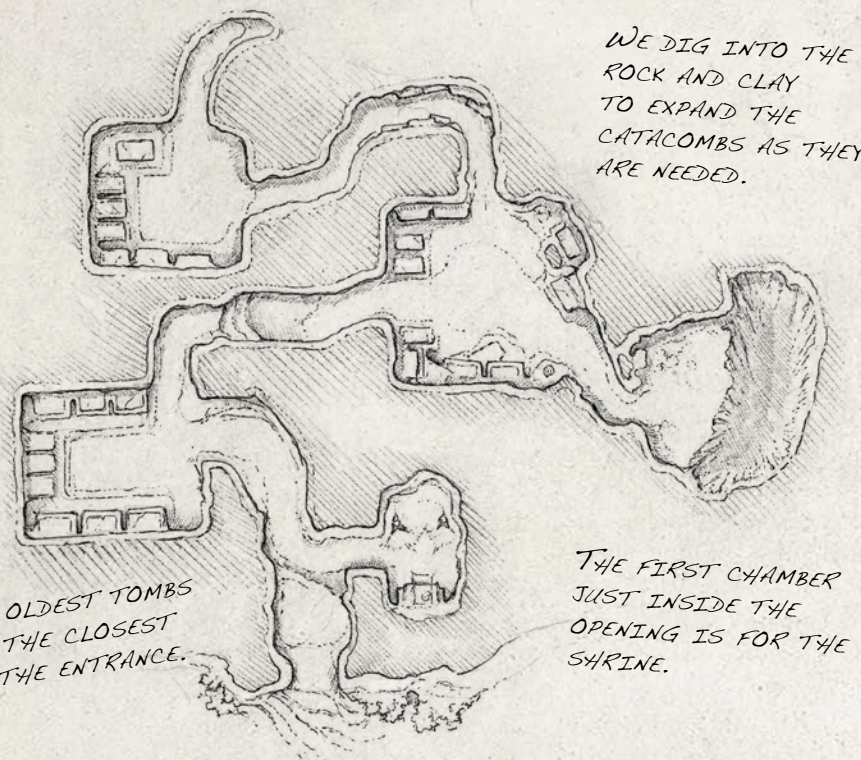
"Food and a few supplies," she said, pushing it into my hands. "Sidek, I didn't mean—"



## IRON GODS



THE DEAD REST ON THE BURIAL PLATFORMS ON THE RIDGE FOR A FULL MOON CYCLE BEFORE THEY ARE BROUGHT INTO THE CATACOMBS.



WE DIG INTO THE ROCK AND CLAY TO EXPAND THE CATACOMBS AS THEY ARE NEEDED.

THE OLDEST TOMBS ARE THE CLOSEST TO THE ENTRANCE.

THE FIRST CHAMBER JUST INSIDE THE OPENING IS FOR THE SHRINE.

"We'll speak of it when I return," I said. Walking past her without making eye contact, I left the village without looking back, not wanting my last look at home to be marked with such anger and grief.

I saw Eirian in the distance as I neared the Dancing Sisters, and caught up to her as we passed the poplars. I gave her some time to walk with me in silence before I said, "I'm sorry."

"It's my fault as much as yours," she said. "I should have realized what your people would think."

"I forgot how much I've changed. How different I've become."

"I know you meant no harm," she said. There was a note of distance in her voice. I wanted to push further, but I let it go. I was learning the wisdom of silence. There would be more time for speech on the road.

We planned to camp when we reached Tryg's hiding place, as it'd be close to sunset. As we neared the place where we left the robot, though, we both saw evidence of trouble. A pile of broken earth and stones marked the ground where Tryg should have been. Eirian and I both broke into a jog.

We saw the same sight but I don't think either of us wanted to believe it. The stone ground where Tryg had hidden was smashed open. A heavy rock lay discarded nearby. A hole gaped in the stone shell, just big enough for a robot to squeeze through.

I reached into the hole and felt around in the rubble, but I knew it was useless. Tryg was gone.

"How could this have happened?" Eirian's voice held a burr of fear and frustration. I'd never heard her so moved before.

"Someone must have seen us hide him," I said bleakly. I scanned the area but saw no one beside us.

Eirian crouched by the hole and touched its jagged edge. "Or someone has been following us."

I turned the thought over in my mind. "In the rendland, we heard someone set on by the coyotes. They were gone when I arrived, but I saw the dead coyotes that they'd left behind."

"In the village too we found marks on Tryg's hiding place. Remember?"

I cursed. "The same person, perhaps. Or, at least, the same blade—the marks on Tryg's hiding place match the stab wounds of the coyotes. I was keeping watch while we buried him, but whoever stole Tryg must be a better sleuth than I am a lookout."

"Brigh sent Tryg to us," Eirian said with the earnestness I only heard when she talked of her goddess. "I'm sure of it. We have to get him back. Can you find the trail of whoever took him?"

I scouted around the area. Eirian stayed by the hole, watching me in silence as I worked. I tried to focus on the ground but soon became distracted by an unusual impulse building in my mind. I stopped moving and closed my eyes, focusing instead on the impulse.

I could still sense Tryg.



## HOMEcoming

As before, I felt certain that I could let this sensation guide my steps and it would take me straight to the robot. He was moving north, I realized, steadily north. I almost opened my eyes, eager to begin the pursuit.

But I realized that underneath my pull to Tryg I could feel another sensation, a stronger pull. North, still, but more to the west, almost in the direction of Starfall. It felt like a voice calling me without making any sound, as if someone very important to me was urging me onward. I could resist the call but not ignore it.

I tried to focus on the sensation, tried to understand what was calling, but I had no sense of who or what it was. It had no name or impulse attached to it beyond calling me toward it.

I heard the rustle of Eirian moving and opened my eyes to see her standing next to me. "What is it?"

"I can sense Tryg. And more. I think I'm feeling the same force that draws him onward."

"You mean you can follow the same path he does?"

I nodded. "I think so, but Tryg isn't following that path anymore. Someone is carrying him away from it." I pointed north. "That way."

"What lies in that direction?"

"Beyond my village, a lot of empty plain until we reach Lackthroat."

