ECLIPSE PHASE
SECOND EDITION

XENOVORE
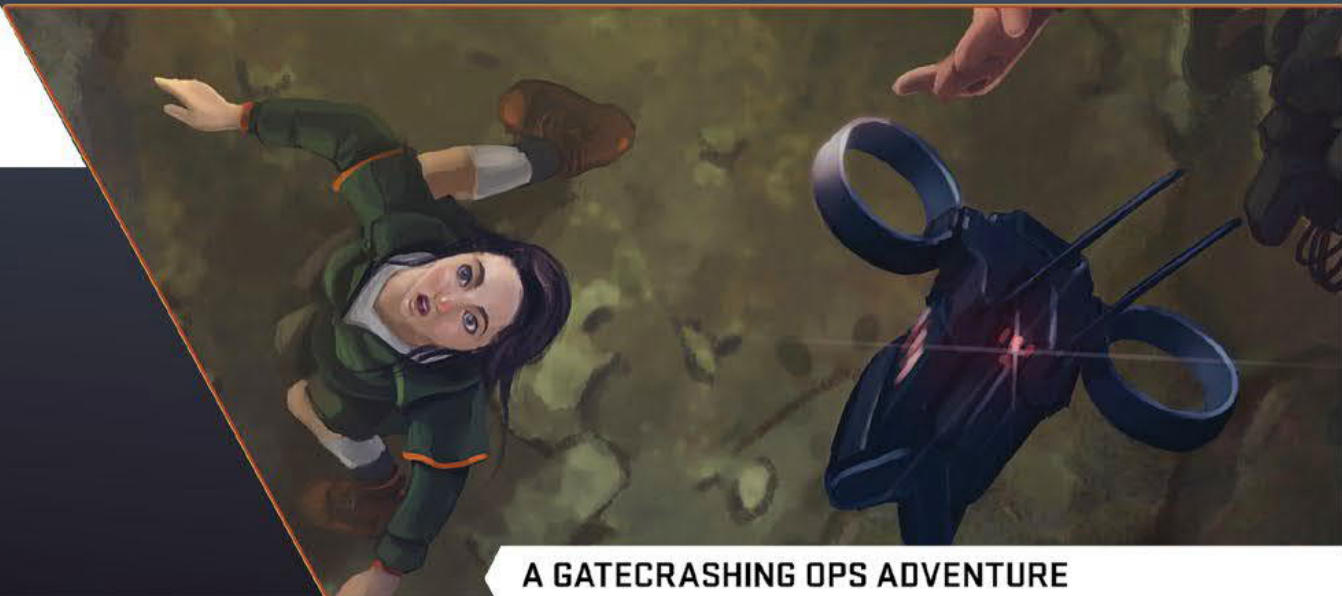
POSTHUMAN STUDIOS

A GATECRASHING OPS ADVENTURE

Xenovore
is a gatecrashing op for Eclipse Phase

A team of xenoarcheologists on exoplanet Vishnu unearths a spectacular find. But the expedition's backer and lead archeologist is more interested in making reality XP recordings than good science. Incautious inquiries lead to an infection risk. If they don't react quickly, the team will need all of their wits to make it back to the Pandora gate amidst a major infection event.

► **Xenovore** is a stand-alone scenario designed for Gatecrashing Ops teams
► PCs accompany a troubled xeno-archeological expedition that uncovers a terrible secret
► Details the cloud forests of the exoplanet Vishnu and it's slug-like fauna

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

We've highlighted key information so you can easily find it. We've also marked each of these highlights with an icon, signifying what kind of information it contains. The icons we use are:

Observations ➜ These call out specific Perceive, Research, Know, and Rep Tests that the player characters (PCs) can make to acquire information, as well as other clues and search functions.

Actions ➜ These are skill tests and other actions the PCs can perform to make progress within the adventure.

Stress ➜ These icons denotes any situations that may call for *Stress Tests* ▶229 *EP2*.

GM Notes ➜ These notate surprises, secrets, and other key information for the GM.

XENOVORE
A GATECRASHING ADVENTURE

THE THINGS YOU DIG UP

The player characters (PCs) join a xeno-archeology dig on the exoplanet Vishnu and make a major discovery, but the expedition leaders are more interested in making a reality show than good science, putting the entire mission at risk.

Xenovore is a medium-length scenario good as a one-shot or integrated into an ongoing campaign.

SITREP

Jic-al Hayude's career in xeno-archeology teeters on the edge of obscurity. Despite achieving minor celebrity scientist status before the Fall, he's now past his prime, hasn't produced anything interesting in years, and his academic grant money has run dry. He's watched with dismay as a host of younger xeno-archeologists have score major discoveries on various exoplanets, while his own expeditions have been dull if not disastrous. To score new backers, he's resorted to pandering to fickle reality-XP networks more interested in sensationalism than science. Sacrificing his integrity seems to have worked—he's been granted approval for an expedition to excavate ruins on the newly contacted exoplanet Vishnu that belong to a previous gate-using alien species known as the Iktomi.

CHARACTERS

The PCs are hired to to help Hayude explore likely dig sites, recover whatever can be unearthed, and document it all for a reality XP show.

Xenovore is designed for 4–6 players and can be played as a stand-alone adventure or integrated into an ongoing campaign.

If you are using sample characters from *Eclipse Phase Second Edition,* we recommend the Gatecrashing Ops team of Astika, Jinx, Shrike, and Whisper (▶90–93 *EP2*). If you have more than 4 players, pick extras from the other teams. Biomorphs are encouraged over synthmorphs. You could also use some of the major NPCs (▶26, but not Linder) as PCs.

If you are using your own PCs, you'll want some skilled in Know: Xeno-archeology, a combat monkey or two, and an async.

BACKGROUND

The first-in team that walked through the gate on Pandora to the exoplanet Vishnu emerged in a ruined, underwater Iktomi gate installation. The long-extinct arachnidian species had been here—marking it as a site of high interest. Though Vishnu boasts a diverse biosphere, the initial excitement faded after a few surveys revealed a mineral poor world and few other traces of an Iktomi presence here. Why the Iktomi were present at all remains an enigma—Vishnu's heat, humidity, thick atmosphere, and relatively high gravity would make it a harsh climate for the spidery aliens.

The Vishnan Fall

Two hundred thousand years ago, Vishnu boasted a thriving civilization. The native molluscoids developed AGI and space travel and had begun to expand out into their star system. Then they discovered one of the ETI's bracewell probes (▶370 and 378 *EP2*).

The probe deployed several strains of the exsurgent virus (▶382 *EP2*) tailored to suppress Vishnan civilization, infecting the ship's AGI and some of the crew. The remaining crew succeeded in taking the AGI offline, subduing their shipmates, putting the infected in stasis, and returning home. They even destroyed the bracewell probe.

Unfortunately, when they returned home, the faction that had discovered the probe tried to use the exsurgent virus as a weapon against their rivals. Because their physiology was more vulnerable to toxins and mutagens than kinetic damage, the Vishnans' preferred method of waging war had always been with poisons and bioweapons. To them, the exsurgent virus looked like nothing more than a big, alien gun.

The Vishnan Fall, then, was self-inflicted. Although AGI-killing strains were important early in the Vishnan Fall, the *xenovore* ("alien eater") strain became dominant once all Vishnan machine life had been extinguished. Finding itself on a mineral-poor planet, xenovore employed a zombie-apocalypse strategy to wipe out the Vishnans. It mutated affected hosts into venomous killing machines and set them loose on the planetary population.

The Vishnans were overcome quickly; the balance between the subtle motives of the TITANs on Earth and the destructive imperatives of the exsurgent virus had no counterpart here. Once sapient life on the planet ceased to exist, the xenovore strain seeded the planet with ochre-colored "eggs" of itself in case another of the planet's species should become competition to the ETI in epochs to come.

The Iktomi Arrive

Ten thousand years ago, the Iktomi opened the gate to Vishnu. They surveyed the planet and nearby space. They found no evidence of the long-lost Vishnan civilization on the ground at first, but once they launched a drone to survey the rest of the system, they started finding Vishnan space debris.

Iktomi xeno-archeologists found a Vishnan missile silo on the slopes of a dormant shield volcano that contained one of the xenovore strain's dormant ochre eggs. Excited at the find (for they'd discovered virtually no Vishnan artifacts other than ruined structures), they began examining it – and became infected themselves. The virus overran the Iktomi as it had the Vishnans. The surviving Iktomi retreated and sealed the gate, never returning to Vishnu.

Other than a moderate installation around the gate, Iktomi ruins on Vishnu are mostly little more than outposts. Surveyors and xeno-archeologists explored the planet by rotorcraft, clearing small outposts on the cloud forest ridges to camp safe from aggressive lowland xenofauna. Iktomi would have needed cumbersome thoracic breathers on the muggiest days here. Vishnu wouldn't have been an exciting world for the Iktomi, requiring at least a century of terraforming to be comfortable, though the native xenofauna was of some interest. It does beg the question, though: could Iktomi contact with the exsurgent virus on Vishnu, rather than contact with a bracewell probe in their own or another system, have been the start of the Iktomi Fall?

The Alien-Eater Virus

The primary threat in this scenario is the xenovore strain of the exsurgent virus, which was one of several exsurgent virus strains deployed against the ancient Vishnans by the ETI's bracewell probe. Over time, xenovore has adapted itself to a role of early suppression of biological sapience. Infected creatures can discern and will destroy machine life if they encounter it, but the virus itself is biological in nature. However, other exsurgent strains may linger in the remains of Vishnan technology.

The planet's soil and ruins are seeded with millions of ochre xenovore eggs. Each employs an array of biological and chemical senses as well as a version of the ego sense psi sleight (▶284 *EP2*). They don't react to known Vishnan life, but they burst violently if they detect an alien life form or a Vishnan species that has evolved significantly since the last time its evolutionary ancestors were "sampled." The eggs also tend to burst if they are handled or jostled roughly.

Anyone within several meters of a bursting xenovore pod risks getting splattered, at which point the virus has a chance to infect the character. Exsurgents can also transmit the infection by bite or spit attacks. Rules for infection are detailed under *The Xenovore Strain* ▶32.

Successful infection by the virus leads to rapid transformation into an exsurgent. When first infected, victims are compelled to isolate themselves, giving the virus time to evaluate the new life form and express mutations best fit to suppress others of its kind. The virus then mutates the infected into exsurgents and releases aerosolized chemical signatures that activate other eggs within a radius of several kilometers. Activated eggs strategically burst, infecting nearby animals and mutating them into sapience outbreak suppressors. Of these, the most dangerous to a mobile and armed transhuman gatecrashing team are arboreal chowkeys and apex predator goopers (*Critters* ▶30). Mobs of these mutated animals will attack any sapient life the virus has identified.

As the virus and exsurgents spread, more eggs will activate and more exsurgents will be created, putting the entire region on alert against transhuman infestation. Wave upon wave of alien animals will appear at this stage, bent on devouring all sapient life.

Once the virus completes its culling, it goes dormant and allows the native biosphere to go back to normal. Over a period of several months, all exsurgents created by the virus self-cannibalize. The exsurgents' insides convert themselves into new ochre eggs, leaving behind only a weird, polymerized skeleton (exo- or endo-, depending upon the species) and the egg itself.

Thus, the trap is reset.

Hayude and His Backers

Vishnu was first discovered by transhumanity when Gatekeeper established a connection via the Pandora Gate. After the original set of surveys, interest in Vishnu waned, and Gatekeeper licensed archeological excavation and media rights to several interested parties. One of these was Otherworld, an XP-publishing hypercorp.

Otherworld is one of dozens of media outfits that feed off the Pandora Gate and its operations. The corporation itself and its history are bland and unremarkable (though the GM is free to establish any shady links they feel are appropriate for plot hooks or red herrings). Already in negotiations with Jic-al Hayude, who was desperate to save his career, they jumped on the opportunity to sponsor the expedition.

Though Hayude is nominally in charge of the expedition, Otherworld is the funder and has privately made it clear to him they have final say when calling the shots. Hayude's ego is too large to swallow this easily, but so far he has accommodated their "requests." Otherworld's rep on the mission is Iriaka Parata, the director of XP production. Hayude runs the archeological and mission affairs, but everyone is expected to follow Parata's directives when it comes to putting on an exciting show.

Hayude's operation is the first full-fledged xeno-archeological mission to arrive on Vishnu, but it won't be the last. A competing expedition is due to arrive just a few days later. Though it will be excavating a less-promising site at the other end of the continent, Hayude cannot help but fret that it is led by an old rival of his, Kisa Paquet. Though they are not on unfriendly terms, Hayude still holds a grudge towards Paquet for winning the affections of a person he was infatuated with back in college, who later died during the Fall.

Complicating matters further, Hayude has racked up substantial personal debts to maintain his lifestyle. One of his creditors, none other than the Pax Familae cartel (▶171 *EP2*), has made it clear that handing over any discoveries he makes could go a long way towards settling that score.

XENOVORE TIMELINE

Xenovore progresses in a fairly linear manner, though the situation with Linder and ending can play out in a number of ways. The timeline after Day 17 is flexible, as the actions of the PCs may end up affecting the sequence and timeframes.

DAY 1
- The PCs are recruited for the expedition.

DAY 8
- Everyone travels to Saturn's moon Pandora and prepares for the mission.

DAY 10
- The expedition steps through the gate onto Vishnu.
- The party travels to the Iktomi ruins and establishes a base camp.

DAY 12
- Surveys and excavations begins.
- The Paquet expedition arrives on Vishnu.

DAY 13
- The Paquet expedition establishes a base camp at the far end of the continent.

DAY 14
- The "tupperware" is found.

DAY 16
- The Iktomi skeleton is found and excavated.
- The "egg" is found.
- Linder is infected while examining the egg.

DAY 17
- Linder disappears

DAY 18
- The silo is discovered.
- Linder activates other eggs, which in turn burst and infect native wildlife.
- The PCs enter the silo.
- The kumobot reactivates.

DAY 19
- The exsurgents attack.
- The infection spreads across the continent.

DAY 20
- The survivors retreat to the gate and wait for it to open.
- The Paquet camp is attacked by exsurgents.
- The Paquet camp survivors attempt to reach the gate (Optional).
- A last wave of exsurgents attacks the gate
- The gate opens and the survivors (if any) return.

DAY 25
- The next scheduled gate connection from Pandora.

MAJOR NPCs

Stats and roleplaying advice for each NPC are under *Major NPCs* ▶26.

Jic-al Hayude
[Expedition Head/Sylph]

Hayude is obsessed with regaining his former glory as a star xeno-archeologist. As project leader he is demanding, passive-aggressive, and unabashedly focused on making a major discovery. He's brusquely friendly but shallow as hell and unrepentant. Constantly high—or coming down—he alternates between blustering around with his camera drones making sure everyone's busy and disappearing into his tent for hours on end.

Other Hayude
[Expedition Head/Menton]

Hayude has forked himself to help manage the mission. Other Hayude is an alpha fork that has been (somewhat unsuccessfully) psychosurgically modified to repress any rebellious tendencies and to follow the original Hayude's orders. Other Hayude manages most of the details of the expedition: finances, logistics, site planning—anything Hayude Prime (as he refers to him) is too bored or high to trouble himself over.

Iriaka Parata
[XP Director/Olympian]

Though this mission is billed as an archeological dig, it is first and foremost a media opportunity—and Parata is the director. She is honed in on making a reality show moment out of everything that happens. Upbeat and friendly to a point that becomes grating, she is relentless on checking everyone's XP streams, adjusting lighting and angles, calling in camera drones, and urging people to put on an interesting show, even if that runs counter to procedures and training. She will not hesitate to stoke drama and interpersonal conflicts. She serves as Otherworld's eyes and voice, and has the authority to override Hayude if ratings are on the line.

Andrei Linder
[Xeno-Archeologist/Neotenic]

Linder is Hayude's top xenopaleontologist and assistant. He's the only one of Hayude's former posse of student disciples who remains. This loyalty is why Hayude is willing to overlook Linder's slacker work ethic, an unfortunate side effect of his severe VR-game addiction.

Olivine "Liv" Ahmadi
[Xenolinguist/Savant]

Liv is the expedition's xenolinguist. She was recruited via the gate lottery program, but Hayude is pleased with her CV. Secretly, she is an agent for an interested party (which one is up to the GM; several options with their specific agendas are on ▶27). As one of the only synthmorphs, she is immune to xenovore infection.

The Interns
[Splicers]

Hayude has recruited 4 student interns for the mission. Confusingly, their names are Neko, Nikki, Nikita, and Nick. Muses make identification easy, but Hayude just calls them all Nikos, whether referring to them individually or as a group. They are all underpaid, underskilled, and being exploited for their labor, but excited to be working with Hayude on an alien world.

Other Expedition Members

At the GM's discretion, the expedition can include up to a dozen other support personnel: surveyors, geologists, lab workers, techies, specialists, security, and general laborers. These NPCs function primarily as background and do not influence the plot. However, they serve as both red shirts and potential exsurgents when the xenovore plague becomes an active threat.

⬒ VISHNU

Type: Terrestrial (Super-Earth)	**Surface Temperature (Min/Mean/Max):** −92/22/70 C
Primary Star: G1V (Yellow Dwarf)	**Day Length:** 20 hours
Gravity: 1.2 g	**Orbital Period:** 213 days
Diameter: 16,000 km	**Orbital Distance (Perihelion/Aphelion):** 1.4/1.6 AU
Atmospheric Pressure: 1.1 atm	**Satellites:** None
Atmospheric Composition:	**Ocean Coverage:** 50%
76% Nitrogen, 22% Oxygen, 2% Argon	**Gate Access:** Pandora

MISSION THEATER

Vishnu is reached via the gate on Pandora in the Saturn system. No one has (yet) connected to Vishnu through any other gates.

Vishnu System

Vishnu's star is a bright, yellow, main-sequence star. The system features 5 terrestrial planets, a gas giant with trojan asteroids, an ice giant, and the usual collection of asteroids and comets. The Vishnans left ruins on several of those planets and moons, which the Iktomi discovered, but transhumanity has not yet spotted.

Vishnu

Vishnu orbits on the inner fringe of the star's habitable zone. It's a hot, wet planet with 50% ocean cover and a breathable atmosphere. The 1.2 g gravity results from the planet's massive size rather than its density. It's a metal-poor world with only a faint magnetic field, so ground-side navigation relies on the satellite network launched by the third survey team. It has no moons.

Seismic activity is more like a young Mars than Earth, with the primary shaping processes resulting from volcanic hotspots rather than plate tectonics. The four continents emerged by upwellings akin to those which formed the Tharsis plateau. Mountains arose as immense, isolated shield volcanoes rather than continental ridges.

The resulting terrain is a jungle-covered, rolling land that snakes between lakes and oceans, rarely rising far above sea level. The only exceptions are the widely scattered volcanoes. Vishnu's lowlands are prone to flooding, and waterways frequently re-route themselves.

Gatekeeper has sent eight survey teams so far and is reviewing proposals by several Titanian microcorps to build colonies. Although attractive for its breathable atmosphere, Gatekeeper has been slow to encourage colonization. Partly this is because of the lackluster planetary system and partly because Vishnu is mineral poor. Other than an easily treated malaria-like illness carried by biting insectoids and some large predators, the planet poses few hazards to well-equipped colonists. The weather is hot, muggy, and usually overcast, but cleared bottomlands will one day be ideal for agriculture. For now, the only visitors have been surveyors, science teams, and xeno-archeologists.

Native Life

The jungles teem with diverse plant and animal species, many of them analogous to pre-Fall Earth's rain forest flora and fauna. Molluscoid life dominates Vishnu, ranging from huge, grazing land snails to seagoing cephalopod-analogs and tiny creatures closely resembling garden pests from Earth. The big predators tend to be slow-moving but well-camouflaged ambush predators. The lethargic, shelled critters dubbed "goopers" (▶30) by early transhuman explorers are both the most common and the most dangerous, grasping their victims with sticky tongues and swallowing them whole. As many creatures are protected by shells, predators have adopted many tactics for bypassing these protections: hole-boring or powerful cracking beaks, acidic emissions, or simply dropping their prey from great heights, as the flying "slirds" (▶31) do. Other notable creatures include the impressively large "LMTFAs" (for "Leave-Me-The-Fuck-Alone"), with their thick, spikey shells and rhinoceros-like horns, and the insectoid "slugitos" that crawl inside shells and suck blood and liquids, leaving painful welts and sometimes hallucinations.

Not all creatures are mollusc-analogs, of course. Animals like the monkey-ish "chowkeys" (▶30) have adapted to niches not already dominated by Vishnu's slimier denizens.

Remnants and Ruins

After two-hundred thousand years, very few remnants of Vishnan civilization remain visible on the surface. So far, transhumanity has yet to discover any of these signs. Most Vishnan ruins are hidden deep, at least 5–10 meters below ground, if not more. Almost none of their technology has survived. The Iktomi excavated a few sites, but even those have been erased by nature and time.

The Iktomi established most of their outposts on the cloud-forested slopes of Vishnu's shield volcanoes, away from the denser jungles and their teeming wildlife. The ever-creeping forest has swallowed almost all of these ruins as well. After ten-thousand years, little of their presence remains, though determined searchers may uncover dream shells (▶379 *EP2*). and other technological fragments.

MINOR EVENTS

Xenovore begins with the mundane affairs of an archeological dig. Several days will go by with the PCs carrying out their duties and undertaking other daily affairs. The following interactions can be used to give PCs a feel for life in the camp, introduce them to NPCs, or just fill in the time between more major events.

> **These minor events can be rolled randomly using 1d6.**
>
> **1▶ Chowkey Raid:** A gang of chowkeys ▶30 invades the camp, sneaking or rushing past the defense beacons. These mischievous devils pilfer food and anything not nailed down, break things, and in general create a nuisance and disrupt operations. The chowkeys will be curious about the camp, so this may be a regular occurrence.
>
> **2▶ Linder's Invite:** Any PC that makes friends with Linder, seems like a gamer, or is just cool may get invited to check out his *Galaxy Voyage* server ▶25. This will include an exhaustingly long tour of his Alliance ship, endless details about the setting and gameplay, and introduction to the guildie forks in his crew, including Ensign Seiwan ▶28.
>
> **3▶ Hayude Overindulges:** Due to his substance-abuse problem, it is not uncommon to see Hayude glassy-eyed, jittery, hyperfocused, or just generally high as fuck. However, this time Hayude goes a little *extra,* so the PCs encounter him while heavily hallucinating—flipping out, stumbling, incoherent, or otherwise making a scene. He may invite the PCs to indulge with him before Other Hayude escorts him back to his tent.
>
> **4▶ Parata Gets Nosey:** If Parata gets wind of anything shady, off-color, or interesting about a PC, she may go to great lengths to needle them about it on camera, even unprofessionally taking it beyond the point the character is comfortable. This can include questioning other PCs, intruding in private spaces, and just otherwise being a pest in her quest for material.
>
> **5▶ Ahmadi Makes an Ally:** Ahmadi may also seek out a PC for a professional friendship in a bid to potentially use them to accomplish her secret mission down the line. She's not completely ruthless, but she knows her job will be harder is she's all on her own.
>
> **6▶ Interns Mess Up:** The Nikos are eager to prove themselves, but inexperienced. It is likely that at least one of them will screw up something major, perhaps in a way that requires the PCs to rescue them or otherwise bail them out.

