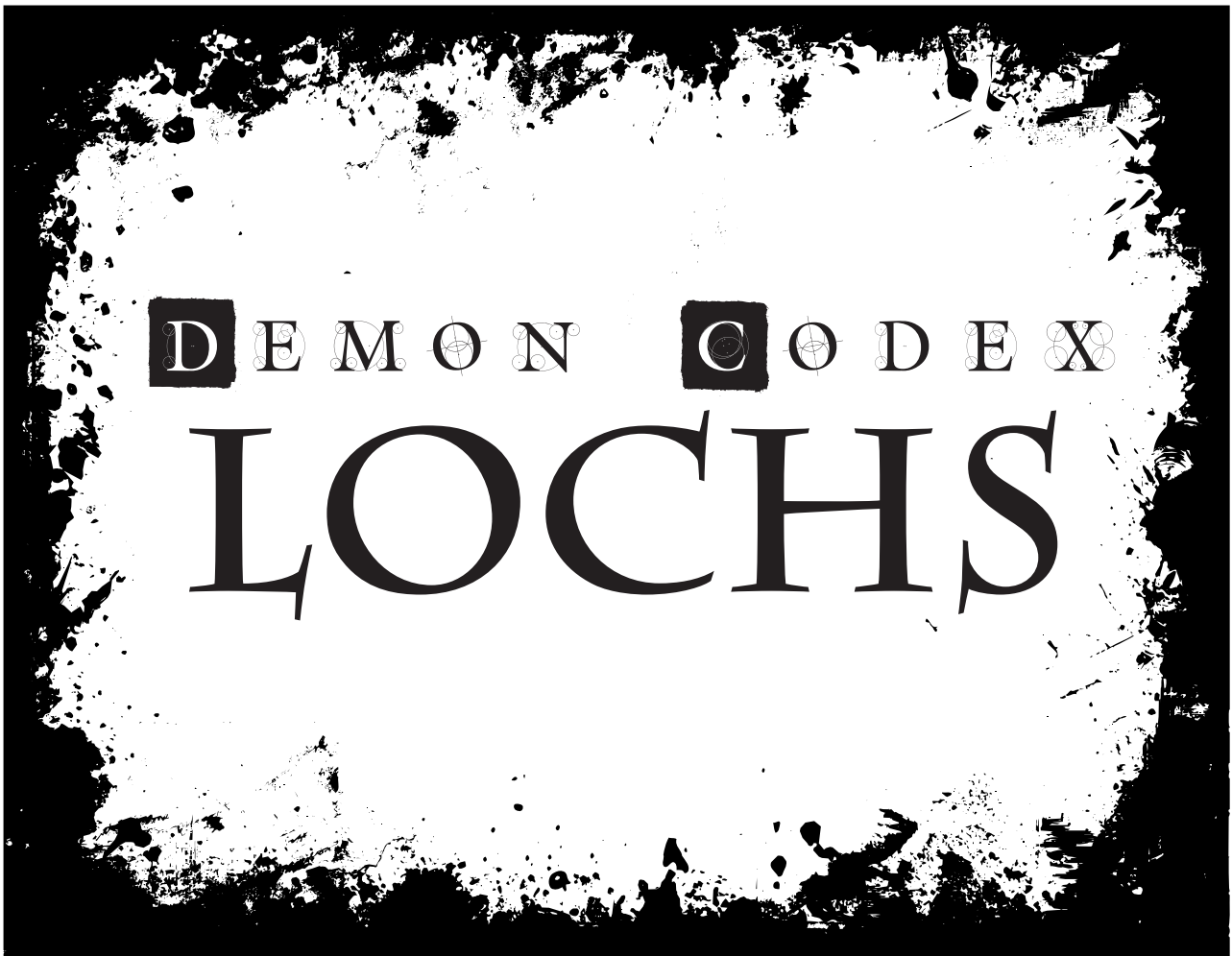


DEMON CODEX

# LOCHS



**A Racial Sourcebook for Apocalypse Prevention, Inc.**



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# Prologue: Jonah and the Kraken

*The sun was fading on the horizon, and the masts of the local fishing boats made tiny pillars against the red skyline. Those on the beach who came to swim and play were either leaving or starting bonfires for more nighttime entertainment, and lights from the nearby hotels on the coastline began to illuminate the beach front.*

*On the northern pier, in his tattered coat and blue jeans, a lone man waved goodbye to other disembarking fishermen and made his way to a small boat shack reserved at the end of the pier. The shack was old and rotting, with dust filling its windows. The man strolled at a bizarre pace, almost waddling as he walked.*

*Jonah breathed a sigh of relief as he opened his door, agitated that he had to go to a meeting and annoyed that he had to cancel his plans for the night. At least he got to do something he rarely got to do these days. It was the one indulgence he asked for when it came to the agency. He got to take the suit off during meetings.*

*Flipping the dial on the dive watch he wore on his left wrist, Jonah's form glimmered and quaked as it expanded quickly. Human flesh disappeared beneath sand colored scales, and his hair shrank beneath a rising fin. Jonah breathed the air in deeply, feeling it rush through gills now exposed to the air. The Loch clenched his fists so hard the knuckles popped and his mouth opened revealing large, pointed teeth through a smile.*

*Clapping filled the small shack, causing Jonah to jump slightly at the noise. Stepping out of the shadows came the agent he was supposed to meet tonight, a balding man with a bulging waist and a look of amusement on his face, his partner. "Was that necessary?" said Agent Shelton. "It's just you and me, y'know. It's not like there's any hot young mamas here for you to impress with your 'I'm a big scary fish man' routine."*

*Jonah smirked as he took off his coat, revealing row upon row of brown stripes going across his shoulders and down his back. "Hey, do I yell at you when you change your clothes each day? It's aggravating wearing that thing every day. It dries out my scales and bunches up my junk."*

*Shelton chuckled and gestured to a nearby table. "I know, I know, but look at it as a favorable compromise for having such a luxurious deployment. Hawaii is choice real estate. I hear your cousin's still mad at you for being here while he's in the Aleutians."*

*"Yeah, well, there is that." Jonah said, waiting for more word. After an awkward silence, he asked, "Did Kota...?"*

*"Haven't talked to her, man. I don't get into marital issues, especially not when claws are involved. Can we get down to business?" Shelton answered quickly.*

*Jonah examined the table with an array of pictures brought on the laptop screen, high resolution scanners, and sophisticated tracking equipment scattered across it. "So we've got a visitor in these parts?"*

*Clicking on the laptop, Shelton stood to the side while the images began to run across its screen. "Yep, partner, looks that way." Shelton had a long southern draw when he talked, although from what Jonah knew of him he came from the Midwest. "Scanning crews say they've detected a massive astrometric shift off the coast in the past week. In that time, several accidents have occurred and the missing person files are getting thick." He clicked another button on the laptop and his face became more serious. "Rumors of something tearing apart buoys have got back to the company and, just recently, there were reports that the Pride of Boston was lost at sea not far from here."*

*"The Pride of Boston?"*

*"Yep, the Pride had thirteen hands on her when she went down and local authorities have begun sniffing around now"*

*"Bob, we're in Hawaii. Why is there a boat called Pride of Boston?"*

*"Look, I'm not here to argue semantics. HQ wants us to check out the local sea haunts and see if something's lurking off the coast. All the attacks are at night, so that's when we'll check. If it's there, we're to escort it out of this reality. This seems pretty clear cut, Jonah. Find the threat, we eliminate it, done. And by we, I mean you. Let's get on it."*

*Jonah nervously ran his hand on his stomach as he surveyed the images on the laptop. "Yeah. Clear cut."*

*\* \* \**

*Jonah's Fresh Fish Stand stood next to Kip's Crabs and The Talapia Grille in the fish market. His was just another place to buy fresh tuna on the pier. Tourists and passersby surveyed what he had for sale, occasionally commenting on how great everything looked. Every sale made the other fishermen hate him just a bit more as they always wonder what his secret was to such large hauls. Fortunately for Jonah, no one noticed the claw marks on many of the fish.*

*The great thing about Jonah's spot was the view he had. He faced away from the pier, even though some would think that his view of the nearby alley would be depressing. Not for Jonah though. Urges to jump into the ocean surged through him every moment of every day, so having his back to the water helped. Also, his stand was in the perfect spot for him to see one of the few things he loved more than fishing... Carmen Soto.*

*Carmen arranged flowers by her stand just outside the market. She was young and full of an energy that seemed infectious to those around her. Customers always left with a beautiful bouquet and a smile, and Jonah couldn't help but grin when he took the time to gaze at her. His thoughts wandered to the many times the two of them had talked before. Jonah always pretended to be interested in flowers to spend time with her. She was sweet and seemed perfect for him in every way.*

*Over time, they became lovers. Thanks to the Compressor Cloth and Image Emitter, Carmen was still ignorant to who Jonah really was. He wanted to tell her the truth, but knew that she would despise him in the end. He also knew that their relationship was further strained whenever Jonah thought about his wife, Kota.*

*He and Kota had been together for more than forty years, and he still loved her. She was just as energetic as Carmen, but Carmen had a relaxed view on life versus Kota's devoted life of research. Kota kept Jonah on track while he studied to become an agent with API and was always there for him when he felt down. Even his partner Shelton had met her, and while Shelton often joked that he couldn't tell the Lochs apart he always said that Kota was the "prettiest wife a Loch could ask for." That was, of course, before their separation.*

*Sighing deeply, Jonah checked his watch and closed down his stall for the day. He had a lot of work to do before he could sleep tonight. He and a mysterious thing off the coast had a date.*

*\* \* \**

*Jonah spiraled through the water as he swam furiously against the current. Every muscle in his body ached with excitement. API business had been slow lately, so he rarely got to swim as he truly was anymore. With all the deep sea divers, the snorkelers, and the open bottom sea boats, he also had to be careful or else he would be seen. Being seen by someone outside the company was obviously a serious offence, and Jonah's tendency to play fast and loose with the rules already meant that he couldn't risk much in that department. Still, he always pushed himself to the limit underwater, cutting through it with great speed.*

*As he swam across the nearby reefs his large eyes detected something in the distance. Something was skulking behind a nearby reef, and his nose filters detected the presence of something in the water. Something warm, and salty. It had to be blood.*

*The agent rounded the bend where he saw a large squid, almost forty feet long, near a small chasm stirring up silt and seaweed with its many long tentacles whipped around. Jonah knew this thing for what it was, a kraken, a creature native to Domainya. Where it differed from normal giant squids was that it tore its prey apart with a massive jaw full of teeth rather than a beak. Its eyes possessed a sinister intelligence to them and, judging by the pair of swim trunks floating in the water, it snagged lunch in the form of some poor surfer out for a late night swim.*

*Jonah knew he couldn't take it on alone. Its sheer size meant at least a couple of agents armed with harpoon guns would be needed to bring it down, and krakens were known for their speed and ferocity. The thought of tackling the creature made Jonah wince slightly, his hand covering his stomach. The fear forced him to slip out of sight quickly to observe the creature as it finished its meal and swam off into the ocean's depths.*

*\* \* \**

As Jonah pulled himself out of the water by his shack he hurried out of sight and grumbled as he fumbled with the lock on the door. After closing the door gingerly behind him, Jonah walked over to the table full of scanning equipment. The same images ran across the laptop's screen, along with a list of all those who were missing over the past couple of days. The length of the list and the names upon it started to eat at Jonah. Curling his hand into a massive fist, he let out a massive roar as he smashed his fist down on the table, sending everything flying around the room.

Jonah sat down in a chair in the corner that was built for someone of his weight. His gills were flaring and his pulse was racing as the same conflicting thoughts ran against each other. In the old days, Jonah would have tackled a monster like the kraken head on. He had learned to fight such things while serving in the Deep Guard back on Domainya. His company file was full of commendations for bravery and he had been cited for valor on many occasions. Shelton knew this and that's why the human was leaving this mission up to the Loch, but everything was different now... Jonah was pregnant.

For Lochs, mating with human biology was tricky at best. Their physiology made it almost impossible for Lochs to mate with each other, so they had to look for alternates and found humans. It was still a strange experience, even for those who found humans attractive and always ended with the death of one of the parents. Jonah knew that breeding with Carmen would have meant her death and he could not bear to lose her, so he was careful to ensure that he carried the child and not her. To others of his kind, he'd be seen as valiant for risking death to prolong their species, but the truth was that he'd happily die to keep those he loved safe, including Carmen.

Kota still did not know that Jonah was pregnant, as far as he knew, but they had separated shortly after it happened. He avoided company physicals so they didn't find out and did his best to appear healthy when around others, but the Contagion was setting in quickly.

The more immediate concern was how Jonah was going to destroy the kraken without risking himself or the child he carried. He knew the kraken was interested in only two things: expanding its territory and feeding. Then the solution dawned on Jonah, and he shouted with glee and dove back out into the ocean to collect some fresh fish.

\* \* \*

Adrenaline surged through Jonah's body. This was the last night they had to kill the kraken before HQ would send in reinforcements and likely be forced to wipe some memories. Too many people had disappeared and now

the authorities were getting anxious, so he knew he had to get the job done tonight or there would be hell to pay tomorrow.

The mouth to the cave seemed dark and foreboding, and the dim light that shown from his diving lamp made the cave out to be a giant mouth waiting to swallow him whole. This was the lair of the kraken, though. All the wreckage gathered around from broken surfboards to the *Pride of Boston's* hull and, of course, several smashed skeletons spoke volumes.

Jonah's fingers hesitated before he pressed the button down on the switch. He knew he only had one shot at this, and he prayed to his gods that this would work. He flipped the switch, and several grates opened on the deep sea uniform releasing the freshly wounded fish. Their blood filled the water, creating a red haze in front of the cave.

The kraken didn't wait long and shot off like a lightning bolt toward the intruder. Its tentacles narrowed to a point as it lunged at the figure. Jonah watched with dread as the kraken attacked and felt his throat tighten slightly as the tentacles began to constrict. He knew he could not wait any longer, and he slammed his fingers down on the nearby button.

The stuffed mannequin exploded with the force of nearly fifty pounds of C4 crammed inside. The kraken was so caught up in feeding that it barely had time to notice before it was vaporized. Bits and pieces of the kraken were sure to leave clues of this event, so he called in for cleaners to handle them.

Jonah put his feet up on the boat's control panel and Shelton cracked open a beer. His partner looked at him with a funny look, handing a folded \$20 bill to Jonah. "Don't say it, don't say it, I know it worked."

"Thank you" replied Jonah as he gazed towards the screen, his thick reptilian lips pulled back in a grin.

Jonah clutched the bill as he leaned back in his chair. He ran a hand across his belly while he fell deep into thought. The future was still a little way off, but he didn't have long to think of the future. For the time being, though, life was good and Jonah felt confident that he could keep his secret another day.

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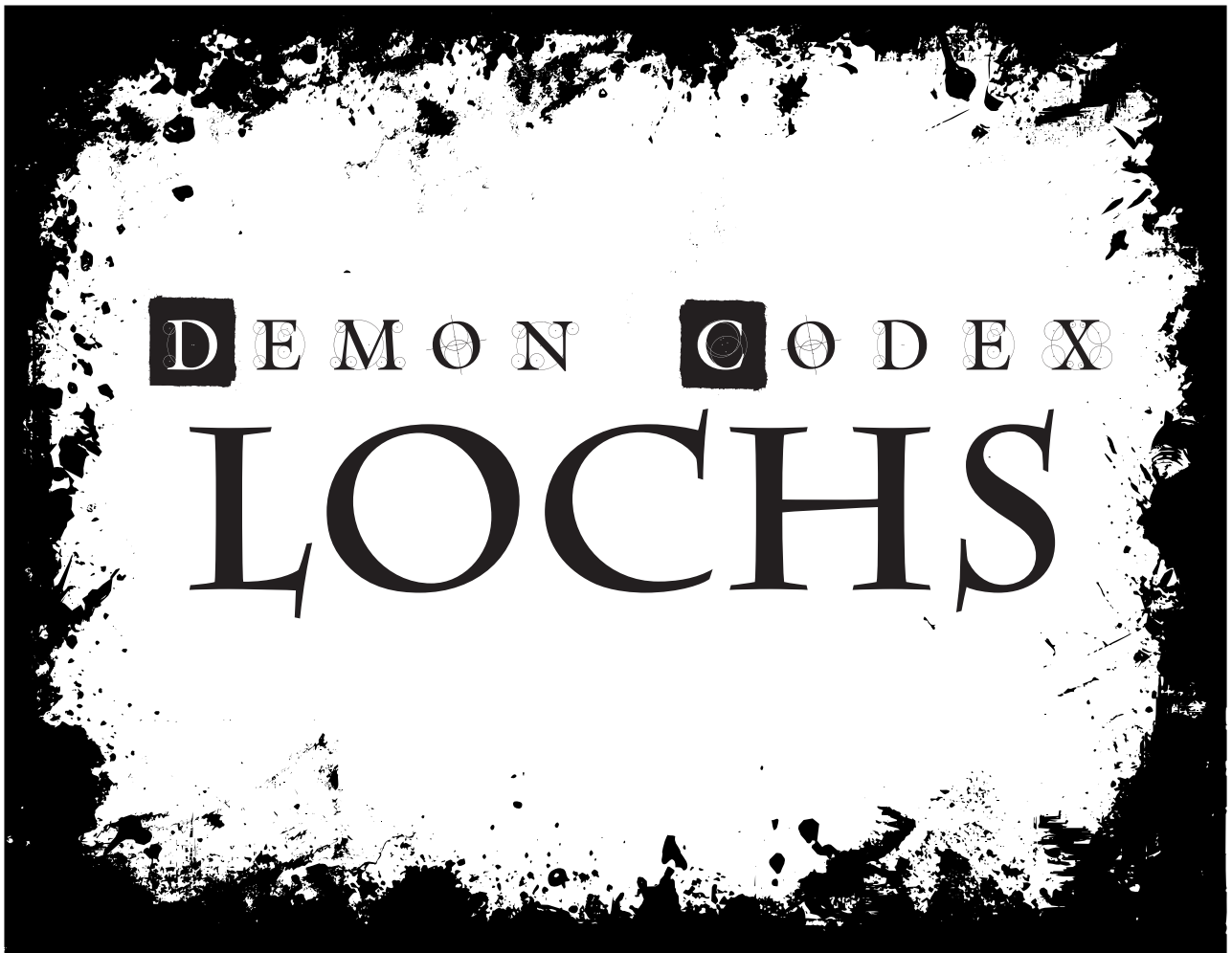
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**Disclaimer:** This book contains supernatural and magical themes, characters, and places. This is purely a fictional work and is for entertainment purposes only. Not recommended for those with closed minds or poor critical thinking skills.

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# chapter One: The Endless Ocean

## Sedrone culture

The Sedrone have always been conquerors. It's in their blood to take what they want from others and make it their own. Yet alongside this relentless need to force others into submission, they also have been cursed with the continuous uprooting of every place they have come to know as home. The Sedrone's most recent kingdom was far to the East, beyond the Smoking Belt, where they dwelled before their final settlement in the Spandrels. This kingdom's name has been lost to history, as the Sedrone were never much for keeping historical records before the Scryers. Much of the knowledge that Apocalypse Prevention Inc. has on record about the Sedrone has come from word of mouth from Lochs, as traditional storytelling has always been a part of their culture, or the

Scryer historians that kept detailed logs of the events within the Spandrels.

The Sedrone were originally entrenched deep in the practice of aquatic alchemy and this worked as a major facet of their culture. They were very barbaric in their thought processes and existed in small tribes full of infighting and blood rituals. Soon, they halted killing each other, as one tribe merged with another and another, creating a huge army of their kind. With such power and the urge for expansion, they began their assault on any and all other races. Their aquatic alchemy told them which way to go and what races to enslave or destroy outright in every instance, but many believed they became almost too reliant and complacent in their belief in the old ways.



The exact time of their cultural transformation is not for certain, as theirs is not a written history, but many demonologists believe that they may have assimilated their founding religion into their culture from one of the first conquerings. Many abandoned their alchemists and began worshipping the Giver and the teachings of the entity's preachers, the Muglics. This created a major rift within their species, between those who stayed true to their traditions of Aquatic Alchemy and those who fiercely preached the teachings of the Muglics and the Giver. This conflict was ongoing as they traveled from the west along the current Badelbod toward the Spandrels and continues even today. While the majority believed in the Giver, it never completely died away. They would have been foolish to refuse the advantages that alchemists could provide.

The Giver is neither seen as male or female, but capable of creating life from spiritual seeds. The first seed given was the creation of Domainya and the second was Hadiena, where Sedrone souls travel after giving their bodies back to Domainya. In this new resting place, they are transformed into new seeds that are scattered anew over Domainya. Essentially, their death not only feeds their dimension to ensure its continued prosperity, but also spelled rebirth through reincarnation. This strengthened their resolve in battle, as dying was treated as an honor, a mentality much needed for the hundreds of wars they fought.

The Sedrone believed that the Giver had chosen them to rule over Domainya and everything in it, including other races. The Giver, creator of all life, needed more seeds to sew after all.

## Claiming the Spandrels

The Sedrone were led to the Spandrels by Opsanus, their greatest warrior throughout all of history. He pushed them across the Smoking Belt and beyond, knowing that the perfect seat for the new Sedrone Kingdom was just around the corner. When they finally came upon the Spandrels, Opsanus trusted the Giver that this was where he would give birth to his new Kingdom. However, like many others before, the Spandrels were already occupied by a race... the Scryers.