I retrieved my pack from where I'd set it down next to Tryg's hiding place. "Do we press on, then?" Eirian said as I readied myself.

"I can go for some time without sleep. We have to close the gap between us and this robot thief." I picked up the heavy rock used to break our robot free and squeezed my hand around it. "And when I find him—"

I'd only meant to imitate striking the imaginary robot thief with the rock. To my surprise, though, the runes on my cuff flared and a surge of power suffused my arm. The rock cracked in half in my grip. I stared, openmouthed, and then squeezed my fist again. The rock split in two and grit rained down.

Eirian and I both stared blankly at my hand. I opened my fist and let the shattered rock fall to the ground.

She was the first to speak. "You're getting stronger."

I rubbed my cuffed arm with the opposite hand. "Another mystery," I said. "One that will have to wait. First, we get Tryg back."

Together, Eirian and I faced north and struck out again across the plains.

### BURIAL CUSTOMS OF NUMERIA

*There are almost as many burial customs in Numeria as there are villages. In the city of Starfall, residents typically bury or cremate their dead as in most major cities across Golarion. Among the plains people of the country, though, a number of different customs hold sway.*

*Natural forces are often used to prepare or dispose of the dead. A common method of the former is to leave the body exposed to the elements and wild animals of the area. If a body is left on the ground, the villagers assume wild animals and insects will scavenge the corpse and leave very little behind. The remains can then be bound in cloth or a specially prepared leather pouch and either stored or buried. Bodies can also be placed on wooden platforms or atop tall rocks to protect them from land-dwelling scavengers. In this case, birds and the elements deflesh the body, leaving behind clean bones to be interred or otherwise preserved.*

*In regions where the earth is soft, Numerians may bury their dead individually or in mass graves, or construct barrows in which to inter their loved ones. In mountainous or rocky regions, Numerians sometimes inter their dead deep within caverns and let time and the elements take care of the rest.*

*Most Numerians leave tokens on their dead, ranging from wooden pendants engraved with family or religious symbols to fine robes and valuable jewelry. Most bury their dead with few possessions, however, preferring to leave the items to the living who knew and cared for the deceased. As a general rule, Numerians strive to carry on memories of their dead kin in some fashion, whether it be through stories told of ancestors, carvings or paintings commemorating the deceased, or stone cairns that mark the history of the village.*



## IRON GODS



### BESTIARY

UNINTERESTED IN PILOTING THEIR OWN SHIPS, THE CREATURES OF THE DOMINION OF THE BLACK DEVELOPED A NEW LIFEFORM TO PERFORM THAT TASK. EACH OF THESE STRANGE, NEARLY AMORPHOUS CREATURES LIVES ITS ENTIRE LIFE IN A SPECIALLY CREATED CONTAINER INSTALLED IN THE BRIDGE OF ONE OF THE DOMINION'S BIOMECHANICAL SPACE SHIPS. THOUGH THESE CREATED PILOTS LACK MUCH PERSONAL MOBILITY, THEY REMAIN FORMIDABLE FOES AND ATTACK ANY WHO TRESPASS ON THEIR SHIPS. IT IS SAID THAT THESE CREATURES WERE DEVELOPED FROM A SINGLE MASSIVE AMOEBA-LIKE CREATURE THAT ABSORBED THE BRAINS OF COUNTLESS SENTIENT CREATURES. THIS BEING, REFERRED TO IN TEXTS AS INFINITY-CEASES-NOW, IS SAID TO RESIDE IN A DYING PLANET'S CORE.

—EXCERPT FROM *THE LAST THEOREM*



## BESTIARY

This volume of the Iron Gods Adventure Path features a salvage robot skilled at creating things from scrap and a handful of horrific creatures associated with the Dominion of the Black.

## DEADLY BEASTS AND METAL MENACES

The random encounter table presented here features a number of typical threats the PCs could encounter while exploring the region near the Scar of the Spider. During the course of the adventure, the PCs have a 20% chance of a random encounter every hour they spend exploring the area, but no more than two random encounters per day. Some of these encounters involve creatures from specific encounters in the adventure, so if one of the random encounter rolls results in a specific creature the party has already faced (such as Isuma), consider rolling again on the table. During the course of the adventure, it's reasonable to expect that the PCs could encounter some of the same creatures (even specific, named creatures) multiple times; information regarding these encounters is provided below.

Since this adventure spans a range of levels, some results might be too simple or too difficult for the PCs, depending on where they are in the course of the adventure. If the result rolled is outside the challenge rating range appropriate for the PCs, roll again or choose a different encounter.

GMs who wish to learn more about Numeria or who are looking for other hazards and encounter ideas should check out *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Numeria, Land of Fallen Stars*. Details on the robot subtype can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary*, and they were reprinted for ease of reference in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #85: Fires of Creation*.

**Android Pilgrims (CR 11):** A group of android pilgrims encountered in the Scar of the Spider seeks to join Harab's penitents... although they aren't sure where in the Scar of the Spider the penitent androids are encamped. They may ask the PCs to guide them to the campsite (area F), but if the PCs are obviously wielding technology, the androids may well decide that the PCs have been corrupted by technology and attack, hoping to gather up what technology they can to present to Harab for sacrifice when they do find her. This encounter is intended to be a peaceful opportunity for the two groups to exchange information, but it's not out of the realm of possibility for this encounter to end in a fight.

**Isuma (CR 9):** There is a chance that the PCs could encounter Isuma outside of her encounter location in the adventure. If this result is rolled, see page 23 for details on how Isuma reacts to the PCs if she encounters them as a random encounter.