SETUP

This scenario assumes the characters are part of a gatecrashing campaign (▶24 *EP2*). Options are provided for Firewall and criminal campaigns as well as one-shot play.

FIRST CONTACT

Jic-al Hayude reaches out to the PCs via shared rep-network contacts (either CivicNet, eXploreNet, Fame, or RNA). He's putting together a gatecrashing team for a xeno-archeology expedition and needs people with the PCs' skills. The expedition is six weeks' length, with an option to extend if the excavations bear fruit. Hayude already has a xeno-archeologist (Linder) signed on, but he's also looking for others as well as engineers, surveyors, and security personnel versed in dealing with hostile xenofauna. He sets up a virtual meeting with Other Hayude to discuss it further (*Mission Briefing*).

One-Shot Games

For one-off games, we suggest gatecrasher PCs. If you are running in a limited time slot (like at a convention), we strongly suggest summarizing all of the background material and starting the game in media res as the first discovery is made (*Discoveries* ▶12).

GETTING IN

If the PCs are not yet an established team, they are all contacted separately but invited to the same simulspace meeting with Other Hayude. They will be introduced to each other there.

If any PCs are reluctant to take the job, they can be incentivized with potential rep rewards and a small cut of any profits. Fueled by his own desparation, Other Hayude will do his best to sell the mission's potential and the likelihood of scoring it big and making a name for themselves.

Some PCs may balk at the mission being recorded for reality XP. This is not an uncommon method of funding operations these days, though it can be a nuisance. Firewall agents especially may be wary about exposing their identities. Hayude, however, is quite willing to allow the PCs to operate under pseudonyms and alternate identities if it becomes a major issue. To him, the XP is merely means to an end.

Firewall PCs

If the PCs are Firewall, they will first be contacted by their router. Firewall is interested in finding out more about the Iktomi presence on Vishnu, and so will insert the sentinels' names into Hayude's list of potential recruits. They are instructed to accept the job when Hayude contacts them as outlined above.

> **Not Yet Firewall?** → GMs can use this scenario to introduce the PCs to Firewall later (*Resolution* ▶22).

Criminal PCs

If the PCs are part of a criminal campaign (▶25 *EP2*), they are first hired by Pax Familae to pose as interested gatecrashers and keep an eye on Hayude's operations. They are informed that Hayude owes a substantial debt and is expected to use the expedition's findings to pay it off. They are being sent to make sure that happens — by any means necessary.

MISSION BRIEFING

Hayude's fork, Other Hayude, meets with the PCs (or their forks) in a custom VR simulspace environment crafted to look like the Iktomi ruins on Echo Alpha (▶200 *EP2*). As they talk, he'll wander through the area and point out interesting aspects like the artwork designed for compound eyes, the architecture that produces music when wind passes through, and how the doorways indicate standard Iktomi height and width. His demeanor, however, is surprisingly jaded, dry, and laconic, often just short of sarcastic. While he will attempt to sell the PCs on the mission, and it is clearly important to him, he should also come across as world-weary and resigned.

Read the following aloud:

All these ruins around us, they are exciting, interesting, yeah? Or they were for a time. Now they are old news, boring, something you find as a free skin for your VR meeting space. But the ruins on this world Vishnu are fresh to us, so maybe we find something intriguing, yeah? Maybe we dig up some secrets these spider-folk have kept from us so far. Something new, that shakes things up, brings new life to old things. Could be fun, eh? Better than another day breathing dust on Mars or replacing the valves in your hab's hydroponics units again, yeah? But others will be trying to do this too, so we'll need to be quick, fast, beat them to it. We'll be recording everything we say and do, of course — that's just how it's done these days. We'll make it a show and broadcast it far and wide. Sharing it all with transhumanity. Advancing science. Inspiring a fresh new generation of scientists to race through the gates and make a name for themselves. It'll be a thing … a real … thing. You'll love it. trust me.

Other Hayude will provide all of the basic information about the expedition and its other members. The challenge for the GM here will be to play up Hayude's quirks and eccentricity without turning them off of the mission.

If asked about the small Iktomi presence on Vishnu and thus the diminished chance of finding anything, Hayude will reply:

Well, you're absolutely right, this entire endeavor could be a massive waste of time. Maybe we find nothing and come home empty-handed. But, you have to wonder: why? Why does their presence here seem so contained? Surely this world, with its biodiversity, must have been of more interest to them. So perhaps we will find out why they did not pursue it further. Maybe they just didn't like the weather. Maybe they just exiled that one spider-guy no one liked here. Maybe their civilization ended right after they found this place. Maybe Queen Iktomi designated this place as her private petting zoo. Who knows? Science is about answering questions. The answers are not always pretty. But what I do know is: this is an opportunity for us. A chance to find those answers and maybe find some reason to keep going. A chance to shove those answers in the face of people who thought we'd never find them. So, are you in?

Questions & Answers

Hayude will answer any questions as best he can, but he will refrain from discussing his own personal history or hardship and will steer any conversation away from the topic of Otherworld. If any PCs are notably wealthy (Resources 4), he will give them extra attention as a potential future backer.

PCs can also consult their rep networks or their own education about Hayude, Otherworld, Vishnu, and the Iktomi, either during or after the meet.

GEARING UP

For this mission, the PCs get the standard allotment of 6 Morph Points and 20 Gear Points. These can be augmented with the Resources trait or rep expenditures per normal rules (▶290 AND 312 *EP2*). If using the sample characters from *EP2,* simply use the characters as is, though players can switch out any gear for items of an equivalent Complexity if they choose.

Due to the nature of the mission, PCs do not need to worry about legal restrictions on weapons or other gear, assuming they can make an argument for why the mission needs it. However, they will not be permitted access to any heavy weapons or explosives until they are in final preparations to pass through the gate; these are forbidden within the Gateway complex itself (personal and less-lethal weapons are allowed but discouraged in public areas).

TRAVEL

If not already there, the PCs will need to egocast from their current location to Saturn's moon Pandora. Other Hayude (or Firewall) will handle the arrangements and expenses, so GMs can skip the details.

TIME ON PANDORA

Depending on when they arrive, the PCs will have a few days to a full week on Pandora before they are scheduled to step through the gate. They are housed in the Gateway habitat that contains the gate itself, but they can also visit smaller nearby habitats or ships in orbit, including the *Lost In Neverwhere* scum vessel. The PCs are expected to prepare for the mission, but they can also find time for other pursuits.

Mission Prep

Other Hayude will be sure to introduce all of the expedition members to each other in person, gathering them for a group meal. Allow the PCs to mingle with, question, and get to know the others.

Hayude Prime goes on a bit of a bender, disappearing at several points to partake of different drugs, acting noticeably different each time he returns (first focused and serious, then mellow and chill, then aggro), before storming off in a huff near the end of the night after a whispered exchange with Other Hayude and Parata.

The next day, the PCs will be required to attend a meeting where Other Hayude will go over the general plan for the expedition, including the base camp, surveys, and excavations. This is a good point to discuss the various roles each character will be serving in the camp (*Mission Roles* ▶11). Pirata will also use this opportunity to discuss what is expected of the PCs in terms of recording XP, getting good shots, calling in camera drones, and so on (*Putting On a Show* ▶9).

The PCs will then be given a chance to acquaint themselves with any of the equipment the group is bringing (*Camp Equipment* ▶25).

Gate Rumors

PCs who spend time socializing in the many gatecrasher bars in the Crash Course section of the Gateway habitat or lurking in eXploreNet chat groups may pick up on some interesting gossip (not all of which apply to this scenario).

Other Options

In an ongoing campaign, the GM can use the short period the PCs are on Gateway to address any dangling plot threads, backstory issues, or NPC interactions. The PCs will be out of touch with most of transhumanity for up to 6 weeks, maybe more, so they may need to get some affairs in order.

The PCs may also seek out other things to do: nanofab or acquire more gear, comb the habitat's thriving black market, upgrade their morphs, seek out members of the Paquet expedition, or dig into Otherworld, Hayude, or other NPCs. Adjudicate these as needed, but in the interest of expediency don't linger too long before pushing the mission to the gate.

THE HAYUDE EXPEDITION

This section covers some of the big-picture details.

STEPPING THROUGH THE GATE

When the time comes, the members of the expedition will be walked through final medical checks and security screenings, backed up one last time, allowed to gear up, and then escorted to the busy gate complex. Be sure to describe the gate itself (▸404 *EP2*) as they watch several missions before them exit and enter the black sphere on schedule. Finally, their turn will come, and the PCs will step (or drive or fly) into the darkness and emerge on Vishnu. Parata's camera drones capture the experience and everyone's reactions.

> **Gate Visions →**
> **20% chance for each PC, +Infection Rating if async; Stress Test (SV 1d6) →**
> For a small percentage of PCs, stepping through the gate will not be instantaneous, but will last for approximately 30 seconds. During this time, the PC will experience dream-like visions of what seem to be multihued snail-like alien forms with a variety of strange shells or exoskeletons all twitching and flopping and seizing like they have been poisoned. Then the vision ends and they continue through to the other side.

The expedition emerges in a concrete structure that houses the Vishnu Gate. The gate itself was underwater when discovered, but the structure has been built around it, with a ramp and pressurized tunnel leading to the surface. There is little room to congregate, however, so everyone will be herded quickly to the gate compound on the shore above. Once the last person is through, the gate shuts down. Three things are immediately apparent:

1. It is hot and muggy; biomorphs are quickly sweating.
2. Everything feels slightly *heavier* (1.2 g gravity) and moving takes more effort.
3. When the gate closes, the PCs are cut off from the larger mesh (though they are still meshed with the local gate compound and rest of the expedition).

> **Adapting to the Gravity →**
> **SOM Check or −10 to physical and social skills and −20 to combat skills →**
> PCs may make this check once per day; once they succeed, they are acclimated. After 3 days, everyone is acclimated.
>
> **Overwhelming Mugginess →** Apply an impairment −10 condition to anyone with a combined AV total (both energy and kinetic) that exceeds their SOM.
>
> **Strenuous Activity →**
> **SOM Check or stunned (−30 physical actions, −10 mental ▸404 *EP2*) →**
> The combination of heat and gravity is brutal to anyone engaging in heavy physical activity (running, melee, physical labor) for more than a few minutes (GM discretion).

The party will have a short period to get accustomed to the new planet and assess their situation, but Hayude will quickly have them organized and moving out (*Convoy to the Base Camp*).

THE REGION ON VISHNU

The Overland Map covers an area of roughly 500 by 300 kilometers in an equatorial region of Vishnu's main continent.

1. PANDORA GATE The gate stands in a hemispherical reinforced concrete chamber at the bottom of the bay, 10 meters down. This chamber, along with the tunnel ramp and compound, are simple and efficient designs built by engineer nanoswarms. Other than some light fixtures, a water pump, and the gate itself, the chamber is featureless. It's 10 meters in diameter, most of which is taken up by the gate itself. The only exit is an open hatchway leading to the tunnel ramp. In an emergency, a metal hatch can be activated to seal the opening.

2. TUNNEL RAMP A concrete ramp wide enough for a crasher truck ascends from the gate enclosure to the surface. A pressurized plastic tube tunnel encases it, much like the floatways used to link habitats and ships. The tunnel runs ~300 meters along the bottom of the bay, emerging from the water at the shoreline gate compound.

3. GATE COMPOUND The gate compound is a bare-bones infrastructure built to surround and protect the tube tunnel. The outer walls are a circle of rough concrete 30 meters in diameter and 10 meters tall. A huge, reinforced door, big enough to drive a truck through, is the only entry. It leads to a narrow road hacked through the jungle. The team has the door codes. The walls keep out the bigger, more dangerous animals, but they won't stop chowkeys or slirds. An AR sign forbids leaving food remains for this reason.

The walls encircle a parking area, comm tower, and a big, prefab, solar-fabric dome. The tower is just a single triangular truss held aloft by guy wires, but with 30 meters height it has a clear line of sight all the way to the distant mountains. The tower rises from the center of the dome, with the lower part of the truss acting as a support. Inside, the dome is sparsely furnished, with a few tables and camp chairs, a console for the comm tower, and a power hookup from the dome to the comm gear. Dead leaves and mildew prevail.

A few sparse and overgrown Iktomi ruins surround the area. Little remains, having consisted mostly of pre-fab modules that have decayed in the wet climate.

4. LOWLAND SWAMPS An already-overgrown primitive road cuts through about 350 kilometers of swampy jungle before reaching the slopes of Mt. Harshaw. The local vegetation has quickly reasserted itself in the weeks since the road-cutting drones passed through, and blind corners, downed trees, sand traps, and quicksand abound. This is probably the most nightmarish area for the team to face infested xenofauna during a fighting retreat.

A separate road forks off to the north right near the compound; this winds about 600 kilometers north and east, to the Iktomi ruins that will be the site of the Paquet expedition.

5. SLOPES OF MT. HARSHAW Mt. Harshaw is an immense, inactive shield volcano that rises like a kilometers-wide flat, forested dome out of Vishnu's tangled lowland jungles. The mountain is covered in heavy cloud forest. The road ascends about 50 kilometers from the lowland base of the mountain to the Hayude base camp.

6. HAYUDE BASE CAMP This is the location of the expedition's main camp, detailed on ▸10.

7. RIVER The river winds down from the mountain to the coast and is teeming with wildlife. The jungle arches over the river from the shore, and the banks are slippery with mud.

8

One Square = 25 Kilometers

5

4

6

3

2

1

7

1	Pandora Gate	4	Lowland Swamps	7	River
2	Tunnel Ramp	5	Mt. Harshaw	8	Paquet Camp
3	Gate Compound	6	Hayude Base Camp		

CONVOY TO THE BASE CAMP

The expedition takes the rough road toward Mt. Harshaw along the banks of the river, eventually turning north toward the mountain's slopes. The drive from the gate to the Hayude camp takes about 8 hours in good conditions, but will take the expedition about 12 hours given the need to clear some of the road, carefully drive around washed-out areas, and so on. The convoy consists of the expedition's 2 crasher trucks (more if the GM includes extra NPCs), each with a cargo trailer, and a dwarf bot. If the PCs have arranged their own vehicle(s), those can be brought as well.

Heavier Hitting → If the GM wants to expand the scenario, this is a good point to add some challenges. Clearing downed trees, freeing vehicles stuck in sand, or rescuing a hapless intern sinking in quicksand will require some skill tests (see *Running for the Gate* ▶21 for ideas). During one of these stops, a gooper (▶30) may attack, introducing the PCs to Vishnu's friendly locals.

ACTION IN THE WILD

Vishnan cloud forests are very hot and humid but not as brutal as the jungles below. Tree cover is very dense, with hanging moss and riotous undergrowth, making it easier to move unseen. Fog is ever-present, and it rains several times a day. The wetness and mud may hinder some movement and actions. Cover is extremely easy to find; even characters not actively seeking cover may get some incidentally from tree trunks and the like.

Situation Modifiers → Apply the following modifiers to chase, combat, and action scenes within the cloud forest and jungle:

▶ **Density:** +10 on Infiltrate Tests
▶ **Fog:** −10 or −20 to Perceive and ranged attack tests
▶ **Wetness:** −10 to Athletics Test, reduce full move by −5
▶ **Cover:** −10 to −30 on Perceive and ranged attack tests

PUTTING ON A SHOW

Along with the strong likelihood of getting eaten by mutated alien monkeys, there's also the possibility that the team's mission, no matter how farcical it may seem on the ground at the time, can be turned into gripping future-television. If Parata or any other characters get out with XP (▶111 *EP2*) and/or video recordings of the mission, Otherworld will do their best to capitalize on the footage (whereas Firewall may seek to bury or modify it; *Aftermath* ▶24).

Parata (and to a lesser extant, Hayude), will intervene into almost every situation to make sure the PCs are recording, that the shots are good, and the drama is high. Parata may even take this further, encouraging the characters to air grievances and act recklessly, even if it violates scientific principles or risk protocols. Parata will also make it a habit of asking pointed and personal questions to both PCs and NPCs, with the camera drones recording, even at inappropriate times.

To evaluate how well this XP comes out, we note several points during the scenario where the GM can call for tests to see how well the PCs make *Gripping XP*. Each of these notes several potential skill tests the PCs can make to get good camera shots, put on a good performance, or otherwise make the action exciting. Feel free to invent others if the team diverges radically from the as-written scenario.

Earning Stars → If the PCs succeed in at least 3 of these tests during each chance to make *Gripping XP,* they gain a *star*. The number of stars the PCs earn, plus a secret die roll by the GM, determines whether Parata and Hayude's masterpiece is a hit or a bankrupting flop (*Hit XP* ▶24). The effects of being in a good or bad XP show are also reflected in the team's rep pings and dings (*Mission Rewards* table ▶24).

HAYUDE BASE CAMP

The camp is situated on a high, wooded ridge on the shield volcano dubbed Mt. Harshaw by early surveyors. It has a dramatic view of the surrounding cloud forest, which gives way to jungle swamps at the base of the mountain's slope. The volcano is extremely old, worn down, and probably hasn't been active for millions of years, as it's very distant from current zones of active volcanism. A rough road cut through the forest descends south toward the lowlands.

> **Camp Layout** → The map provided assumes that camp setup follows Hayude's original plan and orders. If the PCs wish to lobby Hayude to change the layout (say, for defensive purposes), allow them to do so, perhaps calling for Persuade Tests against Hayude's SAV Check of 60. GMs can also leave the setup entirely in the PCs' hands, but take note that this may necessitate relocating the locations of discoveries such as the tupperware, skeleton, and silo (*Discoveries* ▶12). A player map without these features is provided ▶39.

CAMP MAP KEY

The camp includes the following areas:

1. PARKING There are 2 crasher trucks ▶25 and a dwarf bot (▶349 *EP2*) parked here when not being used. The team might want to use the trucks' nanofabbers to fabricate more gear. See *Camp Equipment* ▶25, for a list of blueprints in the trucks' nanofabbers.

> **Driving Privileges** → Everyone has access to the trucks while parked, but the truck ALIs only accept authorization from the Hayudes and Parata (or anyone they designate) for movement/piloting purposes.

2. STORAGE CONTAINERS These 7-meter-long wheeled cargo pods attach as trailers to the backs of the crasher trucks. Used for storing tools and supplies, they are currently less than half full.

For a list of equipment stored here, see *Camp Equipment* ▶25.

> **Shelter** → As the only hard-walled structures in camp other than the trucks, characters may seek to hide here during attacks. Up to four medium-sized persons can fit inside each.

3. MESS & REC TENT Half of this tent is the expedition kitchen, the other, the living area. The autocook (▶343 *EP2*) here is high-end and can fabricate good food, booze, some drugs, and other organics. See *Camp Equipment* ▶25, for a list of available blueprints for drugs and substances.

4. COMM MAST Encircled by the backs of the work and living tents, this utility area holds the camp's power equipment and communications tower.

The comm mast is a single, triangular truss ending in an antenna array, secured to the ground by guy wires. This functions as a radio booster (▶336 *EP2*). Parata keeps a mission recorder here to log everyone's XP feeds, which is backed up to the recorder at the gate.

The solar charger and battery unit provides power to everything in camp except the trucks and bots via wireless transmitters and power cables. Losing them would be a disaster, but fortunately the native fauna have absolutely no interest in them, even once infected.

5. LAB TENT This tent has work areas for a small team of scientists. Linder has a field biology lab, while Hayude has several tables and equipment for cleaning, documenting, and preserving objects. Ahmadi has no equipment, but lots of documents on Iktomi writing in plastic sleeves neatly arranged on her desk. Any scientist PCs can also claim a corner for their own work space. For a complete list of other scientific equipment found here, see *Camp Equipment* ▶25.

6. MED TENT This tent sees little use early in the mission. It houses a healing vat removed from one of the crasher trucks, medical supplies, and several cots.

7. HAYUDE'S OFFICE Hayude's tent has a divider between the office and sleeping area. Both Hayudes stay here. Hayude keeps the blue box gate control unit here.

> **Drug Stash** → **Perceive Test (timeframe: 10 minutes)** → Hayude Prime keeps an extensive stash of drugs on hand. At any time, there are 1d10 doses each of drive, grin, and orbital hash (▶331 and 331 *EP2*) here, and possibly others.

8. TEAM MEMBER TENTS These are individual sleeping tents, one per team member. Tents are 3-meter diameter, soft-walled domes with room for a cot, gear, and personal belongings.

Linder's tent contains his *Galaxy Voyage* server.

> **Collapsed Tents** → Any of the local xenofauna can reduce a tent to a caved-in pile of cloth and poles in a single action turn. Characters tangled in a collapsed tent are at −30 on all actions other than freeing themselves.

9. PERIMETER DEFENSES An electronic perimeter defense system composed of defense beacons ▶25 is supposed to protect the camp from wildlife, but the local primate analogs, chowkeys ▶30, keep getting past it anyway. There's no physical fence. The fenceposts are telescoping stakes about 3 meters high fully extended, topped with a sensor array, a stunner, and a microwave agonizer.

> **Beacon Defenses** → The posts recognize team members, but they'll sound an AR alarm via mesh if anything gets too close. If anything looks like it's on a path to cross the perimeter, the posts use the agonizer in pain mode or the stunner to deter it. Only the Hayudes have the privileges to put the agonizers into roast mode.

Team members who want a portable perimeter defense for extended forays into the forest can cannibalize the beacons here. There are 35 in total.

10. THE TUPPERWARE This is the location of the "tupperware," an ancient plastic Iktomi storage bin that will be the first discovery made by the mission (*The Tupperware* ▶12).

11. IKTOMI RUINS A few scattered ruins of partly buried pre-fabbed Iktomi structures litter this area, along a clay embankment 3 meters high. Similar to the ruins near the gate, very little remains. This is the primary site for the expedition's planned excavations; Hayude orders the area gridded out for detailed scans and digs. Gear used for that purpose is kept here under a small tent.

12. THE SKELETON The Iktomi skeleton that is the team's second discovery is located here, in grid coordinates 13, 11 of the excavation site (*The Skeleton* ▶12). The "egg," discovery number three, is also here, buried underneath (*The Egg* ▶13).