The Sedrone approached the Scryers and claimed to be but peaceful missionaries (not the first time this deceitful tactic was employed). Opsanus gave a long

## Muglics

The Muglics are worshippers of the Giver. They focus on nourishing Domainya, seeing the dimension as a living being and a divine creation of the Giver. They do not frown upon killing other beings, as all creatures feed Domainya when they die. They once gathered annually for the Kill where they would massacre anything they came across and bring it to the Feeding Field to feed the essence of the dimension. They also believed that the Tenguil moss (page 15) to be sentient and divine creatures that acted as the voice of the Giver directing them or giving them divine insight. Muglics directly opposed the aquatic alchemists in this continual religious tug-of-war. Alchemists "stole" materials from the dead to create their abominations, while those parts should have been returned to Domainya for sustenance. Once Muglic doctrine was established into Sedrone Culture, the Sedrone summarily imposed these beliefs on all those they ruled over, much to chagrin of their underlings who actually possessed their own faiths. Unfortunately, few Muglics actually exist today with most Lochs leaving these teachings in Domainya when they migrated to Earth.

rousing speech, relaying the message of the Giver and recounting the vast distances and great sights they had come across in their journey to the Spandrels. The Scryers, while not particularly accepting of the Muglic preaching, held a great procession welcoming the Sedrone to the land, happy to welcome the newcomers and share their home. They then held an emergency meeting of the Scryian Council that made their laws to introduce treaties to allow the Sedrone permanent residence.

Their naivety cost them dearly, as Opsanus and his best warriors stormed the council chambers and massacred all their presiding leaders. With any Scryers with authority gone in the blink of an eye, the Sedrone easily took control of the Spandrels overnight. Opsanus claimed the territory and crowned himself the First King. While viewed by many as evil, all the Sedrone kings allowed the Spandrels to grow and thrive under their care and in homage to the Giver. In their eyes, they provided a great service to the races that served them.

A great palace, the White Opus was constructed entirely out of blocklings (Domainyan coral) for their esteemed king. It became known as the most expansive and intricate piece of architecture in the Spandrels. The blocklings naturally grew toward each other due to special hormones they release,

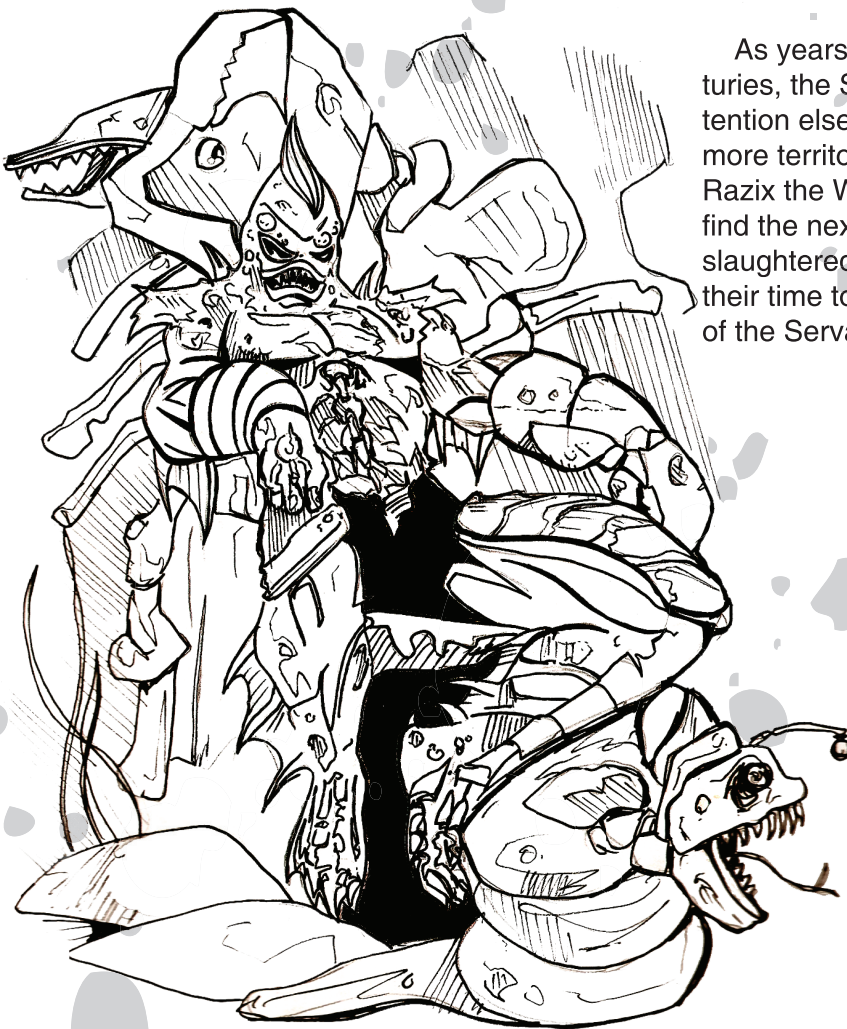
allowing them to combine into great structures. The Sedrone discovered a way to replicate that hormone through aquatic alchemy, giving them the power to guide the creatures as they wished. Their alchemists used this new power to create vast cities, showing their relevance in the age of the Giver. Blocklings were crafted into spiraling towers, grand temples, and ever-widening halls. Soon they spilled out to the Sedrone's commoners, letting everyone feel as if they lived like kings. Many kings shaped enormous statues in their own honor or that of the First King.

The Sedrone ruled for many years afterward, but soon felt that they had become complacent. They heard stories of how they had destroyed dozens of civilization and saw how easily they had taken the Spandrels. They craved expansion again and began searching new prey. They found the Charcadons (page 53) and nearly wiped them out, leading them to the Linx that had served the Charcadons. The Sedrone became their new masters, feeling proud that they decimated one race and enslaved another all in one fell swoop.

Then they thirsted for even more blood. King Rath, also known as the King of Games, opened the Theater of Blood to sate their noble appetite. It was a coliseum of untold size where the best fighters all around Domainya fought each other for glory, mates, and freedom. Even the Sedrone would fight in these battles, used to facilitate arguments on policies or territory. He also began holding public executions in the Feeding Field, a large pit where the dead are collected to feed Domainya. It was a mass grave for all creatures killed within the Spandrels, in the Theater of Blood, or at the king's whim. It was, and still is, surrounded by rings of photosrooms (page 15), also feeding off of the endless supply of dead material. King Rath was a vehement follower of the Muglics and deemed these executions sanctioned by the Giver. Public executions rapidly became the norm, even becoming twisted and vile displays where the Sedrone leaders would feed on their underlings, give the big parts to the alchemists, and offer the rest to the Feeding Fields.

## The Servants Rebellion

As years turned to decades and decades to centuries, the Sedrone began ever widening their attention elsewhere, attempting to take on more and more territory. Around one hundred years ago, King Razix the Wicked-Tongued sent out war parties to find the next civilization to bend to its knees or be slaughtered, while the Scryers and Linx realized their time to strike was then and planted the seeds of the Servants Rebellion.



### The Scryian Calender

The Scryers are the oldest race to exist in the Spandrels and have always exhibited a fascination with recording history. They carved histories into fossilized plants and kept them in vast libraries. From their beginning, they kept track of major time periods by naming the Ages after the leader that ruled. It's never the true name of the ruler, but a name assigned to that ruler, based on his actions in life. As far as the Sedrone were concerned, the calendar started when they took over the Spandrels. Opsanus has his period of ruling associated with the coming of the Sedrone and was called The Age of the First King.

Scryers, Linx, and other dying races, ran through the city, destroying the great statues and buildings that the Sedrone had erected. They stormed the throne room and the first confrontation between ruler and servant occurred. King Razix led his troops straight into the rioting forces, calming many of them with words of peace and even the elevation of status for those that put down their arms. Many were effected by his poison words and then he unleashed his troops to slaughter them all without warning or mercy. However, with half of his forces gone, the king could not easily crush the opposing forces, causing a stalemate between the two groups. Both sides lost equivalent numbers, and the Scryers assembled distress beacons in an effort to break the stalemate, sending them out in all directions and hoping someone would come to their aid. The Wicked-Tongued King and his army hid behind the walls of the White Opus as they planned intricate strategies behind the security and safety of the throne.

With no help in sight and no other choice, the Scryers took their teachings of Sedrone anatomy and aquatic alchemy and created the most powerful weapon they could... the Contagion. They introduced the Contagion to the Spandrels and it laid thousands of Sedrone dead without a whimper, including their king.

Around that time, the Sedrone Prince, Jazix, intercepted one of the Scryers' distress beacons and returned to the Spandrels with his war party. He found the Spandrels in ruins and his father slain. The army descended upon the races of the rebellion, slaughtering as many rebels as they could find. The rebellion was forced to let loose a second, even more potent, wave of the Contagion at the last moment, doubling the Sedrone body count. The war was lost, but the Sedrone unleashed one final attack which killed most of the remaining rebels, creating a war with no clear winner.

The Contagion proved only 90% fatal, but prevented Sedrone from reproducing, leaving only a fraction of Sedrone to survive. The majority of them fled through portals to Earth. The waters around the Spandrels of Sedrone were stained red by the blood of all those that died during this time. The second version of the Contagion bonded to the blood molecules in water from decades of murders at the hands of the Sedrone kings. This became known as Red Zone and encompassed the Spandrels and

### **Jonah on the Contagion**

*I was barely a newborn, but I still remember every moment of that day. I think every Loch still living does. My father, with such rage, descended on top of dozens of Scryers, Linx, and even killing a few other Sedrone in his rage. Then, when the Contagion hit us, I coughed while my father died. His skin and muscles began to shrivel, his eyes popped out, and his cries still haunt me today. It was the bloodiest image I've ever faced and is probably why I am the way I am today.*

miles of the surrounding area. Most survivors shed the doctrine of the Giver, adopting alchemy again and gaining the alchemists assistance with the portals. The survivors who were unable or unwilling to travel scattered through the Spandrels. Many began following the newly christened Muglic Rox and joined Those-That-Kneel. A select few continued to hide out within the Spandrels, waging guerilla warfare upon anyone they encounter.

The Scryers, now served by the Linx, breathed a deep sign of relief. They were finally free and could begin the restoration of the Spandrels and their Council. Yet, a new aquatic race, the Voltics, arrived shortly after in response to the Scryers' distress beacon. They are a warrior race, not unlike the Sedrone, whose Empire spanned far east of the Spandrels. They answered the distress call and raised hundreds of soldiers to resolve the Servants Rebellion by providing the Scryers with much needed numbers and strength. Just the thought of a battle brought them pleasure, but when they arrived too late for the war, the Voltic army felt cheated. So, they created their own war, suddenly turning on those they came to help. They released their fury upon whoever remained in the Spandrels, forcing them once again into subservience.

### **The Voltics Arrive**

The Voltics came from their eastern Empire when one of the distress beacons sent out by the Scryers was discovered by a scouting party. Shekra Vim, a valiant warrior within the Voltic Empire, undertook the quest to follow the distress beacon's message and join the war for freedom. He would of course demand a pact with the Scryers for them to assist against their greatest enemy... the Vastness. He took a large force and left his son in charge of his city-state.

Vim was a wise Voltic, but was filled with the Fury of Volt when they arrived in the Spandrels only to find that the battle had already been fought. They had traveled the fastest currents and still arrived late for the bloodshed they so desired. In anger, he almost immediately unleashed his troops to feed off many of the Scryers and Linx that remained. They were easily defeated and Shekra Vim claimed the Spandrels in the name of Volt, their god. The Spandrels were to become their newest Voltic city-state and important way station in the search for the Vastness. However, before he could set any plans in motion, Vim was betrayed by Kzahn, a major lieutenant in their army who had his own ideas on how to handle the Spandrels.

Kzahn was full of foresight and his exceptionally strong intellect lent great power to his words. He convinced nearly half of the soldiers that the Spandrels were their chance to leave behind the shackles of their past and start over. They would finally be rid of the backstabbing and rulings of the Twelve Eyes that was truly too far away to know what occurs in the Spandrels. The area was now a dangerous war zone, roamed by packs of Afflicted (page 53), Sedrone full of so much rage that they attack anyone who even comes near, the reemergence of the Charcodons, and strong resistance from Scryers that managed to hide from their forces. On top of that, they were expected to search out the Vastness and sustain their species-wide suicide mission as well? He easily won over many soldiers with his charisma and the idea of an independent state.

The fractured army led by Kzahn marched on the White Opus and started a second bloody war at the

### **The Underbelly**

As the Voltics lack the ability to control the natural building materials of the Spandrels, the blockings, multiple layers of buildings have been erected, fallen, and then constructed on top of the other. Many habitable chambers and passages still exist within these bottom layers that have accumulated over the years. During Sedrone Rule, this housed the seedier elements of the kingdom that many took refuge within the confusing maze of the Underbelly to escape persecution or the Hooks. It remains just as dangerous during Shekra Kzahn's rule, becoming a nesting place for the Afflicted and rebel bands. It has also become intriguing for mercenaries, treasure hunters, and even Apocalypse Prevention, Inc, as it is thought a lot of the Sedrone Kings' lost wealth lies underneath the city.

grand palace. They took the throne room by force and Kzahn sucked the life energy out of Vim before many witnesses. He then titled himself Shekra, claimed the Spandrels as independent of the Voltic Empire, and started a new age on the Scryer Calendar.

Today, Shekra Kzahn has ruled the Spandrels for nearly a century. He shows leniency to any Voltic that wished to join the new kingdom, but gives no mercy to all others. In a show of power, he often parades captured Sedrone, Scryers, and others to the Theatre of Blood for combat practice and to sate his soldiers' thirst for blood. They have easily shown the Linx that they are the new masters of the Spandrels, but the Scryers have been harder to control. Some serve Kzahn willingly, preferring slavery over the continuous rebellion their existence has become. Others have rallied together in the Underbelly and even work with Sedrone to fight a common enemy that has stolen their shared home. The Voltics don't know the alchemy required to control the blockling structures, leaving the city to fall into ruin. Shekra Kzahn has made some headway in rebuilding the city by forcing his servants to mine the mountains that surround the Spandrels, but it is a slow and painstaking process.

## **Threats to the Kingdom**

Yet, things have not been as great as the new Shekra may attempt to make them appear. His forces are slowly getting picked apart by the guerilla warfare waged by survivors from the Servants Rebellion that roam the Underbelly. Many of the Voltics sent into the Underbelly to weed out these threats never report back. The Afflicted not only inhabit the Underbelly, but also have spilled out into the Spandrels in small numbers. Shekra Kzahn is also shadowed by two other major threats. The first is the constant worry that the Voltic Empire will decide to send another force to overthrow Kzahn and reclaim the Spandrels for themselves. To try to ward this off, he sends back reports grossly exaggerated numbers of Afflicted, hoping that he and the Spandrels will simply be written off. He knows that Vim's son was covetous of his father's political powers and isn't likely to send rescue teams to aid now that he held that power.

Also, there is the Vastness... the giant Kraken of colossal proportions that has plagued the Voltics since the beginning of their history. Legend states that the Vastness is the ancient enemy of Volt, the

equivalent to the Sedrone's Giver. The Vastness feeds off of the dimension and the inhabitants of the world like a parasite, but Volt sought out the Vastness and defeated it in a great struggle the shook Domainya. Instead of slaying the creature, the Vastness was encased in magical orb that acted as its eternal cell. The Voltic Empire used this giant orb to power their city-states and to create smaller orbs that allowed the Voltics to expand their telepathic reach.

It was centuries ago that the Vastness escaped its prison as the Voltics became greedy for the orb's energies and drained the sealing powers. It escaped to the Dark Horizon and has once again began feeding off of Domainya and its inhabitant with hundreds of giant tentacles that can stretch for miles from the darkness above. The tentacles possess giant maws and can act independently to find and consume their prey. They are not selective in their prey, but do seem to have a preference for Voltic flesh. See Vastness Tentacles on page 56.

The Voltics and API have been in conflict ever since they first met in the Spandrels. Shekra Kzahn holds much contempt for the company, suspicious that they are only trying to help the once-rulers retake their kingdom. Agents are captured on sight and usually tortured for the amusement of his soldiers before being thrown to the Feeding Fields, which has become little more than a garbage disposal for the Voltics.

## Voltic Culture

The Voltics worship a great father god, Volt, and his son, Zimm. They believe that Domainya is Volt's lover and their son was birthed from the dimension's very core. They thank Volt for victories, curse him for their losses, and believe themselves his children. Volt gave the first of their kind the great Resonance Orbs and taught their leaders how to create and care for them. Volt also bestowed upon them the ability to syphon energy from an enemy.

They have no priests in their worship, but an old Voltic known as the Hand of Zimm acts as physical embodiment of Volt. He is an ambassador and has been alive longer than any other Voltic. Some even believe him to have lived for their kind's entire existence. The weight of age is clear in his physical decay, but Volt has protected his mind to keep him mentally sound. He watches over the Seat of Zimm in the Voltic Empire, the shrine where the orb that holds Zimm in a suspended animation lies. Only he

## Hidden Empire

The Voltic Empire lies so far to the East of the Spandrels that API probes have yet to detect it. From their limited knowledge of the Voltics, much of which has come from the single Voltic legally residing on Earth, they know that the empire is composed of twelve city-states. Each city-state elects a Shekra (or ruler) and the twelve gather together into a council called the Twelve Eyes, not unlike that which the Scryers previously held before the Sedrone attacked. It is thought that the Voltic Empire is much larger than the Spandrels, but exact numbers are unknown without first finding where it is located.

knows how to open the orb and his role is to do so only if the Vastness is located. There are always dozens of search parties looking for traces of the beast, sometimes for decades at a time. The Hand of Zimm writes and keeps records of Voltic history, from their creation to the present, and magically inscribes them into a giant rock that sticks out from the seafloor, called the Telling Stone. It is their holy duty to one day write "The Vastness was finally slain" on the Telling Stone and they don't care who they hurt to accomplish this sacred mission.

## Exploring Domainya

Domainya is a beautiful dimension, teeming with life and a variety of ecosystems. It is expansive and Apocalypse Prevention Inc. has just barely scratched the surface of exploring its murky depths. The waters are similar to Earth's oceans, from the chemical composition to the food webs that have formed, but most creatures are barely recognizable to humans. Then there are monsters, like the Vastness, that are more fantastical than anything found on Earth. The true shape, size, and layout of Domainya is still unknown. API scientists have sent out probes in many directions, but they have yet to cross each other.

Domainya has no sun, moon, or stars, and when one looks up they only see the pitch blackness of the Dark Horizon. The seafloor is supple and populated by a variety of plant-life, including algae, mosses, mushrooms, and natural crystals. The dimension is filled by hydrothermal vents known as Black Smokers that shoot nutrients and minerals into the water as natural hot springs. Light is given off by the majority of plant-life, allowing for predator/prey interactions that humans are familiar with from Earth's oceans.

The first API team to thoroughly explore the di-



light through spots on their caps and downward underneath their caps from the giant gills.

Domainya is a gentle dimension and its ocean often soothes and engrosses those that come to visit. Yet its calm waters hide numerous dangers. A major trend in Domainya flora and fauna is its size, as its waters hold a much greater amount of oxygen in it than any Earth water, allowing things to grow on a much grander scale. Creatures follow that same trend, with examples including the

Vastness to the Xanthyras (page 57) to the Drakefish (page 55).

dimension, which included Agent Geoff Kinling (page 17), was amazed and awed by its beauty and complexity. They entered the world near the Spandrels of Sedrone, the site of the lost Sedrone territory. The first noticeable difference was that the Spandrels were filled with blood-stained water called the Red Zone, even though the rest of Domainya's water is blue-green. This was a relic of the Servants Rebellion between the Sedrone's and the races they ruled over.

The next major difference in Domainya is the source of its light. Agents found that the soft seafloor is brightly lit, through various luminescent plant organisms. Almost everywhere they went there was a soft carpet of moss that gave off a subtle green glow and they heard quiet whispers whenever they came into contact with the moss. There were also numerous large crystals that gave off a bright pulsating light and giant mushrooms that gave off great beams of

## The Spandrels

It is alluring in its majesty, and the great cities of coral are beyond the wildest dreams of any architect. The Spandrels is created by four mountainous projections from the seafloor almost to the Dark Horizon. In between these Spandrels, billions of blocklings have been shaped into magnificent structures, many of which were guided by the hands of the Sedrone. Most of its structures have collapsed, either from tremors or the death of the blocklings. The center of the city where all four projections join is also mostly in ruins, but Shekra Kzahn is slowly building new structures on top of the older city.

Domainya has no stellar body to tell the passage of time, but the Spandrels are plagued with tremors. Its inhabitants keep track of time through a series of calculable tremors of a specific magnitude. Powerful tremors occur once roughly every ten years, seven months, and nineteen days in Earth time, manifesting in a wave of five tremors strong enough to level most cities that are built upon even the sturdiest foundation. The Spandrels' four large mountainous projections absorb most of the shock, preventing the area's complete collapse. Still, there is significant damage, often forcing the constant rebuilding of the Spandrels. There are also less powerful tremors that

### One or Many

Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. has encountered several different aquatic races all over Earth, each of them claiming to reside in a dimension of purely water. They may call it by different names, but the similarities are staggering between totally unrelated demon species. This is a major point of API research into the dimension, hoping to prove whether they are all one single dimension or in fact separate phenomenon.

occur roughly every two hours that help them measure time from day to day.

## Bright Crystals

Massive bundles of Bright Crystals thrust out of Domainyan soil and can grow up to thirty feet high in collections of ten to twenty. Bright crystals in each copse emit one of two lights, either bright white or a pale subtler blue. It is rare, but the two colors can also mix in one copse to give off a deep violet color. On a microscopic level, they are gatherings of millions of tiny organisms and the crystal that forms is actually created as protection while they continuously mate. This mating is what produces the light emitted.

They tend to vary between flashing light and a continuous stream and each kind acts as pheromones to attract more of the same. Biologists' research proves that each copse tries to attract as many other bright crystals in order to receive the most fertilization. In this case a single copse has a better chance of getting fertilized if they attract more copses, leading to Bright Crystals often overgrowing areas if not kept in check or harvested.