**Lost Giant (CR 11):** While somewhat rare in other parts of the world, ash giants (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 126)

## SCAR OF THE SPIDER ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-4	1d4 ettins	8	Bestiary 130
5-10	1 giant tarantula	8	Bestiary 2 256
11-15	1 giant snapping turtle	9	Bestiary 2 273
16-19	Isuma	9	See page 58
20-22	1d8 ogre spiders	9	Bestiary 3 254
23-25	1 tick swarm	9	Bestiary 2 265
26-30	1 yangethe	9	See page 15
31-34	1 gug	10	Bestiary 2 151
35-41	1d8 mi-go	10	Bestiary 4 193
42-46	1 peluda	10	Bestiary 4 212
47-52	1d8 shambling mounds	10	Bestiary 246
53-58	1d12 spider eaters	10	Bestiary 3 255
59-63	1d4 torturer robots	10	See page 26
64-69	Android pilgrims	11	See page 16
70-73	Lost giant	11	See below
74-80	1d8 ugothokras	11	See page 88
81-84	1d8 xenopterids	11	Bestiary 4 283
85-90	1 athach	12	Bestiary 2 33
91-93	1 interlocutor kyton	12	Bestiary 3 174
94-100	1d8 neh-thalggus	12	Bestiary 2 197

freely roam the radioactive regions of Numeria, hunting whatever prey they can find. Although the creatures are plentiful here, their lifespans are short and tribes tend not to stay together for long. This particular giant recently lost the last member of her dwindling tribe, and has wandered into the Scar of the Spider. To enhance this encounter, consider making the most of the ash giant's vermin empathy special ability by pairing the giant up with any number of the spiders or other vermin that inhabit the Scar of the Spider.

**Mi-go and Neh-Thalggus (CR 10 or 12):** These two alien creatures can be found in the Scar of the Spider, and make up one of the factions vying for dominance in the area. If this result is rolled and the PCs haven't yet encountered one of these creatures in the adventure, consider making this less of a direct combat encounter. These randomly encountered creatures are scientists and scouts, and their tactics should reflect that—they don't rush into fights or attack with outright bloodlust. Use this encounter to help seed some mystery and horror into the story. Perhaps the PCs just catch a glimpse of a mi-go in the distance, or a neh-thalggu scuttles out of sight at the last moment. Maybe the PCs encounter one of these foes and engage in combat, but the alien breaks from the fray after only a round or two. Use random encounters with these two creatures as an appetizer for the more in-depth encounters in the adventure. If the PCs have already fought some of these in the adventure, then run this encounter normally.



# IRON GODS

## ROBOT. RECLAMATION

This complex-looking automaton's multiple arms end in gripping talons. It moves about on a set of four legs and has a strange bell-shaped head.

**RECLAMATION ROBOT**

**CR 12**



**XP 19,200**

N Large construct (robot)

**Init** +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +18

### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 16, flat-footed 20 (+7 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 168 (16d10+30 plus 50 hp force field)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +7

**Defensive Abilities** hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits;

**Resist** cold 15, fire 15

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to critical hits and electricity

### OFFENSE

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

**Melee** 5 claws +21 (1d6+6/19-20 plus grab)

**Ranged** integrated laser rifle +22 touch (2d6 fire)

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

**Special Attacks** combined arms, constrict (1d6+6), efficient grappler

### STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 25, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +23 (+31 grapple, +27 sunder); **CMD** 40 (48 vs. grapple, 42 vs. sunder, 44 vs. trip)

**Feats** Blinding Critical, Critical Focus, Great Fortitude, Greater Sunder, Improved Critical (claws), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Technologist<sup>®</sup>

**Skills** Climb +34, Disable Device +23, Knowledge (engineering) +22, Perception +18; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Climb, +4 Knowledge (engineering)

**Languages** Androffan, Common

**SQ** item creation, salvage, scaling

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary, duo, or work gang (3-5)

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Combined Arms (Ex)** When taking a full-attack action, a reclamation robot can attack with its claws and its integrated laser rifle simultaneously. It does not provoke attacks of opportunity with its integrated laser rifle when using combined arms.

**Efficient Grappler (Ex)** A reclamation robot takes only a -10 penalty on its combat maneuver check to make and maintain a grapple on a foe when using only its claw rather than its whole body to grapple. It receives a +8 bonus on combat maneuver checks to start and maintain a grapple rather than the normal +4 bonus granted by the grab ability. A reclamation robot can make an attack with its integrated laser rifle against one creature it is grappling as a swift action—when it attacks in this way, the robot has a threat range of 18-20 for critical hits with the laser rifle.

**Item Creation (Ex)** Reclamation robots are known for their startling creativity in repairing damaged technology. A reclamation robot ignores all of the item creation feat requirements for creating a technological item, but must have access to a sufficient amount of scrap metal and spare parts in order to create or repair an item (the robot must still expend materials equal to the item's cost). A reclamation robot can attempt a Knowledge (engineering) check to restore a timeworn technological item to full functionality—the DC of this check is equal to the item's Craft DC + 5, and requires an expenditure of technological components worth a total amount of money equal to the timeworn item's cost (half the cost of the object in its pristine condition). Failure results in the destruction of the item. When a reclamation robot restores a technological





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item to full functionality in this manner, if the robot exceeds its DC by a result of 10 or more, it improves the item in some way—choose one of the following improvements or determine one randomly.

- The item's capacity permanently increases by 50%.
- If the item is a weapon or armor, it becomes masterwork.
- The item becomes hardened (increase its hardness by 2).
- The item becomes fortified (increase its hit points by 50%).
- The item becomes lightweight (weight is divided in half).

**Force Field (Ex)** A reclamation robot is sheathed in a thin layer of shimmering energy that grants it 50 bonus hit points. All damage dealt to a reclamation robot with an active force field is deducted from these hit points first. As long as the force field is active, the reclamation robot is immune to critical hits. A reclamation robot's force field has fast healing 10, but once these hit points are reduced to 0, the force field shuts down and does not reactivate for 24 hours.

**Integrated Laser Rifle (Ex)** A reclamation robot has a built-in laser rifle in its chest. This weapon has a range of 150 feet and deals 2d6 points of fire damage on a hit. The weapon can fire once per round as a ranged touch attack. A laser attack can pass through force fields and force effects, such as a *wall of force*, to strike a foe beyond without damaging that field. Objects like glass or other transparent barriers don't provide cover from lasers, but unlike force barriers, a transparent physical barrier still takes damage when a laser passes through it. Invisible creatures and objects are immune to damage from lasers. Fog, smoke, and other clouds provide cover in addition to concealment from laser attacks. Darkness (magical or otherwise) has no effect on lasers other than providing concealment.