13. THE SILO A dense carpet of logs, roots, moss, and other organic matter plugs the opening of this 200,000-year-old buried Vishnan missile silo (*The Silo* ▶18). Without digging or scanning with a device like a hyperspectral imager, this area is indistinguishable from the surrounding ground.

One Square = 6 Meters

1 Parking	6 Med Tent	10 The Tupperware
2 Storage	7 Hayude's Office	11 Iktomi Ruins
3 Mess & Rec Tent	8 Team Tents	12 The Skeleton
4 Comm Mast	9 Perimeter	13 The Silo
5 Lab Tent	Defenses	
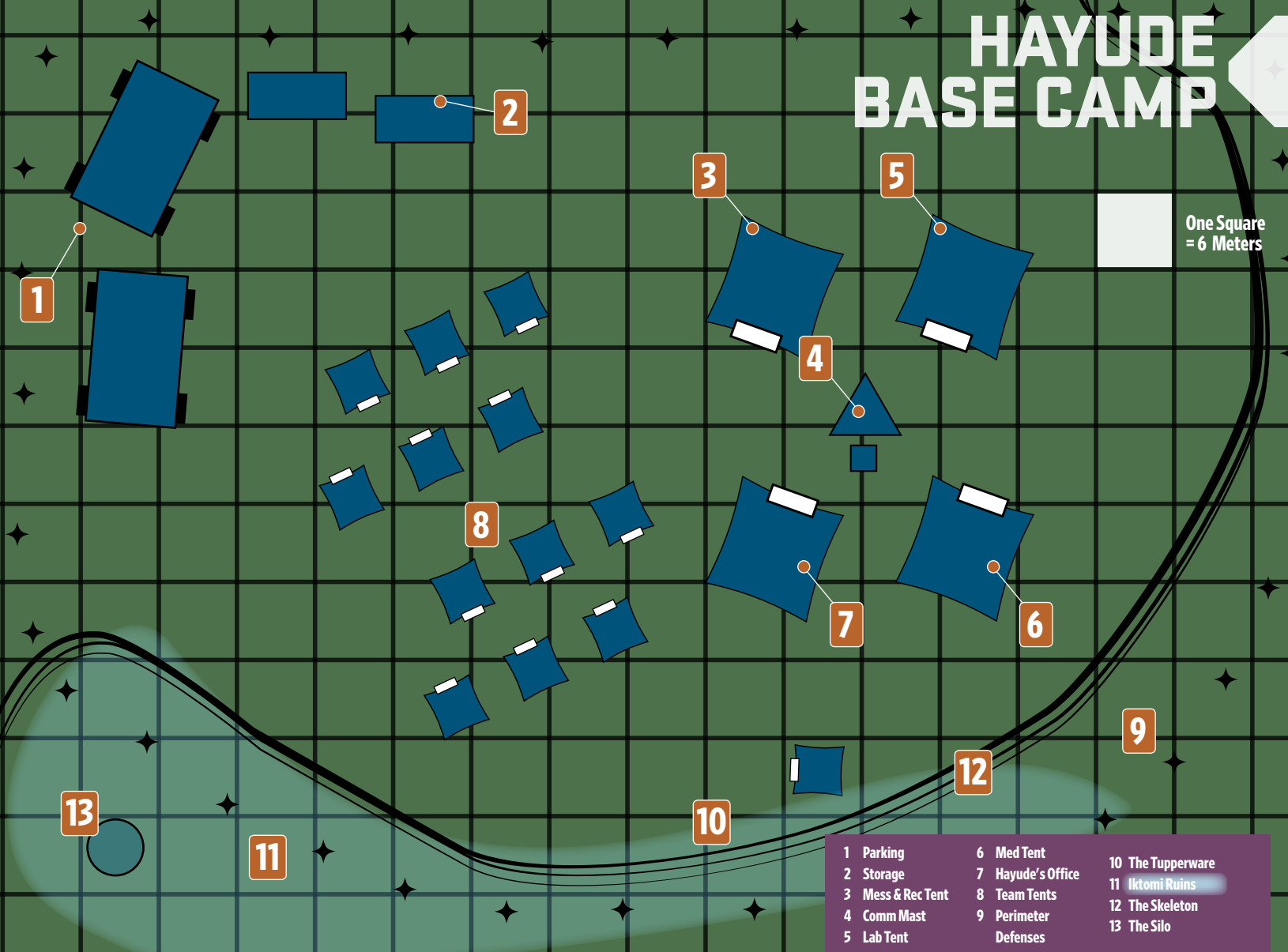
MISSION ROLES

Every PC is expected to play a particular role during the mission, and this is what will occupy the majority of their time each day. Here are some of the options:

- **Survey:** Recon whan traveling, keeping an aerial eye on the camp, mapping, running sensor scans, and tracking the movements of nearby predators.
- **Xeno-Archeology:** Excavations, sensor scans, cataloging and analysis of findings, usually found at the dig site.
- **Field Science:** Collecting samples, age/composition testing and other analysis, usually found in the lab.
- **Security:** Ground patrols, checking on automated defenses, watching for signs of large predators, keeping the peace, and handling any threats. Usually found walking the camp perimeter.

DAILY ROUTINES

Other Hayude gathers the specialists every morning for a meeting over breakfast, going over logistics, recent findings, and daily assignments. After that, everyone heads to their usual work station. At night most folks gather at the camp fire or retire to their tents.

Here's a breakdown of where the NPCs are typically found at *Hayude Base Camp* ▶10:

- **Hayude Prime** is usually either hovering over people's work, giving speeches to the camera drones, or disappearing into his tent to get high. His schedule and moods are erratic and he often misses morning meetings and presses people to work late into the evening.
- **Other Hayude** oversees camp affairs from the lab or his tent.
- **Parata** will be following the action all around the camp, always looking for good footage. She is often with one of the Hayudes.
- **Linder** is usually found in the lab, though he does disappear into his tent for extensive periods to play *Galaxy Voyage*.
- **Ahmadi** mostly sticks to the lab, though she is happy to help out others around the camp.
- **The interns** are wherever they are needed, usually at the dig site.

The team speaks a wide range of languages, but English is the expedition's *lingua franca*. Hayude and Parata often confer in Japanese.

DISCOVERIES

If running this scenario as a one-shot with limited time, begin in media res with *The Skeleton,* summarizing previous details.

The expedition makes several interesting finds, detailed here.

MINOR FINDS

Aside from the discoveries noted here and the silo ▶18, the team's only other finds are a few bits of plastic and metal refuse (food wrappers? broken tools?) left behind by prehistoric litterbugs. GMs can play up the interest with even minor finds, however. Scatter their discovery throughout the scenario. Some possible examples include:

- A u-shaped ceramic component, part of an Iktomi shelter structure.
- The lower half of a keratin-like beak. Though as old as the various Iktomi relics, it actually belongs to a now-extinct Vishnan species.
- A piece of metal from an Iktomi vehicle, partly melted by a powerful laser. Broken off during their fight and retreat.
- A diamondoid tool bit, possibly from something like a drill. Supports the notion the Iktomi also nanofabbed tools.
- An Iktomi dream shell ▶379 *EP2.*

SENSATION

Each of the major finds described below draws the attention of everyone in camp. Other Hayude steps in to oversee and micro-manage the work, sometimes stepping on other's toes. Parata directs the action to get good shots, sometimes contradicting Hayude's instructions. The interns fumble over basic tasks in their excitement.

Hayude Prime pops in and out, sometimes in an altered state, and narrates to the camera drones at length about the finds, the process, and the science behind it. He peppers these monologues with speculations about the Iktomi, historical archeological references, and personal anecdotes from previous projects. When not in front of the cameras, he quickly loses interest while tedious work is underway and wanders off.

> **Gripping XP** → How do you make 12 hours of clearing away dirt with whisk brooms and small hoses interesting to watch? Ask the PCs what they do to make it exciting. Options include Interface, Program, or Pilot: Air to direct/jam the camera drones for good shots; Know: Xeno-Archeology for engaging scientific details and exhibiting the work; or Persuade or Provoke for entertaining commentary and banter.

THE TUPPERWARE

Within the first few days of working the site, a PC involved with surveying will notice something artificial peaking out of the dirt. A bit of digging will uncover an ancient plastic Iktomi storage bin recently exposed by soil erosion.

The "tupperware," as Hayude dubs it, is a little under 1 meter in diameter. It's a dome-shaped bin with a hinged lid made of dirty gray plastic. Inside the team finds a sheaf of aged and damaged documents, along with badly decayed traces of artifacts that might once have been writing utensils. The "paper" and ink are both polymers that have survived the millennia, albeit brittle and faded. The documents are handed over to Ahmadi and/or a PC skilled in xenolinguistics to study.

> **Tech Analysis** → **Hardware: Electronics Test (timeframe: 1 hour)** → The paper once had embedded working electronics, probably for capturing what was written and drawn. No data remains.
>
> **Hyperspectral Analysis** → **Interface Test (timeframe: 24 hours)** → The hyperspectral imager ▶25 reveals Iktomi writing — one of only a few specimens found by transhumanity so far! Success on the test acquires fragments long enough to be analyzed.
>
> **Iktomi Writing** → **Know: Xenolinguistics (timeframe: 36 hours)** → The Iktomi language has not yet been decoded by transhumans, but a successful analysis hints that some fragments may be map markings (a check against enduring landscape features indicates it's possibly local). Others are indicative of measurements, perhaps three-dimensional or depth. Part of a hand-made sketch portrays a shelled molluscoid life form, similar to other Vishnan life, but not yet known to the team.

Further searches and scans of the area uncover no other artifacts, leading Hayude to speculate that the Iktomi may have accidentally left this bin behind when departing.

THE SKELETON

About six days in, either the PCs or other characters running scans of the excavation site find something interesting at grid coordinates 14, 9. The scans only indicate an unusual shape, but buried here is an intact but highly unusual Iktomi exoskeleton.

After about fifteen minutes of careful scraping away, the team exposes the pointed tip of one leg, little more than a pinky's length. The exoskeleton is buried upright in the clay bank, so that as they uncover it, its head emerges at roughly eye level to a human. This find is significant — no one has recovered intact Iktomi remains before.

Excavating the skeleton and clearing the earth from inside it requires ~12 hours of painstaking manual work with whisk brooms, spades, and hoses. The PCs will have to rig supports to keep the exoskeleton upright, as it will sag as earth and clay are cleared.

> **Using a Nanoswarm** → **Program Test** → A disassembler swarm can be used to clear the exoskeleton is 6 hours, but if the Program Test fails, the swarm also eats away parts of the carapace itself, infuriating Hayude.

As more of the exoskeleton is uncovered, it becomes clear that there's something unusual about it. Soil, clay, and moisture have seeped through the chinks in the carapace to fill the inside of it.

> **Exoskeleton Examination** → **Know: Astrobiology** → Success confirms that this is not an anatomically normal Iktomi, at least according to what transhumanity knows of them. Although the Iktomi presumably modified themselves just like trans-humans, this specimen's modifications would be extreme. For example, expectations of Iktomi anatomy don't include toothed mouth appendages, carapace spikes, or some sort of sensory nodule ringing the head and clustered near the eyes. Also, it is known that the Iktomi had opaque, chitinous exoskeletons. But these remains appear to be made of a tough, clear, slightly flexible polymer.
>
> **Exoskeleton Testing** → **Know: Chemistry** → Testing a sample of the carapace reveals that it's plastic, not far off in composition from common polymers used by transhumanity. The polymers are different from those in the tupperware, and do not occur naturally or as a result of fossilization. If not for the location, this might make the find seem like hoax.
>
> **Soil Examination** → **Know: Geology** → The soil layer the team is excavating dates back roughly 10,000 years.

Unknown to the PCs, the polymerization of this Iktomi's exoskeleton was part of the xenovore metamorphosis wrought by the exsurgent virus. When the exovirus determined it was time to go dormant and consumed the rest of the Iktomi's body to make the "egg," this polymerized shell was left behind.

It would be standard practice to excavate the full area around the exoskeleton in the hopes of finding tools or other artifacts, and Hayude will order this. However, this search will turn up nothing — an oddity unto itself.

THE EGG

When the exoskeleton is more than halfway exposed, the PCs or others in the team will discover the "egg" (really a xenovore exovirus pod; *The Xenovore Strain* ▶32.).

> **Egg Placement → Know: Xeno-Archeology →** The placement of this object is curious, as it is found "within" the exoskeleton. The Iktomi may have been carrying it, or died on top of it, with some slight movement of the remains over the centuries leaving them in this configuration.

> **Egg Placement → Know: Astrobiology →** The placement suggests that the egg was carried inside the Iktomi, possibly as an implant or some component of reproduction. It appears biological, but there is no obvious reason for why it remains so intact given the Iktomi's other biological remains seem to have disintegrated.

The egg is not really egg-shaped, it's a 40-centimeter-tall ovoid, about 30 centimeters around at the center. It's ochre in color and has a completely smooth, glossy surface. Although rigid, it's filled with a dense liquid. The liquid is a complex biochemical soup not too different from fabber feedstock, but it's also teeming with nanoviral phages.

Linder declares the egg biological and proposes bringing it to the lab tent for study. Hayude consents, but wants the rest of the crew to keep working on the exoskeleton eye candy.

The egg can be removed safely from the exoskeleton by making an incision and pulling it out. It is sturdy, but it can be pierced by sharp tools or burst by a heavy blow (*Xenovore Eggs* ▶32). Assume the team removes it carefully unless the PCs specifically do something careless or drastic.

> **Breaking the Egg →** If one of the team does manage to break the egg early on, it splashes everywhere, spreading the infection. Linder should be one of those splashed (perhaps taking the brunt of it).

Linder will accept the help of other PCs skilled in Know: Astrobiology in the lab. Not much is learned initially. It gives off no heat, electrical impulses, or radiation. Ultrasound suggests it's filled with a dense liquid, heavier than water.

Contact with even a microscopic amount of the ochre fluid inside risks infection with the xenovore virus (*Xenovore Infection* ▶32). And this is exactly what happens with Linder once he gets some time alone with the egg (*Xenovore Infection* ▶32).

For further details on the egg, see *The First Egg* ▶16.

LINDER IS MISSING!

Left to his own devices, Linder will stay up late into the night running tests on the egg, which will include drilling a tiny hole and attempting to drain off some of the fluid. When Linder does this, whether or not any PCs are present, he'll accidentally come into contact with a small amount of the fluid. Embarrased, he erases this incident from his lifelog.

A few hours after Linder is exposed to the exovirus, he falls victim to its compulsion to flee into the jungle and hide out, giving the virus time to transform him. Linder's gaming addiction drives him first to his tent, where he logs on to *Galaxy Voyage* and leaves instructions with Ensign Seiwan for while he's away. He then attempts to leave the camp unobserved.

LEAVING CAMP

Linder is known to the perimeter beacons, so the system won't raise any alarm when he walks out. PCs who are standing watch (or any drones deployed to do so) have a chance to spot him leaving.

Spotting Linder → **Perceive Test, opposed by Infiltrate 50** → If successful, Linder is spotted leaving.

Once outside the perimeter, Linder goes into mesh privacy mode, deactivates his muse, and takes off into the jungle.

Options → Linder's disappearance can go several ways:
- If spotted, PCs can try to catch him; go to *Chasing Linder* ▶14.
- If his disappearance isn't noted until later, they can investigate and follow his trail; go to *Tracking Linder* ▶15.
- If the team does not pursue him, Linder does not reappear until *Infestation* ▶20. Continue on to *The Silo* ▶18.

Gripping XP → A dramatic chase and/or fight with Linder has excellent XP potential. Allow any PC to note an Athletics or combat test as an attempt to score a star. Interface or Pilot can be used to capture good shots with the drones.

TRANSFORMATION

Just a few short hours after being exposed, Linder's exsurgent transformation begins. Use the stats for *Infected Linder: Stage I* ▶34.

As a side effect of his metamorphosis, Linder's ability to communicate becomes inpaired shortly after fleeing into the forest. If somehow contacted while fleeing, he may respond in Tarval, an invented language from *Galaxy Voyage*. If cornered, he raves in this language during the ensuing fight.

Linder's goal once escaping the camp is to build a nest where he quickly and painfully mutates, developing characteristics of both Vishnans and Iktomi, along with memories of their dead civilizations that destroy his sanity. During this time, he'll infect other animals and secrete the chemical signature that will trigger other xenovore eggs.

CHASING LINDER

If the team immediately pursues Linder, he will sprint in a winding line through the forest, trying to evade pursuers. They will need to keep up with him and overcome several obstacles to corner him. Handle this chase scene as a three-part series of tests.

The Chase → **Athletics (or Pilot) Test, opposed by Athletics 60** → Make this opposed test for each character (rolling once for Linder) for each leg of the chase. Apply the following results:

- **Linder Wins:** The PC loses sight of Linder and close pursuers. They must make a Survival Test to pick up the trail for the next leg or they lose him. If other PCs are still pursuing, they can rely on their tacnet maps to rejoin the chase.
- **The PC Wins:** They gain and keep Linder in sight. They may make a single ranged attack against Linder if they choose, applying full move (−20) and cover modifiers (−10 to −30).
- **The PC Wins with a Suprior Success:** They get a clear view of Linder. They may attack as above without cover modifiers.
- **The PC Wins Twice in a Row:** They close distance with Linder and may make a melee attack instead of ranged if they choose.

There's no map for the terrain traversed in this chase. Each leg covers about 500 meters of rugged cloud forest.

Leg 1: Dense Thickets

The first part of the chase passes through an area dense with trees and underbrush that Linder uses to his advantage.

Injured Chowkey → **Perceive Test** → Pursuers notice a group of chowkeys lurking in the treetops above, hissing at passers by. One is injured; Linder surprised and bit it, transmitting the virus. At the GM's discretion, the chowkeys may throw things or otherwise harass the chasers.

Overhead Cover → **Perceive Test, opposed by Infiltrate 50** → Any PCs who are flying overhead have difficulty with the heavy canopy cover here. If the test fails, they lose Linder (as with a *Linder Wins* chase result above).

Leg 2: Narrow Ravine

Linder bolts from the thickets into a narrow ravine. The steep sides are too high to climb and keep up the pursuit, forcing pursuers into a classic ambush situation. The uneven, boulder-strewn floor of the ravine narrows and widens frequently, averaging about 4 meters wide.

A gooper ▶30 lies concealed halfway along the ravine. It takes a shot at the first PC in line, as Linder passes too quickly. Pursuing PCs may choose to attack the gooper this turn instead of Linder.

Gooper Surprise → **Perceive Test at +10, opposed by Infiltrate 80** → If the PC fails to spot the gooper, it attacks with surprise (▶227 *EP2*); they may not defend against the ambush.

Alien Meal → **Stress Test (SV 1d6)** → Being ambushed and nearly eaten by an alien predator is a bad way to start your day.

The gooper is slow, so PCs who continue the chase quickly outpace it. However, anyone who lingers to fight the gooper (or gets grabbed by it) is effectively out of the chase.

Leg 3: Rushing Cataract

Linder emerges from the ravine at the edge of a rushing cataract cutting through the forest. He rapidly scales the slick rocks of the waterfall. Closely pursuing PCs have a chance to cut him off if they can keep up and make it up the rocky surface quickly.

Scaling the Waterfall → **Athletics Test at −20** → Any PC that fails suffers DV 1d10 (armor does not apply) as they fall into the cataract. Next turn, they must make another Athletics Test or take another DV 1d10 as they are swept down the battering stream. After that, they reach a quiet and shallow spot to exit.

Chase Resolution

If any PCs have won 2 out of the 3 opposed Athletics Tests against Linder, they corner him above the waterfall, and regular combat ensues. Any other PCs who did not completely lose the trail, engage the gooper, or fall into the cataract can join the fight. Linder's primary concern is escaping; the infection is not yet compelling him to kill. If he can break away, the chase is on again.

If Linder wins 2 out of 3 tests, he evades the team and disappears into the cloud forest to infect more animals and build his nest. If PCs try to track him, go to *Tracking Linder*.

Either way, the PCs can use GPS to find their way back to camp.

TRACKING LINDER

If no one sees Linder leave, his absence will be noted at the next morning's meeting. This is not that unusual, as Linder often "sleeps in" (meaning he's playing *Galaxy Voyage*). When someone eventually checks on him, they will find no sign of him at camp.

> **Defense Beacon Logs →** A check of the logs indicates Linder left camp the night before and what direction he went.

> **Questioning Ensign Siewan → Persuade Test opposed by SAV Check 45 →** If the PCs log into *Galaxy Voyage* and convince Siewan ▶28, he will say that an erratic Linder left instructions because he was "going away for a while."

Though Hayude will not welcome the disruption, if any PCs suggest a search party, Parata will jump on the idea.

> **Picking Up Linder's Trail → Perceive Test (timeframe: 10 minutes) →** To track Linder, the PCs need to find where the trail starts.

> **Tracking Linder → Survival Test (timeframe: 4 hours) at −30 →** If successful, the PC slowly follows Linder's progression through the forest, eventually arriving at *Linder's Nest.*

The trail leads through cloud forest terrain similar to that described in the chase above. Along the way, however, the PCs make several gruesome discoveries:

- **Mutilated Chowkey:** The team discovers a chowkey's mauled remains in a clearing. Its wounds are surrounded by an unnatural ochre froth. Several other chowkeys, some of them wounded, chitter at the team but retreat into the trees above. If anyone reacts quickly and shoots one down, it also shows signs of the ochre substance.

> **Infection Risk →** At this stage, the slime doesn't transmit xenovore by touch, but it will infect anyone careless enough to let it get on their soft tissues or in their bloodstream.

- **Slime Trail:** As they near Linder's nest, a huge slime trail crosses the track and disappears into the brush (from a nearby infected gooper).

Linder's Nest

Linder's tracks end at an open, rocky clearing, 10 meters in diameter. The spot chosen by Linder for his metamorphosis is a cave entrance concealed in a rocky outcropping along its periphery.

> **Spotting the Cave → Perceive Test →** A search of the area locates an opening hidden behind some underbrush.

The cave winds back 20 meters and is 5 meters at its widest. In here with Linder are 2 infested chowkeys per team member. Use stats for *Infected Linder: Stage 2* ▶34, unless the PCs either were delayed getting here or didn't track him down right away, in which case, *Infected Linder: Stage 3* ▶35 may be revealed in his full, squicky glory.

Linder and the chowkeys fight to the death, seeking to infect as many enemies as possible rather than focusing fire.

> **Fighting Exsurgents/Killing Linder → Stress Test (SV 1d6) →** Fighting alien monsters is hard, killing a friend even harder.