## Dark Horizon

The Dark Horizon is the region above Domainya where light is no longer present. The Dark Horizon is pitch black, but contains the occasional streak of color that are visible from the seafloor called Auras. These creatures roam the Dark Horizon and feed on the souls that wish to reach Hadiana, or so the Muglics preached. When the Sedrone first encountered the Voltics, they thought the newcomers were physical manifestations of Auras, due to their life siphoning abilities, but this is not a widespread theory outside of Those-That-Kneel. The Dark Horizon is sometimes called the Realm of the Lost Souls. Any living creatures that pass into the Deep Abyss are in danger of having their soul stolen, even if they are not dead, and will become eternally damned. In fact, the Vastness has taken residence in the Dark Horizon and loves nothing more than to pull its victims into the darkness.

## Photoshrooms

These plants are similar to earth mushrooms, but can grow up to over one hundred feet tall. Inside a photoshroom is a continuous chemical process that converts filtered dead matter processed through

small polyps along their body to produce light. Their caps emit spotlights through random points on the surface where their outer membrane thins and becomes nearly transparent. Its light also spills out beneath its cap, brightly illuminating the ground. Many races that were not graced to live in blocking homes, would construct their homes underneath photoshrooms to take advantage of their light. However, others steer clear of this phenomenon so they cannot easily be seen by predators.

## Tenguil Moss

This dark-colored algae gives off an eerie, subtle green glow. They often gather in thick carpets around bright crystals or beneath photoshrooms, but dominate the ecosystem in desolate areas. Any creature coming into contact with the moss feels a sensation of a thousand little voices whispering in unison in their head. The messages are short and simple and transcend any language barriers. The moss can sense the intentions of nearby beings and their whispering often predicts evil events that will occur. Anyone in the presence of Tenguil moss can resist the voices with a Moderate (20) INS + Discipline check, but this may be raised to a Tough (30) check if resisting particularly heinous or strong callings from the moss.

## Twin Currents

While there are thousands of currents running through Domainya, there are only two that can be used reliably for transportation to and from the

### The Slaughter King

Near the end of Sedrone rule, Lasizz the Slaughter King became known for massacring thousands of rumored conspirators within the Spandrels. He was plagued with scheming, theories, and rumors of treachery during his reign. The Tenguil knew the king's evil spirit and haunted his every step, whispering and infusing his mind with every imaginable conspiracy to his rule. They even whispered of threats from his children and the need to kill them. Lasizz summarily had all Tenguil moss removed and exterminated from the Spandrels over the next day. He went so far as to try to destroy the moss that surrounded the Feeding Field, but the Muglics would not have agree to such an action. He fell out of favor with followers of the Giver and his authority diminished. The next night he was found dead in his palace, killed by his daughter, and was summarily given over to the Feeding Field.

Spandrels, the Badelbod and Kekelbod. Legend has it that they were twin Sedrone, both with different life plans. Badelbod always wished to remain close to his mother and bring her all the precious jewels of the planet. Kekelbod was a dreamer and always wished to travel beyond the Dark Horizon to explore the Hadiena. The Badelbod current travels east and tends to push things downward to the seafloor. The Kekelbod current travels west and tends to push things up towards the Dark Horizon.

The Twin Currents are not hard to find, each one working like a highway with the Badelbod traveling from the west and the Kekelbod traveling east. Each one has offshoots that they can take from the major currents, but they usually don't last for longer than a mile. Any character traveling along these Currents receive a +5 Movement bonus, while those traveling against these current suffer a -5 Movement penalty. The currents can be found and identified with a Moderate (20) INS + Survival (Navigation) check. A Tough (30) check allows them to identify an offshoot of either current and an idea of where it will leads.

## The Smoking Belt

Domainya is filled with large cracks in the dimensions surface that creates uplifts. West of the Spandrels lies a huge collection of hydrothermal vents that is known as the Smoking Belt. It is a dangerous expanse where the suspected molten core

### Ishira, the Wise

Until recently, the Contagion's creator was thought to have been killed in the rebellion, but agents have obtained the identity of the responsible party. Ishira was a physician for the Sedrone kings for decades before the Servants Rebellion. She was also a proficient alchemist and she utilized these two skills to create the Contagion. The company believes that she has fled to Earth to hide from the Hooks actively seeking her, but her exact location is unknown. The Scryers left under Voltic rule are likely waiting for Ishira to reappear, ready to rally behind her to defeat the Voltics and reclaim the Spandrels. She stands as a symbol of hope to her kind. Since API has discovered her identity, the company keeps this information classified and is still unsure what to do with it. Some suggest searching for her, as the creator of the Contagion could certainly know the cure. Most Scryers and Linx that remain in Domainya, survivors of the rebellion, think that helping API to find a cure for the Contagion is a betrayal to their race and everything for which Ishira stands.

comes dangerously close to the seafloor. There are thousands of these hydrothermal vents that blast nutrients and minerals throughout Domainya, but the Smoking Belt creates an area prone to massive hydrothermal events akin to a dangerous mine field. Attempting to traverse the area (like the Sedrone did when descending upon the Spandrels) requires multiple AGY + Athletics checks to avoid disrupting the vents. It is often fatal (inflicting 15 (L)) to be caught in one of these blasts.

## The Reclamation Project

The Sedrone are not done with the Spandrels. Together with Apocalypse Prevention, Inc, the Lochs have begun initiatives to take back their lost kingdom from Shekra Kzahm. It has been a long time coming and required decades of service to the company, as well as many peace treaties made between the Lochs and the races they once ruled.

The question most asked is, why would they want to return? The short answer: it is a symbol of home. The long answer can vary based on who you ask. Modern Lochs regard the Reclamation project as a way of righting wrongs. The Voltics have taken the cruel and overlording place that their kind previously held. With newfound friends among the Scryers and Linx, they not only want to save the Voltics from a similar fate as there's, but want to create a fresh start for all races living in the Spandrels.

On the other side of the coin, many Sedrone are still stuck in their old ways. Let the so-called Lochs sleep with humans and produce bastard offspring. They regard the Spandrels as their property still and would rather spend their last days in their rightfully conquered territory. They are not keen on allowing one lesser race to curse their people and another to steal their land. That just won't do. They'll work with whoever will lead them back to their throne and will likely count API as enemies after they get in their way.

The Reclamation Project is led by Geoff Kinling and Wyx, two agents who have become close allies through the "one of us, one of them" mentality of Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. Agent Kinling is an expert in oceanographic sciences and was assigned to the first research team to travel to Domainya and collect specimens for experimentation. However, API doesn't have the technology to effectively combat both the Shekra's forces and the natural



dangers of Domainaya at one time. The company has employed a number of aquatic races to help develop new equipment necessary to maneuver about in Domainaya's murky depths for extended periods of time and counteract the threats of both the Voltics and monsters. The first creation by the API scientists was the M.U.E.S. (page 49), created by Agent Kinling. They have another piece of equipment still in the prototype stage called the "H.I.C.C.U.P." (page 48). The unit is apparently highly maneuverable, and can obtain blinding speeds even underwater.

## Agent Geoff Kinling

Agent Kinling is a leading scientist from Earth, recruited by the company in his twenties. Since then he became obsessed with the ocean and originally spent his time near the Great Lakes researching the Ondine, but was assigned to travel to Domainaya when the Lochs finally shared the dimensional coordinates. He has applied his passion for the Earth's oceans to Domainaya and spends as much time as he can there, usually stationed at the Box. He is instrumental in creating technology and organizing the excursions to Domainaya, logging more hours than any other agent. This led to his inevitable promotion to Ambassador to Domainaya.

Agent Kinling is obsessed with his work and spends the majority of his time either collecting specimens or examining his findings. He doesn't seem to know how to relax and is relentless in the pursuit of something once he has decided to go after it. As an advocate protector of Earth's waters, he has a soft spot for all sea-life, even monstrous creatures from Domainaya. His status as Ambassador has opened Scryers and other aquatic races to his analytical mind, and he has actually become fascinated with their culture before and after the Sedrone and their mastery of alchemy and technology.

He speaks rarely on his feelings on the situation with the Lochs. Few know whether he supports API's quest to aid in the retaking and repopulation of the Spandrels. Some think that he has become too close with the Scryers and Linx and that this may have clouded his judgment. In reality, the Spandrels originally belonged to the Scryers after all. However, Wyx is a great friend to Kinling and he finds it hard to turn his back on his partner's wishes.

In truth, Agent Kinling has grown very partial to

## Those-That-Kneel

Those-That-Kneel is a group led by Muglic Rox and the Sedrone that follow believe that they are the only ones responsible for their species' demise. Praying to the Giver for penance for the past wrongdoings is the only way to exist. They journey everyday to the Smoking Belt, which they believe to be a sign of the Giver's displeasure, and kneel before them for hours in prayer. While they seem exposed to an easy massacre by the Voltics, Kzahn actually has his hands full between the Afflicted, roaming Sedrone, rebellious Scryers, and his dwindling forces. He dreams of the day when he has the Spandrels fully under control and can grant Those-That-Kneel a sweet death.

the Scryers and Linx and their continuous enslavement at the hands of others. He has authored an objective that would make an agreement between the Scryers and the API, giving the Spandrels back to its original owners should the Reclamation Project succeed. This has yet to be presented to the Board of Directors, unsure as to how they'd be received. Annabelle Priscilla Ilsley would, of course, have the final say. Both races have suffered deeply at the hand of the other. Should something this important be decided by a "the Sedrone started it" rationality? The CEO isn't likely to take such a simple approach.

## Wyx

Wyx encountered Kinling's squad during their first traverse into Domainaya. Thoroughly entrenched in the old teachers of the Muglics and the Sedrone, his original plan was to tear the squad apart with his large claws. However, Kinling was able to talk him down with a few calming words and a Universal Translator, and thus began their brand new friendship. The two have not left each other's sides since. Wyx's knowledge of the landscape has assisted Kinling's research immensely, and he has risen quickly in rank within the company. He is deeply involved in efforts to cure the Contagion and restoring the Spandrels to their glory, before the arrival of the Voltics. Wyx serves as bodyguard most often, but his presence also lends credence to Kinling's words amongst the other Sedrone.

While Agent Kinling secretly believes the Spandrels should be returned to the Scryers, he has hidden these feelings from Wyx. The Sedrone agent has pushed for many Loch-friendly initiatives within

*Wyx sped through the waters of Domainya. He had been spotted during his reconnaissance mission to inspect the current forces of Shekra Kzahm and was now in for the swim of his life... quite literally. He felt the vibrations of at least four followers, most likely well-trained Voltic warriors out for blood. Honestly, though, when are they not out for blood? Few knew this area better than Wyx, however, so they had quite the chase ahead of them.*

*The resourceful Sedrone shot around pillars of stone and photoshrooms like a torpedo, each time throwing his aggressors off more and more. He dipped downward, shot up, and knew exactly what currents to catch in order to hasten his escape. Sadly, he soon remembered that the Voltics had launchable tentacles as one wrapped around his ankle, making it harder to swim. The Voltics also used their grip to pull themselves toward Wyx that much faster.*

*Suddenly, he then spotted his salvation... the kind that usually liked to keep hidden. He had to time it just right, so he adjusted his speed against the current and the Voltics' rate of gaining right before he swooped down to seemingly gain cover in some plant-life and passed by one precise spot. Of course, he passed safely, but a large carnivorous plant lashed out and captured the Voltics into its mouth as they went by. Xanthyras were certainly good for dissolving captured food quickly too, giving Wyx plenty of time to return to the Box. He had to report to Kinling and API as soon as possible, as his findings could turn the tide of the Reclamation Project.*

the company, many of which have cleared, but Kinling has stayed silent. This difference in opinion will most likely lead to a future rift between the two, possibly with the human oceanographer in the Sedrone's stomach.

## **Station D1 (The Box)**

Station D1 is a camouflaged waypoint used as a relay station between Earth and Domainya. It was constructed within a large crevice in Domainya's seafloor and is maintained by a standing crew of approximately fifty agents with both military and science specialties. There is also a full compliment of the most advanced undersea equipment. Many of these newer prototypes are tested in Domainyan waters, which protects Earth from possible issues (such as the disappearance of Marine Base Seven (page 25)) and tests the new devices in the very waters they are intended to be used.

The nickname for the facility, the Box, has become a staple, even though no one knows exactly where it actually came from. It is a 300 ft. tall building with a main floor devoted to storage and living quarters, as well as two basement floors, one R&D floor, and a bottom level that contains the relay portal. It can be opened within minutes of notification to bring agents back and forth between Earth and Domainya.

The base is protected by a number of sensors

and security monitors, as well as a variety of spear and torpedo turrets placed in various locations around the facility. In addition, the entire building is encased with the first prototype of a camouflage casing material, allowing it to blend in with its surroundings. Rumors have circulated that this new technology has come from research into the Half-Loch's special abilities. The company has made no official comments on these assumptions.

## **What Does the Future Hold?**

There are a number of potential outcomes for the battle for the Spandrels. Most likely, Shekra Kzahm will continue to hold power in the Spandrels for the short term, while Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. builds their forces and creates more solid plans of attack. Included are a few ideas of possible futures:

### **Rebels Win**

It is possible that the Scryers and Linx could gather their numbers together and attempt a well-organized assault on the Voltics. They may be able to deal a great enough blow to collapse Shekra Kzahm's power. They could receive help from API if Agent Kinling voiced his support of them, as well. However, most signs point to the Scryers attempting a Voltic Contagion. There are many who protest this action. The Afflicted were created from the Sedrone Contagion and who knows what will happen to the Scryers as a side-effect of a new, dimension-

wide poison? Still, too many rebels see this as their only way out. If they were to win, they would most likely reelect a Scryers Council and restore the Spandrels to their prior glory based on their well-kept historical records.

### Lochs Win

The Lochs have ample backing from Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. However, the company has enough problems protecting Earth and financing programs to benefit humanity that the Reclamation Project has not been a huge concern. Many believe the company has simply given lip service and plopped a base in the dimension with no actual plans for further action. However, if this is not the case, they might be able to gather large enough numbers to reclaim the Spandrels. They would likely place a new king to the throne, but API would probably force them into a peaceful arrangement with the Scryers and Linx. This, of course, would cause bad blood between the Sedrone and the company, almost certainly escalating into yet another war.

### Voltics Win

Shekra Kzahn and his Voltic army have been training every day and hunting down the weaker races. The Lochs and API may just underestimate how powerful and tactical these beings truly are. The Voltics may be able to secure their hold on the Spandrels and eliminate the majority of the dangers in the area. The Spandrels would then be subject to an even more fearsome and bloodshedding rule. If the Voltic Empires decide that the Spandrels are a valuable enough resource, they may send a much larger Voltic force, kill anyone they encounter (including Shekra Kzahn and his men), and absorb the Spandrels into their Empire. This would create an even greater threat to API interests in Domainya and would most likely prevent a Loch repopulation all together. The Voltics numbers would be much greater than any numbers API could afford to send to Domainya, thus ending the Reclamation Project.

### Ondine Assistance

Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. has enlisted the help of the Ondine, the half-aquatic race from Earth. After encountering several colonies that attacked the Lochs and agents on sight, they eventually found a group willing to aid the Lochs with the Reclamation Project. Their reasoning is very simple... if the Lochs go back home, the Ondine can be left to rule the waters of Earth once again. No more battles for control of waterways and no more blood spilled in protection of territory the Sirens have held for thousands of years from these overambitious fish demons. While their numbers are not high in the group and they are not liked by many, the Ondine have proved an irreplaceable asset to the effort.





# chapter TWO: Mission to Earth

## Brand New Home

Immigration is a difficult decision that few take likely. Even if packing up their belongings and moving someplace better sounds attractive, it is often a hard and sometimes dangerous process. Selecting a new home to live, making travel arrangements, and learning a new culture are all important if a group hopes to survive. There is also dealing with the harsh reality of living in locations that are dangerous and xenophobic, the root of why the Loch Migration was no laughing matter.

Once they decided to flee Domainya, dozens of worlds were inspected, examined, and placed under the harshest scrutiny. The world they moved to had to be a world with plenty of water and an atmosphere in

which they could survive. The oceans needed to have plenty of food to support the Sedrone's numbers and had to have an acceptable level of danger that would not end with the Sedrone being destroyed in their weakened state.

The Sedrone had scoped out Earth for centuries. It was considered little more than an obscure vacation spot by Sedrone nobles that were rich enough to afford the alchemist fee for dimensional travel. Early visits amounted to hunting trips for young nobles and early reports of attacking mermaids or sea creatures stalking beaches looking for humans can be attributed to these Sedrone (when they weren't actual mermaids). Some say it was one Sedrone hunting trip which led to the inspiration behind a famous cult movie from the early 20th century. Loch publicists

deny this.

The primary motivator for moving to Earth was not just to find a new home for their race. When the high alchemists of Domainya were consulted for information regarding Earth, they revealed visions and portents that said the blue planet held the key to their survival. Followers of the Giver protested, but gave no alternative other than to stay behind, so the Sedrone leaders followed the old ways. The matter was debated heavily for weeks before a noble whose name has been lost to history made a great proclamation that the survival of the species was the most important issue and could no longer be ignored. The Sedrone underwent a massive effort to secure the survival of their race, and set their eyes on a new prize for their empire.

## Initial Encounters

For many, the original Migration plans were not for settlement, but instead conquest... their first reaction to most encounters. Across Domainya the remaining conclaves were assembled and armies were inspected to see how many troops they could deploy in what was seen as their greatest endeavor since claiming the Sedrone Spandrels. Several commoners were drafted into massive regiments and available Hooks (page 38) were brought into the fold. In total, their armies numbered almost 500,000 strong, a force almost unheard of on Domainya.

And yet, while an army of 500,000 soldiers looks great on paper, it was nowhere near enough to conquer a planet of over six billion humans. The mystical power needed to send that many troops across the planes was greater than what their greatest alchemists could summon, and scouts brought back accurate estimates on human populations, making their generals nervous. They knew they could not take on nations whose civilian population dwarfed the remainder of their entire race.

The great plan was revised and redrafted, creating a new proposal. Instead of conquest, the Sedrone would instead try to infiltrate the planet peacefully. They would send across their armies, but their primary goals were scaled back to finding places for the Sedrone to settle. They would establish bases and underwater colonies across the planet that would help the Sedrone survive while they tried to work out how to survive and possibly revise their plans back to conquest.

The first few forays across dimensions were near

### Left Behind

It is important to note that not all Lochs made it over from Domainya. The nobles could obviously afford to travel across dimensions, but many of the commoners were abandoned. Others were religious zealots and joined Those-That-Kneel in order to show loyalty to their homeworld. These Lochs still live on Domainya, but without a central authority guiding them they fought an endless series of bloody civil wars, until the Voltics encroached on the land for control. Combined with the various aquatic threats in Domainya, it is believed that these Lochs may have little more than a decade before they are extinguished. Hence the Reclamation Project (page 16).

disasters. Their aquatic alchemy was pushed to levels never seen before, and many mystics burned out trying to transport troops. Rather than landing massive legions across Earth, small strike teams were sent in to secure areas to scout for habitable lands. The very first effort was in Scotland, in a small lake known for a powerful nexus point located near the bottom, making dimensional travel easy. This led to the company's first encounter with the Lochs.

Loch Ness had been known for its monster myths for years. Most of these legends came from pranksters and overzealous researchers trying to cash in on the belief in a "Loch Ness Monster", but the deep portal did occasionally churn out real monsters as well. When a Sedrone strike force emerged from the Loch Ness' coast, it was noticed by nearby fishing boats that soon held slaughtered fisherman in order to be kept quiet. Despite this, their actions alerted the nearby API watchtower that transmitted the agency's first images of the Sedrone back to the HQ. The Sedrone received their nickname of "Lochs" from this encounter.

## Conflict and Resolution

After initial scouting efforts, the Sedrone finally decided upon Brazil as the point for their portal. The Amazon was a near perfect landing place. Its location was near several powerful ley lines, allowing massive numbers to pass through at one time to then immediately proceed to the ocean. Also, few humans lived in the jungles and those that did were primitive at best. However, in their attempts for glory, they glossed over the signs of heavy tourist travel or the large cities located not far from the river they chose. As time went by, it became harder and harder to ignore human interaction.

## **Fish Tank or Open Waters?**

One of the harshest things the Lochs and other aquatic races had to endure was staying in artificial environments (i.e. water tanks) while the company processed their paperwork. API needed to ensure that the Sedrone were not contaminating Earth's environment and observe how they reacted to different types of ocean climate. Finding a suitable homeland for the Lochs was also difficult and took years. Many Lochs unused to Earth's water died while waiting in large tanks while API figured out what to do with them. The company has since streamlined these processes to minimize the discomfort of its possible citizens.

While most Lochs recovered from this experience, many others did not. Some felt betrayed by their leaders that were placed in comfortable heated tanks while they negotiated their terms. Others had left behind lives of luxury and coral palaces to now be forced to live in despicable conditions. Many within the company argue that the Lochs were treated with respect and had their every wish answered while they waited.

Those Lochs who remember the first waves of the migration have bad memories of cold tank, little food, and harsh treatment at the hands of API scientists. They refuse to take part in such events again and have slipped free of the company's grasp. These Lochs moved to the open waters on Earth and refuse to return, most just wishing to live out their lives in privacy. Unfortunately for them, the open waters often hold even more danger.

Brazilian naval boats were frequently dispatched to investigate missing fishing vessels and strange claims of aquatic monsters that seized several tributaries and lagoons along the Amazon. When a particular vessel was destroyed by Lochs in 1972, API chose to act on the serious problem the aquatic demons posed in what became known as the Battle of Muddy Waters.