**Salvage (Ex)** A reclamation robot is designed specifically to salvage technology for further use. All Craft skills are class skills for reclamation robots, and they gain a +4 racial bonus on Knowledge (engineering) checks and gain Technologist as a bonus feat. A reclamation robot can repair 2d6 points of damage to a robot within reach (including itself) as a standard action.

**Scaling (Ex)** Reclamation robots are expected to work at great heights or while clinging to immense ships. They gain a +4 racial bonus on Climb checks. Once every 1d4 rounds, a reclamation robot can increase its climb speed to 40 feet as a swift action for 1 round.

**Vulnerable to Critical Hits (Ex)** Like all robots, reclamation robots are vulnerable to critical hits. In addition, when a critical hit is confirmed against a reclamation robot, roll a d8. On a roll of 1, instead of suffering additional damage from the critical hit, the robot suffers damage to essential processing units and memory modules that it cannot itself repair (although another reclamation robot could repair this damage). While such damage is not readily apparent on the exterior—and the robot itself is essentially

unaware of it—this kind of injury can have a number of different effects. When such an injury occurs, roll d% and consult the following chart to determine the nature of the damage.

d%	Result
01–20	The robot takes a –4 penalty on all skill checks.
21–30	The robot's integrated laser rifle now glitches each time it is fired as if it were timeworn <sup>6c</sup> .
31–40	The robot loses its scaling ability (including its bonus on Climb checks).
41–60	When it attempts to repair damage to a robot via salvage, it only repairs 1d4 points of damage.
61–70	Movement is reduced by 10 feet.
71–95	One of the robot's claw attacks becomes nonfunctional.
96–100	The robot goes berserk, functioning as if under the simultaneous effects of a <i>confusion</i> spell and a <i>rage</i> spell.

Reclamation robots, or “reclamators,” are masters of salvage and construction. These robots were originally designed to build structures and repair all manner of technology with speed and precision. Construction of these robots was difficult and time consuming, but they often repaid those spent resources swiftly with their ability to rebuild and repair other robots or technological items. Their truly remarkable programming surprised even those who originally developed them, as these machines can salvage items thought to be far beyond hope of repair.

Over time it's not uncommon for a reclamation robot to develop a unique personality akin to that of an artist, with something that almost approaches pride in its work. On some occasions, reclamation robots have even been known to make improvements to items and constructs that they repair.

Though a reclamation robot is generally quite adept at repairing damage to itself as well, injury to certain processors and memory modules deep within the robot can cause significant problems. Some of the resulting malfunctions can be quite noticeable (see the table above), while others are subtler, such as a tendency to add baroque and unnecessary embellishments to constructions and repairs. Reclamation robots with this type of damage are largely unaware of their condition and actively resist efforts to repair them, requiring intervention with a robojack<sup>7c</sup> or the like. There are even recorded incidents of damaged reclamators going rogue and setting off on their own to build whatever outlandish structures their flawed processors dictate. Though they were originally designed to create things for humanoids, such rogue robots typically design structures and devices of no apparent use to organic beings... which isn't to say that these creations don't have a place in some unknowable automaton agenda.



# IRON GODS

## SHIPMIND

This yellowy viscous liquid bubbles in a large tank suspended by strangely organic cables. Wisps of white gas occasionally escape the roiling fluid.

### SHIPMIND

**CR 13**

**XP 25,600**

CE Huge ooze

**Init** +13; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect magic*; Perception +20

### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 17, flat-footed 18 (+9 Dex, +10 armor, -2 size)

**hp** 161 (14d8+98)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

**Defensive Abilities** amorphous, thought disruption; **DR** 10/—;

**Immune** bludgeoning, charm effects, electricity, fire, ooze traits; **SR** 24

**Weaknesses** limited mobility, vulnerable to cold

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 0 ft. or 10 ft. (limited mobility)

**Melee** 3 slams +20 (1d8+12 plus 1d4 Int damage and grab)

**Ranged** plasma bolt +17 touch (10d6 plasma/19-20)

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

**Special Attacks** immerse

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th; concentration +18)

 Constant—*detect good*, *detect law*, *detect magic*

 At will—*enthrall* (DC 17), *sending*, *telekinesis* (DC 20)

 3/day—quicken *touch of idiocy*

 1/day—*confusion* (DC 19), *crushing despair* (DC 19)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 34, **Dex** 28, **Con** 24, **Int** 21, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 43 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (plasma bolt), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*touch of idiocy*)

**Skills** Knowledge (engineering) +19, Knowledge (geography) +19, Knowledge (nature) +19, Knowledge (planes) +19, Knowledge (religion) +19, Perception +20, Sense Motive +20

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Undercommon, Protean; telepathy 60 ft.

**SQ** container, ship interface

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Dominion of the Black ships)

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** standard (mostly gemstones)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Container (Ex)** A shipmind dwells within an immobile container of partially organic material grown by its Dominion masters. This container functions somewhat like a suit of armor for the shipmind. A shipmind container has hardness 10 and 240 hit points, and can be damaged by sunder attempts. A shipmind container that gains the broken quality grants only a +5 armor bonus to the

shipmind within, and does not allow the shipmind to heal negative levels gained during a prolonged period outside of the container (see Limited Mobility). The partially crystalline nature of a shipmind container makes it vulnerable to *shatter* spells, and sonic damage bypasses the container's hardness and inflicts full damage.

**Immerse (Ex)** When a shipmind in its container successfully grabs a Large or smaller target with one of its slam attacks, it can attempt to drag that target into its body as a swift action. To immerse a creature, the shipmind must attempt a combat maneuver check (as though attempting to pin the opponent). If it succeeds, the prey is pulled into the container with the shipmind and immediately takes 6d6 points of plasma damage (half of which is electricity and half of which is fire) and 1d4 points of Intelligence damage—a successful DC 24 Fortitude save halves the plasma damage and negates the Intelligence damage. A creature that remains immersed takes this damage again every following round at the start of the shipmind's turn. In addition, an immersed creature is in danger of suffocating. A creature can attempt to escape immersion by making a successful combat maneuver check or Escape Artist check, as if it were attempting to escape a pin. If the shipmind's container has the broken condition, attempts to escape in this manner gain a +8 bonus.