> **Exsurgent Backup →** To notch up the challenge, an infected gooper ▶30 oozes up behind the PCs and joins the combat on the third action turn.

TROUBLESHOOTING

There are many ways in which Linder's infection could be sidelined by PCs. Here are a few ideas for handling contingencies.

- **Linder Not Left Alone:** Let's face(hugger) it: any players familiar with the *Alien* franchise will keep a close eye on the egg. GMs can get around this by having Hayude give watching PCs something else to do or by having Linder pretend to call it a night and then sneak back later. Alternatively, Linder extracts some fluid in front of them, but hides the fact that he gets exposed (Perceive Test opposed by his Infiltrate 50 to notice the mistake).
- **Linder Quarantined:** PCs may seek to keep anyone who interacts with the egg under quarantine. Linder will volunteer to quarantine himself with the egg in order to conduct his experiments. Once infected, he will do his best to make a break for it.
- **Someone Else Gets Infected First:** If the egg is broken through carelessness or someone else gets creative with experiments before Linder, that PC becomes Patient Zero. Either have them take the role that Linder plays in the scenario (running off and returning later with other exsurgents) or make them a distraction that an also-infected Linder uses to escape.

If the PCs manage to prevent the egg from infecting anyone, the GM will need to get creative. It is critical that *someone* gets infected to kick off the xenovore spread. Consider the following alternatives:

- **The Egg Simply Bursts.** Eventually, the egg will detect the presence of unrecognized sapient creatures and burst, causing at least one person (preferably Linder) to come into contact with the fluid.
- **Chowkeys Steal It.** Chowkeys are a consistent nuisance in the camp, stealing whatever they can. Eventually, a chowkey makes off with the egg. The team would be irresponsible to let them get away with this valuable artifact, so have them chase the chowkeys into the jungle to get it back. As it's being trundled around the jungle by alien parrot monkeys, a mishap is sure to happen.
- **A Mishap with Another Egg.** The team may uncover another egg at the excavation site, only this time they accidentally break it open (or it bursts). This can occur with the NPCs (Linder, an intern, or anyone really) while the PCs are pre-occupied elsewhere.

Avoid infecting team members at this stage unless they do something stupid or intervene selflessly to save Linder from exposure.

Regardless of whether the team pursues Linder immediately or not, Linder will infect a few native animals and kick off the xenovore egg chemical signatures before being brought down, triggering a more general infestation. The chief benefit in catching him early is that it allows the team to recognize their peril and either beef up their defenses or retreat to the gate.

QUESTIONS & TENSIONS

The situation with Linder is bound to raise questions — especially if he is captured or killed. This section addresses some of the potential fallout and options for GMs.

TESTING AND ANALYSIS

Both transportation and any medical examination of Linder are risky affairs. If the PCs are careless or do not take proper precautions, they risk exposing themselves to the exovirus if they come into contact with his bodily fluids (*The Xenovore Strain* ▶32).

Medical Exam → **Medicine: Forensics or Medicine: Paramedic Test** → Note that PCs can use the med scanner (▶342 *EP2*), which has both Medicine skills at 60. Linder is clearly under the effect of a complex, transformative virus, but the infection does not match any known diseases. His genetics are being altered with transgenic DNA. Some of the code is related to sampled molluscoid Vishnan life forms. He is likely infectious via transmission of fluids. On a superior success, they note similarities to strains of the exsurgent virus seen during the Fall.

The same results apply if the ochre froth or any of the infected chowkeys or goopers are tested.

IF LINDER IS CAPTURED

If the PCs manage to capture Linder, the first question will be: what do they do with him? The expedition is not equipped for imprisonment or quarantine protocols, though the team can improvise. It is possible to keep him sedated, under guard, or locked within a storage unit or even the healing vat. If Linder awakens, he will do his best to escape and either infect or kill others.

Infection Protocols → **Know: Exsurgent Virus Test** → The exovirus is beyond transhumanity's ability to treat. Recommended protocols are to isolate and destroy the infected.

Hayude will be opposed to destroying Linder until more is known about his infection. He does not want to disrupt the excavations, but he will not oppose anyone that proposes to take Linder back to the gate for an evac in a crasher truck. However, he does not want to surrender the blue box and will suggest that anyone going back time it to the next expected gate connection in ~1 week. Linder can be kept in stasis in the healing vat.

Parata, however, will argue for Linder to stay. She thinks the infection's progress will make for interesting XP and she doesn't want to split her cameras and recording efforts.

Linder can be placed in the healing vat in the med tent for recuperation or to keep him in stasis. The healing vat will not be able to revert the infection, but it will slow its progress. If Linder is placed in the vat, the vat will need a major disinfection process (taking a week) before anyone else can use it without becoming infected themselves.

Linder Healing → **1d10 damage per hour, 1 wound per day** → Due to his ongoing transformation, Linder heals at an accelerated rate.

Over time, Linder will continue his metamorphosis into a full exsurgent (*The Xenovore Strain* ▶32).

Metamorphosis → **Stress Test (SV 1d6)** → Getting an up-close look at Linder's transformation is a harrowing sight.

Questioning Linder

If the PCs attempt to talk to Linder, his mind is is effectively gone. He babbles in Tarval, but they get no useful information out of him.

Linder's Lost Mind → **Stress Test (SV 1d6 – 2)** → What little is left of Linder is alien, confused, and hostile.

IF LINDER IS KILLED

Linder's death will hit the camp hard. Though he was backed up before the mission, no one likes to see a friend go down that way — and almost everyone has concerns about how it happened and if the camp is at risk. The interns especially will be spooked.

Hayude, of course, views this primarily as a nuisance and setback to his important work here. Linder was useful, but kind of a slacker — the camp will be fine without him. He will make sure Linder's stack is recovered (at least until the exsurgent virus presence is confirmed, then he will destroy it).

IF LINDER GETS AWAY

If Linder somehow survives and escapes, or is never pursued in the first place, he will return with an army of infected chowkeys in a few days (*Infestation* ▶20) to kill everyone.

THE FIRST EGG

The situation with Linder aside, the question remains: what does the team do with the egg? Other Hayude will argue that it should still be tested and analyzed — if nothing else to determine its relation to the Iktomi remains. The Hayudes may be willing to keep it stored away in a specimen container (▶340 *EP2*), however, until it can be returned through the gate and studied there. (One of the interns may try to explain that this is a terrible idea, but Hayude will drown them out.)

If the PCs argue that it should be studied further, one of the storage containers can be turned into a more secure environment.

Egg Exam → **Medicine: Forensics (timeframe: 8 hours)** → NA careful analysis of the egg's shell and/or fluid can turn up some of the following (make a separate test for each):

▶ The egg shares some genetic similarities to Vishnan life forms.
▶ The egg's interior soup is crawling with viral nanophages that are similar to those infecting Linder.
▶ The egg's casing is not a simple shell. It is a complex organism that incorporates a number of unusual sensory organs and an elaborate nervous system analog.
▶ The shell shows signs of recently awakening from a metabolically inactive state of stasis and advanced biological aging. Radiocarbon dating pegs its age at roughly 10,000 years.

The PCs are not the only ones interested in the egg. Ahmadi keeps a close eye on the research from a discreet distance. If the PCs seek to keep their finding secrets, she may attempt to surreptitiously access their results. If caught, she will claim only self-preservation, as the egg could threaten everyone in camp.

Watching Eyes → **Perceive Test, opposed by Ahmadi's Infiltrate 60 or Infosec Test opposed by Ahmadi's Infosec 60** → Ahmadi is closely evaluating how valuable the egg is to her secret sponsor.

INFECTED CRITTERS

As the xenovore infection spreads out of sight, there is an increasing chance that the expedition members will spot or encounter an infected critter in the days leading up to the full-on attack (*Infestation* ▶20). In fact, this is an excellent way to foreshadow what is coming.

> 👁 **Spotting Infected Chowkeys** → **Perceive Test at −10, opposed by Infiltrate 80** → If successful, the PC notices a chowkey with ochre froth around its mouth, or perhaps a spiky set of extra limbs, before it vanishes into the forest.

The PCs may get the idea of making a foray into the wilds to try and capture an infected specimen. Allow them to encounter an infected chowkey or gooper, and even to capture/kill it, but don't give them the idea that the forest is swarming with exsurgents just yet. Let them think they have time. If, on the other hand, the PCs are already paranoid about a looming exsurgent outbreak, let them find nothing to keep their guard down.

RISING CONFLICTS

As stress levels rise and Linder's disappearance/transformation haunt the camp, disagreements and conflicts will also spike.

Linder Questions

If Linder is killed, some members of the expedition may question whether his death was necessary. Ahmadi in particular will express horror that the situation was not handled with more delicacy. She may even use this to drive a split between the PCs and Other Hayude. If Linder is still missing, there will be disagreements about whether to search for him or continue on with the expedition's work.

If the PCs did not witness Linder touching the fluid, there may be some questions about what exactly happened to him. Some sort of mishap involving the egg is the most likely scenario, which will likely inspire the team to take extra precautions about it. However, with no evidence, it's possible Linder acquired his infection some other way: the exoskeleton, a chowkey bite, or something stranger. It might even be an attempt to sabotage the expedition—perhaps one of Hayude's rivals at work. Random speculation in this vein—perhaps voiced by an intern—could increase the paranoia.

Infection Questions

There is also the question of what Linder's infection was, exactly. Even if the possibility of an exsurgent infection is raised, some members of the expedition will see that as unlikely without stronger evidence. Hayude Prime himself will not give the idea much support, though Other Hayude will quietly consider it an important possibility. Others in the expedition may raise the concern that this is some sort of disease unique to Vishnu that the original biological surveys did not identify. This could lead some to suggest working on an antidote or cure, though this is doomed to be a fruitless endeavor.

Needling Questions

Parata is seemingly excited about the turn of events and will take the opportunity to get in everyone's faces with the camera drones and ask personal questions about how they're feeling. She'll also be quick to encourage people to voice their conflicting views. This will increasingly get on everyone's nerves—even Hayude Prime's.

Fork Fight

Tensions between the Hayudes may also erupt openly at this point. Hayude Prime will not be happy about a rebellious fork and may take measures to diminish their authority within camp (thus creating more work for themselves). Both Hayudes may also seek out the PCs to win them to their particular side. Hayude Prime will handle this all poorly, indulging in his drugs even more than usual.

Intern Questions

Seeking guidance, the interns may turn to the PCs about their opinions. They are not all in agreement about the best course of action. Some are ready to head home, others think this has been the most exciting part of their education so far.

Ahmadi's Schemes

Finally, depending on who Ahmadi's sponsor ▶38 is, she may take some measures to secure valuable samples (infected tissue, egg fluid, part of the Iktomi exoskeleton) or sabotage the mission. This may also include hacking the PCs to keep a close eye on them or steal any secrets they've uncovered. It may also include pressuring Hayude to take particular courses of action that benefit the sponsor more than the expedition's goals or safety.

CONTINGENCIES

With the potential of an exsurgent infection outbreak on hand, the PCs may be inclined to make some preparations.

Quarantine Prep

As previously discussed (*If Linder Is Captured*), the expedition is ill-equipped for quarantine or exsurgent virus protocols, but the team can certainly improvise some options or strengthen the camp's defenses. The Hayudes will object to PCs who spend too much time on this, however, stating that it distracts from their main mission. Parata will hover over any prep work and ask leading questions that insinuate the PCs are being overly paranoid.

Evac Thoughts

Likewise, the PCs may suggest evacuating the camp and returning to the gate. Both Hayudes and Parata will strenuously object to this—they have far too much riding on the mission to give up now.

Reaching Out to Paquet

If anyone suggests reaching out to the Paquet expedition, Hayude Prime will also object—at least at first. He wants no communication between the camps, even if it means leaving the other camp at risk. He views them as competitors. However, once the threat is fully realized (i.e., after the attacks in *Infestation* ▶20), he will reconsider. He's obsessed with beating them, but he's not a monster.

If anyone reaches out to Paquet behind Hayude's back and he discovers the disobediance, he will explode, possibly even banning them from the camp.

THE SILO

Buried deep beneath the Hayude camp is one of the Vishnan missile silos responsible for touching off the wave of infection that lead to the Vishnan Fall.

FINDING THE SILO

The likely way for the expedition to discover the silo is through examination of the ancient Iktomi documents found in the tupperware ▶12. After 3–4 days of scanning the markings, either Ahmadi or a PC xenolinguist identifies what seems to be a point of interest on a map of the local area (as it appeared 10,000 ago). Hayude orders the surveyors to scan the designated area and they soon find what appears to be a long-buried vertical tunnel opening. The scans show that the tunnel is blocked at the top, but opens up and descends for at least a 100 meters, if not more.

Alternatively, the team finds the entrance by accident either during routine surveys or spot digs of promising areas.

The expedition is not equipped with climbing gear, but as soon as the shaft is discovered, Other Hayude will instruct the crasher truck fabbers to print up electronic rope and spindles (▶341 *EP2*), as well as standard ropes, harnesses, carabiners, pitons, etc. This takes a minimum of 8 hours.

> **Gripping XP** → This sequence provides the PCs with an opportunity to show off their tomb-raider skills. Options for earning stars include: big booms with Hardware: Demolitions; spiffy drone handling with Interface, Pilot, or Program; traversing treacherous descents with Athletics; identifying extinct Vishnans with Know: Xeno-Archeology; or handling the kumobot with social or combat skills.

OPENING IT UP

A 10-meter-deep tangle of sticks, soil, logs, and decayed organic matter clogs the top of the silo's launch tube, the point of entry also previously found by the Iktomi. The team has two options for getting inside: digging or blasting. Digging would be the preferred archeological approach, so as not to damage any potential finds, but it would also take far more time, especially if done carefully. The Hayudes may clash over this decision; Parata likes the idea of a big explosion.

> **Blasting It Open** → **Hardware: Demolitions Test (timeframe: 1 hour)** → A superthermite charge (▶340 *EP2*) from the camp's storage sunk into a hole can blast the tunnel open. Most of the clogging dirt and debris will fall to the bottom of the shaft.

> **Slow Digging** → **Timeframe: 4 days** → Digging out the blockage in a careful and methodical manner, while also looking for other relics, is painstakingly slow and boring. If the PCs go this route, it is possible that they will be invaded by an army of infested chowkeys and goopers — possibly led by Linder, if still alive — before, or as, they finish (*Infestation* ▶20).

> **Digging a Small Tunnel** → **Know: Engineering or Know: Mining (timeframe: 8 hours)** → A small crawlway can be dug more quickly either by hand or with a disassembler nanoswarm. If the test fails, the hole is not properly stabilized and will partially collapse after 1d3 characters pass through it. Anyone in or below the tunnel takes DV 2d10 from the avalanche. Anyone flying or not secured by ropes must make an Athletics or Pilot Test or be swept with the debris all the way down the launch tube — a lethal fall.

With an opening cleared, the hole opens into a concrete shaft 4 meters wide. Radar pings indicate the bottom is 300 meters below. The tube's walls are reinforced but crumbling, weathered-looking concrete, with indentations where long-rusted-away launch hardware was installed. Growths protrude from numerous cracks. The climate has left the walls crumbly and slick, a danger for climbers. There are no markings or lights — just a descent into darkness.

WHO MADE THIS?

The Vishnan civilization is previously undocumented by transhumanity. Hayude will speculate to the cameras that this must be an intriguing Iktomi subsurface construction. He is eager to explore it.

> **Was It, Though?** → **Know: Xeno-Archeology (timeframe: 1 minute)** → A sampling and radiocarbon dating of the concrete or even a thorough look at the construction of the shaft hints that it was not actually built by the Iktomi, but by a civilization that is much, much older (~190,000 years old).

SCOUTING AHEAD

The team will most likely send some drones in to assess the situation (see the notes on descending under *Spelunking*). There is little to interfere with this, so describe what they see as noted in *The Bottom* and *The Complex,* calling for Perceive Tests as necessary. The recon drones will not be able to access the area where the kumobot remains trapped (*An Unexpected Meeting*).

SPELUNKING

Other Hayude has already printed up climbing gear to safely descend the walls of the ancient missile launch tube. Ropes can be attached to trees or the crasher trucks.

> **Assisted Climbing** → **Athletics Test at +10 (timeframe: 1 minute)** → If the PC is simply lowered down or pulled up, no test is necessary.

> **Free Climbing** → **Athletics Test at −30 (timeframe: 5 minutes down, 10 up)** → Given the state of the shaft's walls, free climbing is not recommended. On a critical failure, part of the wall gives way.

> **Flying** → **Athletics or Pilot Test every 100 meters** → The tube is a tight fit for any flyers that cannot simply hover down the tube. Failure results in DV 1d6 from skidding against the walls.

THE BOTTOM

The reinforced concrete military bunker at the bottom of the launch tube leaves a lot to the imagination.

About 20 meters from the base of the tube, a large but partly collapsed tunnel extends perpendicular to the south. It is also cracked concrete though the floor is covered in a thin layer of damp dirt. Long-deteriorated fixtures may once have been railings, lights, and other features. This tunnel leads 10 meters to the rest of the complex.

The very base of the tube is an expanded concrete area with a number of openings that are all thoroughly clogged with dirt and debris. The floor is muddy and littered with debris that has fallen down the shaft over the years, including rusted metal bits (all that remains of the old doors). There are no viable exits from the shaft aside from the tunnel to the complex.

> **Launch Tube Examination** → **Hardware: Industrial** → The shaft has the semblance of a missile launch tube. The bottom features match what could be a launch cradle (minus metal and plastic fittings, long decayed), a blast shield, and shafts for the missile exhaust (now clogged).

THE COMPLEX

The tunnel opens up into a cavernous room with broad grooves in the floor. Most of the exits end in unexcavatable cave-ins, but a few adjoining rooms can be reached. Here, uninfected Vishnans made their last stand against a horde of Vishnan exsurgents.

The Ruins

With the exception of the kumobot's room (*An Unexpected Meeting*), none of the side rooms lead to anything interesting; their exits are also blocked by cave-ins. Only rock and concrete have survived, marked by gaps and anchor points where plastic, metal, or rubber fittings were once attached. Any technology or equipment more advanced than concrete has long since rusted or deteriorated into unrecognizable lumps at best (and anything that wasn't, the Iktomi took). The floor is damp and muddy and everything is coated with dust and grit. However, a good look at the architecture may provide some insights.

> **Central Room Purpose → Hardware: Industrial →** Given the grooves, space, and proximity to the tube, this was likely a missile storage area. The ruins are structurally unstable.

> **Design Details → Know: Astrobiology/Xeno-Archeology →** Whoever made this place was likely shorter and longer than most transhumans—floor spaces are wide and standard doorways short enough that transhumans need to duck. They may have been slitherers, given that ramps are used in lieu of stairs and steep stairs with extremely narrow steps instead of ladders.

If the team is careless about digging around the complex, sets off explosives, etc., they risk triggering a small cave-in (GM discretion).

> **Collapse → DV 3d10, Fray Test to reduce by half →** The cave-in only buries a small area of the complex.

Mass Grave

Nothing remains of the Vishnan combatants that died here but a few black stains on the floor and their shells, scattered everywhere.

> **Ancient Slaughter → Stress Test (SV 1d6 – 2) →** The presence of so many remains implies something ominous happened here.

Vishnan shells are about a meter long and a little under a half meter in diameter at their longest point. About a quarter of the shells in this room are normal, calcareous Vishnan shells, slimed-over but otherwise well-preserved. The rest are collapsed piles of clear plastic exactly like the flexible polymer of the Iktomi skeleton the team discovered. These are the shells of the Vishnan exsurgents. Anatomically, they're slightly different from the normal shells.

> **Shell Comparison → Know: Astrobiology →** Oddly, the plastic Vishnan exsurgent shells found here have some design similarities to the normal Vishnan shells, but they also have features similar to the Iktomi carapace found above: spiky growths and some kind of sensory nodules arranged radially around the outsides of the shells.

> **Shell Polymer Examination → Know: Chemistry →** The plastic shell composition is the same flexible polymer making up the Iktomi skeleton discovered topside. Unlike the Iktomi carapace, however, these polymer shells are badly decayed—they've been here about 180,000 years longer.

> **Old Traces → Know: Xeno-Archeology →** Areas around some of the remains (particularly those missing eggs) bear centuries-old traces that they were once excavated and analyzed (presumably by the Iktomi).

Egg Overload

Almost every plastic shell has an ochre xenovore egg inside (the ones missing were taken by the Iktomi to the surface long ago). There are ~20 overall. These eggs are currently dormant, but it is only a matter of time before they detect the presence of sapient life (or get a whiff of the chemical signature Linder triggered) and become ticking viral time bombs.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

One of the adjacent rooms is partially blocked by a ceiling collapse. However, this one looks easily cleared with a bit of effort (5 minutes). The chamber inside is also small and partly collapsed, but has one notable feature: a half-buried Iktomi kumobot ▶38, left behind when the Iktomi fled, now trapped and barely functional.

> **Bot Recognition → Know: Xeno-Archeology/Iktomi →** Transhumanity has discovered kumobot remains before, so the design is recognizable as belonging to the Iktomi and being similar to their body plans.

The bot appears dormant and unmoving. It is aged and seemingly damaged by the cave-in. However, any effort to excavate it or analyze its components will cause it to suddenly reactivate. It lurches free of the dirt and rubble, skittering in an erratic manner away from the team, backing into a corner, while dragging at least one of its legs. It raises two of its arms in either a defensive or threatening manner.

> **Alien Technology → Stress Test (SV 1d6) →** The sudden animation of a potentially hostile alien machine is shocking.

The kumobot is on its last legs. It is low on power, decrepit with age, and badly damaged. Its response to the transhumans will depend largely on their reactions to it:

- **If the PCs attack,** the kumobot will defend itself. It will attempt to kill any non-Iktomi it finds in the complex. It is, however, too damaged to make it back up the shaft on its own. If destroyed, its components will make a great find for transhumanity.
- **If the PCs retreat,** the kumobot will cautiously follow back to the shaft, but will not chase or ascend.
- **If the PCs attempt to communicate,** they will have a difficult time, but it will play along.

> **First Contact → Know: First Contact or INT Check →** The kumobot is intelligent but damaged and of an alien mindset. It will respond to images more than speech, emoting, hand signals, or scientific concepts. It can project holographic images as well. If shown the Iktomi exoskeleton, it will play a short, hazy holo clip of an Iktomi exsurgent attacking Iktomi.

If the PCs establish a rapport with the kumobot, it will be willing to accompany them back to the surface (with some lifting help from the team). It will not, however, let anyone get too close for repair or analysis purposes.

> **Kumobot Options →** For ideas on how the alien bot participates in the rest of the scenario, see The Kumobot ▶22.