Lasting almost a month, the Lochs and API fought a series of brutal engagements along the shores of the Amazon River, involving both Elites and Hooks in the encounter. The Lochs had the advantage in physical strength and strategic combat training, inflicting terrible losses on API squads unprepared for high-level underwater fighting. The company had the technological advantage and, with the aid of Wolf People and experimental cybernetics, was able to take on the Lochs, blow for blow.

The company won the battle and the Lochs were forced to send dignitaries to negotiate. They had already devoted too much of their resources towards Earth to quit, and their nobles hoped to negotiate something favorable by making concessions to API. Their initial talks failed when API learned of how the Lochs were a conquering race that had enslaved many races in their homeworld. There was no guarantee that they would not try the same with Earth. The technological gap between the two races also meant that the Sedrone had little to offer besides their mastery of aquatic alchemy and a few priceless magical relics that the Lochs begrudgingly surrendered.

In the end, the plight of the Lochs won over several sympathetic members of the Board of Directors. While they were not forgiven for the humans lives lost at the Battle of Muddy Waters, the company saw the value in recruiting Lochs for their strength and intimidating demeanor and offered a counter proposal: If the Lochs willingly joined API, thus becoming citizens of Earth, they would work on finding them new homes and help them work on a solution to their breeding problem.

While not the conquest the Lochs had quite hoped for, their beaten soldiers were demoralized and agreed simply to end the conflict. They slowly finished their Migration and were scattered across the globe to secret API aquatic bases while the Circle of Ten decided what to do with them. Many ended up waiting for months or years in small camps that were hastily constructed in order to accommodate so many Lochs.

## **Open Revolt**

Over time, some Lochs became obsessed with Earth culture. Many of their young people began using human slang and babbling nonstop about surround sound stereo systems, the latest human female on the cover of Maxim, or the idea of land surfing on wheels attached to a board (viewed as the oddest of human traditions).

Duke Squallish, one of the Sedrone's most influential orators and general, became the figurehead of an anti-human movement amongst the Lochs. Disgusted with the abandonment of their culture for that of the humans, he wrote a simple treatise entitled "To the End." No more than a few pages long, Squallish wrote about the Loch plight and how the Migration had failed. They left Domainya to save their people, but they lost their culture and their way in coming to Earth.

## Survival of the Species

Consider this. The human race is about to be wiped out, because no more children are being born. Despite humanity's best efforts, men and women have gone irreversibly sterile. Now imagine that a process is developed to save humanity, but only by some unsavory means, such as cloning or using animals as birthing receptacles. Disgusting? By most standards, yes! Many people could never imagine mankind disappearing forever, and so radical steps would be seen as necessary.

This is the very predicament of the Lochs. Their culture existed for thousands of years before man rose to prominence on Earth and most want their culture to go on. As their numbers start to dwindle from millions to thousands, they must embrace these radical steps or breeding with tiny, hairy beings in order to keep their species going.

The duke began organizing small protests at first, gathering hunger strikes or smearing graffiti on API boats. This escalated to one of his most famous displays, the "Rotten Fish Affair", as his followers slaughtered dozens of whales, sharks, and large fish to leave them strewn across Miami beach during the 4th of July. This created a dreadful stench and caused the company to invest millions to cover it up.

When agents arrived to arrest Squallish, he gave up without a fight. However, before he could be loaded onto the transport boat, dozens of Loch warriors burst out from the waves and attacked. Although primitive, they overwhelmed the agents and set fire to the buildings nearby. API mobilized its forces and managed to subdue most of the rebels after two days.

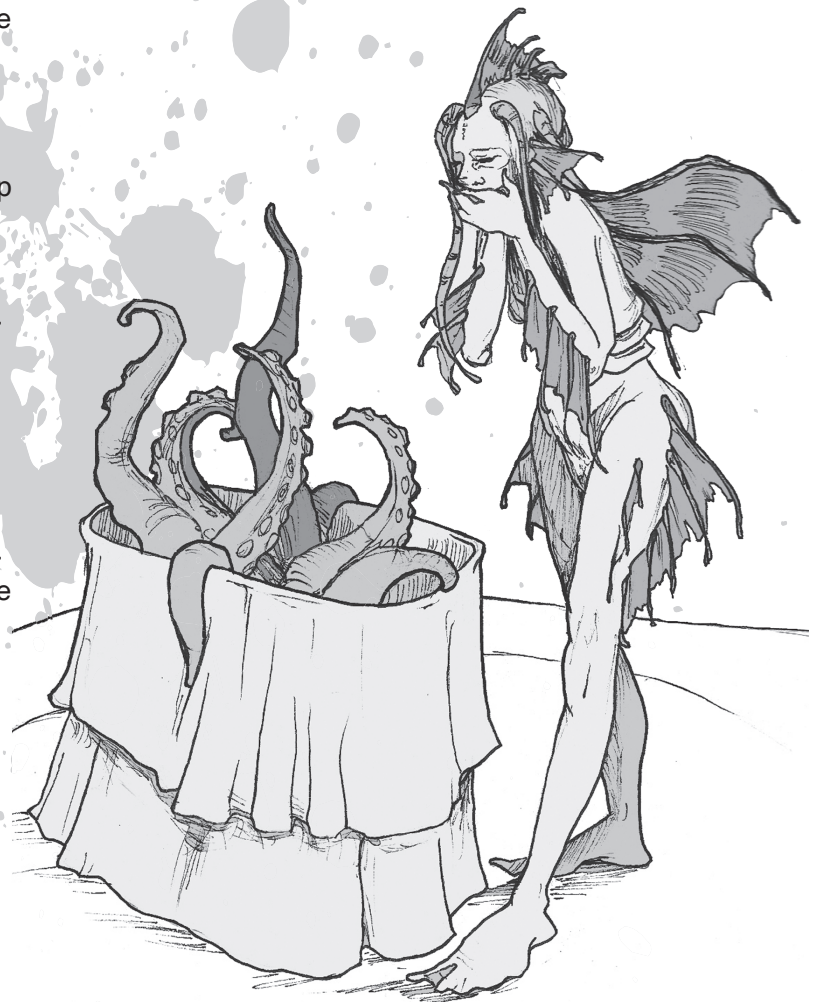
Several Lochs stayed at the bottom of Black Moss (page 28) and had no trouble with API, many considering Squallish an unwelcome renegade. Few wanted to aid him in his rebellion and worked with the company to find him, but Duke Squallish still escaped despite their best efforts. While the rest of his followers were killed or arrested, Squallish used his alchemist contacts to teleport him and as many followers as possible back to Domainya. API considers the rebellion over and all that is left is to round up those that fled, but it is believed that Squallish has kept very active while in exile. Regardless of his original intentions, Squallish is considered a terrorist. He set out to make life better for his race and to preserve what was left of their culture, but his tactics only stained the Lochs reputation.

## Birdfish and the Bees

Their survival weighs on the mind of each and every Loch. Not a day goes by when one doesn't turn to the other and ponder how they are going to survive or who has passed away recently. Their civilization, which once spanned in the millions and had conquered the entirety of their home plane, seems to be on its way to extinction.

This is why it is important for Lochs to overcome their inability to breed, regardless of cost. All the mystical powers of aquatic alchemists have yet to lift the disease and API's best scientists weren't knowledgeable enough to cure it. Instead, the Lochs decided to go with their most desperate plan yet to stave off complete destruction.

From a series of human rapes at the hands of a Loch, they learned that they could potentially create offspring in a similar fashion. Breeding with humans is a tough issue for the Lochs to tackle. Even with proof that it would work, most Lochs were revolted with the idea. The idea of mating with a creature with leathery



skin, strange fur, and a lack of fins was hard to imagine for many. At the same time most humans have a hard time mating with a creature that is covered in scales and has ferocious teeth. Surprisingly enough, there were willing members on both sides for the experiments to save the species. Over time, the first Loch-Human mating began and some Loch's took to the process like fish to...well, you can guess.

However, after the first humans and Lochs became pregnant, scientists learned that their physiologies were not 100% compatible. First, less than two percent of pregnancy attempts even actually conceive a child. Loch children gestate very quickly and removal of the infant can be fatal to both parent and child. The child slowly introduces waste products and poisons into human hosts that weakens and kills them. By the time the child is born, the host body is overwhelmed

### **Eating the Contagion**

As those aware of the supernatural may know, Carriers have the uncanny ability to devour diseases and sicknesses like food. A group of Lochs tracked down one of these beings, attempting to stay under API's radar of course, and paid the Carrier a handsome fee to remove the Contagion from their bodies. The Illegal agreed, reached his fingers inside of the Loch, and pulled out the sickness, chomping on it like sloppy joes. The Lochs were overjoyed and thought they had found the true answer to their race's misfortune, until the Carrier began to convulse and fell to the ground... dying instantly, but not before releasing a gas with a highly intensified Contagion inside. One whiff and the Lochs died immediately as well. Fortunately, agents were following them and were able to contain and dispose of the air-born sickness before it could spread any farther. This information was recorded as "something never to try" by API scientists.

### **Contagion as a Curse**

The Loch curse is said to have been born the day the last of a race known as the Kulmajezdad was crushed by their claws. The Sedrone conquered the Kulmajezdad and turned them into slaves. Possessing unbridled hatred for their conquerors, the Kulmajezdad fought to the bitter end before the Sedrone inadvertently wiped out their egg pools during their last battles. Since the end of the Kulmajezdad was within sight they spent the last of their spirit to curse the Sedrone. While not directly responsible for the Contagion, many believe that this curse led the Sedrone down the path to their current epidemic. Others don't even give credence to this argument, dismissing it as superstition.

and they die in a very bloody manner.

Loch's discovered quickly that they were unable to continue the species without the death of one of the parents. Either the Loch or the human parent always died in the process, either due to side-effects from the Contagion or the aforementioned toxins. API briefly decided to discontinue testing, but was swayed when they produced the first Half-Loch, beings born of both man and loch, possessing qualities of both. Lochs will never give up trying and see hope in the practice, despite the often traumatic consequences involved.

This begs the question: Can a species continue through such an act? Clearly, the Lochs know they do not have a choice. Many of their kind are lost each year through natural causes and losses suffered in the line of duty to Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. or one of their many outside groups. Some believe that they made the right choice, holding up Half-Lochs as proof that they will one day fit in on Earth and their bloodlines will live on.

API has numerous programs in place to try to help the Lochs, hoping to find alternatives to having to choose between a Loch death and a human death. So far, none have been successful. One failed program even tried cloning Lochs rather than letting them reproduce naturally. Due to little knowledge of their demonic physiology, their clones turned feral and rabid (See Jaws Snapping in the Dark on page 74). Another project tried to mate Lochs with other demon species found on Earth, but these mating yielded no results.

### **The Kids**

Affectionately known as Half-Lochs, the DNA of these small children is a perfect combination of human and Loch potential. For security purposes, they are kept in a hidden facility away from prying eyes and its location is only common among the higher-ranked members of the US branch. Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. has been able to produce one of these spectacular children every two years of painstaking experimentation, for a total of five documented births. The technology required to produce a Half-Loch without the death of one of the parents has yet to be found, but one look at them fills any scientist with hope for the future of the Loch species.

When a Half-Loch is born, their lungs are not ready to breath air. They are immediately rushed to tanks filled with a special liquid solution where they are infused with necessary minerals, vitamins, and antibodies through osmosis. Some believe that the solution uses mermaid's milk as a foundation. The children



take instantly to water and possess the cognizance and movement capabilities of a human child a year old with basic swimming skills.

When they have grown accustomed to walking on land, they are allowed to leave their tanks, but only while outfitted with special suits to keep their bodies hydrated and a mouth piece so they can breathe water. The oldest of the children is four years old currently, and the company could not be happier with the young girl's progress. She was named Hope by the scientist team that watches over her for obvious reasons.

GM's may wish to advance the company's breakthroughs and even allow Half-Lochs as player characters. For those interested in such a story, the rules for playable Half-Lochs can be found on page 66.

## Loch Mania!

Spotlights and luxury yachts, delicious brews and tasty food, hit songs playing from an MP3 player and Hollywood thrillers full of action and excitement are all things Earth has to offer. To someone from a completely different culture, these can be mesmerizing. Consider the music, artwork, and vocabulary from fifty years ago. It's different, perhaps even more dull and boring, in comparison to those of today's youth. This is how some Loch's view human culture. The Sedrone civilization was the most advanced civilization in Domainya and had a rich history of art and literature, but many younger Lochs believe their old culture to be quite boring. This has led many to obsess over human culture.

One reason for this big shift is due to the social standards in Domainya where some lived lives of servitude to the nobles that made up their government. A majority of Loch's spent their days in luxury (by Sedrone standards), overall used to a much simpler culture, but it became increasingly evident that blending in was important to their survival. In order to absorb as much culture as possible, some take night courses to learn human languages and cultural concepts. They also learn by watching movies, listening to popular music, and engrossing themselves in local human community programs, like feeding the poor or joining neighborhood watch.

What do Lochs like most about human culture? Unlike their time in Domainya, Earth has so much to do that hasn't been thought of yet! Lochs are used to deep sea environments, so things like snowboarding, mountain hiking, and playing basketball are absolutely

### Sedrone vs. Loch

Most of the Lochs living on Earth refer to themselves as Lochs. They use it to signify a state of transition for their race, no longer considering themselves "Sedrone". After all, new Lochs are being born to human parents and their culture is changing drastically to fit into Earth's. The term Sedrone is still used by some, particularly those who are indignant about how their culture has been changed by Earth and prefer to cling to their fading heritage.

new and exciting. Lochs still try to maintain a lot of their own culture, however. In their communities, they still celebrate Loch holidays, like Tremors Day where all the Lochs attempt to shake the ground as much as possible, and there are many that still worship the Giver (page 9). Loch's spend much of their free time playing underwater sports and acquiring new hobbies.

Those with Image Emitters tend to make themselves resemble models or famous people they see in pop culture. However, Image Emitters are hard to come by. API gives Emitters to its agents first, but with the sheer number that are needed for the Lochs most of them have to wait months before they will receive one. Civilians usually have an even longer waiting list.

The culture transfer is not just one way either. Lochs are slowly introducing their own culture in the places where they have popped up across the planet. Small tourist traps in scenic locations have started selling mysterious coral jewelry and tapestries that have never been seen before. One example of this is Sedrone art. Their sculptors featured flowing pieces of polished marble, often decorated with simple shell-like designs. Their paintings are vibrant displays of colored sands. Across New York, Barnabus Proll has managed to wow the cultural elite with his cutting edge and inspirational artwork. No one knows that back on Domainya, Proll was considered laughable and uninspiring by Sedrone standards.

## Marine Base 1-6 (Deep Six)

Obviously, Lochs make for great underwater operatives. Their ability to survive at crushing depths and great physical strength make them perfect for undersea exploration and patrolling the ocean bottom for any threats to Earth.

The ocean is an often overlooked hiding place for demonic creatures. The great ley lines and nexus points that flow across the surface world are often in-

## **Jonah on Land Races**

*I know you're new to Earth, but it's cool, I'm here to help you get acclimated. And before you start staring at all the different type of people, um, demons here, let me give you the low down on the main ones.*

### **Humans**

*There are some good ones and bad ones and they come in all shapes and sizes. The majority are altruistic at their core and even the worst ones can be redeemed with enough work. I've yet to meet one that didn't need to get taken down at least a peg or two. You'll get used to them though. They're everywhere.*

### **Burners**

*You know, one would think that Lochs and Burners couldn't get along, what with fire and water being opposites, but I honestly dig these guys. I've found that our two races compliment each other pretty well, us with our strength and them being limber. The few I've met were easy to work and get along with, even though some Sedrone would say they are too happy and likely hiding something. I find it refreshing myself.*

### **Changelings**

*I'm still not quite sure what to make of these guys. They rarely talk and they can look like anyone, even one of us. I'm not really looking forward to having to face of them, since I'm a little afraid of what their true abilities might reveal. You and I will have to learn them together.*

### **Taylari**

*Ok, these guys are interesting. They're vamps, but not really. They do drink blood, but crosses and junk from the movies don't work. What's a movie? That's a lesson for another day. Anyway, try to stay on a Taylari's good side. They may look pale, thin, docile, and all that, but they can hit back hard and do crazy stuff with magic. Trust me... try to get a daytime assignment if you can.*

### **Spectrals**

*Ghosts freak me out. Don't laugh, I'm just being honest. When you die, you should just go on to the Dark Horizon and call it a day. These things stick around long after they should have expired just to mess with the living. I worked a case with one once. She possessed doors to unlock them, possessed the guards to fight each other, and then freaked out the target so much he wet himself. Not someone I want to piss off, if you get my drift.*

### **Wolf People**

*Now Wolf People are trouble. First of all... dogs and wolves, you'll learn about them soon enough, are freaky little furry things. Picture a Coralsnark with hair pasted to it, yeah just like that. Anyway, seems they were the muscle before we moved on the scene and now they're on the outs with the company. Bad for them spells bad for us, sadly, asince you'll find that they try to make our lives harder. Just stay out of their way and you'll be fine, but don't be scared to knock one down if they get in your way.*

tensified and even more numerous in the oceans, and demons from other planes can appear deep beneath the waves. As 70% of the Earth is covered with water, patrolling the oceans can be a costly and sometimes dangerous mission, unless API knows exactly what they are looking for. Before the Lochs, more often than not, the company was forced to wait for aquatic threats to show themselves before they could track and eradicate them.

This is where Project Deep Seven comes in. With the Lochs' help, API managed to build several undersea bases that are used for reconnaissance and keeping watch over particularly troublesome locations. These bases also serve as research centers where the company can test new technologies in relative seclusion. After the destruction of Marine Base 7 to a dangerous underwater Contagion, these bases must be more careful than ever when it comes to their research procedures. Now nicknamed Project Deep Six, these bases serve as small Loch settlements and

training grounds for new Loch agents.

## **Base Agato**

Located in the Sea of Japan, this base has a conflicted nature when it comes to staying out of global politics. While Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. has stressed that the base shouldn't get involved in conflicts between China and Japan, many detractors of this policy state that it's only a matter of time before it is used as a deep sea staging outpost for such a conflict. The base is mainly operated by US agents, stationed there at the request of the Kyoto HQ and who are under strict orders to stay out of API business outside of said orders.

Agato's primary purpose is the monitoring of sea serpent activity in the Sea of Japan. These serpents, considered by some to be mythical Dragon spirits reborn on Earth or ancient dinosaurs who have managed to survive for centuries, occasionally attack

ships. They require frequent monitoring to make sure they do not get close to the major commercial vessels. The Lochs are integral to this process, as they possess the strength and underwater fighting skills to accomplish this task often without company aid. Plus, Japan has really good sushi.

## **Base Capricorn**

This base is located at the bottom of the Mediterranean and is involved in API's many archaeological projects. The agents of Capricorn work to investigate lost artifacts when they come to the surface, mostly concerned with the number of ancient relics lost at sea during many classic wars. A Loch's life at this base is composed of diving to inspect hundreds of different ship wrecks at the sea bottom and often involve bringing Scryers along to use their special Magic Sight (See page 62). Some can find this life boring, while others are constantly looking to piece together fragments of Earth history with what they find. On more than one occasion, Lochs have found important historical artifacts that humans would have never otherwise discovered.

One particularly troublesome artifact that keeps reappearing every few years is Poseidon's Trident. This artifact was supposedly the scepter of the ancient Greek sea god, the possessor capable of summoning massive tidal waves and summoning ghostly Greek vessels to fight at their side. Despite being found and destroyed repeatedly by API, the trident reemerges every few years, most commonly in the hands of pirates or eco terrorists wishing to strike back at businesses that pollute and over fish the sea. See Superior City on page 43 for its latest emergence.

## **Base Bermuda**

Located off the coast of Jamaica, this base is the oldest of the seven, even predating the Loch's involvement with API. It was originally constructed to monitor the odd events that permeate the Bermuda Triangle that has proved to be some kind of powering, fluctuating portal. However, the base is badly outdated and many wings have been evacuated due to safety concerns. While a small cadre of agents and scientists has stayed on, the Lochs currently make up 80% of the personnel. Many even request to be stationed in Bermuda, which has so far been the best place for their kind to advance within the company. Every major Loch agent has come from this base and its current second in command hopes to make good on that trend. Agent Quinton is an ambitious Loch who sees himself as taking over for the head human Dr. Eli Balding. Quinton has studied science since he was

decades old and believes he is the person for the job. Despite the less than subtle warnings from prejudiced agents, he believes it possible to overcome their pettiness and become the first Loch commander of the base. This would push API's standards to a new level, as humans are traditionally in any role of real authority, but Quinton is hopeful that his actions will start new policies that will aid in the advancement of his people.

In addition to serving as a research post for the Bermuda triangle, the base is stocked with undersea vehicles and maintains a small production yard to help refit API vessels. Still the largest of the bases, it holds a key location for the agency in case they have to confront something that surges out of the Bermuda Triangle's portal.

## **Base Aurora**

This polar sea base is the coldest and least desired assignment of all the underwater bases. Aurora is often considered to be a punishment for agents that break the rules one too many times. Others are of course wiped of their identity or deported entirely, so this isn't that bad to some. Despite the company's best efforts in keeping their agents happy (including providing the best stocked bar in Antarctica) the suicide and psychosis rates are higher in Aurora than the other bases. Even Lochs hate the assignment as the water temperature can get too cold even for them, requiring special dive suits to keep them at a comfortable level.

What makes Aurora important is its proximity to a major API excavation site. Massive cyclopean ruins were discovered beneath the polar ice cap that extend deep beneath the surface of the ocean. These ruins are so unique because they have been carbon dated from an age when Antarctica was a jungle and strange glowing rocks have been brought back for inspection. Could these ruins be a lost human city or an elaborate test concocted by demon pranksters who hope to divert API resources? Also, what is the relation between the Bright Crystals from Domainya and those found here?