**Limited Mobility (Ex)** Unlike most oozes, a shipmind cannot exist outside of the partially organic container it was originally created in—this container serves the shipmind as its “skin.” While inside its container, a shipmind has a speed of 0 feet. When it leaves its container, it gains a speed of 10 feet, but loses its armor bonus to AC. A shipmind can exist outside of its container for 1 hour without consequences, but at the start of each subsequent hour it gains 1 negative level as its body starts to dissolve. These negative levels cannot be restored by any means save by returning to an appropriate shipmind container, at which point they are removed at a rate of 1 level per hour.

**Plasma Bolt (Su)** As a standard action, a shipmind can fire a bolt of plasma at a target within 300 feet (no range increment). On a hit, a blast of plasma deals 10d6 damage, half of which is electricity damage and half of which is fire damage.

**Ship Interface (Ex)** As long as a shipmind is interfaced with a Dominion vessel, it can observe events within the ship or within 90 feet of its exterior hull as if via *clairaudience*/*clairvoyance* for as long as the shipmind concentrates. While concentrating on an area, the shipmind can activate traps or other ship systems in the area as a swift action; it can even converse with creatures in the area by vibrating the metal and strange membranes in the walls.

**Thought Disruption (Su)** The substance that makes up a shipmind ooze is charged with alien psychic energy that is toxic to the minds of most life forms. A creature who



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willfully touches an ooze (via a touch attack, natural weapon attack, or unarmed strike) or is struck by its slam attack must make a DC 22 Will save or take 1d4 points of Intelligence damage. This is a mind-affecting confusion effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

The enigmatic shipminds are painstakingly engineered creations of Dominion fleshfarms, molded and formed over the course of years to pilot the massive organic spacecraft the aliens use to navigate the Dark Tapestry.

Intimately bound to their vessels, shipminds oversee the health and function of the ships they control. They maintain this single-minded task for as long as a thousand years before they must be recycled and rebuilt.

A shipmind resides within a specially designed containers on a craft, connected to the ship's greater workings via varying forms of physical interface. These oozes generally follow orders from superiors stationed on their spacecraft, though coaxing is sometimes necessary in order to get these strange creatures to follow direct orders. This is due in part to the fact that these engineered creatures are fanatically devoted to the Dominion's inscrutable faith, with rigid beliefs regarding orthodoxy. Rumors persist of especially radical shipmind oozes going beyond defiance and actually slaying their passengers, a task made frightfully easy due to the mastery each ooze has over every aspect of its spacecraft's function (such as life support and internal security appendages and creatures). Some have been known to plunge their vessel into a star or black hole in moments of defiance or religious ecstasy, leaving the rest of the ship's crew helpless and unable to convince the shipmind to abandon its actions.

As a shipmind reaches more advanced age, it becomes increasingly pedantic and difficult to control. Such oozes often demand small offerings, sacrifices of lesser creatures, or the powering down of ship's systems they deem superfluous or "unpure." At a certain point, the shipmind is recycled, poured from its container into vats to serve as nutrients for the cultivation of a replacement. Fragments of the previous shipmind's intellect and skills carry over into the newly created ooze, ensuring that a sort of entrenched memory and institutional knowledge persist through the generations.

### DETERIORATING SHIPMIND (CR –1)

In cases where a shipmind isn't recycled in time, as often happens in abandoned ships or in cases where a Dominion crew neglects the shipmind for too long,

a shipmind can begin to deteriorate while still within its container. Deteriorated shipminds are sometimes encountered on Dominion drop ships after the vessel has landed on a planet and been left to rot. In such cases, the shipmind slowly goes insane, serving almost as a sort of living haunt within the decaying ship and bringing madness and pain to any creatures exploring its decks. Most deteriorating shipminds survive for only a few years, or a decade at most—in the majority of cases, the Dominion drop ship decays into filth and sludge long before then.

A shipmind that is deteriorating has slightly different statistics than the typical shipmind. You can create stats for one of these shipminds by applying the deteriorating shipmind simple template to the statistics above. The quick rules and rebuild rules for a deteriorating shipmind are the same.

**Quick/Rebuild Rules:** –2 on all rolls (including damage rolls) and to special ability DCs. The shipmind's container is broken and has only 120 hit points. A deteriorating shipmind can only use its plasma bolt once every other round, and gains negative levels at a rate of 1 per round immediately after it leaves its container.





# IRON GODS

## UGOTHOKRA

This partially mechanical, partially organic spider moves with a skittering lurch. A single crystalline eye glares from its hideous face.

### UGOTHOKRA

**CR 7**

**XP 3,200**

CE Small aberration

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

**DEFENSE**
**AC** 20, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 85 (10d8+40)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

**Defensive Abilities** infected blood; **Immune** cold, disease, poison; **Resist** acid 5, electricity 5

**OFFENSE**
**Speed** 50 ft., climb 50 ft.

**Melee** bite +9 (1d4+1 plus poison)

**Ranged** 6 flechette spray +13 (1d4+1 plus viral infection)

**Special Attacks** combined arms

**STATISTICS**
**Str** 13, **Dex** 20, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 23 (35 vs. trip)

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Shot on the Run

**Skills** Acrobatics +18 (+26 when jumping), Climb +30, Perception +16, Stealth +22; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb

**Languages** Aklo (can't speak)

**SQ** expert climber, no breath

**ECOLOGY**
**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary, pair, or pack (3-12)

**Treasure** incidental

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Combined Arms (Ex)** When taking a full-attack action, an ugothokra can attack with its bite and its flechette spray attacks simultaneously. It does not provoke attacks of opportunity with its flechette spray attacks when using combined arms.

**Expert Climber (Ex)** An ugothokra's feet allow it to climb any surface, no matter how slick or sheer. In effect, an ugothokra is treated as constantly being under the effects of *spider climb*, though this is effect is natural rather than magical.

**Flechette Spray (Ex)** An ugothokra can fire bursts of calcified bone and horn from the vents along its abdomen. All six vents can fire as part of a full-attack action, or it can fire one vent as a standard action. This attack has a range increment of 50 feet. An ugothokra generates the "ammunition" it uses for this attack internally by feeding on organic material, and effectively has an unlimited supply of flechette material at any one time, but an ugothokra that is currently starving can't use this attack until at least 1 hour after feeding.