INFESTATION

As the xenovore infection spreads across the region, the number of exsurgents will exponentially increase. An initial attack should put the expedition on its guard, but more waves will quickly follow—with the size of the exsurgent horde growing each time. If the team responds slowly, they might find themselves retreating back to the pandora gate in the midst of a full-blown outbreak.

TIMING

GMs should carefully consider when to launch the first attack. In accordance with the spread of the xenovore virus, the first assault should occur ~2–3 days Linder is infected. If Linder is captured or killed, the first wave may not coalesce for an extra 1–2 days without his leadership to pull it together more quickly.

Ideally, the attack should take place after the team has entered the silo, but before they have had too much time to process the results or consider excavating the Vishnan complex further. If the team takes too long to excavate the silo, an attack may spur them to act more quickly. The best time to place it may be right as the PCs are emerging from the complex for the first time.

If the attack occurs while some or all of the PCs are tracking Linder or exploring the silo, the group's attention will be split. The attack may strike at just one location or multiple, indicating a coordinated effort. This will be more challenging for the GM to run, but could spur a rescue drama as the PCs rush back to camp to defend it. Alternatively, the attack could occur while all of the PCs are away, leading to a more isolated experience (and brutal Stress Tests) as they return to a devastated, overrun encampment. Complicating things further, they could be obliged to track down NPC survivors who escaped into the woods or took refuge in the silo.

Gripping XP → Can the team come off as badasses while fighting off a horde of mutated xenofauna? Harrowing, heroic, and selfless acts will draw eyes in a fight sequence. PCs can get stars with dramatic action (Athletics or Pilot Tests), fancy shots (Guns Tests), brutal fights (Melee Tests), tactical brilliance (Know: Security Ops), witty banter (Provoke Tests), or simply being cool under fire (WIL Check).

Handling NPCs → GMs should not attempt to make rolls for every NPC during the fights. Most of the NPCs are not fighters, anyway; they will defend themselves, and help others when possible, but mostly they will seek refuge or run away. You can narrate what the NPCs are doing each turn, and if fighting assume they kill 1 chowkey every 2 turns or die if they get swarmed for 2+ turns without any help. The best use of NPCs is to make the combat interesting: have them falter in a dangerous position, drop crucial gear, get swarmed, or otherwise need rescue—or show up out of nowhere to help a PC who is on the ropes.

LINDER

Linder will be in his final exsurgent form (Stage 3 ▶35)—if he's alive—directing the attacks against the camp. However, he should keep a distance and not play a direct role until things hit a climax. The best option is to hold him back until the PCs are ready to flee back to the gate, then have him lead the final assault.

THE FIRST ATTACK

The initial attack is a probing mission. A wave of infected chowkeys assault the camp perimeter, concentrating around a single point in an attempt to break through. While the defense beacons will succeed in driving some away, 1d6 beacons will be destroyed and 1 infected chowkey per character (including NPCs) will make it past the beacons and into the camp.

This assault should be pure chaos. The scampering, hyperactive exsurgents scurrying out of the trees and bushes are as destructive as they are murderous. They are obviously transformed and different from normal chowkeys.

Chowkey Tactics → These chowkeys are not a major threat to armed and armored PCs, but they will inflict damage to NPCs and use swarm tactics on individual characters (*Infected Chowkey* ▶35). They mostly ignore synthmorphs and bots, but may damage some smaller bots and will wreak havoc on tents and camp equipment. They fight to the death.

Infection Risk → As the PCs may learn the hard way, infected chowkey bites transmit the exsurgent virus.

Chaotic Assault → **Stress Test (SV 1d6)** → Just another day fending off a horde of homicidal critters.

Bye Bye Blue Box

Infected chowkeys still have scavenger tendencies, and any that are driven away will attempt to take anything they can grab with them. During an intense moment, one chowkey will invade Hayude's tent, grab the blue box there, and run off with it into the forest. Without that device, the team cannot open the pandora gate.

Thieving Critter → **Perceive Test at −30, opposed by Infiltrate 80** → If spotted, PCs can attempt to chase and retrieve the device.

SECOND ATTACK

About 4 hours after the first attack (just enough time to do some emergency fabbing, regroup, and figure out a plan), a second wave of exsurgents assaults the camp. This time, it's 2 chowkeys ▶30 per character (including NPCs) and 2 infected goopers ▶30 that get through the defenses and 2d6 beacons that get damaged.

CAMP SIEGE

After this, the waves of attacking creatures come more frequently: every hour, maybe less. They also grow in numbers. It should increasingly become apparent that the camp will not survive sustained assaults. Attrition wears away at the beacon perimeter faster than new ones can be fabbed, and the existing beacons are running out of power as well.

Running the Grind → **Know: Security Ops Test or DV 1d10** → Additional attacks can be simplified to a single test. On a failed test, everyone on the team not holed up in a hard-walled structure takes damage (armor does not apply) and 1d6 defense beacons are destroyed. On a superior failure, 1 random biomorph is infected. On a critical failure, double everything. When fewer than 10 beacons remain, apply a −30 modifier to the test.

HIDING OUT

The PCs may opt to hide out behind secure walls to wait out the attacks, perhaps hoping rescue will come through the gate, but this is a dangerous plan (*Holding out for Rescue* ▶22).

Taking refuge in the silo is not tactically sound: there are no other exits. Likewise, the storage containers and crasher trucks will keep out chowkeys and goopers, but many other alien critters in the region are getting infected. Eventually an LMTFA ▶31 will come along and do some serious damage or slugitos ▶31 will squeeze through cracks and vents. This should force the survivors to make a break for the crasher trucks and flee back to the gate.

RUNNING FOR THE GATE

Despite the situation's bleakness, Hayude Prime will be reluctant to abandon camp. The PCs will need to convince him or stage a coup.

> **Time to Go!** → **Persuade Test, opposed by Hayude's SAV Check 60** → Alternatively, Parata (SAV Check 60) can be convinced to pull rank and order a withdrawal.

If the team flees camp, the Hayudes will do everything they can to bring their discoveries (the tupperware, exoskeleton, egg, Vishnan shells, and kumobot) with, even risking their lives (or the interns') during an assault to carry them to a truck.

It takes a minimum of 8 hours to reach the gate. However, they'll be attacked along the road, slowing them down. If the team heads back within 3 days of Linder being infected, the number of exsurgent critters isn't enough to stop crasher trucks barreling along, but they will be forced to stop and deal with an obstacle or two: a washed-out section of trail, a fallen tree, or wheels sinking in thick mire.

> **Avert Crash** → **Pilot: Groundcraft Test or DV 2d10** → The truck ALIs have Pilot: Ground 70 (Crasher Truck 80). On a failure, the vehicle is not stopped in time and suffers damage. On a critical failure the damage is doubled and the vehicle requires repairs that will take a Hardware: Groundcraft Test (timeframe: 1d3 hours) to fix.

> **Clearing the Obstacle** → **Pilot: Groundcraft Test or SOM Checks** → While the PCs are dealing with the obstruction, they will be attacked by 1d6 chowkey exsurgents, +1 chowkey or gooper for each day since the first attack.

If the team makes this journey at a later point, the infestation is in full swing, and they will not only have to deal with the obstacle(s) and constant swarming attacks along the way, but the exsurgents will organize at least one ambush, blocking the road with logs in a narrow spot (treat as the obstacle above), and then knocking another tree over behind the PCs so that they cannot escape. The exsurgent ambush consists of 2 chowkeys per PC, 2 goopers, and a LMTFA ▶31.

> **Spotting the Ambush** → **Perceive Test at +10 opposed by Infiltrate 70** → If successful, the PC spots the hidden exsurgents working on the second tree. Give the team 1 action turn to back out of the trap. If a tree comes down on the truck, it will inflict DV 4d10 and the truck will be pinned.

If the PCs lose a truck, they may be able to cram survivors into the remaining vehicle (each fits 6 comfortably, ~10 uncomfortably). If room is tight, some folks can ride hanging on top or the sides (or possibly on the dwarf bot), though they will be vulnerable to exsurgents swinging out of the trees or lobbing goobers as they go by.

If the PCs lose both trucks, they are in for a long and dangerous foot trek, with exsurgents closing in on them from all directions.

Reaching the gate compound, however, may not be the last of their worries. Go to *Gate Siege* ▶22.

RESOLUTION

Depending on the PCs' actions, *Xenovore* may conclude in several ways.

HOLDING OUT FOR RESCUE

If the team takes shelter at the camp or silo and waits for rescue, it will be a long time coming — if ever. If they can reach the gate complex by radio, an automated distress call can be set to go when the gate is next opened. They can also use the camp's emergency distress beacon (▶336 *EP2*); any newcomers through the gate will receive this signal.

The next gate connection is scheduled in about a week. If not warned, the third xeno-archeology expedition that comes through will be quickly overwhelmed by exsurgents.

Gatekeeper will eventually learn of the situation via mission recorder downloads or other survivors and will deploy search-and-rescue bots. Whether or not a full rescue mission is sent to retrieve them is up to the GM (or perhaps a Rep or Persuade Test). If Gatekeeper becomes aware that the entire continent is undergoing an exsurgent virus outbreak, they will be strongly inclined to abandon any survivors and lock out the gate. Sorry, but it's in the contract and mission specs.

GATE EVAC

The most likely scenario is that the expedition survivors reach the gate and attempt to evac out. If the team still has the blue box, they can attempt to open a connection back to Pandora (*Gate Rules* ▶405 *EP2*). However, the Pandora Gate is quite busy, and even a connection request flagged as an emergency may be put on hold for hours before a wormhole is actually opened. The PCs always have the option of opening a wormhole to some other gate, but this is a risky option; they could end up anywhere.

> **Opening a Wormhole → Interface Test (timeframe: 1d10 minutes) →** If the PCs wish to establish a link to a gate other than Pandora, they must make a Program Test at −30.

If the PCs have lost the blue box, they must wait for the next scheduled connection, due in a week or so. Alternatively, they could seek out the Paquet expedition's blue box — meaning an arduous trek to their overrun camp — or the Paquet camp's survivors can show up at the gate on their own, also seeking to flee.

Gate Siege

However this plays out, this scenario should end up with the PCs making a desperate effort to repel an invasion of the gate compound walls like they are defending a castle while they wait for the gate to open. The GM can throw as many chowkey and gooper exsurgents at the team as they need. The walls will keep everything but chowkeys and slirds out, but enough of them can swarm the walls and get past the team to open the gate mechanism and let other exsurgents in.

As the walls are overrun, the team is forced to abandon their trucks and make a desperate retreat to the cramped tunnel ramp and the fragile pressurized tube that protects it underwater. If the tube is breached, flooding will become a serious issue.

> **Tunnel Cover → DR 30, WT 6 for every 3 meters of tube →** The pressurized plastic is not designed to hold up against attacks.
>
> **Tunnel Breach → DV 2d10, armor does not protect, but Fray Test reduces by half →** Anyone near a breach is knocked off their feet by a wave of water. GM may call for Athletics Tests to swim to air or a SOM Check to close the gate room hatch in time.

Last Stand

The PCs have the option of sealing themselves within the undersea gate room, but it can only fit about a dozen survivors crammed together. None of the animal life on the planet is capable of breaching the gate room's massive, reinforced hatch, for which the team has the codes. However, they will be trapped in a concrete room, underwater, and running out of air.

> **Gate Room Air Supply → 100 person-hours of air →** A party of 10 survivors will have 10 hours of breathable air.

INFECTED CHARACTERS

It is highly likely that members of the expedition will become infected during the exsurgent attacks. If the PCs avoid this fate, you may want to have an NPC or two get bit just to add to the tension. The interns especially work well for this role (Sorry, Nikos!).

If the team did not witness Linder undergo his transformation, this provides an opportunity to show off the virus's progression. This will also raise the question of what to do about the victim, made even more challenging by the waves of attacks. If the victim is not locked up or restrained, they will attempt to flee into the forest/jungle a few hours after becoming infected, just as Linder did. When they reach stage 2 of the infection, they will become hostile to the others (*The Xenovore Strain* ▶32).

It is also a possibility that someone becomes infected and keeps it hidden from the others. This is an especially good option for Parata (still followed by camera drones, even after she transforms into an exsurgent) or Other Hayude (who will at least attempt to document his own mental decline and metamorphosis). The team will not realize what has happened, only that they have gone missing. This victim could even attempt to hide themselves away somewhere close to the team while they transform, suddenly coming out of nowhere in full exsurgent form to surprise the PCs late in the game.

> **Battling Friends-cum-Exsurgents → Stress Test (SV 1d6) →** The way they babble incoherently as they attack is particularly disturbing.

THE KUMOBOT

If the kumobot is present, the exsurgents will ignore it when they attack. The kumobot will refrain from interfering at first; it does not have a complete grasp on who's who and will not want to take sides in a conflict it doesn't understand.

PCs can attempt to convince the kumobot to join the fight, but they will need to get creative to convey the request. If the team abandons their camp, they can also try to convince it to tag along. If the PCs flee via the gate, however, the kumobot will refuse to enter. It plans to stay and wait for the Iktomi to return.

> **Enjoining Kumobot's Aid → INT Check →** If the PCs link the exsurgents to those that attacked the Iktomi, apply a +30 modifier.

The kumobot is not in the best shape, so it may not survive the arduous journey to the gate and repeated attacks. Though the exsurgents are focused on infecting and killing biomorphs, they may attack the kumobot if it gets in their way. The most likely outcome is that the PCs are forced to leave it behind at some point. Their last memory of the kumobot will be it holding off a horde of exsurgents as they escape.

THE PAQUET PARTY

It's important to remember that the Hayude expedition is not the only group of transhumans in danger on Vishnu. The Paquet expedition will also come under exsurgent attack—without any of the warning or lead-up the PCs had.

If the PCs are doing well, Paquet's group is an opportunity to add another complication. They will put out a distress call, asking to be rescued. This is a perfect opportunity for Hayude to express some humanity—and also show up his rivals. He will order the team to do what they can to rescue Paquet and the survivors from their camp, even if it puts his own people at risk. This could entail a nail-biting trek all the way to the Paquet camp and back to the gate, or it could be rescuing the Paquet survivors as they are threatened by an ambush just outside the gate compound's walls.

If the PCs are struggling, the Paquet expedition works as a nice deus-ex-machina, showing up to rescue the team in their hour of need or arriving with a blue box at the gate just as things are looking desperate. Hayude will not be pleased to be shown up once again, but even that ignobility is preferred to being torn apart by mutant alien parrot-monkeys.

SECRET LOYALTIES

If an opportunity presents itself, Ahmadi may betray Hayude and make off with the expedition's valuable discoveries, hoping to be the only survivor and to hand them over to her sponsor (▶27). Ahmadi will only do this if she is fairly certain she can get away and that the others will not be able to follow. This could entail sabotaging one crasher truck (or waiting until one is disabled) while she makes off with the other. Or it could mean being the first into the gate room with the discoveries and blue box, locking the others out as exsurgents close in. Ahmadi knows everyone on the expedition is backed up, so she's willing to sacrifice them if necessary. She may even leave the team with a message to Hayude from her sponsor as she departs. However, she does plan to concoct a story that makes it seem like everyone on the expedition died in a valiant effort to escape; she sees no reason to besmirch anyone's rep.

For her betrayal to work successfully, she'll need to access the mission recorder at the gate compound and wipe it clean. She'll also make the exsurgent outbreak look really bad so as to discourage any attempts to rescue the others or retrieve their stacks.

LOST IN NEVERWHERE

Jokingly referred to as Pandora's own moon, *Lost in Neverwhere* is a scum barge that has semi-permanent residence in Pandoran orbit. Considered by some to be the true gateway to Gateway, *Lost in Neverwhere* is an ideal place for gatecrashers looking to load up on black market gear or items that are otherwise hard to find on Pandora. It is also the premier market for auctioning off goods found in extrasolar systems, some of which were carefully smuggled past Gatekeeper's own customs and quarantine procedures. Though a substantial amount of these are in fact counterfeits manufactured by the scum themselves for gullible tourists, trade remains brisk. XP-casts from gatecrashers are also a strong commodity. The barge is also an excellent place to meet with paranoid clients, pick up off-the-record work or dangerous missions, or score some entertainment options that Gateway cannot provide. A regular shuttle service operates between the *Lost in Neverwhere* and Gateway's spaceport, though the barge also has excellent egocasting and resleeving facilities and an interesting variety of customized morphs to select from.

This betrayal has the potential to seriously screw the PCs. An overland trek on foot back to the gate is certain death. If any of the PCs befriended Ahmadi or saved her during a previous attack, she may have second thoughts about abandoning them. Or she could simply have a flash of conscience and return for them.

RETURNING TO PANDORA

Characters that make it through the gate are safe. They are immediately disarmed, placed in quarantine, and provided with medical care. Any exsurgents that chase them through are quickly eliminated by the gate's heavy security.

Exocustoms

Upon returning to the Solar System, all gatecrashers must go through Exocustoms. They are given a thorough medical screening and scanned for the exsurgent virus, diseases, and parasites. All electronics and meshed systems are also scanned for digital malware. Infectees are painlessly euthanized and destroyed. Any gear or biological objects coming up positive on a scan are quarantined and destroyed, with their bearers subjected to additional scrutiny. Any xenovore eggs definitely come up positive. The Iktomi exoskeleton and Vishnan exsurgent remains do not test positive with any active signs of the virus. However, as they are most likely exsurgent remnants, they will be seized and held in isolation while a protracted legal battle ensues.

Team members are then individually interviewed by a customs agent who questions them about the expedition, encounters with hostile life, and any missing team members. XP footage and the mission recorder will also be reviewed. If there's any hint of criminal activity or xenoartifacts/specimens to review, a Titanian Science Police investigator is called in. Criminal matters include missing persons and suspicion of intentionally returning with exsurgent virus-infected items. If they brought back xenoartifacts/specimens, these are registered and catalogued. A permit is issued for their possession after the character signs a writ of intention to share any research related to them.

If the GM wishes to introduce the team to Firewall, this is a good chance (*Firewall Recruitment* ▶24). The Science Police are infiltrated by Firewall, so an interview ostensibly about criminal activity could instead be cover for Firewall's pre-recruitment screening.

> **Exocustoms Mesh Access** → Mesh access is blocked inside the Exocustoms area, with wireless signals jammed. All access to the outside is through dedicated and secure wired connections. The PCs will not be able to access the mesh or communicate online with others until they clear Exocustoms.

Smuggling

Smuggling physical goods past Exocustoms is exceptionally difficult. Unless the PCs have a solid plan, they are likely to be caught. However, if they previously made arrangements with the scum fixer on the *Lost in Neverwhere* or some other criminal cartel or person of influence, their goods may get conveniently overlooked.

Ahmadi's sponsor (▶27) may have this sort of influence. If she did not betray the team earlier, she may attempt to secretly steal and sneak one of the expedition's discoveries through Exocustoms and into her sponsor's hands or arrange for it to be stolen later after they are through.

AFTERMATH

Here's how things can play out afterwards.

NO ONE MAKES IT OUT

With an entire continent of monsters trying to kill them, a TPK (total party kill) is not out of the question. However, there's a good chance that at least some of the team's cortical stacks will be retrieved, either by Paquet expedition survivors or search-and-rescue bots.

> **Stack Recovery** → 50% chance per character, 5% if corpse hard to find → Stacks are not taken from any corpses that exhibit signs of exsurgent transformation.

DEAD & MISSING CHARACTERS

Characters who died during the mission will be re-instantiated according to the terms of their backup insurance. If the character went missing, this can mean a waiting period of up to 6 months, to provide time for them or their stack to be found — or at least until Vishnu is declared off-limits and search efforts cease. NPCs who are re-instantiated from backups may contact PC survivors to find out what the hell happened.

VISHNU AND GATEKEEPER

Once Gatekeeper confirms the exsurgent virus outbreak on Vishnu, search-and-rescue efforts are cut off and the exoplanet is declared off limits. Wormhole connections to and from it are blocked. Any survivors still on the planet are on their own.

HIT XP

As noted in *Putting On a Show* ▶9, Otherworld plans to release the XP recorded during the expedition, hoping for a breakout hit.

> **Gripping XP Tabulation** → Total up the number of stars earned during the four (or more) Gripping XP opportunities (remember, each opportunity requires 3 successful tests to gain a star). The GM also rolls 1d10 to simulate the "secret sauce" of luck, timeliness, etc. that helps XP shows go viral. Add 1 star to the team's total if the roll is even; subtract 1 star if it's odd. See the Gripping XP Star Results table.

Spiking the Show

An XP show is only possible if Otherworld gets the recordings. The PCs or some other party (such as Firewall) may decide it's best to suppress it. This is easy if Parata and the Hayudes are killed during the mission, but Otherworld will come after the PCs for breach of contract. Otherwise it may require some mesh intrusions to access and delete all of the footage.

Gripping XP Star Results

Stars	Result
3+	It's a hit! The PCs gain minor celebrity status and may get some more media work tossed their way in the future.
1–2	The show flops.
0 or fewer	The show bombs so badly that the PCs will appear in clips and mesh memes for years to come.

FIREWALL RECRUITMENT

Firewall has a close eye on the gate's Exocustoms and the expedition's story is likely to draw notice, especially if things went badly. A Firewall sentinel or proxy may either conduct or join the Science Police interview if anything was out of order or if Vishnan artifacts are brought back. Nothing about Firewall will be revealed at the time, but the interviewer will ask pointed questions about Linder's sickness, the mutated animals, and the ochre Xenovore pods.

If possible, Firewall might even send an async to this interview to probe the team members' reactions.

If the PCs' responses in the interview show competence and promise, Firewall may float a recruiting offer in the days or weeks after the run.

HAYUDE'S FUTURE

Hayude has invested all that he had left in this expedition. If the team manages to return with some interesting relics and/or footage and the XP show gets good ratings, he has a chance to get his career off of life support. If the team lost the relics and the show flops, he is looking at a fade into obscurity.

More seriously, Hayude owes debts to some dangerous people. He may need to go into hiding. If he is back in the spotlight, his debts will still be a drain on his future prospects. Either way, he may turn to the PCs to help him out of his bind.

MISSION REWARDS

Rewards to i-rep only apply if the PC is (or becomes) a member of Firewall. Gripping XP rewards only apply if the XP is aired.