## **Base Shankara**

Built more as a surveillance station than for research, Shankara has held its location off the coast of Sri Lanka ever since the 43rd reincarnation of the Rakshasa Emperor returned in 1956. His powers were so great that he might have destroyed India and most of Asia, if not for the intervention of Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. This base helps monitor the Indian oceans for dark cults who live on the coast lines,

enacting dangerous blood rituals that could be the tipping point in the already potentially turbulent region. The Delhi HQ works in conjunction with the base that now works as an intermingling of the two branches.

Shankara is never overlooked, but it is the most peaceful and bland of any of the sea bases that few expect any issues in the neat future. It's seen as the ideal sea base if an agent wants (or needs) a vacation, but few realize that the Rakshasa Emperor's machinations are not so blatant this time around. Agent Raji Calidisura has been taken over by a fragment of the emperor and is slowly rebuilding his god's body beneath the surface of the ocean with the help of several agents. A small group of Lochs have been converted to his cause, as the emperor has promised to cure their species if they assist in his conquering the country. No one knows whether this is a valid promise or a horrible lie, but more and more Lochs convert to his cause each year.

## Base Midway Watch

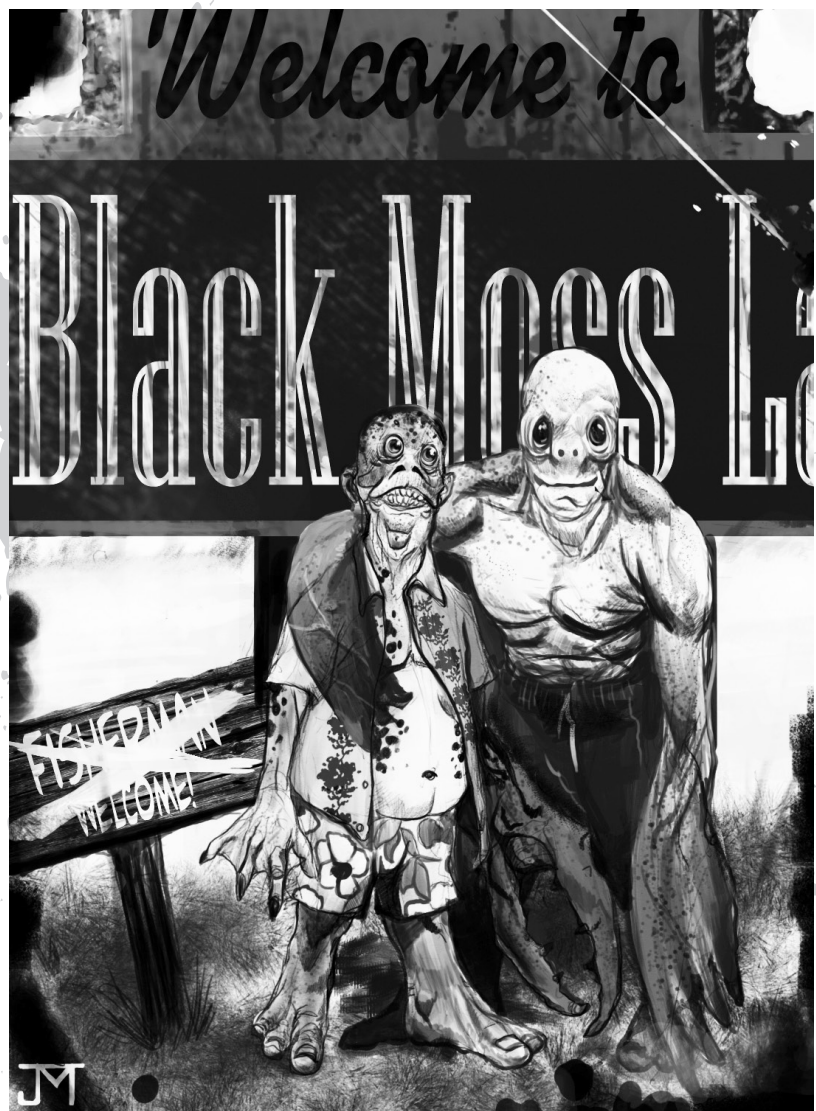
The only base that was secretly repurposed from an old Navy refueling base instead of built from scratch, Midway Watch is the smallest of the Deep Six bases. Located north of Midway Island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, it is used primarily for testing new API equipment amongst the ship graveyards located around the region and plays an important part in Loch training. When Lochs initially enter the Earth dimension, they are forced with the choice of whether or not to join API. If they choose to enlist, the majority are sent to this base to learn the basics. Using old military ships as training grounds, rookie Loch and human agents are trained to work together on combat missions. It proves a powerful ice breaking session, getting both the Lochs and humans used to working with each other as partners.

## Black Moss Lake Home Away from Home

Lochs are survivors at heart, known for living in deep sea trenches that are inhospitable to most creatures. This is due to their ability to adapt easily to almost environment. Their gills are able to filter sea and fresh water and air, and their strength helps them survive against most would-be predators.

There are two types of Lochs out in the waters on Earth: those that came over with the blessing of API and those who found their own way across. One method can take years and requires a life of constant monitoring and service to the agency for years in order to earn a Blue Card. The other method allows for near absolute freedom, but at the risk of being captured and deported.

After a period of mandatory quarantine, Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. helps set up Lochs with places to live and jobs to earn a living. One of the first permanent Loch colonies after the Migration was a small lake located in Florida. In the northern pan handle, Black Moss was off the highway routes and rarely used by fishermen. In the late fifties with the US economy booming, Black Moss' tourist population all but completely stopped and many locals moved off to larger cities to find work. The town of Black Moss, located on the shores, was left a desolate place with few humans that lived there.



This made it a perfect remote location to place Lochs and API quickly bought out the area using a series of "Fishing corporations" as cover. The lake itself was transformed into private research stations. Large fences were erected around portions of the lake except for a small fishing area and cameras installed to monitor all movements to it.

On the surface it appears as another lake, but the Loch city of Ook'tal'Lees lies beneath, working as the central disembarking point for the Loch after the original first wave. While not as magnificent of the palace cities the Sedrone once maintained on Domainya, it has become home to hundreds of Lochs.

The city was never meant to be a permanent home, and in some ways it shows. Many of the underwater dwellings are reused camping trailers and shipping crates that have been reworked for housing the Lochs. These buildings are starting to come apart due to age and are barely held together by rusted beams and hastily patched walls. It's still viewed as home sweet home to many, though, and isn't likely to be abandoned any time soon.

While the Lochs try to build according to their ancient traditions, most buildings have Earth styles mixed in with them. Most of these buildings are communal structures, such as schools, as the Lochs living there have a more pressing need for these structures than their old temples and museums. Still, the rich and upper class nobles have managed to divert enough resources to build larger estates along the north end of the lake, almost like building their own underwater gated community.

Ook'tal'Lees is split down the middle when it comes to assimilating Earth culture. On some street corners there are clear signs of surface culture, such as posters advertising new DVD releases or storefronts full of the latest human fad. Others are kept traditional with the only decorations being Bright Crystals intricately woven into polished stone depictions of former Sedrone rulers. While the governing body tries to keep disputes to a minimum, agents must frequently deal with angry Lochs who object to someone's gaudy flamingo lawn ornament.

## Interacting with Neighbors

The Lochs are not the only aquatic race that now makes Earth their home. Other races have set up shop, and the Lochs have different opinions on how to deal with them. Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. uses the Lochs to quell any resistance when these races start

## Keeping Hidden

Even for an agency known to employ fire demons, ghosts that can inhabit objects and people, and numerous demons of different types and shapes, the idea of a Loch can still be daunting. Unlike a Burner who can hide their appearance with the help of some creative costuming and make up, a Loch is more difficult to keep hidden from public eye. Their sheer size can make them highly conspicuous if they walk down the street covered from head to toe with a hat, mask, and trench coat. So how can a being like a Loch work in an agency that needs to rely upon stealth and blending in?

Very well, actually. Science came to the rescue with the help of the Image Emitter technology developed by API to help disguise the appearances of the more inhuman demons. With Emitters, a bright yellow fish creature can appear as a college student reading a book in the library or as a street vendor selling hot dogs.

Of course, it's not perfect, since Lochs have a tendency to behave like Lochs while wearing an emitter. Some scratch body parts as their scales dry out in the air, and this can lead to awkward situations. Other Lochs keep their sluggish stride once they step on land and it's highly suspicious to see a 5'8" cheerleader waddling around like a line backer. It's a good thing that the Trench Coat rule (See page 136 of the API corebook) and humanity's rational minds work for the Lochs.

to cause trouble, but this doesn't happen often.

## Linx

The Linx have mixed feelings of living on Earth. Just as the younger generations of Lochs have embraced Earth culture, so have the Linx. However, with their limited lifespan, they have made fewer strides in acquiring actual Earth knowledge. They help facilitate their masters by joining in on the latest fad, sitting around on couches watching reality shows with the Lochs, or helping them pick out which new mp3 player will be the best one.

Others have left their would-be masters among the Lochs and Scryers and now look to humanity. After all, Earth belongs to the humans. Why receive second hand understanding of human culture and life from other aquatic races that know even less? Chosen humans seem to be quite eager to take on a willing servant, even if only to keep their house clean and other simple chores done. Linx have yet to prove

*"Earth to Kota. Are you with us?" The voice rang through the Loch's mind and snapped her out of her daze. She once again noticed her surroundings, at the bottom of the Atlantic with her partner. They were sent to investigate wreckages to discern the possibility of supernatural causes. She was distracted, surely. It was understandable given her separation from Jonah, but she had to stay sharp.*

*"A little less attitude would help, Hamilton," Kota said as they finally reached their destination... the SS Archer. This vessel wrecked about a year prior, belonging to a powerful plastics manufacturer, but only now could API spare the agents to check it out. Kota's suit was chaffing. Sure, she was a Loch, but the waters by this ship were heavily polluted. Wasting no time, Kota swam around the ship, trying to find the reason for its sinking which became quite obvious.*

*Hamilton eventually caught up and viewed the gaping hole in the bottom of the ship. He ran his fingers along the jagged edges. "What do you make of it?"*

*Kota looks closely and sighed. "This was from a Charcadon attack. No doubt about it, see the curvature of the edges. Even with the corrosion you can see it." Her partner activated a life-sign-reading device on the arm of his underwater suit, but it didn't pick up anything. Kota moved along the side of the wreckage, looking for any other clues and eventually came across three perfectly aligned puncture marks. "Tridents."*

*"You think Ondine? Tridents are their weapon of choice." Hamilton said, recording everything on the underwater camera.*

*Kota nodded. "But where have they all gone to?" she said and then noticed a barrel to her far right. She swam to it for further examination and found claw marks that matched the pattern created by a Loch. "Hamilton!" she screamed as she then noticed a skeletal foot sticking out from underneath rubble. Kota worked quickly to lift and throw all of the huge rocks and then stood shocked at what they uncovered... a field of bones from Ondine, Charcadons, and Lochs. Each one charred, melted, and supposedly dumped. Some still had flesh that was being nibbled away by the fish, but there was definitely something not right here.*

*"We have to find out who owns that barrel, Hamilton." Her human partner dared not say anything, seeing the Loch's anger welling up in her eyes, so the agents quietly traveled back to the ship and hoped they could solve this case quickly.*

indispensable in the field, but each generation seems to be getting slightly better.

What is unexpected is that a rare few Linx have begun to act out independently. It is not yet a widespread phenomenon, but some Linx who spend ample time around humans or demons obsessed with human culture start to develop their own independence. This starts off in small ways, such as with a Linx's passive aggressive refusal to serve a Loch, but many scientists believe that their obedience will be squashed within the next couple centuries at most. Some believe it is because there are no natural predators for the Linx on Earth and their need to form symbiotic relationships is waning with each new generation.

## **Ondine**

Loch storytellers view their history as circular. They are tested with many hardships, but they triumph and live for centuries in peace until the next test challenges to them. However, never have they had to deal

with so much: the Contagion, the Migration, and the Ondine.

The Ondine view themselves as the natural heirs to Earth's oceans, given to them by the great sea god, Poseidon, himself. They are not demonic invaders but rather a race that developed on Earth to be quite territorial. Their communities are smaller than the vast kingdoms of Domainya, but were established long before the Lochs even took notice of Earth. Now they are in a fight for their homes.

Ondine raids on Loch communities are not unheard of, with their sleek bodies capable of zipping into bases, seducing the human guards as they enter, and launching devastating raids before retreating. Lochs are currently planning defensive strategies against them, utilizing API's help to set up sophisticated security systems. Regardless of their efforts, the Ondine continue to attack and with good reason. They ruled Earth's waterways in solitude for thousands of years and now they have an overambitious race of fish demons attempting to hijack that control.

While not surprising that the Ondine would retaliate, many Lochs view them with contempt. After all, the Sedrone conquered Domainya and drove other races to extinction in their bid for power. When the Loch nobility learned of the Ondine and their claim on Earth, it was unanimously decided that the Lochs would refuse to leave. The survival of their species was tantamount to the desires of other races, and scattered reports indicate that roving bands of Loch settlers assault and destroy Ondine warrens in an attempt to conquer the oceans and protect themselves.

## **Scryers**

The Scryers are a tragic race, one whose desire to strike back against their conquerors led to their own downfall. Today they exist in rather isolated communities, most under the control of the Voltics in Domainya. Many who remain free have left Domainya for Earth, following the Loch's scouting reports, but most stayed behind. The Spandrels were, after all, home to the Scryers before the barbaric Sedrone took it over.

Once considered great teachers, the Sedrone conquered them and devastated their civilization, stealing pieces of their culture and forcing their unwanted god down their throat. They created the Contagion, crafted from the left-dead carcasses of the once-rulers, but they did not expect it to have such devastating consequences on their own race. The Contagion infected a small portion of Scryers as well, turning them into horrible monsters (See the Afflicted on page 53).

The Scryers are almost universally hated by Sedrone who have yet to let go of the past, leading some Loch agents to refuse working on the same team with one. Understandably, it is hard for the Lochs to forget everything they have lost due to the Scryers experiments, but if it were not for the Sedrone crushing them so brutally their ancestors would not have resorted to such vile tactics for retaliation. Many of today's Scryers regret their ancestors' actions that condemned both the Lochs and even some of their own kind to a slow and painful end. Some have even worked hard to

aid API in finding a cure for the Contagion.

## **Voltics and the Reclamation**

Voltics have been deemed illegal for a reason. Not only are they a race even more hell-bent on conquering than the Sedrone were, but they have the ability to remove the souls from their victims. The company has one Voltic in their ranks, who is kept far away from any other aquatic races. Those that enter the Earth dimension must immediately go into hiding, as Lochs are ready to destroy them, Scryers are searching for them, and the Ondine can't wait to put another would-be "master race" on their asses.

Despite these very real threats, the Voltics still venture to Earth, usually on reconnaissance missions. They know, or at least have heard murmurs, of the Reclamation Project and need to know what they are up against. They have staged battles against modern Lochs to test their strength, who are seemingly not as cut-throat as their Sedrone-cousins in Domainya. They have plotted the overtaking of Ondine colonies, finding their charm effects amusing, but not infallible.

The largest problem that Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. has encountered with Voltics on Earth is that they bring the Vastness with them. The entity that is the great enemy of their race can, on occasion, find loopholes in a portal to come through as well.

### **Lochs and Cybernetics**

The sea demons have developed a strange love of human technology, especially the advances in cybernetics. At first, API scientists experienced troubles with coordinating Loch genetics and assimilating machines into their body. However, over the last fifty years, they have had the time to develop new techniques that make Lochs the optimal race for testing prototypical implants. They are the second most common race, after humans, to be approved for cybernetics, which some think makes them even better agents.



# Chapter Three: Loch Collectives

Not all Lochs are friends to humanity and not every Loch works for Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. They naturally gather into large collectives for companionship, competition, and strength in numbers as they destroy others. This chapter covers some of these groups and the influence they have over our world.

## Aquatic Alchemists

While not always one unified group, aquatic alchemists represent a large part of Sedrone history. Even when they were a simple and small collective, the Sedrone's barbarian ancestors practiced this grotesque alchemy of dissecting and reassembling beings. It was treated like a religion by the Lochs

and, while it set them apart from other aquatic races, it eventually led to their current predicament as well.

Alchemists acted as advisors for their people and were consulted before any major decisions, including the conquering and assimilation of each town, city, and empire that stood in their way of their climb to power. The Sedrone Spandrels were built on the bones and blood of the races they decimated in the wake, only possible by the divination powers of their alchemists. Even though the Muglics and the Giver were openly worshipped, almost half of their race practiced the dreaded and difficult art at one point. It was also taught to a select few servants from other races, as it proved to be great at healing the sick and



strengthening warriors. Scryers specifically became proficient in the art, surpassing their teachers in some cases. Even though the Sedrone quickly halted lessons to the Scryers and forbid their practicing the art after realizing their proficiency with alchemical magic, it did not stop and eventually put these secrets into the hands of the rebellion. It was ultimately aquatic alchemy in the hands of Scryers that created the Contagion, a use for the magic that had never been fathomed by the Sedrone.

When the Contagion struck the unsuspecting Sedrone and caused tens of thousands of deaths, while sterilizing the Sedrone that survived, their

royal fury was far from focused only on the rebellion. They gazed inward as well, leading many to destroy their siblings, parents, and even their children that practiced this alchemy that had cursed their once-powerful people. After their initial rage passed, the self-genocide stopped to keep their numbers from dwindling too much farther, but few continued to trust the alchemists and their ill-fated rituals. Still, alchemy is needed to find the roots of the Contagion and hopefully banish the affliction.

## Practicing the Art

Aquatic alchemy is quite the gruesome practice



## Aquatic Alchemist (5 BP or 3 BP)

Available only to aquatic races. Alchemists can select certain alchemical items that they both possess and know how to create, each recipe costing a number of BP equal to its according level (page 50). The character's Mana conversion rate is not affected. This Gift costs 3 BP for Scryers who are often better at using alchemy than even the Lochs.

Alchemists acquire the core ability of the profession, divination. The task is simple, yet disgusting to most, as it involves gutting another living creature in order to read the future from their entrails. With this, they can divine answers to simple yes or no questions regarding the slain creature or even an unrelated event with a Moderate (20) IQ + Crafts check. More complicated questions can be asked with a Tough (30) IQ + Crafts check. While it can be performed with ANY creature, they receive a modifier based on the creature's size, dangerousness, and intelligence:

Small (i.e. squirrel)	-2 penalty
Mid-sized (dog/housecat)	-0 penalty
Large (i.e. horse)	+2 bonus
Dangerous (i.e. poisonous, can inflict Lethal)	+2 bonus
Human or other sentient being	+4 bonus

**Example:** *Ditorr the alchemist has reached a dilemma, as he may have been found by a Hook. He grabs a squirrel from its cage, holds it down on the table, and stabs it with his claws, then spreading its intestines around the table, reading the intricacies. "Is there a Hook following me?" he asks and rolls IQ (6) + Crafts (5) against a Moderate (20) difficulty. He rolls a 13 for a total of 24, which is more than enough to get a Yes answer. He then begins searching for details of the Hook's appearance, raising the difficulty to Tough (30). He rolls a 17 for a total of 28, falling just short.*

and horror to behold for all but those with the steeliest of nerves. They create alchemical items with a culmination of their aquatic Mana and powerful plants and herbs or the entrails of other living beings. Before the wars on neighboring nations, the Sedrone used their alchemy only with the animals and plant-life. They had weak healing abilities and a few other tricks, but were not nearly as powerful as today.

When they began to conquer and slaughter other races, alchemists found that other races' hearts, or-

gans, and bones could be used as new and exciting ingredients to make their alchemy stronger. To this day, aquatic alchemists are feared by races in hundreds of dimensions and humanity has learned this lesson in recent years. Killing sprees in downtown areas have ended with victims' right index fingers missing. Serial killers have been murdering their intended targets, only to take the right hemisphere of their brains as theorized trophies.

These are mere ingredients for their magic, brought back to the alchemist's haven where their supplies are kept. Early lessons teach the alchemists to keep their havens secret from everyone, even other students of the craft. Their havens are sanctified in their own Mana and another's presence can disrupt its flow, leaving the haven useless until the area is cleansed once more. The introduction of a Taylari into a haven is especially vile due to the strength of their curse. Their presence forces a change in haven, as cleansing the area is impossible.

In Domainya, alchemists created their havens near areas with strong and natural hot springs, clusters of Tenguil moss, and lots of Bright Crystals, as many recipes require heat to combine or mold their ingredients. On Earth, they can be almost anywhere as long as they have a cauldron. Some say that the myths of monstrous figures over boiling cauldrons of unknown contents were actually aquatic alchemists and that could be why the witches were always hideous in said stories. The cauldron itself must be crafted from enchanted Domainyan coral and energized by an array of crystals. Some have tried to reproduce their alchemy using Earth fire with disastrous results.

## Today's Alchemists

The practice of this lost art is still alive and kicking if you know where to look. Upon arriving on Earth, alchemists were greeted with loads of new ingredients that proved usable in most of their potions. Discovering animals and beings present in a new dimension gave them more choice in their recipes and allowed them to craft brand new ones as well. Some believe that some Earth ingredients will be the key to unlocking the Contagion mystery and developing a cure. Others are not so convinced.