**Infected Blood (Ex)** A creature that damages an ugothokra with a slashing or piercing melee weapon (regardless of how often the ugothokra is damaged) must succeed at a DC 20 Reflex saving throw at the end of its turn or be sprayed by the ugothokra's infected blood. A creature that damages an ugothokra with a slashing or piercing natural weapon automatically fails this saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is exposed to a random viral infection (see below), but gains a +4 bonus on the Fortitude save to resist contracting whatever disease it is exposed to. Unlike when a victim contracts an infection from an ugothokra's flechette spray, diseases caught via contact with the monster's blood have normal onset times as determined by the disease in question. The Reflex save is Dexterity-based.





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**Poison (Ex)** Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 19; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Con plus sickened for 1 round; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

**Viral Infection (Su)** An ugothokra's body is infested with numerous potent and highly infectious diseases engineered by their Dominion creators to cause highly specific conditions in those they infect. An ugothokra's blood carries these diseases, and while the creature can transmit random infections by means of contact with its blood, the most efficient method of transmission is via its flechette spray. Most ugothokras carry the following three contagions in their systems, and they can decide which one to inflict on a target as part of the act of firing a flechette spray—it can even inflict different diseases with different sprays in the same round if it so chooses. Some ugothokras carry additional viral infections that are tailored by their Dominion creators for incredibly specialized tasks. A creature exposed to any of these viral infections can resist the infection with a successful DC 19 Fortitude save, but on a failed save, the effect occurs immediately and the onset time is ignored. Contracting an infection via the ugothokra's blood is not as efficient and uses the listed onset time. The most common viral infections available to an ugothokra are listed below.

**Aklo Submission:** Disease—injury or contact; *save* Fort DC 19; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d2 Wisdom drain (can't drain Wisdom below 0) plus susceptibility to Aklo; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. As long as a creature is infected with this disease (even if the creature isn't currently suffering any Wisdom drain from the disease), it becomes unusually compliant and responsive to commands issued to it in Aklo. Any Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check attempted against the character while speaking in Aklo gains a +4 bonus. Furthermore, as a full-round action, any creature can issue a command to the victim in Aklo to attempt to affect the victim with a *suggestion* effect (effective CL 5th, regardless of the commander's level)—the victim can resist this *suggestion* with a successful DC 14 Will save. Once a victim of Aklo submission succeeds at a Will save to resist such a *suggestion*, it can't be further affected in this way by any Aklo-speaking creature for 24 hours.

**Flesh Ripen Fever:** Disease—injury or contact; *save* Fort DC 19; *onset* 1d4 days; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Con damage plus stench; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. A character suffering from flesh ripen fever exudes a nauseating stench as his skin decays and sloughs off, leaving behind reeking pits of stinking flesh. The victim is automatically sickened by its own smell, as are all creatures within a 10-foot radius. A successful DC 14 Fortitude save allows a creature to ignore the sickening effect for 24 hours—the victim of flesh ripen fever doesn't get such a saving throw to avoid being sickened. This stench is a poison effect that doesn't affect creatures associated with the Dominion of the Black.

**Implant Rejection Syndrome:** Disease—injury or contact;

*save* Fort DC 19; *onset* 1d4 days; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d2 Con drain plus 1d2 Int drain plus implant rejection; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. This insidious sickness is particularly devastating to creatures with cybernetic implants. Such creatures take a –2 penalty on all saving throws attempted to resist this disease. Further, each time a saving throw to resist its effect is attempted and failed, the creature takes 2d6 points of damage and loses the use of one randomly selected cybernetic implant for 24 hours.

One of many artificially engineered species grown and molded in Dominion of the Black labs, ugothokras were designed specifically to spread contagions through organic enemy ranks. Immune to disease, ugothokras have small bodies that are capable of hosting a limitless number of contagions within their blood.

Ugothokras are incapable of reproduction, and when additional ones are required by the Dominion of the Black, replacements are constructed from organic and cybernetic components. The construction facilities typically operate within the organic walls of Dominion installations, the little beasts crawling out from birthing tubes protruding from their semi-organic incubators. These incubators are of widely varying size and capacity. Smaller versions, possessing no more than two birthing tubes, can produce an ugothokra every hour if provided the proper nutrients (typically curdled flesh harvested from victims of flesh ripen fever), fed to it through the living walls in which the incubator is nestled. Significantly larger incubators with dozens of birthing tubes have been reported, their size limited only by the resources needed to create more offspring.

A newborn ugothokra is completely autonomous and fully functional. While ugothokras can't fly, their immunity to cold and the fact that they don't breathe make them ideal bioweapons for use against enemy vessels in space—often, a Dominion ship's exterior swarms with ugothokras, and as they near an enemy ship, dozens of the tenacious aberrations drop off to cling to the enemy's hull. The creatures skitter along surfaces, searching for points of entry so they can infect the vessel's crew and spread their sickness. Often, these entry points are created for them via battle damage from other Dominion weaponry. Many Dominion ships have had great success at using ugothokras to spread Aklo submission among enemy crews, allowing the Dominion to order their victims to power down and submit. Those that manage to resist still typically fall under the grinding legs and mouth parts of swarms of ugothokras.

Rumors of variant ugothokras abound, including swarms or larger varieties, and those possessing even more potent and deadly diseases. Given the prodigious industry of the Dominion of the Black, such rumors hardly seem far fetched.

An ugothokra stands only about 2 1/2 feet tall, with a leg span approaching 6 feet. Most weigh around 150 pounds.



# IRON GODS

## YAH-THELGAAD

A writhing forest of tendrils extends from one end of this chitin-covered creature's body, while from the other lashes a pincer-tipped tail. Six transparent blisters adorn its back, each containing a brain floating in thick green fluid.