Mission Rewards Table

Outcome	Rez & Rep Rewards
PC Participated	2 RP, +1 i-rep, +1 r-rep, +1 x-rep
PC Survived	1 RP, +1 x-rep
At Least 5 NPC Expedition Members Survive	+1 x-rep
Team Returns Without Hayude Prime	−2 c-rep
Team Rescues Paquet Expedition	1 RP, +2 x-rep
Team Establishes Communication with Kumobot	+1 i-rep, +2 r-rep, +2 x-rep
Team Returns with Iktomi Remains/Artifacts	1 RP, +2 r-rep, +1 x-rep
Team Returns with Vishnan Remains/Artifacts	+2 r-rep, +1 x-rep
Team Scores 3+ Gripping XP Stars	+2 f-rep per star, +1 x-rep
Team Scores 1–2 Gripping XP Stars	+1 f-rep
Team Scores 0 or Fewer XP Stars	−5 f-rep
PC Fulfilled Motivation/Motivational Goal	1 RP
Player Contributed: Good Roleplaying/Drama/Humor/Fun	1 RP
PC Recruited Into Firewall	+5 i-rep

CAMP EQUIPMENT

The following gear can be found around camp, with its expected location noted:

- 2 crasher trucks, each of which carries a large fabber (▶343 *EP2*); both also carry a healing vat (▶342 *EP2*), though one is removed and placed in the Med Tent when camp is established   [1: Parking]
- 3 repair sprays ▶342 *EP2*   [1: Parking, in the crasher trucks]
- 1 dwarf bot ▶349 *EP2*   [1: Parking]
- 1 grip tape ▶317 *EP2*   [2: Storage]
- 1 set of motes ▶337 *EP2*   [2: Storage]
- 1 superthermite charge ▶340 *EP2*   [2: Storage]
- 2 long-handled utilitools ▶317 *EP2*; as a normal utilitool, but can form handled tools such as shovels   [2: Storage]
- 1 autocook ▶343 *EP2*   [3: Mess & Rec tent]
- 1 large combo nuclear/standard battery unit   [4: Comm Mast]
- 1 healing vat ▶342 *EP2*   [4: Comm Mast]
- 1 healing vat ▶342 *EP2*   [4: Comm Mast]
- 1 radio booster ▶336 *EP2*   [4: Comm Mast]
- 1 emergency distress beacon ▶336 *EP2*   [4: Comm Mast]
- 1 mission recorder ▶336 *EP2*   [4: Comm Mast]
- 2 healing vat ▶342 *EP2*   [5: Lab and Med Tent]
- 3 portable SolArchives ▶340 *EP2* for Know: Astrobiology, Know: Xeno-Archeology, and Know: Xenolinguistics   [5: Lab]
- 3 specimen containers ▶340 *EP2*   [5: Lab]
- 1 healing vat ▶342 *EP2*   [6: Med Tent]
- 1 med scanner ▶342 *EP2*   [6: Med Tent]
- 3 healing sprays ▶342 *EP2*   [6: Med Tent]
- 1 blue box ▶340 *EP2*   [7: Hayude's Office]
- *Galaxy Voyage* server ▶337 *EP2*   [8: Linder's Tent]
- 35 defense beacons   [9: Perimeter]
- 1 hyperspectral imager   [11: Iktomi Ruins]
- 1 portable radar sensor ▶317 *EP2*   [11: Iktomi Ruins]
- 1 disassembler hive ▶342 and 345 *EP2*   [11: Iktomi Ruins]
- 1 engineer hive ▶342 and 345 *EP2*   [11: Iktomi Ruins]
- 1 x-ray emitter ▶339 *EP2*   [11: Iktomi Ruins]
- 6 saucer bots ▶349 *EP2* accompanying Hayude Prime, Other Hayude, and Parata and recording other camp activity

BLUEPRINTS

All of the gear above except for the vehicles exists as blueprints in the crasher truck nanofabbers, along with the following. Items marked with a square bullet ▪ are only accessible with Hayude's permission, unless the fabber is hacked. Standard print times are listed. For details on nanofabrication ▶314 *EP2*.

- Adaptive interface ▶340 *EP2*; 24 hours
- Armor vest (light and heavy; ▶215 *EP2*); 2 hours/8 hours
- ▪ Assault Rifle ▶210 *EP2*; 8 hours
- Breadcrumb system ▶336 *EP2*; 2 hours
- ▪ Buzz ▶334 *EP2*; 8 hours
- Buzzer ▶209 *EP2*; 8 or 24 hours, depending on swarm
- Disassembly tools ▶340 *EP2*; 8 hours
- ▪ Drive ▶331 *EP2*; 8 hours
- Electronic rope ▶341 *EP2*; 2 hours
- Gardener swarm ▶345 *EP2*; 2 hours
- ▪ Grin ▶331 *EP2*; 2 hours
- ▪ Kick ▶331 *EP2*; 8 hours
- ▪ Klar ▶331 *EP2*; 2 hours
- Light vacsuit ▶341 *EP2*; 8 hours
- Microwave agonizer ▶208 *EP2*; 8 hours
- ▪ Orbital Hash ▶334 *EP2*; 2 hours
- Portable sensors (different kinds; ▶317 *EP2*); 8 hours
- Scout swarm ▶345 *EP2*; 2 hours
- Spindle ▶341 *EP2*; 8 hours
- Spindle climber ▶341 *EP2*; 2 hours
- Sprayer ▶209 *EP2*; 2 hours
- Stunner ▶208 *EP2*; 8 hours
- Torch ▶209 *EP2*; 24 hours
- Viewers ▶317 *EP2*; 8 hours

GALAXY VOYAGE SERVER

Linder's *Galaxy Voyage* server contains a massive, player-versus-environment simulscape and 20 heavily pruned beta forks of his guildies. The server is guarded by a standard security ALI (▶327 *EP2*). If the PCs gain admin status via a mesh intrusion, they can log in as Linder and talk to the forks of his guild. The most useful of these forks is Ensign Seiwan ▶28, who knows Linder well, speaks fluent Tarval, and has some useful skills if sleeved into a bot.

The guildies act out the roles of a fantastical FTL starship crew of the Federated Alliance of Planets (most players speak Mandarin or Skandinavíska, where the acronym isn't as funny). Linder's character is a Tarval warrior who serves as the ship's Science Officer.

NEW GEAR

Xenovore introduces some new gatecrashing gear:

Crasher Truck: Crasher trucks are budget, rocket-less versions of the general exploration vehicle (▶352 *EP2*). It can traverse overland with wheels or legs and either under or over the water.

Defense Beacons: These telescoping rods extend out to 3 meters in height and are designed to be hammered into the ground or attached to surfaces with grip tape. They are designed to be placed as far as 30 meters from the nearest rod, creating a defensive line or perimeter to keep unwanted wildlife and intruders out of an area. Each unit carries infrared, radar, and ultrasonic sensors as well as powerful speakers, a stunner, and a microwave agonizer (▶208 *EP2*). The defense beacon ALIs can identify authorized users, allowing them to pass through, while creating a silent, audible, or AR warning and/or deploying weaponry to deter intrusions.

Hyperspectral Imager: These devices scan in multiple wavelengths simultaneously and then process the input to compare the results at each frequency against each other. Many objects, materials, and gasses have unique spectral signatures when viewed this way. Hyperspectral imagers can be used to identify composition, layers, and buried/concealed objects.

HYBRID VEHICLE	Complexity/GP	Passengers	Vigor	Flex	Armor	WT	DUR	DR	Movement	Size
Crasher Truck	Rare/	6	2	2	12/10	50	250	500	8/40 Wheeled • 4/20 Walker	VL
Ware: Access Jacks, Autocook, Chem Sniffer, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Vision, Large Fabber, Life Support (1 month), Healing Vat, Mesh Inserts, Pressure Adaptation, Puppet Sock, Radar, Sonar									8/32 Submarine	

SURVIVAL TOOLS	Complexity/GP	Description
Defense Beacon	Maj/3	Perimeter guardian system, set of 4
Hyperspectral Imager	Maj/3	Multi-wavelength scanning unit

MAJOR NPCs

The following NPCs accompany the expedition. Some list full character pools, for GMs that prefer that over threat pools, or if they are used as a player character.

JIC-AL HAYUDE (HAYUDE PRIME)

Expedition Leader, Chief Archeologist

Motivations: +Fame, +Hedonism, +Wealth

Hayude is obsessed with regaining his former glory as a star xeno-archeologist. As the mission's leader, he is demanding, passive-aggressive, and unabashedly focused on making a major discovery. He's brusquely friendly but shallow as hell and unrepentant about it. He's also constantly either high or coming down, which means he alternates between blustering around with his camera drones making sure everyone's busy and disappearing into his tent for hours on end.

Hayude Prime

Morph: Sylph   Threat Pool ⏶ 6
Insight ❂ 1 • Moxie ⬖ 3 (5) • Vigor ✊ 1 • Flex ✴ 2

Initiative: 6 • **Fray:** 50 • **Armor Value:** 0/0
Wound Threshold: 6 • **Durability:** 30 • **Death Rating:** 45

Perceive: 55, 65 vision w/specs
Move: Walker 4/20

COG: 20 ⁶⁰ • **INT:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **REF:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **SAV:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **SOM:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **WIL:** 10 ³⁰
Skills: Athletics 40, Deceive 60, Guns 40, Interface 60, Kinesics 50, Know: Anthropology 40, Know: Astrobiology 40, Know: Geology 40, Know: Speech 60, Know: Surveying 55, Know: Xeno-Archeology 75, Know: Xenolinguistics 40, Persuade 70 (90), Provoke 70 (90), Research 55, Survival 40
Languages: Arabic, English, Japanese
Rep: c-rep 50, f-rep 60, g-rep 20, r-rep 45, x-rep 45

Ware: Biomods, Clean Metabolism, Cortical Stack, Endocrine Control, Enhanced Pheromones, Mesh Inserts
Traits: Addiction (Klar, Level 2), Striking Looks (Level 1)
Gear: Drive (3 doses), Orbital Hash (3 doses), Klar (5 doses), Smart Clothing, Specs, Utilitool

Notes: Hayude is usually followed by 1–3 filming saucer bots

OTHER HAYUDE

Hayude's Fork and Expedition Task-Master

Motivations: −Doing Prime's Menial Work, +Exploration, +Science

Hayude forked himself to help manage the mission. Other Hayude is an alpha fork that has been (somewhat unsuccessfully) psychosurgically modified to repress rebellious tendencies and to follow the original Hayude's orders. Other Hayude manages most of the details of the expedition: finances, logistics, site planning—anything Hayude Prime (as he refers to him) is too bored or high to trouble himself over.

Other Hayude retains a passion for academia that Hayude Prime has forgotten. He resents Prime for trashing their scientific rep. Persuasion under the right conditions might drive a wedge between the two, but even then, Other Hayude is limited in terms of how he can act. The behavior modification prevents him from directly harming Hayude Prime (physically, mentally, or financially), but he might assist PCs under the right circumstances with information.

Other Hayude

Morph: Menton   Threat Pool ⏶ 5
Insight ❂ 3 • Moxie ⬖ 1 • Vigor ✊ 1 • Flex ✴ 2

Initiative: 6 • **Fray:** 50 • **Armor Value:** 1/3 (Armor Clothing)
Wound Threshold: 7 • **Durability:** 35 • **Death Rating:** 53

Microwave Agonizer: 40, SA, Ammo 20, Range 15, Pain; Roast Mode: DV 2d10, SS, Armor-Piercing, Pain

Perceive: 55, 65 vision w/specs
Move: Walker 4/20

COG: 20 ⁶⁰ • **INT:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **REF:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **SAV:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **SOM:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **WIL:** 10 ³⁰
Skills: Athletics 40, Deceive 60, Guns 40, Interface 60, Kinesics 50, Know: [Anthropology 40, Astrobiology 40, Geology 40, Speech 60, Surveying 55, Xeno-Archeology 75, Xenolinguistics 40], Persuade 70, Provoke 70, Research 55, Survival 40
Languages: Arabic, English, Japanese
Rep: c-rep 50, f-rep 60, g-rep 20, r-rep 45, x-rep 45

Ware: Biomods, Cortical Stack, Mesh Inserts, Mnemonics
Traits: Edited Memories, Enhanced Behavior (Obey Hayude Prime, Level 2), Restricted Behavior (Harming Hayude Prime, Level 2)
Gear: Smart Clothing, Specs, Utilitool

Notes: Hayude is usually followed by 1–3 filming saucer bots

IRIAKA PARATA

XP Director, Otherworld Rep

Motivations: +Fame, +Make Gripping XP, +Thrill-Seeking

Though this mission is billed as an archeological dig, it is first and foremost a media opportunity—and Parata is the director. She is honed in on making a reality show moment out of everything that happens. Upbeat and friendly to a point that can become grating, she is relentless on checking everyone's XP streams, adjusting lighting and angles, calling in camera drones, and urging people to put on an interesting show, even if that runs counter to procedures and training. She will not hesitate to stoke drama and interpersonal conflicts. She serves as Otherworld's eyes and voice, and has the authority to override Hayude if ratings are on the line.

Parata

Morph: Olympian   Threat Pool ⏶ 4
Insight ❂ 1 • Moxie ⬖ 1 • Vigor ✊ 3 • Flex ✴ 1

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 55 • **Armor Value:** 0/0
Wound Threshold: 8 • **Durability:** 40 • **Death Rating:** 60

Perceive: 70
Move: Walker 4/20

COG: 15 ⁴⁵ • **INT:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **REF:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **SAV:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **SOM:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **WIL:** 15 ⁴⁵
Skills: Athletics 60, Deceive 70, Guns 50, Infiltrate 55, Infosec 40, Interface 55, Kinesics 70, Know: Drama 70, Know: Socialites 55, Know: XP Industry 60, Know: XP Production 70, Melee 45, Persuade 70, Pilot: Air 65, Pilot: Ground 40, Program 55, Provoke 80
Languages: English, Japanese, Mandarin, Māori
Rep: c-rep 45, f-rep 50, x-rep 25

Ware: Biomods, Cortical Stack, Drone Rig, Mesh Inserts
Traits: Situational Awareness
Gear: Gnat Drones (2), Microbugs (5), Smart Clothing, Traction Pads

Notes: Parata is usually followed by 1–3 filming saucer bots

ANDREI LINDER
Gaming-Addicted Xeno-Archeologist
Motivations: +Play Games, +Science, −Work

Linder is Hayude's top xenopaleontologist and assistant, and the last remaining of his former posse of student disciples. This loyalty is why Hayude is willing to overlook Linder's slacker work ethic, a side effect of his severe VR-game addiction. Linder's morph is sharp-featured and tan, with dreadlocks and an outdoorsy look that belies his preference for spending all of his time in his tent playing games.

Linder

Morph: Neotenic   **Threat Pool** ⏶ 3
Insight ☀ 2 • Moxie 🕊 1 • Vigor ✊ 1 • Flex ✺ 0

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 60 • **Armor Value:** 1/3 (Armor Clothing)
Wound Threshold: 6 • **Durability:** 30 • **Death Rating:** 45

Perceive: 50
Move: Walker 4/12

COG: 20 ⁶⁰ • **INT:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **REF:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **SAV:** 10 ³⁰ • **SOM:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **WIL:** 10 ³⁰
Skills: Athletics 50, Guns 45, Infiltrate 40, Infosec 50, Interface 60, Know: Astrobiology 40, Know: Field Science 55, Know: Gatecrashing 50, Know: VR Games 70, Know: Xeno-Archeology 60, Know: Xenopaleontology 65, Melee 40, Program 60, Research 60, Survival 50
Languages: English, German, Tarval
Rep: c-rep 30, r-rep 30, x-rep 20

Ware: Biomods, Circadian Regulation, Cortical Stack, Mesh Inserts
Traits: Addiction (*Galaxy Voyage*, Level 3)
Gear: Utilitool

Notes: Small size (−10 to spot/hit ▶227 *EP2*)

THE INTERNS ("NIKOS," 4)
Xeno-Archeology Students
Motivations: +Learning, +Science, +(one other personal)

Hayude recruited 4 student interns for the mission. Confusingly, their names are Neko, Nikki, Nikita, and Nick. Muses make identification easy, but Hayude calls them all Nikos, whether referring to individuals or a group. They're underpaid, underskilled, and being exploited, but excited to be working with Hayude on an alien world.

Nikos

Morph: Splicer   **Threat Pool** ⏶ 1

Initiative: 6 • **Fray:** 50 • **Armor Value:** 0/0
Wound Threshold: 6 • **Durability:** 30 • **Death Rating:** 45

Perceive: 50
Move: Walker 4/20

COG: 20 ⁶⁰ • **INT:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **REF:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **SAV:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **SOM:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **WIL:** 15 ⁴⁵
Skills: Athletics 55, Guns 30, Infiltrate 40, Interface 60, Kinesics 40, Know: Astrobiology 40, Know: Geology 40, Know: Surveying 40, Know: Xeno-Archeology 50, Know: [GM Choice] 50, Program 50, Provoke 50, Research 70, Survival 30
Languages: [Choose 3]
Rep: @-rep 10, c-rep 20, r-rep 20

Ware: Biomods, Cortical Stack, Mesh Inserts
Traits: Real World Naiveté
Gear: Smart Clothing, Utilitool

OLIVINE "LIV" AHMADI
Xenolinguist, Embedded Agent
Motivations: +Patron's Interests, +Science, +Survival

Liv is the expedition's xenolinguist. She was recruited via the gate lottery program, but Hayude is pleased with her CV. Secretly, she is an agent for an interested party (which one is up to the GM; several possibilities are provided on the *Ahmadi's Patron Options* table. As one of the only synthmorphs, she is immune to xenovore infection.

Ahmadi

Morph: Savant   **Threat Pool** ⏶ 3
Insight ☀ 3 • Moxie 🕊 0 • Vigor ✊ 1 • Flex ✺ 1

Initiative: 6 • **Fray:** 40 • **Armor Value:** 6/4 (Light Frame)
Wound Threshold: 7 • **Durability:** 35 • **Death Rating:** 70

Microwave Agonizer: 50, SA, Ammo 20, Range 15, Pain; Roast Mode: DV 2d10, SS, Armor-Piercing, Pain
Eelware: 50, Shock, Touch-Only

Perceive: 60
Move: Walker 4/20

COG: 15 ⁶⁰ • **INT:** 20 ⁴⁵ • **REF:** 10 ³⁰ • **SAV:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **SOM:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **WIL:** 15 ⁴⁵
Skills: Athletics 45, Deceive 65, Guns 50, Hardware: Robotics 50, Infiltrate 60, Infosec 60, Interface 60, Kinesics 40, Know: Astrobiology 40, Know: Iktomi 55, Know: Psychology 55, Know: Spycraft 50, Know: Xeno-Anthropology 60, Know: Xenolinguistics 80, Melee 50, Persuade 55, Pilot: Ground 55, Program 65, Research 50
Languages: Arabic, English, French, Hindi, Persian
Rep: c-rep 35, g-rep 30, r-rep 35

Ware: Access Jacks, Cortical Stack, Cyberbrain, Eelware, Lidar, Mesh Inserts, Mnemonics, Puppet Sock
Traits: Exotic Morphology (Level 1)
Gear: Utilitool

Ahmadi's Patron Options

1d6	Result
1	**Pax Familae** ▶227 *EP2*. Claudia has made significant loans to Hayude, but does not expect him to pay. Ahmadi is instructed to snatch any discoveries his expedition makes first.
2	**Paquet.** Hayude's long-time rival wants him to fail and go down for the count. Ahmadi's orders are to sabotage the mission.
3	**Hypercorp Rival.** Otherworld's competitors want to see the project fail. Ahmadi is instructed to sabotage the XP production, delete footage, and derail the mission as necessary.
4	**Jovians.** The Jovians consider gatecrashing and digging up dead civilizations to be an x-risk. Ahmadi is ordered to destroy everything if any threat to transhumanity is uncovered.
5	**Iktomi Cult.** This group of xenodeists (▶169 *EP2*) worship the Iktomi. They instruct Ahmadi (who may or may not be a believer) to steal all Iktomi relics and research.
6	**Herself.** Ahmadi has a personal infatuation with the Iktomi, an old grudge with Hayude over an incident he no longer remembers, and/or deeply-seated psychological issues, making her a wild card.

ADDITIONAL NPCs & BOTS

At the GM's discretion, the expedition can include up to a dozen other support personnel: surveyors, geologists, lab workers, techies, specialists, security, and general laborers. These NPCs function primarily as background and do not influence the plot. However, they serve as both red shirts and potential exsurgents when the xenovore plague becomes an active threat.

ENSIGN SEIWAN

Galaxy Voyage Guildie Fork

Motivations: +Beam Weapon Combat, +Gaming, +Science

Ensign Seiwan is the most useful of the guildie forks running on Linder's *Galaxy Voyage* server. They're of the Safian species — elfin, genderless beings who excel in beam weapon combat and science (*Galaxy Voyage* science, not actual science). Seiwan appears in AR or as a hologram as a sky bluish, fey-like alien with no clear gender, clad in a blue Alliance Fleet uniform.

As a beta fork, Seiwan's memories are pruned to only remember their time in *Galaxy Voyage*. They're aware that they're someone out in the world, but they don't really care about that. They cite only the world of *Galaxy Voyage* when telling anecdotes, drawing comparisons, or making analogies.

If convinced properly, Ensign Seiwan will provide information on Linder, attempt to translate his Tarval rantings (though his chance is low), and possibly even help out by piloting vehicles or drones (if given access to the mesh outside the server). If angered, Seiwan will be evasive or lie about information and might even try to hack their way out of the server and subvert systems in the camp.

Seiwan has gamed with Linder for years and is pretty sure he spends a lot of time gaming when he's actually supposed to be working. Or maybe he forks himself? Who's Seiwan to judge? Seiwan and Linder once spent a week taking stims and doing base raids on the Tarval Wall at Gaphernum, but they were younger then. Seiwan will note that Linder is a guild leader, noted for spending long hours online and enlisting other lifestyle players. As a commander, Linder favors swarm attack strategies and large buildups prior to attacks.

Ensign Seiwan

Morph: Digimorph	**Threat Pool** ⚠ 1

Initiative: 5 • **Fray:** 50 • **Armor Value:** 0/0
Wound Threshold: 5 • **Durability:** 25 • **Death Rating:** 50

Perceive: 60

COG: 15 45 • **INT:** 10 30 • **REF:** 15 45 • **SAV:** 15 45 • **SOM:** 10 30 • **WIL:** 15 45
Skills: Guns 40 (Beam Weapons 50), Infosec 45, Interface 60, Kinesics 50, Know: *Galaxy Voyage* 80, Know: VR Gaming 70, Pilot: Air 40, Program 50, Provoke 40, Research 45
Languages: Mandarin, Safian, Tarval
Rep: c-rep 20

Ware: Mnemonics
Traits: Addiction (*Galaxy Voyage*, Level 3), Digital Speed, Edited Memories, Exotic Morphology (Level 3), Real World Naiveté

Notes: Seiwan is hosted in Linder's *Galaxy Voyage* server. As a beta fork (beta fork ▶292 *EP2*), all aptitude checks suffer a −10 modifier.