Alchemists keep to their own kind, gathering sporadically, but never in the same location more than once. Not only are there plenty of Hooks (page 38) that would love to capture and dispose of the alchemists, but their gruesome traditions make them ample targets for harsh regulation from Apocalypse

Prevention, Inc. Some Sedrone, especially Muglic zealots, hold on to their hatred of alchemy, still citing that it was the root cause of their entire race's current problems. They hide out of necessity and take on students only once every few decades. Multiplying their numbers is not a major concern for most alchemists. Instead, the more experienced of them focus their energy on researching the Contagion, actually discovering a few things about the species-wide disease. The most prominent is that it required the slaughter of many Lochs to complete, using a certain blood-type as a catalyst. Currently there are two popular schools of thought within their numbers.

The first group is obsessed with finding a cure for the Contagion and ridding the Lochs of their burden. It is composed of almost every aquatic race, as well as many humans that are compassionate to their predicament. However, their research has overwhelmingly proven that they must kill many Lochs if they hope to replicate and diagnose the probable effects, find the root ingredients of the alchemy, or create a suitable antidote. Some Lochs, usually those already nearing death, have even sacrificed themselves to the cause, but these are few and far between. Other alchemists have taken to hunting Lochs, believing that only the healthiest specimens will have the key to possible immunity. These actions have been known to drive a few quite mad with guilt, as they are forced to destroy a species they are simultaneously attempting to save. These groups often seek API funding and possible volunteers to assist in finding a cure, but these dealings are always made in secret to avoid the wrath of Sedrone that hate alchemy and to cover up why some Lochs mysteriously disappear.

The second group is worse than the most horrible stories told about alchemists. This group is composed of Sedrone still obsessed with conquest and power, calling themselves the Vanquishers. They wish to wipe humanity from Earth and take over the dimension as one last destructive quest before the end of their race. How does this differ from the acts of other Sedrone groups with the same idea? The Vanquishers are building the recipe for a new Contagion... for humans. They have slaughtered hundreds of humans all across the United States in preparation for this massive destructive force and believe themselves on the verge of completion. Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. has recently caught wind of their actions and is scouring every corner of the world in search of Vanquisher havens, which are quite securely hidden.

## Deep Green

Most large corporations work hard to stay within federal regulations and health codes regarding industrial waste disposal. Adhering to these laws can be quite pricy and carry steep fines or jail time if the company is found to be in breach. Every once and awhile, a big corporation comes around that refuses to change their disposal practices, disregarding environmental regulations. The Deep Green Plastics Corporation in San Francisco is doing exactly that. Maybe it's family tradition to pump methyl isocyanate into lakes or perhaps tearing out old-growth forests by the roots to helps their CEOs sleep better. Whatever the reasons, Deep Green finds it acceptable to destroy the environment in order to increase their bottom line.

Most groups that notice the environmental damage caused by the company are quickly bribed before complaints can be officially filed. However, after a particularly horrible legal battle nearly twenty years ago, Deep Green began shipping their pollution away from their factories to dump it far away from the prying cameras. Then one day, their boats spotted other ships anchored around one of their many dumping spots. In a desperate act of improvisation, they pulled into deeper waters and dropped their damaging payload in a seemingly abandoned part of the Pacific Ocean. What they didn't know was that a Loch colony was poisoned and choked under tons of their chemical waste directly below the tanker. The utter weight of the toxic solvents and twisted plastics sealed many of the Lochs inside their homes, preventing escape from the pollution that killed nearly one hundred of their kind. A few, some would say the lucky ones, managed to escape, but were horribly and irreversibly scarred. Some were burned all over their bodies, while others were exposed only to trace amounts of toxin which allowed them to live another year before they died.

In either case, the survivors were never the same after this incident. Remnants of the remaining Lochs followed Deep Green's tanker back to its port after subsequent dumpings. They alerted Hooks that followed dozens of federal paper trails that revealed the corporation's absolute corruption. In an act of revenge, Lochs broke into a facility under the cover of night and tore the place apart, killing a handful of employees, burning down an office, and destroying countless machines worth thousands of dollars. When security arrived, they attempted to escape, but one of the Lochs was fatally shot as they dived off

the neighboring dock. The body was recovered by Deep Green and the security force stared in befuddlement before calling in the CEO of the company, Diane Richardson.

When Richardson arrived on the scene, it appeared that the destruction caught the attention of the authorities. Police were scattered all around her main facility noting the unsafe working conditions and multiple fire hazards. After dowsing the fires and carting away those killed in the attack, she was left with a bundle of fines, health code ordinances that needed to be instituted before the factory could reopen, and the corpse of a bizarre fish creature covered in sores and teeth. She didn't know what to think of this creature at first, but it spelled the eventual new direction for Deep Green. The creature was named Curtis.

## Retribution

Richardson worked first on cleaning up the main Deep Green factory over the next few years, scrubbing out old stains, starting proper chemical storage, and updating workplace safety training. The seven other Deep Green factories are still the same filth factories, but the corporation uses the alterations to their main facility as proof that they've "changed for the better". Richardson still uses the smaller factories to offload chemicals in the ocean as per the company's usual dealings.

The biggest change inside Deep Green was the realization of the magical underworld. Richardson was furious at the factory destruction and money lost at the incident, but was also scared to discover something out there in the waters working against them and possibly against humanity. Richardson dredged through tons of records and found that these monsters only came after tankers dumped in a previously unused location. The coordinates were subtly scouted and photographed by a diving team and the results terrified her. An entire city covered in her toxic waste and the half-dissolved corpses of many more like Curtis. Without the monsters' attack, the company would have forgotten about the dumpsite and gone back to their norm, but Richardson was now preparing for war.

Richardson called in her contacts with high-tech manufacturers to equip her boats with specially-designed sonar devices to find these monsters and unload directly on top of them. To date, Deep Green ships have yet to find any new colonies, but the corpses revealed males, females, and children within

their race. It wasn't likely that only one colony existed and Richardson knows they're out there somewhere (especially if they're smart enough to scuttle machinery). She hopes to wipe the monsters out before they think about attacking her or any other human again... but mostly her.

## How it's done

Diane Richardson has always afforded her security force considerable salaries, but their number and pay grade has risen significantly in recent years. All of the higher-ranked Deep Green officers have been shown the monster "Curtis", stuffed, mounted, and ferociously posed in a secret vault within the main facility. These officers accompany all dumping ships and have orders to shoot anything resembling Curtis on sight. Richardson, filled with her own fear, has convinced her team that they are the last defense against an army of monsters with intentions of rising from the waves to steal their children and eat their flesh.

Diane is an incredibly wealthy woman and is dedicated to her personal war against the Lochs, whether for revenge, the protection of humanity, or a misplaced sense of patriotism. She sees the Lochs as intelligent monsters who know how humankind thinks and is trying to react accordingly. Continuing to poison the ocean makes her life easier by saving her money that can then be invested in her war, and she suspects it makes the monstrous colonies' lives more difficult. She's vigilant in staying true to how she runs Deep Green and her vault is now lined by three other Curtis-like ornaments.

## Forgotten Tribes

The first of many portals from Domainya opened in the Amazons of South America with starry-eyed and hopeful Sedrone peeking out from the dimensional crack. They were met with Earth's alien foliage and atmosphere, but a small percentage of their population could not cope with surviving above water and the harsh reality of this dimension, killing several of their kind within days. A minority blamed their soothsayers, alchemists and Muglics alike, accusing them of condemning their royal blood to die in a world that did not want them. These rightfully angry beings were calmed over and over again, as hunters killed them, they died from residual effects of the Contagion, and fights began with the strange Ondine. Eventually, their cries could not be ignored any longer.

Their dissenting cries were led by a previous duke in Domainya, Rillaz. He had carved his own territory in their homeworld, personally dissecting each previous resident until he had enough land that he could live comfortably. He was known for his calmness in demeanor and carried a lot of weight with his people. Rillaz spoke on a platform of accepting their current situation. Their population was cut drastically, they were caught in a dimension with too many hazards, there was no cure for the Contagion in sight, and it was time for them to come to terms with these facts. Over time, these disenchanting Lochs took the only course of action they could, splitting from the collective to find their final resting place. Other Sedrone attempted to sway Rillaz and his followers, urging toward hope and the continuation of their royal blood, but no amount of argument would stop them.

The larger collective sought out all around the world to find a cure, which led them into the arms of Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. Few looked back to the Sedrone they left behind and even fewer have information on the events that followed for what became known as the Tribes of Rage.

## **Pursuing the Grave**

Not only did Rillaz take those that agreed with him into his group, but also any of the Sedrone that showed signs of weakness. Whether they were simply awaiting the lethal effects of the Earth's harsh conditions or the last stages of the Contagion to kill them, Rillaz promised them a restful death. He also took the injured or those with limited mental capacities, as not to slow down those that still had hope in their hearts. Everyone was still entitled to their dreams. This thought also dissuaded the dissenters from taking children into their ranks, as their young would likely be instrumental to the future if they the Sedrone were actually to have one. Their place was not to die a premature death with Rillaz and his followers.

As one would expect, they traveled quite slowly through unknown jungles. On top of this, the need for secrecy burdened their numbers to make frequent stops to avoid detection by Earth's inhabitants. They did eventually find the place they would call home until they died.... Rillaz Village. The area appeared to have been the previous residence of a slaughtered native Brazilian tribe. It suited their purposes fine, as they would live in the area thought abandoned and hopefully out of the human eye.

In the next thirty-five years of history, they would come to live a life in humble peace with Earth's nature and the end of their race as they died slow deaths. That was until humans began encroaching on their territory. They encountered battles with neighboring tribes, resulting in the collective's first taste of human blood. Their years of peace were all but completely forgotten when Rillaz was murdered at the hand of an overly-inquisitive journalist. The elder Loch was already old and Earth's atmosphere had worn him down to the point that the journalist's simple hunting knife was enough to send him to the Dark Horizon. That reporter died a slow and painful death shortly after.

## **The Tribe Split**

The tribe was dismayed and angered at the death of their leader in such a violent fashion, completely contrary to how Rillaz tried to exist on Earth. He wished only to die in peace and with dignity, which was robbed from him by talking apes. Without Rillaz's calming and rational voice, many of his followers began a rampage through Brazil that decimated many native tribes and explorers alike.

Those Lochs that were fit and healthy enough to fight left the weak behind, splitting themselves into two unlikely groups. The first set out to destroy everything they crossed, calling themselves the Rampagers. The group stopped believing in Rillaz's message of peace and developed a new faith that their death should be earned in battle. With what or with whom did not matter, only that their last moments were violent and bloody (with at least most of the blood being from their enemy). As humans are abundant on Earth, they easily saw humanity as their natural and deserving target.

The weaker Lochs of the tribe were left alone. Near-death Lochs within this group of Orphans were forced to either care for the frail of mind or take them along on their journey to the Dark Horizon. Many simply attempted to continue their peaceful life at Rillaz Village, but with a much lower quality of life. Others chose to kill themselves at that moment, hoping to join Rillaz in death as a symbol of their loyalty to his teachings. This was obviously a much different show of affection from the Rampagers.

## **Contact**

There are official Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. reports of recent contact with the Orphans. It turns

out that the more hopeful Lochs that left them over a century ago did not completely forget about their wayward kin. Rescue efforts have started to pull the weak and dying to safety and possible recovery.

Not all want to accept the giving hand of humanity, as they are ready for humans to take with the other. Rillaz Village was abandoned by most and they currently seek new territory. Prospects are few and far between, as South America has gone through mass modernization in recent years and developers have taken over much of the land. They dare not return to Rillaz Village though, as it is likely next on the chopping block.

Even if the Orphans did want to leave, the Ram-pagers have their own goals. They have used the Orphans as bait in order to massacre agents as they

attempt to provide aid. These attacks have the company second-guessing its good-will efforts. They are likely to forget about the mission all together or hand it off to the South American HQ that they believe should be handling these incidents anyway. However, many Loch lobbyists, including Caster Mux, publicly insist that the US branch's decision with regard to the weakest of their kind will shape Loch/Human relations in the United States for years to come.

## Hooks

Before the Sedrone came to Earth, a secret guild existed with the purpose of finding criminals and traitors to the ruling order. This included investigating possible threats from Loch-betrayers, Charca-dons and Linx, and Scryers that seemed loyal as well. Rumors spread that members were trained in

combat pits and fought for their lives against others who wished to join, but they also needed to be diplomatically savvy for situations that did not call for a blade. Upon joining the guild, each member would be assigned to work for a certain Sedrone ruler and receive the blessing of the reigning kings. Individual members of the guild reported to the Sedrone kings with a main objective of tracking down conspiracies. It was always suspected that they actually worked for a secret overlord that seemed to have invested interest in keeping Sedrone in power. No proof was ever presented to sustain these claims.

Perpetrators were discovered and executed, but their informants, flunkies, and supporters were often left at large. They hid from their pursuers in Domainya, some even self-exiling themselves to Earth. Of course, when criminals run, those who enforce order must pursue. They dubbed themselves "Hooks", a funny name referring to their ability to reel their prey back to Domainya. Mingling with humans as inevitable and necessary and many outfitted themselves with large hats and long coats as to disguise



their appearance and take advantage of the humans' rational minds.

After the Contagion hit and the majority of Se-drone also migrated to earth, the Hooks knew that there was little harm the criminals they sought could actually do to fallen rulers. They ended their pursuits of all but the most dangerous villains, as they couldn't go back on their oath to take down constant threats to their race.

## Day to Day Business

Through steady adaptation, and with a few years more experience on Earth than other Lochs, the Hooks became business conscience and started their own business endeavors as private investigators. This allows them the tools and credibility needed to continue pursuing realistic threats and sustain a life on Earth without needing to enroll for service with API. The Hooks share a common central headquarters in Philadelphia, but most of them operate out of private offices, tracking cheating spouses, performing background checks, and occasionally taking bodyguard jobs in order to pay the rent. They receive updates from HQ on targets that may be in their areas, but Hooks rarely work together beside this basic information exchange or sharing of contacts unless they encounter an especially difficult case.

Hooks can advertise as mundane private detectives, complete with yellow page listings and shoddy websites that are years behind the times. Most, however, work through word of mouth, ensuring that they receive referred (and thus more reliable) clientele. Some even hire secretaries who attempt to screen calls and do pre-interviews with potential clients. Their jobs don't pay much though, so they can't always afford to pay employees. Being a Hook is a duty not taken lightly, so Hooks accept that money must be made through boring jobs to pay the rent in the hopes of landing the case of a lifetime. Hooks may unwittingly find themselves wrapped up in murder schemes or kidnapping plots that their customers can't or won't bring to their regular law enforcements attention, but few back down from such dangerous situations because they gave their word to solve the case. Some even seek out life-threatening cases in order to test their limits.

Demons with a local Hook know that they have a place other than the often intrusive API to go to with their problems. They are fed plenty of supernatural cases because they understand how dangerous it is to pursue powerful foes. Clients have no reason to

## Hook Membership (3 BP)

Any aquatic race may become a member of the Hooks as long as they are law abiding. A great personality is not a requirement and is a trait that most Hooks lack anyway. They have pride in their name and reputation and will always attempt to fulfill a promise once made. Below are the good and bad qualities to membership:

**Gift – Hook Comrades:** While they seldom go out of their way to do so, Hooks help each other if requested. This Gift acts as Connection (4) within the Hook organization. They can call on this assistance for access to a safe house, help with checking up on a lead, or even to send for reinforcements. However, Hooks are expected to be self-reliant. Their Connections rating goes down by one point with each use, reflecting the lack of respect they receive for continually asking for help.

**Gift – Smarter than the Average Fish:** Hooks have a knack for figuring out puzzles and conspiracies. They receive a +4 bonus to Perception checks with regard to any cases they take. For some reason, this bonus is only linked to official cases, so the character loses this bonus in personal matters.

**Drawback – Skint:** Hooks are notoriously hard up for cash on even the best of days. The Wealth Gift costs double the BP or XP to purchase, regardless of when the Hook attempts to obtain it. They cannot select the Indebted Drawback.

**Drawback – Unstoppable:** Once the Hooks decide a course of action, they complete it to its fullest. The character must make a Tough (30) IQ + Discipline check to avert their attention from an official case or a task that they have given their word to accomplish.

hide the truth about how their step-father ran off with their mother breathing fire... Hooks have heard it all too many times. These demon cases can be a lucky Hooks' bread and butter if they handle them well enough to gain the supernatural community's trust.

## Big Brother API

Apocalypse Prevention Inc. often employs the Hooks as sub-contractors for cases that require extra manpower, a keen insight, or sometimes even just a fall guy to save the company face. Most Hooks don't

## Secret Leaders

Only the Hooks themselves know their true leaders' identities. Some scholars and historians theorize that it was a small group of very influential Sedrone standing to profit largely from the past reign, possibly in the form of money or rare alchemist creations. Some believe that the last of one of the conquered races, possibly the Kulmajezad (page 24), knew the Sedrone's comeuppance was coming and wanted to keep them in Domainya. The Sedrone had a good thing while they were in charge, why would they have needed to leave? Others theorize that the Hooks had no leader and were simply a guild of warriors that saw it as their duty to serve. The GM has many different approaches to take with this group.

mind being any of these as long as the company makes healthy donations to their favorite charity... cash. No matter how much money is thrown at the Hooks, API knows to treat the glorified bounty hunters with at least a smidgeon of respect in person.

The Hooks are simply a resource to tap for API, however. The company has no official alliance with the guild, nor do they officially condone their presence and vigilantism on Earth. They are allowed to continue operations because API still has use for them... and the Hooks know it. More than one Hook has washed up murdered while on a sub-contracted investigation. API usually just sighs and calls for the next. The company also has a strict policy against lending equipment to Hooks, because they don't always get it back.

## The Hope Foundation

Every Loch fears that their legacy will fade away after their death with no heirs to hand mantles down to and no way to replace the Lochs lost since the Contagion. It weighs heavily on their minds no matter how long-lived a species they are, making even the simplest action meaningless for many among them. With this in mind, Caster Mux created the Hope Foundation with the intention of fostering optimism for his brothers and sisters.

Learning much from the recent API findings regarding Half-Lochs, the Hope Foundation has systems in place to pair two Lochs and one human in order to reproduce. Human women are found mostly from the internet, much like other surrogate mother recruiting sites. They lure a lot of money-hungry

people, but every so often they may meet someone who just wants to help another realize the dream of parenthood. After an initial meet and greet with Mux and the prospective parents to see if they are a "right fit" they go through the In Vitro process and attempt to produce a child. Little does the human know that the couple holding hands and awaiting results in the waiting room is pretty far from human themselves. They also don't know that their eminent death is not far away.

The Hope Foundation is run by Lochs for the repopulation of their race. They don't care if the two Lochs involved actually care for each other, as this is about survival, not attraction. They're not in it for love, but because two sets of eyes are better to watch over the surrogate mother than one. While it is important that the human be of at least adequate pedigree, the organization doesn't care about the human girl caught up in their efforts. Many rupture and bleed to death well before the child comes to term, but that's why there are two "parents" watching over her as closely that attempt to save the baby. If the child dies, it is the parents' responsibility to dispose of the evidence. As a Loch himself, Mux knows that most half-breeds die in the womb, but hopes that they can overcome that eventuality through sheer numbers and a special ingredient.

## Proud Progenitors

The impregnations are overseen by Dr. Philip Bird, a previous employee from one of API's secret research laboratories tasked with finding a cure for the Contagion. His findings struck a cord with the company's scientific review board after examining his research, concluding that the addition of a concoction derived from the cerebral fluid of human infants to human/Loch mating could theoretically increase the chances of fertilization by nearly 2%. While backed by strong evidence, API was concerned with the number of innocent human deaths required for such an endeavor. The Board of Directors barred him from his research, confiscated all his work for possible future follow-up, and assigned him to a new research team without another word. They were forced to send him to work in medical records because of his disgruntled nature, but occasionally called him in as a consultant. He decided to leave the company without any of this research notes or clout, but was very happy the company allowed him to keep his memory just in case they needed him in the future.

Dr. Bird sought out Caster Mux, a well-known community leader seeking initiatives to help reveal



the secrets of the Contagion, and together they created the Hope Foundation. Dr. Bird may indeed continue to work as an API consultant, but every second outside of that is spent toiling in the Hope Foundations laboratory. Mux might be in it for the propagation of his species, but Dr. Bird is in it to prove his theories. His formula, dubbed the Amalgam, is created from the spinal fluid of human children (from birth to three), which leads to at least three child deaths for every attempted Loch pregnancy that may or may not take. Great strides are being made, however, to increase the Amalgam's effectiveness and the doctor hopes to one day have all of the thankful Lochs tell API that he was right all along.

Success rates have been a mixed bag at the Hope Foundation. They currently have 119 total conceptions on file in the US, mostly on the west coast. Only two Half-Lochs have been produced by the organization and they still live today in a specially-designed containment areas in Dr. Bird's laboratory. While the chances of success are not high, these two births spell hope for many and Mux is not shy to share their small successes with any Loch that inquires. Like the sign outside the company's building reads... "Everyone Needs Hope".

## Loving Parents

Mux ensures that the utmost caution is taken with surrogates, lining up specially-selected doctors as their OBGYNs that are trained to know if and when something goes terribly wrong with a Loch pregnancy. The child is obviously not human, easily discernable from a basic x-ray, they only gestate for five months, and any pregnancy pains could be life-threatening, so this responsibility cannot be left to the average doctor.

No length is considered "too far" for the sake of a potential newborn. Cell phone taps, secret security details, and even murder are precautions taken by the foundation and parental Lochs in order to keep tabs on the child. Doctors are often killed and replaced to keep the surrogate mother placated and continually in the dark about the true nature of the child inside. If she gets too smart for her own good the parental Lochs may abduct and keep her under lock and key until labor.

At times, working together to follow their surrogate around or get rid of her more inquisitive friends can bring the two parental Lochs together, if they weren't already. More often than not, romances have bloomed through the Hope Foundation's efforts and

it has been become known for being a place for lonely Lochs to meet a potential match and possibly help their species at the same time. They know nothing about who they'll be paired with, but it doesn't matter to most. Companionship in the form of surveillance and possibly murderous acts is often better than none at all. Mux fosters this togetherness, as it not only makes future attempts easier, but also gets the couple to care more about their offspring. So, it's a win-win situation from a business standpoint.