### YAH-THELGAAD

**CR 14**

**XP 38,400**

CE Large aberration

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *diagnose disease*<sup>UM</sup>, *true seeing*; Perception +26

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 30, touch 25, flat-footed 26 (+4 Dex, +12 insight, +5 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 200 (16d8+128)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +11, **Will** +17

**Defensive Abilities** carapace; **DR** 10/magic and adamantine;

**Immune** disease, mind-affecting effects; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 25

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** claw +22 (3d6+11 plus poison), 2 tentacles +22 (1d8+11 plus grab)

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

**Special Attacks** command disease, mind storm, powerful tentacles, spellstrike

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +20)

 Constant—*diagnose disease*<sup>UM</sup>, *true seeing*
**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 12th; concentration +32)

 6th (4/day)—*disintegrate* (DC 21)

 5th (6/day)—*sending*, *suffocation*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 22)

 4th (8/day)—*confusion* (DC 19), *contagion* (DC 21), *dimension door*

 3rd (8/day)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *slow* (DC 18), *vampiric touch*

 2nd (8/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *ghoul touch* (DC 19), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *spectral hand*

 1st (8/day)—*chill touch* (DC 18), *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 18), *shocking grasp*, *unseen servant*

 0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 15), *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 17)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 32, **Dex** 18, **Con** 26, **Int** 23, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 50 (62 vs. trip)

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Eschew Materials<sup>B</sup>, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (necromancy), Vital Strike

**Skills** Bluff +21, Diplomacy +13, Fly +21, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +37, Knowledge (engineering) +37, Knowledge (geography) +37, Knowledge (planes) +37, Perception +26, Spellcraft +25, Use Magic Device +21

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Protean, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** brain collection, strange knowledge

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** double

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Brain Collection (Ex)** A yah-thelgaad can store up to six brains of Small or Medium creatures and use them to enhance its knowledge and power. Each stored brain grants a yah-thelgaad a cumulative +2 insight bonus to AC, concentration checks, and Knowledge checks. A yah-thelgaad can extract a brain from a helpless opponent with a coup de grace attack, or as a standard action from a body that has been dead for no more than 1 minute. A yah-thelgaad that has fewer than six collected brains gains two negative levels for each missing brain. These negative levels never become permanent, and can only be removed by replacing one of the yah-thelgaad's collected brains. The statistics presented here assume a yah-thelgaad with a full collection.

**Carapace (Ex)** The spikes on a yah-thelgaad's carapace make melee attacks against it hazardous. Any opponent attempting to attack a yah-thelgaad with a light weapon, unarmed strike, touch attack, or natural attack must succeed at a DC 22 Reflex save or take 1d6 points of bleed damage from these bristling barbs. Bleed damage from multiple failed Reflex saves does not stack. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

**Command Disease (Su)** As a swift action, a yah-thelgaad can cause a disease or infection currently afflicting a creature within 30 feet to quicken and activate, forcing the afflicted creature to immediately attempt a saving throw against the disease's effects. Those who fail immediately suffer the disease's effects. These additional saving throws count against those one must succeed at to recover from a disease, so it's possible for a victim to be cured by succeeding at enough saving throws. Any creature that has been affected by a yah-thelgaad's command disease ability (whether or not the creature succeeded at the saving throw this ability triggered) takes a -2 penalty against any mind-affecting spell or effect generated by the yah-thelgaad in the next minute.

**Mind Storm (Su)** As a standard action once every 1d4 rounds, a yah-thelgaad can employ its own brain as well as any brains kept in its blisters to create a powerful psychic vortex. When the creature activates this ability, all creatures within a 40-foot radius must succeed at DC 23 Will save or become confused for 1d4 rounds. When a yah-thelgaad activates this ability, it can choose to absorb one of its brains as a swift action to cause one creature within the area of effect that has succumbed to the confusion



## BESTIARY

effect to instead become stunned for 1d4 rounds. A creature stunned in this manner is confused for 1d4 rounds after the stun effect ends. A yah-thelgaad generally saves this tactic for when it's faced with a particularly dangerous foe, since the stun effect forces the yah-thelgaad to lose one of its stored brains and gain 2 negative levels. This is a mind-affecting confusion effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Poison (Ex)** Claw—injury; save Fort DC 26; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d4 Strength damage and nauseated for 1 round; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Powerful Tentacles (Ex)** A yah-thelgaad's tentacles are primary attacks.

**Spells (Su)** A yah-thelgaad casts spells as a 12th-level sorcerer. Its caster level is reduced by 2 for each negative level it gains from missing brains. A yah-thelgaad with no collected brains can't cast any of its spells.

**Spellstrike (Su)** Whenever a yah-thelgaad casts a spell with a range of "touch," it can deliver the spell through its claw attack as part of a melee attack. Instead of the free melee touch attack normally allowed to deliver the spell, the yah-thelgaad can make one free melee attack with its claw as part of casting the spell. If successful, this claw attack deals its normal damage (including poison) as well as the effects of the spell.

**Strange Knowledge (Ex)** All knowledge skills are class skills for yah-thelgaads.

When a neh-thalggu has absorbed a critical mass of thoughts and memories from an unknown number of humanoid brains, its body undergoes a horrific transformation. The creature enters a state of torpor, its body curling into a tight ball as it consumes the oldest of its seven stored brains to trigger the metamorphosis. Over the course of several days of self-consumption, the neh-thalggu bursts from the shell of its old body into its new incarnation as a yah-thelgaad.

While the yah-thelgaad shares many of the features of its less powerful progenitor, it is in every way a more powerful creature than it was before. While the capacity to store one fewer brain than a neh-thalggu presents some disadvantage, the yah-thelgaad gains twice as much power from a collected brain as its lesser kin does. In addition, these creatures need not limit their harvest to the brains of humanoids—any Small or Medium creature's brain will do.

Yah-thelgaads are zealously devoted to the inscrutable causes of the Dominion of the Black, but they are also notoriously devout believers in that alliance's weird theology, worshiping a concept they refer to as the "Ineffable Void," among other cryptic mysteries. It is not uncommon for yah-thelgaads of high rank to also possess inquisitor or oracle levels, lording their authority and fanatical faith over those in their charge—the most powerful yah-thelgaads often take levels in mystic theurge to combine their class-based mastery of the divine with their stolen brains' arcane lore.

Yah-thelgaads often supervise the Dominion of the Black's surgical and genetic engineers on major projects, pushing those agents to attempt greater and more horrific procedures. For all their legendary cruelty, however, yah-thelgaads don't appear to gain pleasure from such experiments. Indeed, they don't seem to feel any emotions at all on their own, but rather experience such sensations vicariously through the memories of the brains they've collected. In this way, the creatures know lust, fear, hatred, and pride without exposing their own minds to the disadvantages of being susceptible to mind-affecting effects.