KISA PAQUET

Rival Expedition Leader, Chief Xeno-Archeologist

Motivations: +Career, +Discovery, +Science

Kisa Paquet is brilliant, suave, and confident. She is used to comfortably exceling at almost everything she does. A rising star in the xeno-archeology field and one of the first to study Iktomi ruins on Sunrise, she is nevertheless modest about her achievements.

Paquet and Hayude have been low-key rivals since their pre-Fall university days. Paquet doesn't harbor a grudge, but she does think Hayude is blustery and too used to getting his way. If anything, she pities his decline; she thinks he was a good scientist.

Paquet

Morph: Hibernoid	**Threat Pool** ⚠ 4

Initiative: 6 • **Fray:** 55 • **Armor Value:** 3/6 (armor clothing, second skin)
Wound Threshold: 7 • **Durability:** 35 • **Death Rating:** 53

Microwave Agonizer: 40, SA, Ammo 20, Range 15, Pain; Roast Mode: DV 2d10, SS, Armor-Piercing, Pain

Perceive: 75
Move: Walker 4/20

COG: 25 75 • **INT:** 15 45 • **REF:** 15 45 • **SAV:** 20 60 • **SOM:** 15 45 • **WIL:** 15 45
Skills: Athletics 55, Guns 40, Interface 60, Kinesics 55, Know: Anthropology 60, Know: Astrobiology 70, Know: Geology 45, Know: Surveying 55, Know: Xeno-Archeology 80, Know: Xenolinguistics 50, Persuade 70, Research 50, Survival 50
Languages: English, French, Mandarin, Skandinaviska
Rep: @-rep 15, c-rep 50, f-rep 40, r-rep 65, x-rep 60

Ware: Biomods, Circadian Regulation, Clean Metabolism, Cold Tolerance, Cortical Stack, Hibernation, Mesh Inserts
Traits: Hyper Linguistics

ENGINEER

Expedition Workers and Techies

Motivations: +Self-Reliance, +Stability, +Survival

Various engineers, techies, and laborers work the expeditions.

Engineer

Morph: Worker Pod	**Threat Pool** ⚠ 1

Initiative: 5 • **Fray:** 50 • **Armor Value:** 3/2 (8) (crash suit)
Wound Threshold: 7 • **Durability:** 35 • **Death Rating:** 53

Club: 45, DV 1d10, Reach

Perceive: 50
Move: Walker 4/20

COG: 15 45 • **INT:** 10 30 • **REF:** 15 45 • **SAV:** 15 45 • **SOM:** 20 60 • **WIL:** 15 45
Skills: Athletics 55, Guns 40, Infiltrate 40, Interface 50, Kinesics 40, Know: [Choose 1] 65, Know: [Choose 1] 60, Know: [Choose 1] 50, Melee 45, Pilot: Ground 50, Program 45, Provoke 50, Survival 55

Ware: Access Jacks, Biomods, Cortical Stack, Cyberbrain, Mesh Inserts, Mnemonics, Puppet Sock
Gear: Orbital Hash (2 doses), Tools (Kit), Utilitool

SCIENTIST

Assistant Field Scientists

Motivations: +Discovery, +Science, +Survival

Use these stats for xeno-archeologists, xenolinguists, astrobiologists, geologists, ecologists, and scientists with other specialties accompanying either the Hayude or Paquet expeditions.

Scientist

Morph: Splicer · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · **Threat Pool** ⚠ 1

Initiative: 6 • **Fray:** 40 • **Armor Value:** 0/0
Wound Threshold: 6 • **Durability:** 30 • **Death Rating:** 45

Perceive: 55
Move: Walker 4/20

COG: 20 ^{60} • **INT:** 15 ^{45} • **REF:** 15 ^{45} • **SAV:** 15 ^{45} • **SOM:** 10 ^{30} • **WIL:** 15 ^{45}
Skills: Athletics 40, Infiltrate 40, Interface 50, Kinesics 40,
   Know: [Choose 1] 65, Know: [Choose 1] 60,
   Know: [Choose 1] 50, Persuade 40, Research 60, Survival 40

Ware: Biomods, Cortical Stack, Mesh Inserts
Gear: Drive, Fokus, or Klar (2 doses), Pocket Lab, Portable SolArchive,
   Smart Clothing, Utilitool

SECURITY

Camp Defenders

Motivations: +Fame, +Hedonism, +Wealth

Use these stats for security personnel hired to protect the expedition and its personnel.

Security

Morph: Olympian · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · **Threat Pool** ⚠ 2

Initiative: 6 • **Fray:** 55 • **Armor Value:** 4/10 (light armore vest)
Wound Threshold: 8 • **Durability:** 40 • **Death Rating:** 60

Assault Rifle: 55, DV 2d10 + 2, SA/BF/FA, Ammo 45 + 1, Range 100,
   Long, Two-Handed
Shock Baton: 55, DV 1d10, Reach, Shock, Touch-Only

Perceive: 50 (60 with specs)
Move: Walker 4/20

COG: 10 ^{30} • **INT:** 15 ^{45} • **REF:** 15 ^{45} • **SAV:** 15 ^{45} • **SOM:** 20 ^{60} • **WIL:** 15 ^{45}
Skills: Athletics 60, Deceive 40, Guns 55, Infiltrate 40, Kinesics 50,
   Know: [Choose 1] 65, Know: [Choose 1] 60, Know: [Choose 1] 50,
   Melee 55, Pilot: Ground 50, Provoke 55, Survival 50

Ware: Biomods, Cortical Stack, Mesh Inserts
Gear: Cuffband, Grin or Kick (2 doses), Specs, Traction Pads

DWARF BOT

Excavation Machine

This large industrial bot is equipped with massive modular industrial tools like boring drills, shovels, hydraulic jacks, jackhammers, scooping arms, and acid sprays, for use in mining, excavation, tunneling, and construction. Like other dwarf bots, its ALI is programmed to happily whistle while it works. It has a quadrupedal walker design, but the Hayude expedition's bot is also outfitted with wheels for the long overland journey.

Dwarf Bot

Initiative: 4 • **Fray:** 30 • **Armor Value:** 18/14 · · · **Threat Pool** ⚠ 1
Wound Threshold: 30 • **Durability:** 150 • **Death Rating:** 300

Perceive: 40
Move: Walker 4/20, Wheeled 8/40

Skills: Athletics 20, Guns 30, Hardware: Robotics 20 (Dwarf Bots 30),
   Infosec 20, Interface 30, Know: Dwarf Specs 80,
   Pilot: Ground 60 (Dwarf Bots 70)

Ware: 360-Degree Vision, Access Jacks, Bot AI, Disassembly Tools,
   Electrical Sense, Lidar, Mesh Inserts, Puppet Sock, Radar, Sonar,
   Tool Kit

Note: Large size (+10 to hit/spot). If jammed/sleeved, the bot has
   Vigor 3 and melee attacks made with its tools inflict DV 2d10 + 8,
   Armor-Piercing.

SAUCER BOTS (6)

Everpresent Flying Cameras

These disc-shaped drones are lightweight and quiet. They are typically launched by throwing them like a frisbee, after which they hover and propel themselves with an ionic drive (▶231 *EP2*). Parata uses these saucers for camera, audio, and XP recording.

Saucer Bot

Initiative: 4 • **Fray:** 30 • **Armor Value:** 2/2 · · · · · **Threat Pool** ⚠ 0
Wound Threshold: 5 • **Durability:** 25 • **Death Rating:** 50

Perceive: 40, 50 hearing/vision
Move: Ionic 8/40

Skills: Guns 30, Hardware: Robotics 20 (Saucer Bots 30), Infiltrate 30 (40),
   Infosec 20, Interface 30, Know: Saucer Specs 80,
   Pilot: Air 60 (Saucer Bots 70)

Ware: 360-Degree Vision, Access Jacks, Bot AI, Chameleon Skin,
   Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Vision, Lidar, Mesh Inserts,
   Puppet Sock, Radar

Note: Small size (−10 to hit/spot)

CRITTERS

The cloud forests and jungles of Vishnu are rich in biodiversity, though various molluscoid-analog species predominate. These critters range in threat levels from annoying to extremely dangerous. A few are detailed here, but GMs are encouraged to design their own for variety and to mix things up.

These stats are for uninfected creatures. For those infected by the xenovore exsurgent virus see ▶34–37.

CHOWKEY

Annoyingly Curious, Thieving Parrot-Monkey Analogs
Threat Level: Yellow
Niche: Vishnu's jungles and cloud forests
Numbers: 2+ per PC

Chowkeys are similar to arboreal monkeys but with some avian characteristics. They are about the size of spider monkeys, but have parrot-like heads and powerful beaks for cracking open food (seeds, nuts, and Vishnan mollusk-analogs). They're wingless but covered with bright green and blue "feathers" that are small and dense, mistakable for hair at a distance. Chowkeys have long, spindly arms and legs and prehensile tails that are as long again as their bodies. They feed mostly on the giant seed pods of the big forest hardwoods, but they're playful and inquisitive (and thus a huge nuisance to gatecrashers). The males build intricately decorated love nests on the forest floor in a fashion similar to bowerbirds. Most chowkeys are little more than a nuisance, but the boldest and most motivated may steal brightly colored objects to add to these nests. Their name comes from the "chow, chow" call they frequently make. If attacked, they use swarming tactics and latch onto the target's body (usually the back or legs), where they can more effectively apply their beaks.

Chowkey

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 60 • **Armor Value:** 0/0	**Threat Pool** ⚠ 1
Wound Threshold: 2 • **Durability:** 10 • **Death Rating:** 15	

Beak: 40, DV (1d10 + 2) ÷ 2, Armor-Piercing
Back Scramble: 70. If successful, the chowkey jumps/climbs onto opponent, gaining a superior position bonus (+20) to subsequent attacks and Fray Tests versus the opponent. This also negates the opponent's Reach bonuses. On a superior result, the chowkey gets inside the target's clothes or otherwise finds a weak spot; beak attacks ignore armor entirely. Knocking a chowkey off requires winning a Melee Test or SOM Check opposed by the chowkey's Melee or SOM Check (bonuses above apply).

Perceive: 60, 70 hearing
Move: Walker (Medium 4/20)

COG: 1 ³ • **INT:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **REF:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **SAV:** 5 ¹⁵ • **SOM:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **WIL:** 5 ¹⁵
Skills: Athletics 70, Infiltrate 60, Melee 40, Survival 60

Ware: Enhanced Hearing, Prehensile Feet, Prehensile Tail

Notes: Small size (−10 to spot/hit; half melee damage ▶227 *EP2*)

GOOPER

Molluscoid Apex Ambush Predator
Threat Level: Orange
Niche: Vishnu's jungles and cloud forests
Numbers: 2

The critters dubbed "goopers" by explorers are the most common and most dangerous of Vishnu's large ambush predators. It combines the typical slow-moving, heavily armored body adaptations of terrestrial mollusks with a terrifyingly fast frog-mouth tongue that ends in a barbed, grasping reticulum. It can snare a chowkey from a branch 5 meters off the forest floor and swallow it whole. For preying on shelled molluscoid life, it features a nasty set of 4 "crackers" around its head. These appendages are jointed, beaked, acid-exuding, meter-long hammers. Shell-less transhuman explorers on foot are a low-hanging food source. Although camouflaged to not stand out in the cloud forest, gooper shells have a subtle, lustrous beauty that might be appreciated by artisans or collectors.

Gooper

Stress Test: SV 1d6 − 2	**Threat Pool** ⚠ 2
Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 30 • **Armor Value:** 11/11 (shell)	
Wound Threshold: 14 • **Durability:** 70 • **Death Rating:** 105	

Tongue: 70, DV 1d10, Reach (+20). On a superior success, the target is automatically grappled ▶205 *EP2*.
　When taking an action to maintain the grapple, the gooper can strike the victim with up to 2 crackers simultaneously.
Cracker:
　60, DV 3d10, Armor-Piercing, only usable against grappled targets
Bite: 60, DV 2d10, Reach (+10). On a superior success, medium and smaller targets are swallowed whole. Swallowed targets cannot see or hear, asphyxiate ▶234 *EP2*, and take DV 1d6 each turn (armor protects but is reduced).

Perceive: 60, 70 hearing/smell
Move: Crawler (Slow 4/12)

COG: 1 ³ • **INT:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **REF:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **SAV:** 5 ¹⁵ • **SOM:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **WIL:** 10 ³⁰
Skills: Athletics 60, Infiltrate 50 (60/80), Melee 60 (Tongue 70), Survival 60

Ware: Carapace (Shell), Chameleon Skin, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Smell

Notes: Large size (+10 to spot/hit, Reach; ▶227 *EP2*)

LMTFA

Massive Armored Herbivore Molluscoid
Threat Level: Red
Niche: Vishnu's jungles
Numbers: 1–2

LMTFA is an acronym for Leave-Me-The-Fuck-Alone, a name provided by gatecrashers who learned the hard way. These elephant-sized wading herd creatures are notable for their ponderous gait and impressive, spiked shells. They are extremely wary of other creatures, giving a thunderous warning yowl to warn off anything close before they charge with terrifying speed and bulk. Even vehicles are not safe from their head horns and crushing weight. LMTFAs are more common in the lowland jungles than the cloud forests.

LMTFA

Stress Test: SV 1d6 – 2   **Threat Pool** ⏏ 4

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 30 • **Armor Value:** 12/18 (shell)
Wound Threshold: 20 • **Durability:** 100 • **Death Rating:** 150

Horn: 60, DV 4d10 + 8, Reach (+10), Armor-Piercing
Stomp: 60, DV 3d10 + 4, Reach (+10), Armor-Piercing

Perceive: 50, 60 hearing/smell
Move: Walker (Medium 4/20)

COG: 1 ³ • **INT:** 10 ³⁰ • **REF:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **SAV:** 1 ³ • **SOM:** 25 ⁷⁵ • **WIL:** 15 ⁴⁵
Skills: Athletics 40, Infiltrate 40, Melee 60, Survival 60

Ware: Carapace (Shell), Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Smell

Notes: Large size (+10 to spot/hit, Reach; ▶227 *EP2*); LMTFAs often aggressively charge when they attack (−10 attack, +1d10 + 1d6 DV, −10 Fray ▶205 *EP2*)

SLIRD

Predator Molluscoid Avian Analogs
Threat Level: Yellow
Niche: Vishnu's jungles and cloud forests
Numbers: 4–6

Territorial and rare, the creatures dubbed "slirds" (an unfortunate portmanteau of slug and bird) look like a mix between a massive slug and a large raptor. Their slick bodies are aerodynamic and featherless, with large membranous wings and a pair of clawed legs. Their "beaks" are long and thin, like a spike.

Slirds hunt smaller molluscoids and other small creatures by diving down, swooping them from the ground, and dropping them from great heights to crack their shells. They can also spit an acidic secretion to bore holes in a shell, using their thin beaks to feast on the flesh within.

Slird

Stress Test: SV 1d6 – 2   **Threat Pool** ⏏ 1

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 60 • **Armor Value:** 0/0
Wound Threshold: 6 • **Durability:** 30 • **Death Rating:** 45

Diving Claw Attack:
   60, 3d10, can make a full move and attack without modifiers
Acid Spit: 70, DV 1d6 + 3 for 5 turns, armor protects but is reduced by damage absorbed, victims are impaired (−20) by pain
Spike Beak: 60, DV 1d10 + 4, Armor-Piercing

Perceive: 70, 80 vision
Move: Winged (Fast 8/40)

COG: 1 ³ • **INT:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **REF:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **SAV:** 1 ³ • **SOM:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **WIL:** 15 ⁴⁵
Skills: Athletics 70 (Fly 80), Infiltrate 60, Melee 60, Survival 60

Ware: Enhanced Vision, Prehensile Feet

SLUGITO

Tiny Flying Leeches
Threat Level: Yellow
Niche: Vishnu's jungles and cloud forests
Numbers: 3 per PC or swarm

These flying insectoids hover and dart like dragonflies, but of a slightly smaller size. They otherwise resemble a slug or leech. They feed by landing on their target, slithering under the shell (or clothes), and using a swathe of micro-sized feeder tendrils to painlessly suck bodily fluids away. Living in vast swarms throughout Vishnu, thankfully most slugitos are turned off by the chemical scent of transhumans and rarely attempt to feed on them. A small percentage of slugitos are venomous, injecting a chemical when they feed that is a potent psychedelic to transhumans.

Slugito

Initiative: 5 • **Fray:** 65 • **Armor Value:** 0/0   **Threat Pool** ⏏ 0
Wound Threshold: 1 • **Durability:** 1 • **Death Rating:** 2

Fluid Leech: Automatic after 2 turns on exposed skin, DV 1, 10% chance of being venomous: SOM Check or SV 1d10, impaired (−30) due to sensory hallucinations for 1d10 minutes

Perceive: 40, 50 smell
Move: Winged (Medium 4/20)

COG: 1 ³ • **INT:** 5 ¹⁵ • **REF:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **SAV:** 1 ³ • **SOM:** 1 ³ • **WIL:** 5 ¹⁵
Skills: Athletics 70 (Fly 80), Infiltrate 80

Ware: Enhanced Smell

Swarm: GMs can choose to present a large number of slugitos as a swarm ▶344 *EP2* with DUR 25 and DR 50
Notes: Very Small size (−30 to spot/hit ▶227 *EP2*)

THE XENOVORE STRAIN

Vector: Biological Pathogen

The xenovore ("alien eater") strain of the exsurgent virus (▶382 *EP2*) is a malignant biological plague that rapidly transforms its victims into sapience-suppressing marauders.

Xenovore infection progresses in 4 stages, detailed below. In the context of this scenario, it begins with exposure to the fluid of a xenovore egg.

The planet's soil and ruins are seeded with millions of ochre xenovore eggs. Each egg employs an array of biological and chemical senses as well as a version of the ego sense psi sleight (▶284 *EP2*). They don't react to known Vishnan life, but they burst violently if they detect an alien life form or a Vishnan species that has evolved significantly since the last time its evolutionary ancestors were "sampled." The eggs also tend to burst if they are handled or jostled roughly. Anyone within several meters of a bursting xenovore pod risks getting splattered, at which point the virus has a chance to infect the character. Exsurgents can also transmit the infection by bite or spit attacks.

Successful infection by the virus leads to rapid transformation into an exsurgent. When first infected, victims are compelled to isolate themselves, giving the virus time to evaluate the new life form and express mutations best fit to suppress others of its kind. The virus then mutates the infected into exsurgents and releases aerosolized chemical signatures that activate other eggs within a radius of several kilometers. Activated eggs strategically burst, infecting nearby animals and mutating them into sapience outbreak suppressors. Of these, the most dangerous to a mobile and armed transhuman gatecrashing team are arboreal chowkeys and apex predator goopers (*Critters* ▶30). Mobs of these mutated animals will attack any sapient life the virus has identified.

As the virus and exsurgents spread, more eggs will activate and more exsurgents will be created, putting the entire region on alert against transhuman infestation. Wave upon wave of alien animals will appear at this stage, bent on devouring all sapient life.

Once the virus completes its culling, it goes dormant and allows the native biosphere to go back to normal. Over a period of several months, all exsurgents created by the virus self-cannibalize. The exsurgents' insides convert themselves into new ochre eggs, leaving behind only a weird, polymerized skeleton (exo- or endo-, depending upon the species) and the egg itself.

Thus, the trap is reset.

XENOVORE EGGS

The eggs left behind by previous xenovore outbreaks are smooth, shiny, ochre-colored ovoids, roughly 40 x 30 centimeters. The shells are rigid and non-fragile, but easily broken or penetrated with intent. Packed to bursting inside is a thick liquid loaded with infectious bio-nanobot retroviral phages.

The egg shells are not simple casings, however. They are a complex organisms designed to maintain their interiors in a kind of biological stasis over epochs of time. They also possess a number of sensory organs which they use to identify the presence of new sapient organisms.

Once a target is identified, or if an egg is jostled too abruptly, it bursts, spreading its ochre goo over a wide area. Splashed liquid remains potent for 48 hours; anyone coming into physical contact with it risks infection.

Xenovore Egg

Armor Value: 3/3 (shell)
Wound Threshold: 2 • **Durability:** 10 • **Death Rating:** 15

Splash Burst: Everyone within 2 meters is automatically splattered. Anyone within 2–4 meters must make a Fray Test or be struck with goo. Splashed biological targets are exposed to the xenovore virus and must make an Infection Test.

Perceive: 50

Ware: Carapace Armor (Shell), Chem Sniffer, Enhanced Smell

Ego Sense: Functions as an always-on version of the psi sleight (▶284 *EP2*) with Psi skill 50

XENOVORE INFECTION

Infection Rating: 70

There are several ways one can become infected with the xenovore virus:

- Physical contact (dermal vector) with the liquid goo contents of a xenovore egg
- Exchange of bodily fluids with an infected person (injected/oral vector) or via an exsurgent's bite
- Physical contact with the ochre froth expungement from an exsurgent (dermal vector)

Any biological entity exposed to the virus through these vectors must make an *Infection Test* (▶384 *EP2*). Synthmorphs cannot become infected, though if they are splashed they can potentially transfer the fluid to others and expose them.

Infection Test → SOM Check opposed by Infection Rating 70 → Medichines and nanophages provide a +10 modifier. If the virus wins, the character is infected. If the character wins, they do not need to test for infection if exposed again for 1 day.

Harder Hitting → To make the virus more potent, increase its Infection Rating, make it aerosolized (inhalation vector for exposure), shorten the cooldown period for potential re-infection to 1 hour, and/or give exsurgents the Psi trait and 1d6 sleights.

All skill modifiers and traits from the stages of infection are cumulative.

Stage 1

Timeframe: 4 hours
Stress: SV 1d10 − 2

During the first stage, the infectee still has some control over themselves, but are overcome by an urge to isolate themselves while the virus evaluates their biology and begins its assault. They also are conditioned to accept their odd behavior and subsequent changes as normal or inevitable. Victims will do what they can to get away from others, hide, and let the transformations progress.

The virus takes over the character's chemistry, making few externally visible changes, but optimizing the victim's muscles, skeleton, and nervous system for rapid, stealthy movement and, if needed,

fighting. This takes a toll on cognitive capacity, though the victim gains an animalistic instinct for hiding and feeding in the wild. The character also become sincreasingly ravenous.