## Keeping Secrets

Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. knows that the Hope Foundation is impregnating humans with Loch DNA and trying to keep them alive. Of course, this isn't much different from what the company does in its own labs and the foundation is left mostly alone as long as it provides their findings on a quarterly basis. Agents perform routine inspections of their facilities, but the fact that Dr. Bird works with the foundation is kept a secret. The company may one day find out the truth about their experimentations, and that day will likely call for their full disbandment, incarceration of guilty parties, and swift destruction of all evidence.

It wouldn't be difficult to raid the foundation's main branch, but this would also cause all the current parents to take their surrogates underground. Hundreds of pregnant women would disappear simultaneously, with mutilated corpses washing up for weeks. API couldn't catch all the parents at once. Mux is also a figurehead in the Loch community and his arrest (or disappearance) would cause mass confusion and outrage from his people. His actions and those of the Hope Foundation are largely seen as altruistic and perception often outweighs reality. API would have one hell of a PR problem on their hands.

### Jonah on Caster Mux

*To me, the guy is a grade-A hosebag. I've met him a couple of times during inspections and he seemed very full of himself. So, suffice to say, I'm not a fan of his, even though he has really done a lot to progress the Loch agenda on Earth. You know, with various rallies and raising questions in supernatural communities. I saw him give a speech once, and even though I didn't like everything he said, it was kind of moving. What he does is important, which is the only reason why I've yet to report the Hope Foundation's actions to API. I'm riding a fine line and keeping more secrets than I should, but this one just seems worth it in the end. He's still a hosebag though.*

# The Red Steps

When Lochs first looked out the portals from Domainya to Earth, they knew immediately who was in charge. Every other species bowed to the bipedal beings known as humans and their technology rivaled much of what the aquatic alchemists had to offer. Even nature itself was forced to kneel before the throne of mankind. Each group of Lochs had different ideas on how to proceed from that point onwards. Some wanted to join humanity in its deity-like status in the dimension, while others desired their help, but the group that began the Red Steps wanted to crush humanity in their hubris and show them how it felt to be under the heel of the Sedrone. Humans have a shorter life span and a disdain for the very ground that provides them their kingship, they deserve what's coming to them.

## First Steps

As they traveled north and began inhabiting human cities, mostly under normal API registration laws, the Red Steps saw the terrifying effectiveness in a Michigan slaughterhouse, one of the few jobs easily attainable by Lochs. They saw the opportunity to subvert the over-ambitious humans from the inside by turning a series of slaughterhouses into palaces of death. They then began turning the so-called ruling species into all sorts of delectable foods. It became amusing and delightful for them to turn humanity's own miraculous technology against them and make them feed on each other without their knowledge.

Soon, they seized control over two different Michigan plants and forced the humans there to teach them how to use the equipment before they themselves became the first test subjects. The word spread among dubious and underground demons that there was now a place to bring people that needed to "disappear". Now, the Red Steps take donations of kidnapped people, accidental kills, or victims of the criminal underworld from all around the United States. While designed with humans in mind, they'll gladly take demons as well (for a nominal fee) granted that they taste good. Then they can return the next day to eat them as spiced jerky.

The Red Steps' operation has expanded to Texas, Nebraska, Kansas, and Colorado. They stay away from the coasts as much as possible, as investigators would likely look there first for Sedrone activities. Although there are only six facilities operating so far, the Red Steps can go through potentially dozens of

people in any given day, turning them into sausages, jerky, and other assorted meat products.

## Hidden Horror

Employees are well-paid, sometimes through magical favors, and enjoy their bloody work. Of course, the human meat is mixed with beef and pork to disguise the taste and to ensure they have legal meats to show health inspectors. This clever balance has kept them under the radar from years. If necessary, magic is employed to obfuscate their endeavors, but they use this sparingly as it can bring undue attention from Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. The bosses of each plant know where the other locations are, but the workers are kept in the dark just in case of a raid. One of the leaders is also rumored to have acquired an API Sonic Memory Scrambler from the black market, which lets them get away with quite a bit.

The plant leaders attend bi-monthly "seminars" held in back-road motels and meeting halls to discuss new products, problems, and their thoughts of expansion. The leaders occasionally ponder revealing to the world that humans have been feasting on each other. The reaction would likely be chaos and horror that they could sit back and watch safely from the sea, but they are still having too much fun to abandon their work so soon.

The next phase of their plan has been in the planning stages for a considerable amount of time... fast food. Using capital gained from their fast food venture, selling items containing the "special" meat from local factories, they hope to fully incorporate and start construction on worldwide factory franchises. If the Red Steps ever ran out of human meat, they would close their doors, wipe their drills clean, and smile on a job well done, but this task is far from complete.

## Investigating the Madness

The Red Steps has not shown up on Apocalypse Prevention, Inc.'s radar thus far, as they are currently working on a small scale. Eventually though, the wrong demon will be informed of their friendly drop-off points and is likely to turn to API for the right price. Agents could wipe a single factory from the earth in a matter of minutes, but would have no clue where to find the others, due to their insular nature.

The Red Steps would welcome a fight with API

and ready their grinders for agent meat, but they are few to API's many. The leaders, however, have taken appropriate steps to fortify themselves. They have opened secondary factories that operate as underwater facilities in large enough lakes. These are operated separately from the land factories, are much more fortified, and are practically impossible to detect by normal means. API may be fooled to think that taking out all of their land operations will destroy the Red Steps, but they would be very wrong.

## Superior City

The largest of the Great Lakes has become a point of contention between battling factions of Lochs and Ondine. This is one of the many places that the Ondine built their own communities on the lake floor. The rich water is unpolluted and is kept that way by both US and Canadian governments. It has a sprawling population of over sixty species of fish to make this prime real estate for aquatic demons.

The Lochs found the Ondine city about sixty years ago and set upon it with furious righteousness. The Sirens had little choice but to abandon the area as the attackers were too many and much stronger. The mermaids went on to spread the word about the usurping Lochs throughout their numbers, while the ransacked community was rebuilt and named Superior City. This event was the first on US soil between the two races.

## War Zone

The Lochs had taken over a large Ondine settlement with few casualties in their numbers. For years, they scoffed at the mermaids and their cowardice for running so quickly, but they did not know of the Ondine ability to rally their numbers very quickly. While the Lochs rebuilt the city they had destroyed, their enemies were gathering and planning a mass assault to take Lake Superior back. They bided their time until they had at least three Ondine for each Loch and set upon their crusade. Boaters, swimmers, and anyone else in the world above saw the lake boil with underwater activity that day.

When it was all said and done, the Lochs still stood triumphant and with new insight into their enemies. Sure, some would think that it was pride or territorialism, which are both true in part, but deep in the decimated castle of Superior City laid a very powerful artifact that the Ondine wanted back... Poseidon's Trident. They learned of the mermaids' ridiculous

claims of being descendents from a mythical sea god and marveled at the item of rich beauty and history. Unfortunately, the item was protected well.

A grand statue of Triton stands next to a broken Ondine throne that holds the trident in its hand. However, there are seals written into the base of the statue that keep anyone from removing it and protect the statue from damage. While the Lochs do not know the exacts behind this powerful magic, they do wield aquatic alchemy that may hold the key. Slaughter squads are regularly sent to known-Ondine territory to collect bodies for testing and new ingredients into alchemical potions to one day retrieve the trident. In response, the barrage of attacks on Superior City from Ondine has not stopped. They want that trident back, but the Lochs are not giving it up. This has become a major component in their ongoing feud.

## The Collective

The Lochs residing in Superior City still think they were meant to rule and conquer any territory they please. However, this underwater city has yet to elect any type of real leader, each of them fighting to be the leader on any given day. The collective uses a form of democracy to keep from destroying each other at the moment, but the decision has been made to give absolute rule of Superior City to the one to wield Poseidon's Trident.

This has turned the community into a strange mix of helpful and backstabbing natures. Lochs fight on the front lines together as the Ondine rail against their numbers. They help to build new homes and eat in large community-wide feasts in the center of the city. They even work together to find the right recipe for the alchemy to break the spell holding Poseidon's Trident in place. However, each and every Loch in Superior City holds a certain disdain for the others. They have kept just enough hatred inside so that they won't feel remorse for murdering each other as they reach for the beautifully divine weapon.

### Freshwater Phenomenon

For one reason or another, Ondine are able to survive just fine in Lake Superior regardless of the fact that it is a freshwater lake, not saltwater. Many among them believe this is due to the magic emitted by the sea god's trident, allowing his children to live alongside his essence without limitation. The company also believes that the removal of the trident is likely to nullify this effect, thus clearing the area of Ondine in the future.

## Poseidon's Trident

Only those Ondine from Superior City actually know the item's whereabouts, but all of them have heard its history. It is said that it was left to Triton, Poseidon's son, and passed down the line of Ondine through the last several thousand years. Stories tell that the last Ondine to wield the trident, Umphel the Brave, went mad with power from feeling the essence of the sea god. He proved to be a powerful warrior, but cut his own throat with the weapon in an unending craze. It was sealed away to keep others from the same fate. Those Ondine in Superior City were the devout tasked to keep it that way.

Ondine have sworn not to wield the weapon again, as it would be unsafe for their people and humanity for certain. However, the Lochs have no silly reservations about such things. If they are able to break the seals keeping them at bay, they gain possession of a weapon of great power. While normal tridents use stats for Spears (page 55 of the API corebook), Poseidon's Trident has the following:

- **Stats:** Speed +2, Stamina +2, +4 (L), Size 3, with a reach of 10 ft.
- Ondine do not receive any penalties for using Poseidon's Trident without levels of Weapon Style: Staff.
- Ondine with this Trident need not spend Stamina to entrance others with their Siren Song (page 60)
- Spending 5 Stamina at the beginning of a Round, gives the wielder a +4 bonus to all combat checks, +2 Actions, and raises the weapon damage to +8 (L) for one Round.
- The longer one wields Poseidon's Trident, the faster they descend into suicidal bliss. Each week with the trident forces a Tough (30) INS + Discipline check against Insanity. The first failed check means they become megalomaniacal and believe themselves invincible. A second failed check makes them very paranoid, driving their friends and family away. A third failure makes them depressed to point of suicide. A fourth failure and they cannot hold onto life any longer.

## API Involvement

Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. had their eyes on these events for years. They knew little about what the Ondine were guarding at the bottom of Lake Superior and see this as a major problem now that they do. In the interest of the company, funds have been ordered to aid the Lochs in their endeavor to keep the lake as theirs, but the Lochs sit pretty on their usurped thrones and don't know the company's true intentions. As soon as Poseidon's Trident is free, agents are set up to descend on the area and confiscate the weapon for further testing. It may require containment for an indefinite period to ensure Earth's safety. This is a combined effort between the US and Canadian HQs and is of great importance to humanity as far as the company believes.

Currently, API has an understanding with the Loch collective. Weekly meetings at the Isle Royal (a small island located in the NW quadrant of the lake) take place between the two groups to ensure that the overly-secretive Ondine have no chance of retaking the area. With the Lochs in charge, they are given weekly updates and essentially free reign to the underwater city. With the mermaids in charge, the company would have no recourse but to destroy an entire community of Ondine to get to the trident... which is not an option as far as Priscilla Anne Ilsley is concerned.



# Chapter Four: Aquatic Tools

## Playing Tips for Lochs

Roleplaying a Loch can be a difficult, but very rewarding challenge. They are inhuman in their appearance and often in thought, which makes an accurate portrayal of these commanding demons prove insurmountable for some. They embody some of the worst characteristics of any character, such as envy, horrible tempers, and the urge to beat down those that are smaller or weaker. By the same token, they possess great valor, an incredible sense of pride in their culture, and loyalty to their comrades. Some may find it hard to play such an alien creature filled with such depressing regret and rage that reaches uncomfortable levels at times.

## Land and Sea

Too many players overlook the usefulness of the Lochs, thinking that they “are great for water missions, but not much else”, usually citing how hard it is to blend in to regular society. Sure, they are large fish people and are wonderful in water, but there are measures that allow them to travel with their squad normally to use their other gifts to aid them. First, Image Emitters are provided for Loch agents on their first day. They don’t like to overuse them, but they know when the times are right. Those with even greater size may be provided with the experimental Compressor Cloth (page 48)

Those Lochs without Image Emitters can partake in the Trench Coat rule that allows them to use humanity's rational minds to hide themselves. As long as they don't draw attention to themselves and are mostly covered (i.e. hat, gloves, long coat, pants, etc.) they'll be almost completely ignored and regarded as a "regular person".

For those that practice aquatic alchemy (page 32), they even have access to a third option... the Human Skin item (page 52). It requires the death of the occasional human, but can let them intermingle with humans on a more concrete level... for at least a short span of time.

## **Forgive, but Never Forget**

The Lochs were unstoppable rulers in Domainya. They took what they wanted from anyone they saw as weaker and assimilated it into their own personal culture. This was due to their strong urges to conquer, destroy, and crush others under their feet, and it eventually led to a massive rebellion that decimated their race, leaving them without the ability to breed with one another. Modern Lochs usually fall into two camps that a player can decide to take with their character.

The first group and the most playable option are Lochs that are attempting to build new lives on Earth. They recognize the failures of their kind and are humbled by their past. The Contagion was a desperate last ditch effort of the Scryers, a race that the Lochs forced into subservience and killed for fun. Many believe that this punishment was too harsh for any race, but most modern Lochs understand that it was something they brought on themselves. They have come to forgive these events, making friends with Scryers and Linx alike, even if their elders don't approve. Many don't even call Domainya their homeworld anymore, finding themselves so far removed from the people they used to be or that their old empire is somehow cursed. By the same token, these types of characters have developed caring for others and deep wisdom that only their kind could imagine. They are the first to want to return to Domainya in the Reclamation Project (page 16) in order to help clear the area of an even worse threat... the Voltics.

The second group has left nothing behind and continues their role as Sedrone from the old world with the tried and true traditions of destruction and

rage to drive them. They see Earth as nothing but a new place to conquer, even if only carving a small niche in the expansive dimension. This type of thinking has led to the encounters in Superior City (page 43) and the efforts of the Red Steps (page 42). They are often very racist against any non-Lochs, especially those aquatic races they previously conquered. Many see their fall from grace as a simple setback. They are seen as relics to younger Lochs who are attempting to blend into Earth culture and create new lives for themselves. They also have a stake in going back to Domainya to retake the throne and rule once more.

## **Love and Sex**

It is a disturbing aspect of life as a Loch, but the need to procreate (often by force) is very real for these demons. GMs should keep tabs on their game while using this theme to ensure that the players are not becoming too uncomfortable. Also note that, while Loch rapes are high in number now, there is an upswing in the number of Lochs that are actually falling in love with humans and dealing in consensual sex only. Others find love and affection for humans as deplorable and condemn the apologists that perform such heinous acts. Those Lochs that have no regard for human life, still attempt to conquer others, and deal with Illegal demons that are prone to this type of behavior. Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. doesn't officially condone sexual assaults on human. Suspension, memory wipes, and incarcerations are known judgments for Loch (or other races of) agents that are found to have committed such atrocious crimes. However, if the acts are kept secret, there is no way for the company to find out. Sonic Memory Scramblers have many uses.

There are other legends about Lochs that make deals with human communities to provide them "sacrifices" or "brides" on a regular basis in return for their help. These are often difficult to establish, but if a Loch can get in on the ground level, there is no struggle or violence necessary.

## **Not Just Muscle**

Most players may be tempted to create Lochs that are terrifying and exceedingly effective combat monsters. They lend themselves to this type of build with their large size and increased strength, but they are far from one note songs and can take on

more than this singular role in any squad. Below are a few examples:

### **Diplomats**

Sedrone used many tactics to chip away at a race's defenses before they conquered. They would use charm to forge false treaties or gain support without violence just before they'd launch an offensive and destroy the weaker race. Today, Lochs are often the first agents sent to greet other aquatic races and they must be able to represent the helpful face of Apocalypse Prevention, Inc.

### **Tacticians**

Not every Loch is a great warrior. Their great strength gives them certain natural bonuses, but many have devoted their time to learning combat strategies and become generals and tacticians for their own personal armies or even for API.

### **Sages**

Lochs have gone through a lot and many of them wish to share their experiences with others. They may become wanderers, going from town to town in hopes of providing aid to other demons headed down the same path that the Sedrone took. Simply sharing their story can be enough to keep another race from their fate... or one might hope.

## **Be Careful**

Lochs have one major component of their species that holds them back in most cases... the Contagion. When faced with a problem, their first instinct is to rush in and crush the opposition like so many times in their history. However, with the onset of this recent epidemic, the number of Lochs still in existence diminishes every day. Reports of the latest death or even about the possibility of finding Lochs without the Contagion spread around Loch communities, but in the end... dying in battle just isn't what it's cracked up to be anymore. The death of even one Loch can seem like too much with a population on its way to extinction. The average Loch has urges to slay anything in their way, but they must be able to take a step back and think about their current situation before acting. They do no good for their race if they are dead.

## **New Passion**

### **Redemption**

The character's goal is to find redemption. This could be personal redemption or redemption of a group that the character associates with. They or their group often has a dark past that the character is focused on fixing. References to the past can be taken as offensive or cause debates about innocence and guilt. This could take the form of a Loch trying to right the wrongs of his people and returning the Sedrone to glory or in a Scryer that feels that the Contagion was a crime by his people and is doing everything to help cure the affected Lochs.

**Bonus XP:** Whenever the character makes progress in bettering their (or their groups') redemption

## **New Gifts**

Some of these reflect physical alterations that the character is born with (must be taken during character creation). As their race is the most adaptable of the aquatics, some Gifts are only available to Lochs.

### **Armored Scales (2 BP) – Lochs only**

The Loch's scales are thicker than most and provide a natural AR of (2/1). The scales are heavier and reduces their base Movement by 2.

### **Aquatic Alchemy (5 or 3) – Any Aquatic**

The character has learned the intricacies of the complicated Aquatic Alchemy (pg. 32). Scryers need only pay 3 BP for this Gift.

### **Built for Speed (3 BP) – Any Aquatic**

The character is well adapted to move through water, even more than other aquatic creatures. They receive a +4 bonus to Athletic (Swimming) checks and +5 Movement bonus while underwater.

### **Contagion-Free (4) – Lochs Only**

Requires GM approval. The vast majority of Lochs were cursed with the Contagion, the magical disease that keeps their race from procreating. However... only those Lochs within Domainya at the time of the disease (or that have returned since) were infected. Some Lochs, however, left Domainya for one reason or another (usually by exile) before the Servants Rebellion. This, in essence, has saved them from the fate of the rest, and the character with this Gift can procreate easily... as long as they

find another unaffected Loch. However, because their body has not been changed by the Contagion, breeding with a human is impossible. If they return to Domainya, they instantly lose this Gift.

### **Crab Claw (4 BP) - Lochs only**

The character has a large claw instead of a hand. When using anything that requires two hands to effectively operate they suffer a -3 penalty, but they are granted a +2 Damage bonus to unarmed attacks and the following:

- **Crush (Speed 5, Stamina 4, +2 (NL)) –**

**Grapple Maneuver:** The Loch grabs and attempts to crush their target with their Claw. If the target fails to resist, they are paralyzed with Pain, losing 1 Action for this Round.

### **Hook (3 BP) - Any aquatic**

The character is a member of the Hooks organization, receiving all the bonuses and penalties on page 39.

### **Photophores (2 BP) - Lochs only**

The character has round eye spots all along their body that are covered by a skin flap. With a thought this flap can be raised and lowered, either specific photophores or all of them at once. If raised a blue phosphorescent light shines out, illuminating a radius of 15 ft. around the character.

### **Tentacles (2 BP / 4 BP) - Lochs only**

The character has up to two tentacles (2 BP) or up to four tentacles (4 BP) on their head or hanging from their chin. They grow at a rate of half an inch per year, so a Loch of 24 years would have tentacles that are 12 inches long. They can manipulate objects and light machinery at a -4 penalty. In addition, they can carry up to 10 pounds, but are not strong enough to inflict damage or wield weapons.

## **New Drawbacks**

### **Water Breather (2 BP) – Any Aquatic**

This Gift can be taken by creatures that are normally in an aquatic habitat or any other world where they do not normally breathe oxygen from air, even Lochs that are usually adaptable to Earth. The character cannot breathe normally out of water. Their maximum Stamina is reduced by 5 when above water and they regenerate Stamina at half the normal regeneration rate (rounded down) unless submerged.

## **New Equipment**

### **A.B.A. Air Breathing Apparatus**

**Durability:** 2, **Size:** 1, **Cost:** API-Issued

**Description:** The ABA is a small instrument inserted into the character's mouth, held tightly in place by a small unobtrusive strap. It allows underwater beings to breathe normally in Oxygen/Nitrogen atmospheres, including Earth. This was designed and developed for Scryers working with API, but can be used by any aquatic race with issues breathing air. A small microphone on the internal portion plays the wearer's words through a speaker on the external portion.

### **Compressor Cloth**

**Durability:** 5, **Size:** N/A, **Cost:** API-Issued

**Description:** Compressor Cloth is used to help hide the broad physiques that Lochs often have that an Image Emitter is not able to cover up. While the Image Emitter can shield the Loch's appearance, the Loch's overall mass can lead to awkward situations where he bumps into objects because of his actual body and not the image the producer reflects. The Compressor Cloth removes this difference in size, but can only be used for up to 8 hours before needing to charge for 4 hours.