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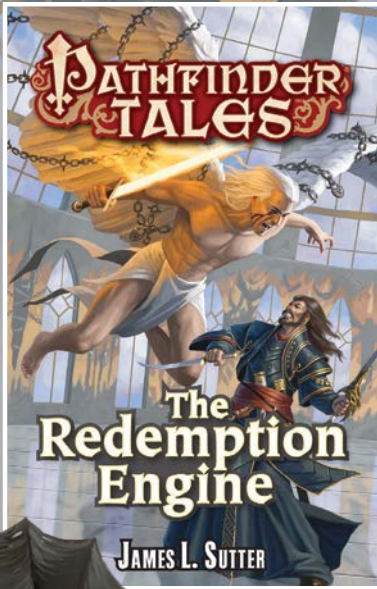


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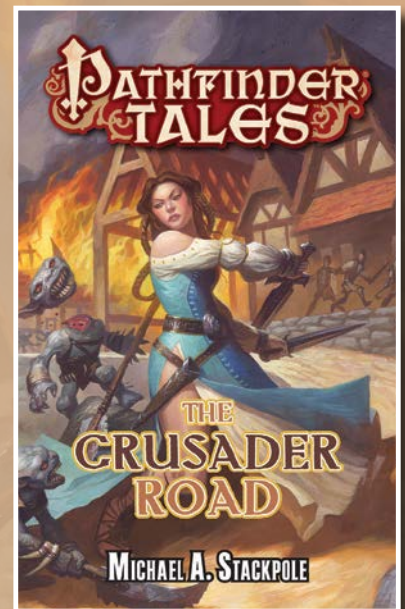
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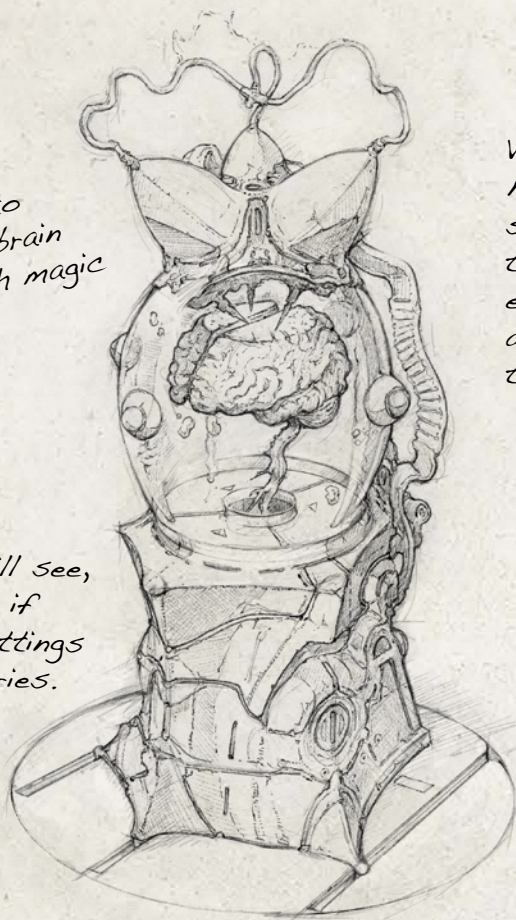


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The technology to preserve a living brain utilizes as much magic as science.

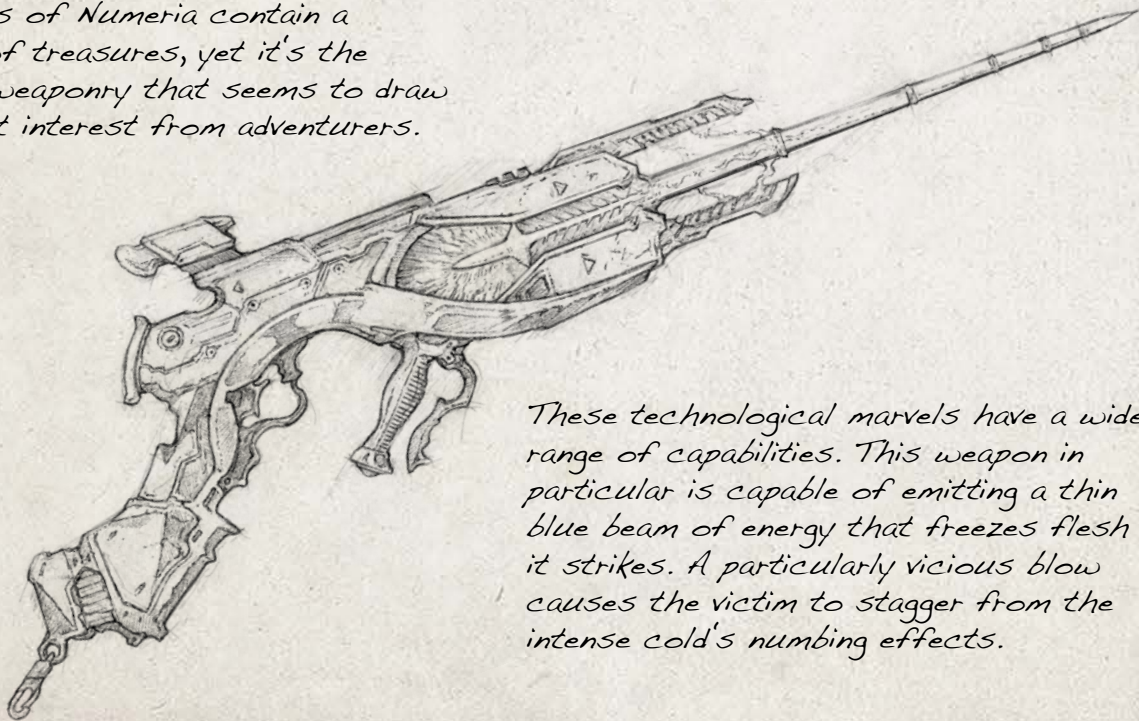
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