Stage 1 Changes →

- Enhanced Behavior
  (Acceptance and Isolate Self, Level 3) trait
- Pain Tolerance (Level 1) trait
  (ignore 1 wound effect)
- Toughness (Level 1) trait
  (+1 WT, +5 DUR, +8 DR)
- +10 Athletics skill
- +10 Fray skill
- +10 Infiltrate skill
- +10 Survival skill
- −10 Know and Technical skills

Stage 2

Timeframe: 8 hours
Damage: DV 1d10
Stress: SV 1d10

In the second stage, the exovirus subsumes the victim's mind and begins more outward physical transformations. Player characters become NPC exsurgents under the control of the GM.

The exsurgent is motivated at this time to build a nest and hide out while its body rebuilds itself. It is also voracious, so it will frequently venture out to feed, seeking to spread the infection to anything it encounters. Exsurgents at this stage are often detectable by an ochre frothing of the mouth, aside from the other physiological changes.

The exact physical transformations spurred on by the virus are dependent upon the environment and past suppression outbreaks. In many cases, the virus incorporates genetic traits acquired from sapients it has previously sampled and suppressed. It may also inject traits that are deemed adaptive and competitive to local environmental conditions.

In the case of Vishnu, the virus will spur most exsurgents to grow a brain-like visual sensory organ (a Vishnan trait); spikey, spider-like, clawed, detachable limbs (an Iktomi trait); a wicked, parrot-like beak (a chowkey trait); natural camouflage; and a plasticized carapace for protection. However, GMs are encouraged to mix it up a bit and include traits of their own devising.

Stage 2 Changes →

- Remove any behavior-affecting traits not inflicted by the virus
- Enhanced Behavior
  (Nest and Infect Others, Level 3) trait
- Lethal trait (+1d6 DV melee damage)
- Pain Tolerance trait upgrades to Level 2
  (ignore 2 wound effects)
- Toughness trait upgrades to Level 2
  (+2 WT, +10 DUR, +15 DR)
- Chowkey Beak
  (DV 1d10 + 2, Armor-Piercing)
- Bioweave (AV +2/+3)
- Chameleon Skin
- Claws
- Enhanced Vision
- Ochre Froth (bites/contact transmit the xenovore virus)
- +10 Melee skill
- −10 Know and Technical skills (cumulative)
- −10 Social skills
- +2 Vigor Pool

Stage 3

Timeframe: Indefinite

In the third stage, the metamorphosis completes; the exsurgent has transmogrified to its peak capabilities. It seeks out all sapient life to either infect or destroy.

Stage 3 Changes →

- Enhanced Behavior (Infect Others/Kill Sapients, Level 3) trait replaces previous Enhanced Behavior traits
- Psi Defense (Level 1) trait
- Carapace Armor (AV +6/+7) replaces Bioweave Armor
- Enhanced Hearing
- Enhanced Smell
- Medichines (ignore 1 wound effect, faster healing)
- +10 Fray skill (cumulative)
- +10 Melee skill (cumulative)
- All Know and Technical skills and languages are lost
- +2 Vigor Pool (cumulative)

Stage 4

Timeframe: 1 week

After a period of several weeks has gone by without any sapients to kill or infect, the exsurgent's body will again transform, this time self-cannibalizing in order to create a xenovore egg.

OVERALL CHANGES

The total cumulated changes from the stages of infection are:

- Remove any behavior-affecting traits not inflicted by the virus
- Enhanced Behavior (Infect Others/Kill Sapients, Level 3) trait
- Lethal trait (+1d6 DV melee damage)
- Pain Tolerance trait upgrades to Level 2 (ignore 2 wound effects)
- Psi Defense (Level 1) trait
- Toughness trait upgrades to Level 2 (+2 WT, +10 DUR, +15 DR)
- Bioweave (AV +2/+3) or Carapace (AV +6/+7)
- Chameleon Skin
- Chowkey Beak (DV 1d10 + 2, Armor-Piercing)
- Claws
- Enhanced Hearing
- Enhanced Smell
- Enhanced Vision
- Medichines (ignore 1 wound effect, faster healing)
- Ochre Froth (bites/contact transmit the xenovore virus)
- +10 Athletics skill
- +10 Infiltrate skill
- +10 Survival skill
- +20 Fray skill
- +20 Melee skill
- All Know and Technical skills and languages are lost
- +4 Vigor Pool

EXSURGENTS

The xenovore virus spreads rapidly across Vishnu, infecting all manner of creatures. Stats for Linder and some of the more common exsurgents are provided here.

Infected Linder is listed with both full pools and threat pools, in case GMs prefer to run him with one or the other.

INFECTED LINDER: STAGE 1

Unwitting Xenovore Victim
Motivations: +Get Away, +Hide, −Transhuman Interaction

In this stage, Linder's infection is not yet apparent. The virus quickly makes Linder freakishly athletic compared to the Linder the PCs know. He'll seek to escape the camp as quickly as possible and hide in the jungle.

Infected Linder: Stage 1

Morph: Neotenic (Infected) **Threat Pool** ⛰ 4
Insight ❋ 2 • Moxie ⩔ 1 • Vigor ✋ 1 • Flex ❖ 0

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 70 • **Armor Value:** 1/3 (Armor Clothing)
Wound Threshold: 7 • **Durability:** 35 • **Death Rating:** 53
(ignores 1 wound effect)

Club: 40, DV 1d10 ÷ 2, Reach (+10)

Perceive: 50
Move: Walker 4/12

COG: 20 ⁶⁰ • **INT:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **REF:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **SAV:** 10 ³⁰ • **SOM:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **WIL:** 10 ³⁰
Skills: Athletics 60, Guns 45, Infiltrate 50, Infosec 40, Interface 50, Know: Astrobiology 30, Know: Field Science 45, Know: Gatecrashing 40, Know: VR Games 60, Know: Xeno-Archeology 50, Know: Xenopaleontology 55, Melee 40, Program 50, Research 50, Survival 60
Languages: English, German, Tarval
Rep: c-rep 30, r-rep 30, x-rep 20

Ware: Biomods, Circadian Regulation, Cortical Stack, Mesh Inserts
Traits: Addiction (*Galaxy Voyage*, Level 3), Enhanced Behavior (Acceptance and Isolate Self, Level 3), Pain Tolerance (Level 1), Toughness (Level 1)
Gear: Utilitool
Notes: Small size (−10 to spot/hit, half melee damage ▶227 *EP2*). His muse is deactivated and he is in mesh privacy mode (−30 mesh tracking ▶241 *EP2*).

INFECTED LINDER: STAGE 2

Xenovore Exsurgent in Nesting/Transformation Mode
Motivations: +Infect Others, +Nest, −Sapient Life

At this stage, Linder is interested in nesting, transforming, and infecting others. The metabolic changes are also making him hungry, so he frequently hunts. He is obviously transforming, with thicker skin, spiky clawed hands, a mean-looking chowkey beak, and a strange purple organ growing on his forehead.

Infected Linder: Stage 2

Morph: Neotenic (Infected) **Threat Pool** ⛰ 5
Insight ❋ 2 • Moxie ⩔ 1 • Vigor ✋ 3 • Flex ❖ 0

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 70 • **Armor Value:** 3/6 (Armor Clothing + Bioweave)
Wound Threshold: 8 • **Durability:** 40 (35) • **Death Rating:** 60 (55)
(ignores 2 wound effects; has 5 damage from the transformation)

Ochre Froth Beak Bite: 50, DV (1d10 + 1d6 + 2) ÷ 2, Armor-Piercing, transmits xenovore strain ▶32
Claws: 50, DV 3d6 ÷ 2
Club: 50, DV (1d10 + 1d6) ÷ 2, Reach (+10)

Perceive: 50, 60 Vision
Move: Walker 4/12

COG: 20 ⁶⁰ • **INT:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **REF:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **SAV:** 10 ³⁰ • **SOM:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **WIL:** 10 ³⁰
Skills: Athletics 60, Guns 45, Infiltrate 50 (60/80), Infosec 30, Interface 40, Know: Astrobiology 20, Know: Field Science 35, Know: Gatecrashing 30, Know: VR Games 50, Know: Xeno-Archeology 40, Know: Xenopaleontology 45, Melee 50, Program 40, Research 40, Survival 60
Languages: English, German, Tarval
Rep: c-rep 30, r-rep 30, x-rep 20

Ware: Biomods, Bioweave, Chameleon Skin, Circadian Regulation, Claws, Cortical Stack, Enhanced Vision, Mesh Inserts
Traits: Enhanced Behavior (Acceptance/Isolate Self/Nest/Infect Others, Level 3), Lethal, Pain Tolerance (Level 2), Toughness (Level 2)
Notes: Small size (−10 to spot/hit, half melee damage ▶227 *EP2*). His muse and mesh inserts are deactivated.

INFECTED LINDER: STAGE 3

Xenovore Exsurgent: Annihilation Phase

Motivations: +Annihilate Sapient Life, +Hunt, +Infect Others

Linder's final form has a wicked chowkey beak, a full set of spiky, clawed Iktomi legs, a Vishnan purple brain-like sensory nodule on his forehead, and a plastic carapace.

Infected Linder: Stage 3

Morph: Neotenic (Infected)   **Threat Pool** ⛰ 6
Insight ✵ 2 • Moxie ⚑ 1 • Vigor ✋ 5 • Flex ✳ 0

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 80 • **Armor Value:** 7/10 (Armor Clothing + Carapace)
Wound Threshold: 8 • **Durability:** 40 • **Death Rating:** 60
(ignores 2 wound effects)

Ochre Froth Beak Bite: 60, DV (1d10 + 1d6 + 6) ÷ 2, Armor-Piercing, transmits xenovore strain ▶32
Claws: 60, DV 3d6 ÷ 2
Spiked Limb: 60, DV (2d10 +1d6) ÷ 2, Reach (+10)
Back Scramble: 80. If successful, Linder jumps/climbs onto opponent, gaining a superior position bonus (+20) to subsequent attacks and Fray Tests versus the opponent. This also negates the opponent's Reach bonuses. On a superior result, Linder gets inside the target's clothes or otherwise finds a weak spot; beak attacks ignore armor entirely. Knocking Linder off requires winning a Melee Test or SOM Check opposed by his Melee or SOM Check (bonuses above apply).

Perceive: 50, 60 Hearing/Smell/Vision
Move: Walker 4/20

COG: 20 ⁶⁰ • **INT:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **REF:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **SAV:** 10 ³⁰ • **SOM:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **WIL:** 10 ³⁰
Skills: Athletics 60, Guns 45, Infiltrate 50 (60/80), Melee 60, Survival 60

Ware: Biomods, Carapace, Chameleon Skin, Circadian Regulation, Claws, Cortical Stack, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Smell, Enhanced Vision, Mesh Inserts
Traits: Enhanced Behavior (Infect Others/Kill Sapients, Level 3), Pain Tolerance (Level 2), Psi Defense (Level 1), Toughness (Level 2)
Notes: Small size (−10 to spot/hit, half melee damage ▶227 *EP2*). His muse and mesh inserts are deactivated.

CHOWKEY EXSURGENT

Vicious Mutant Parrot-Monkeys

Threat Level: Yellow
Niche: Vishnu's jungles and cloud forests
Numbers: 2 per PC

Infected with the xenovore virus, chowkeys develop sharper beaks; brain-like, violet Vishnan sensory nodes; and 2 pairs of spider-like extra legs good for both climbing and skewering things.

Chowkey Exsurgent

Stress Test: SV 1d6   **Threat Pool** ⛰ 2

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 80 • **Armor Value:** 2/3
Wound Threshold: 4 • **Durability:** 20 • **Death Rating:** 30
(ignores 3 wound effects)

Claws: 60, DV 3d6 ÷ 2
Ochre Froth Beak Bite: 60, DV (1d10 + 1d6 + 6) ÷ 2, Armor-Piercing, transmits the xenovore strain ▶32
Back Scramble: 80. If successful, the chowkey jumps/climbs onto opponent, gaining a superior position bonus (+20) to subsequent attacks and Fray Tests versus the opponent. This also negates the opponent's Reach bonuses. On a superior result, the chowkey gets inside the target's clothes or otherwise finds a weak spot; beak attacks ignore armor entirely. Knocking a chowkey off requires winning a Melee Test or SOM Check opposed by the chowkey's Melee or SOM Check (bonuses above apply).
Spiked Limb: 60, DV (2d10 +1d6) ÷ 2, Reach (+10)

Perceive: 60, 70 hearing/vision
Move: Walker (Medium 4/20)

COG: 1 ³ • **INT:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **REF:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **SAV:** 5 ¹⁵ • **SOM:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **WIL:** 5 ¹⁵
Skills: Athletics 80, Infiltrate 70 (80/100), Melee 60, Survival 70

Ware: Bioweave, Chameleon Skin, Claws, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Smell, Enhanced Vision, Medichines, Prehensile Feet, Prehensile Tail
Traits: Lethal, Pain Tolerance (Level 2), Psi Defense (Level 1), Toughness (Level 2)
Notes: Small size (−10 to spot/hit; half melee damage ▶227 *EP2*)

GOOPER EXSURGENT

Infected Tongue Lashers
Threat Level: Orange
Niche: Vishnu's jungles and cloud forests
Numbers: 2

Goopers infected by the xenovore strain bear mutations and are considerably more aggressive, attacking anything uninfected in range whether they're hungry or not. Infected goopers can be identified by clusters of purple, brain-like Vishnan sensor organs encircling the shell and crackers that resemble skewering spider legs more than hammers.

Gooper Exsurgent

Stress Test: SV 1d6 – 2   **Threat Pool** ▲ 4

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 50 • **Armor Value:** 11/11 (shell)
Wound Threshold: 16 • **Durability:** 80 • **Death Rating:** 120
(ignores 3 wound effects)

Tongue: 90, DV 1d10 + 1d6, Reach (+20). On a superior success, the target is automatically grappled ▶205 *EP2*. When taking an action to maintain the grapple, the gooper can strike the victim with up to 2 crackers simultaneously.
Cracker: 80, DV 3d10 + 1d6, Armor-Piercing, only usable against grappled targets
Ochre Froth Bite: 80, DV 2d10 +1d6, Reach (+10), transmits the xenovore strain ▶32. On a superior success, medium and smaller targets are swallowed whole. Swallowed targets cannot see or hear (asphyxiate▶234 *EP2*) and take DV 1d6 each turn (armor protects but is reduced).
Ochre Froth Spit: 55, Range 20, transmits the xenovore strain ▶32

Perceive: 60, 70 hearing/smell/vision
Move: Crawler (Slow 4/12)

COG: 1 3 • **INT:** 15 45 • **REF:** 15 45 • **SAV:** 5 15 • **SOM:** 20 60 • **WIL:** 10 30
Skills: Athletics 55, Infiltrate 60 (70/90), Melee 80 (Tongue 90), Survival 70

Ware: Carapace Armor (Shell), Chameleon Skin, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Smell, Enhanced Vision, Medichines
Traits: Enhanced Behavior (Infect Others/Kill Sapients), Lethal, Pain Tolerance (Level 2), Psi Defense (Level 1), Toughness (Level 2)

Notes: Large size (+10 to spot/hit; Reach ▶227 *EP2*)

LMTFA EXSURGENT

Hostile Spiky Tanks
Threat Level: Red
Niche: Vishnu's jungles
Numbers: 1–2

Infected LMTFAs are even more aggressive, attacking sapient creatures, vehicles, and sometimes other exsurgents on sight.

LMTFA Exsurgent

Stress Test: SV 1d6 – 2   **Threat Pool** ▲ 5

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 50 • **Armor Value:** 12/18 (shell)
Wound Threshold: 22 • **Durability:** 110 • **Death Rating:** 165
(ignores 3 wound effects)

Horn: 80, DV 4d10 + 1d6 + 8, Reach (+10), Armor-Piercing
Stomp: 80, DV 3d10 + 1d6 + 4, Reach (+10), Armor-Piercing

Perceive: 50, 60 hearing/smell/vision
Move: Walker (Medium 4/20)

COG: 1 3 • **INT:** 10 30 • **REF:** 15 45 • **SAV:** 1 3 • **SOM:** 25 75 • **WIL:** 15 45
Skills: Athletics 50, Infiltrate 50 (60/80), Melee 80, Survival 70

Ware: Carapace (Shell), Chameleon Skin, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Smell, Enhanced Vision, Medichines
Traits: Enhanced Behavior (Infect Others/Kill Sapients, Level 3), Lethal, Pain Tolerance (Level 2), Psi Defense (Level 1), Toughness (Level 2)

Notes: Large size (+10 to spot/hit, Reach ▶227 *EP2*); LMTFAs often aggressively charge when they attack (−10 attack, +1d10 + 1d6 DV, −10 Fray ▶205 *EP2*)

SLIRD EXSURGENT

Airborne Slug-Birds of Prey

Threat Level: Yellow
Niche: Vishnu's jungles and cloud forests
Numbers: 4–6

Exsurgent slirds will come together to patrol the skies and seek out victims. Though rarer than chowkeys and goopers, these are good exsurgents to use against flying characters or as a surprise from above.

Slird exsurgents normally ignore flying bots, but if attacked they will defend themselves.

Slird Exsurgent

Stress Test: SV 1d6 – 2   **Threat Pool** ⚠ 3

Initiative: 7 • **Fray:** 80 • **Armor Value:** 2/3 (Bioweave)
Wound Threshold: 8 • **Durability:** 40 • **Death Rating:** 60
(ignores 3 wound effects)

Diving Claw Attack: 80, 3d10 + 1d6, can make a full move and attack without modifiers
Acid Spit: 80, DV 1d6 + 3 for 5 turns, armor protects but is reduced by damage absorbed, victims are impaired (−20) by pain
Ochre Spike Beak: 80, DV 1d10 + 1d6 + 4, Armor-Piercing, transmits the xenovore strain ▶32

Perceive: 70, 80 hearing/vision
Move: Winged (Fast 8/40)

COG: 1 ³ • **INT:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **REF:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **SAV:** 1 ³ • **SOM:** 15 ⁴⁵ • **WIL:** 15 ⁴⁵
Skills: Athletics 80 (Fly 90), Infiltrate 70, Melee 80, Survival 70

Ware: Bioweave, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Vision, Medichines, Prehensile Feet
Traits: Enhanced Behavior (Infect Others/Kill Sapients, Level 3), Lethal, Pain Tolerance (Level 2), Psi Defense (Level 1), Toughness (Level 2)

SLUGITO EXSURGENT

Mutant Insectoid Plague-Spreaders

Threat Level: Yellow
Niche: Vishnu's jungles and cloud forests
Numbers: 3 per PC or swarm

Due to their tiny size, slugitos can penetrate inside hard shelters through cracks, vents, and so on. This makes them a good option to deploy against PCs who try to hole up and wait things out, forcing them from their protective shelter.

GMs should take care not to use slugito exsurgents too aggressively, as they can very easily infect many characters with the exsurgent virus.

Slugito Exsurgent

Initiative: 5 • **Fray:** 75 • **Armor Value:** 0/0   **Threat Pool** ⚠ 0
Wound Threshold: 1 • **Durability:** 1 • **Death Rating:** 2

Fluid Leech: Automatic on exposed skin, DV 1, transmits xenovore strain ▶32, 10% chance of being venomous: SOM Check or SV 1d10, impaired (−30) due to sensory hallucinations for 1d10 minutes

Perceive: 40, 50 smell
Move: Winged (Medium 4/20)

COG: 1 ³ • **INT:** 5 ¹⁵ • **REF:** 20 ⁶⁰ • **SAV:** 1 ³ • **SOM:** 1 ³ • **WIL:** 5 ¹⁵
Skills: Athletics 80 (Fly 90), Infiltrate 90

Ware: Enhanced Smell
Traits: Enhanced Behavior (Infect Others/Kill Sapients, Level 3)

Swarm: GMs can choose to present a large number of slugitos as a swarm ▶344 *EP2* with DUR 25 and DR 50
Notes: Very Small size (−30 to spot/hit ▶227 *EP2*). Slugitos killed by melee attacks will squish and splatter, transmitting the xenovore virus to the attacker or their weapon with their fluids.

THE KUMOBOT

Motivation: +Iktomi Interests, +Survival,
+Wait for Iktomi to Return

The kumobot encountered in this scenario is around 10,000 years old. It was left behind when the Iktomi investigating the Vishnan ruins became infected with the xenovore virus and fled back to the gate. With no other directions, it stayed in the Vishnan ruins, eventually becoming trapped in one chamber during a cave-in. It has survived primarily due to this isolation and by shutting down for massive lengths of time. Its functioning and capabilities are severely degraded.

Like their creators, kumobots have a spider-like form, with six radially symmetric legs and a smaller pair of manipulative arms/claws. As a protective measure, the head retracts into the body and the legs can be pulled in to act as a protective shield. The kumobot's shape-changing features enable it to further roll into a ball shape for high-speed movement. Curiously, the legs are also detachable, suggesting that perhaps Iktomi biology functioned the same.

Iktomi Kumobot

Stress Test: SV 1d6   **Threat Pool** ▲ 4

Initiative: 6 • **Fray:** 50 • **AV:** 28/18, offensive armor, self-healing
Wound Threshold: 14 • **Durability:** 70 (45) • **Death Rating:** 140 (115)

Adjustable Laser Pulser: 60, DV 2d10 + 2, SA/BF/FA, Range 50, Ammo 30,
    may increase damage +1d10 DV per shot by consuming 1 extra ammo, to a maximum of +5d10 DV
Claw: 60, DV 4d6 + 3
Leg Spike: 70, DV 3d10 + 4, armor-piercing

Perceive: 40, 50 hearing/vision
Move: Roller (Fast 8/32), Walker (Medium 4/20)

COG: 15 45 • **INT:** 10 30 • **REF:** 20 60 • **SAV:** 5 15 • **SOM:** 20 60 • **WIL:** 10 30
Skills: Athletics 50 (60), Free Fall 50, Guns 60, Hardware: Electronics 50, Infiltrate 50, Infosec 60,
    Interface 50, Know: Music 40, Melee 60 (Leg Spike 70)

Ware: Cyberbrain, Electrical Sense, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Vision, Fixer Hive,
    Magnetic System, Mesh Inserts, Mnemonics, Pneumatics, Radar, Radiation Sense,
    Shape Adjusting, Structural Enhancement, Utilimod
Traits: Neural Damage (Repetitive Behavior)

Aged: Due to the effects of time,
    the kumobot has 25 points of damage that may not be repaired (one leg is nonfunctional)
Alien Code: Due to their alien software, kumobots may not be hacked
Limb Detachment: Individual limbs may be detached with a quick action
Rapid Deterioration: After each hour of activity (that is not rest), there is a 10% chance that something
    breaks. Treat as either an unrepairable wound, nonfunctioning ware, or a negative trait (GM discretion).

One Square
= 6 Meters