### **Harpoon Gun (Handheld)**

**Durability:** 5, **Size:** 2, **Cost:** 1  
(**Speed** 3, **Stamina** 1, **Damage** 1 (L), **Range** 5/8/12, **Payload** 1, **RS** 4)

**Description:** Used primarily to stick fish, frogs, and other small prey while diving. It can be used on an opponent but deals little damage, because its not made for combat.

### **Harpoon Gun (Mounted)**

**Durability:** 13 (3/3/), **Size:** 4, **Cost** 4  
(**Speed** 4, **Stamina** 3, **Damage** 18 (L) AP 4, **Range** 300/500/700, **Payload** 1, **RS** 1 min)

**Description:** This type of gun can stop even the strongest demon in their tracks. It is a very large harpoon used primarily for whaling. This type of weapon is often mounted on API vessels to allow the company to retrieve specimens of larger sea monsters for further research.

### **H.I.C.C.U.P.**

**Durability:** 50 (AR 8/5), **Cost:** API-Issued  
**CS:** 75 (1104), **TS:** 180 (2650), **Man:** +6

**Description:** This is the latest design of Agent Geoff Kinling, the Hydrogen Injected Cross Cycling





Underwater Prototype. It is designed for maximum maneuverability, quick acceleration, and high speeds. It possesses only light armor to allow for this, but the hull's armor does prevent the accumulation of organic matter, such as barnacles or other sessile organisms. It is still in its prototypical stages and less than fifty exist, most of which are stored at the Box in Domainya. If one were to appear on the black market, it would surely fetch quite the price.

The HICCUP is powered by an engine that pulls hydrogen out of the water as an unlimited fuel source. There is room for one operator and one passenger. Two additional passengers can latch on to handlebars underneath the vehicle via a secure locking mechanism (Speed 3 to latching on, Speed 2 to unlatch), but must be careful to avoid obstacles at such high speeds.

- **Short-Range Torpedo (Speed 4, Stamina 3, Damage 15 (L)):** It fires a torpedo from its forward or back torpedo bays. Range 25/50/150, Payload 4 in front and 4 in back.

- **Depth Grenades (Speed 4, Stamina 3, Damage 5 (L) to an area with a Radius of 10 ft):** It drops a depth grenade from its bottom surface. Range 30/45/70, Payload 10

### The M.U.E.S.

**Durability:** 10 (AR 5/0) **Size:** N/A **Cost:** API-Issued

**Description:** The Mini Underwater Exploration Suit, nicknamed the Moose, is API's lightweight underwater exploration suit. It has an intricately

designed propulsion system that allows characters without the Aquatic Gift or the Underwater Jets implant to move at double their Movement in water and breathe normally while submerged. It has a personal light and two-way radio intercom and comes equipped with a Spear Gun mounted on either the left or right arm of the suit.

- **Spear Gun (Speed 3, Stamina 2, Damage 6 (L)):** Fires a long spear at the target. Range 10/20/30, Payload 3, RS 3

## New Cybernetics

Cybernetics are not constructed to work in an aquatic environment. Most exposed implants (those with a targetable AR) will become unusable right away and remain that way until it is serviced. When a player submerges the implant, they receive a check with no bonuses. On a roll of 1-5 the implant immediately shorts and inflicts 5 (L) points of damage from electrocution. On a roll of 6-10, it'll noticeably short circuit, but won't inflict damage unless the character attempts to use it.

All of the implants below are already waterproofed and actually only operate properly in an aquatic environment.

### Waterproofing (1 BP)

**Description:** This procedure can be applied to any external cybernetic implant. It is a thin membrane that prevents water from getting to the implant, while any other nutrient exchange that is necessary for proper function is not inhibited. The membrane can be clear or colored to match the cyborg's skin tone. A successful Moderate (20) INS + Perception check allows someone to spot the implant beyond any camouflage provided, but it requires a Tough (30) check to identify the exact implant hidden underneath.

## Air Lungs (3 BP)

**Durability:** N/A

**Description:** This implant is for any character that suffers limitations with breathing in different environments. It installs as two smaller lungs attached to those already existing. For land races, like humans or Wolf People, Air lungs let them breath underwater normally. For aquatic races, like Scryers, it allows them to extract oxygen from the air. The character regenerates Stamina per normal rules, and no longer receives a Stamina penalty while not in their normal surroundings (page 48).

## Current Generator (4 BP) (Upgrade)

**Description:** This is an upgrade to a Bionic-Torso. When activated, a donut-shaped sound emitter emerges from the cyborg's body to create a strong current as wide as twenty feet that affects any being that is no more than thirty feet away. It halves or doubles the Movement of all creatures within its range, depending on the direction created by the cyborg. The size and speed are controlled by thought. It can be used for up to one hour, but will then need four hours of charging afterward.

## Sonar (3 BP)

**Description:** Sonar allows the character to detect anything within 200 ft of them in any direction, while underwater. With a Moderate (20) INS + Perception check, this implant allows for approximate speed, size, and a rough shape of the object. It installs behind one ear or usually somewhere on the head, with a small retractable antennae that projects out two inches when it is in use.

## Underwater Jets (2 BP) (Upgrade)

**Description:** Two jets are installed onto a previously existing bionic arm and bionic leg implants to aid in propulsion through water. Each jet occupies one upgrade slot on the appendage. The cyborg's Movement is doubled when the jets are in use.

## Aquatic Alchemy

Below are a list of alchemical items created by Aquatic Alchemists (page 32) and their abilities. They can purchase the following recipes for a number of Bonus Points (BP) equal to the item's level. They receive one of the items upon purchase and create more as they wish. Items can be used an unlimited number of times, unless otherwise stated, and require an extended Tough (30) IQ +

Crafts check per day of work to create additional or replacement items.

Medical knowledge is widely helpful for alchemists, as most ingredient extraction require the appropriate AGY + Medicine (Surgery) checks to ensure the parts and pieces are not damaged in the removal process. If it is an item that can be transferred from wearer to wearer, the alchemist needs to activate the item first for it to be used by others.

## Level 1 Items

### Aqua Lung

**Durability:** 15 (AR 4/4), **Size:** 2

**Description:** Created with the petrified lungs of any aquatic race, the alchemist can gift this item to a comrade that does not have the ability to breathe underwater. It effectively gives the recipient the Aquatic Gift (page 58) for one hour at the cost of 3 Stamina. The Aqua Lung takes three days to recreate.

### Blocking Former

**Durability:** N/A, **Size:** 1

**Description:** By extracting the hormone that makes blocklings (page 9) grow, the alchemist can control their growth from start to finish for the cost of 3 Stamina. The item itself looks similar to a paint brush and can be used to craft underwater buildings, walls, or any other structure in minutes, but they are brittle and can be destroyed by any attack dealing more than 6 damage. The Blocking Former takes two days to recreate, but requires at least two blockling samples from which to extract.

### Cleansing Gem

**Durability:** 3, **Size:** 1

**Description:** A glowing purple gem that activates the same effect as "Cleanse" from the Path of Health (page 102 of the API corebook), getting rid of any dirt or germs in a whole room or a 25 ft. radius (whichever is greater). It can also be used to cleanse the spirit of an alchemist's haven (page 34) if it has been tampered with. The Cleansing Gem takes ten minutes to make, but requires Bright Crystals from Domainya.

### Jorem Paste

**Durability:** N/A, **Size:** N/A

**Description:** This paste is created from mashed together herbs and ingredients from Domainya,

combined with a bit of the alchemist's own blood (3 (L)). When applied to a wound, the Jorem Paste instantly heals 3 Health and stops any infection from the many parasites in the murky depths. Once applied, it seals the skin, stopping any bleeding, and dissolves into it over the course of an hour. It cannot be scrapped off. It takes one hour to create a dose of Jorem Paste.

### Siren Choker

**Durability:** 4, **Size:** 2

**Description:** Created from the stolen vocal chords of four humans, two dolphins, or one Ondine, the Siren Choker is worn around the neck like a long, thick necklace. It gifts the wearer with a +4 bonus to any Performance (Singing) checks for one hour for every 2 Stamina points spent to activate. Requires two days to create.

## Level 2 Items

### Charm of Hyper Swimming

**Durability:** 10 (AR 2/0), **Size:** 1

**Description:** This item is crafted from the tips of fin cartilage from any aquatic beings, from sharks to dolphins to Linx. They usually have to slaughter at least ten to get just the right parts. It is worn as a thin necklace with a cartilage charm at the end in any shape of the alchemist's choosing. It provides quadruple Movement and a +3 bonus to all combat checks while submerged for the cost of 4 Stamina per minute. Takes four days to create.

### Charm of Mana Sight

**Durability:** 6, **Size:** 1

**Description:** Made from the dissected eyes of a Scryer mixed with other herbs and the alchemist's own blood (5 (L)). It is worn as a necklace with an obvious eye at the end. More discreet wearers put the eye into another casing of gold to hide it. By expending 6 Stamina, the wearer gains the Magical Sight Gift of the Scryers (page 62) for 5 minutes. The effect cannot be turned off and must run its course before the wearer's vision returns to normal. Takes five days to create.

### Human Tongue

**Durability:** N/A, **Size:** N/A

**Description:** This item allows an aquatic being to talk just like a human, without any gurgle in their voice and provides a +4 bonus to Linguistic checks for human languages. The cost for such a voice is

ripping the tongues from two humans and sewing bits of them into the recipient's own tongue. This effect is always active and there is no activation cost. The procedure takes about six hours of painstaking surgery.

### Oceanic Voice Shells

**Durability:** 5 (AR 4/2), **Size:** 2

**Description:** This item comes in pairs and links two large, handheld shells magically to allow voice communication between the two for the cost of 3 Stamina per conversation. The range of communication is up to 100 miles. While the shells are more readily available on Earth, cultivating such an item in Domainya requires combat with any one of the horrible and dangerous crustaceans that scour the dimension floor. Requires one full day to create.

### Pointing Compass

**Durability:** 6, **Size:** 1

**Description:** The alchemist creates this item from four fresh human index fingers affixed to a thin metal disc. With it, they can speak the name of a person and be directed to them by reading the direction in which the fingers point. The alchemist must know their target's true name (nicknames do not work) and this ability costs them 4 Stamina for one hour of directional assistance. **Note:** This item just points. It doesn't tell you how far or what is going on, but simply the direction. Requires about five hours to create, but the fingers decompose normally and need to be replaced regularly.

## Level 3 Items

### Floating Orb

**Durability:** 14 (AR 8/8), **Size:** 2

**Description:** This basketball-sized magical orb of Bright Crystals allows the user to float above the ground up to ten feet high as if they were in water for the cost of 3 Stamina per minute. While this would be a detriment to most land-dwelling races, aquatic races benefit highly from the Movement bonuses they receive in water. The orb must house the heart of a Loch, requiring the death of one of the dying species to power its magic. Requires six days to create.

### Infinite Box

**Durability:** 25 (AR 4/4), **Size:** 2

**Description:** This item is created by ripping a Husk (See API Worldwide: Canada) apart and craft-

ing its parts into a box no larger than one square-foot in size. The alchemist can spread their own blood (3 (L)) across the lid to expand the area inside to ten times that much. Anyone other than the alchemist that attempts so finds only a small empty box. Requires fourteen days to create.

### **Voltic Scalp**

**Durability:** 8, **Size:** 2

**Description:** Alchemists have found ways to exploit the Voltics' special abilities. By scalping one and pinning bits of their brains to the user's fingertips, they gain telepathic abilities at the cost of 5 Stamina per conversation. It is worn atop the head, with straps under the alchemist's chin to hold it in place. They can converse, share memories, share all five senses, and sense the presence of anyone within 500 ft. with a Moderate (20) INS + Perception check. Takes ten days to cure the scalp and create the item.

## **Level 4 Items**

### **Haven for a Hermit**

**Durability:** 42 (AR 10/8), **Size:** 4

**Description:** This is one of the most useful and sought after recipes, but also one of the most costly (permanent loss of -1 VIG during creation). They craft a very large shell from the bones of eight victims of any sentient race and invest a portion of their soul into the item. It takes twenty days to complete, but once done, they have created the perfect pocket dimension of approximately 500 square-feet where they may live or perform their alchemical experiments. Most alchemists carried the shell on their backs, with few knowing that it is their home. They can spend 4 Stamina to enter it, but require no extra expenditure to exit. While inside, their Health and Stamina refreshment rates are doubled. Only the alchemist that created the shell may enter.

### **Human Skin**

**Durability:** N/A, **Size:** N/A

**Description:** This is one of the more recent alchemical items, created from specially-prepared human skin. For the best results, the alchemist should skin the human so that they remove it all in one piece. Failure to do so may leave some pieces useless and require additional murders to make up for the missing tissue. After soaking the skin in a special bath of herbs and the alchemist's blood for one month, they may put the skin on and appear as a regular human. No matter how large the alchemist

is, their body conforms to fit the frame and build of the human they skinned. For the cost of 8 Stamina, they are instantly a human in every way, shape, and form, but the skin lasts only for a period of one month before needing to be discarded.

### **Scale Thickeners**

**Durability:** N/A, **Size:** N/A

**Description:** This was a favorite tool in the times when the Sedrone conquered multiple kingdoms. No soldier went to waste, even after death. If a fighter was killed, their comrade would pick them up, drink their blood dry, and then take a special pill that pumped that blood into the user's scales to thicken them. After taking the time to drink all of a Loch's or Charcadon's blood from their body and ingesting one of these pills, the alchemist receives AR +8/+8 on top of any AR they already have. The herbs and ingredients needed to create these pills are rare indeed and are only found in the deepest recesses of Domainya. They require only a day to create, but many spend weeks in search of the items needed for the recipe.

## **Level 5 Items**

### **Ancient Skull of Travel**

**Durability:** N/A, **Size:** N/A

**Description:** While primitive in many ways, even the ancient Sedrone knew how to use alchemy to jump dimensions. They are new to Earth, but have traveled to many worlds unknown even to humans. This item is crafted from the skull of a Loch and imbued with crystals from Domainya. Some are crafted from the skulls of their ancestors, as the older the skull the more control the alchemist has over their travel. When they know where they wish to travel, they meditate on the destination, make a Tough (30) IQ + Discipline check, and spend 10 Stamina (modifiers based on the age of the skull used). After the skull reaches its max uses, it shatters.

Fresh skull	-4 penalty	1 use
1 year old	-2 penalty	3 uses
2-5 years old	0	5 uses
6-20 years old	+2 bonus	10 uses
21-50 years old	+4 bonus	25 uses
51+ years old	+6 bonus	50 uses

The portal stays open as long as the alchemist concentrates. However, if an adept with the Dimen-

sional Portal spell (page 108 of the API corebook) attempts to close the portal, change the destination, or keep it open past the alchemist's wishes, the adept automatically wins any contested checks.

## Enslaving Hourglass

**Durability:** 10 (3/3), **Size:** 1

**Description:** By taking the bones of xohms from four different Linx, the alchemist can create an item capable of enslavement. Their bones are ground and placed into an hourglass, then christened with mixture of Linx blood and that of the alchemist as well (5 (L)). When turned over and the time is started, the alchemist picks a target, spends 10 Stamina, and speaks their command, (similar to Command from the Path of Domination on page 95 of the API corebook). The target receives Difficulty (18) Magic Resistance check. If they fail, they can be instructed to perform any action, no matter how heinous or how much it goes against their nature, without receiving additional checks to break the effects. However, the item is only in effect until the last grain of bone drops, which is about an hour, after which it must be rechristened. Requires fifteen days to create on top of construction time for the hourglass itself.

## Antagonists

### Afflicted (Fear 15)

**Description:** Afflicted are Scryers that were unexpectedly altered by the Contagion. They did not realize that a percentage of their population had a genetic mutation that allowed the disease to bind to their cells and affect their brain function and sensory development. They have a reduction in eyesight and sometimes the eyes are completely absent. However, their body canals are widened and their sensors are more developed. They might not be able to see a creature stationary before them, but they could feel the vibrations.

**Motivations:** They have a pack mentality, often taking cues from a lead male, and travel in packs as small as four or as large as twelve. Their only goals are feeding and reproducing. Their primitive brains don't distinguish between prey and their attacks are unbiased.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 25, Stamina 30, Initiative +8, Movement 25, Fear 15, Actions per Round 2, Magic Resistance +3, Perception +14, Stealth (Shadowing) +8, Survival (Tracking) +5

**Combat:** They rarely attack openly, preferring to ambush their targets. They often shadow them

to spread fear and try to sense the weakest of the group, singling them out from their group and attacking. Other Afflicted will simultaneously distract the others in the group (usually without attempting any serious attacks). **Bonuses:** Strike +6, Dodge +6, Parry +6, Roll +8, Damage +2 (Claws +3 (L))

**Powers:** They have Magic Sight (page 63) always in effect.

**Weaknesses:** They are considered animals with respect to the Path of Animalia. They are immune to blinding effects, but any distracting vibrations give them a -5 penalty to Perception rolls.

### Charcadons (Fear 22)

**Description:** Charcadons are large shark-like beasts that would dwarf any of their Earth "cousins". In addition to their massive jaws filled with four rows of teeth, they have short muscular forearms that they use for grasping their prey. They are often solitary, but have been seen in groups of three or more when prey becomes scarce. In the past, they have fought amongst themselves and actually cannibalized each other. They are born at about five feet long, and usually average over thirty five feet. They are not very flexible and their skin is prone to dangerous infections from various bacteria that inhabit the sediment they build their lairs from, which led to their symbiotic relationship with the Linx. They protected the Linx from predators, while the Linx cleaned them and took care of their lairs.

**Motivations:** Charcadons dominated the food chain of the Spandrels for millennia. Then they came into direct conflict with the Sedrone, who wiped out most of the Charcadons, matching the creature's strength with numbers and organization. They used to be solitary in nature with one or two Linx serving them, so they were picked apart one by one and their Linx taken as servants to the new empire. With the Sedrone now almost eliminated from the Spandrels, Charcadons have started to repopulate the Red Zone and hope to take back their former breeding ground.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 60, Stamina 30, Initiative +10, Movement 25, Actions per Round 3, Magic Resistance +3, Intimidation +12, Stealth + 10, Survival (Tracking) + 16

**Combat:** They enjoy toying with their kills, often shadowing their prey for a while before attacking. It is also a tactical move, used to learn more about their prey. They will avoid encounters until they are 100% prepared. Tear (Speed 5, Stamina 8, 8 (L) / 6 Counts): They must be engaged in a grapple with a target before performing this technique. They can take no other actions while the effect lasts. This



deals 8 (L) every 6 Counts. A successful Break Grapple is needed to end the effect. Ram (Speed 2, Stamina 3, +2 (L)): They build up speed and ram into the target with their head. The target loses 4 Counts in addition to the damage taken. Strike +9, Parry +6, Dodge +3, Grapple +15, Damage +5 (L)

**Weaknesses:** The Charcadons cannot breathe normally outside of water. They can hold their breath per the Hold Breath rules on page 32 of the API corebook.

## Coralsnarks

**Description:** A large, dog-like creature that makes its home on the ocean bed, Coralsnarks have bony protrusions and coral shards jutting off their bodies. They roam oceans looking for food. Like dogs, Coralsnarks can be trained to guard locations and be protectors.

**Motivations:** Coralsnarks can be loyal creatures if trained properly. They are relentless and can pursue their prey for miles across the ocean floor, but due to their heavy bodies they are poor swimmers.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 35, Stamina 30, Initiative +12, Movement 8, Actions per Round 3, Magic Resistance +2, Athletics +10, Fortitude (Poison) +9, Survival +8

**Combat:** They are quick to attack, unless ordered not to by their masters. They are ferocious, similar to wolves. Bite (Speed 5, Stamina 3, +8 Strike, 8 (L)): A lunging bite attack, not requiring a Grapple beforehand. Combatants make contested POW checks to get the creature to let go (Coralsnark gets +8), Dodge +9, Roll +6

**Powers:** By reflexively spending 5 Stamina points, Coralsnarks can harden their scales to halve damage done to them for the rest of the Round.

## Dolphins

**Description:** Dolphins are grey slick-skinned aquatic animals, largely known as loveable mammals of the sea. They are highly intelligent and can even communicate with each other through high-pitched echoing sounds.

**Motivations:** In most cases, they are motivated by fun, but don't really enjoy fighting humans. They'll only preemptively attack if trained to do so or under a spell. Otherwise, they are completely defensive.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 25, Stamina 36, Initiative +14, Movement 16, Actions per Round 2, Magic Resistance +3, Athletics +9, Performance +6

**Combat:** Tail Swipe (Speed 7, Stamina 2, +6 Strike, 5 (NL)): the dolphin spins around to strike

their target with their strong back fin and then takes a full Movement action. They strike to distract and then proceed to retreat, Dodge +8

## Drake's Anemone

**Description:** First found and studied by John Drake, a prominent API scientist, these wriggling masses are similar to anemone found on Earth, but much larger. Their writhing tentacles will sting any creature that comes near them or begins to harass the creature. They can grow as large as 20 ft. tall at maturity. Some are inhabited by Drakefish that lay their eggs within the tentacles. They will come to the aid of the Anemone if present.

**Motivations:** None, other than to eat.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 15 (+5 Health/ft over 10 ft.), Stamina 20, Initiative +5, Movement NA, Actions per Round 3, Magic Resistance +2, Intimidation +5

**Combat:** Lash (Speed 3, Stamina 4, +10 Strike, 5 (NL)): It lashes out with one of its tentacles, Sting (Speed 5, Stamina 6, +5 Strike, 5 (L)): It sends a shock through one of its tentacles, forcing a Moderate (20) VIG + Fortitude check. A failed check means the target loses 1 Action for the Round. Must be within 5 ft. of the Anemone for this to be done. Entangle (Speed 3, Stamina 1) As per the Entangle Reaction.

**Powers:** There is a 25% chance (1-5 on a 1d20) that the Anemone is inhabited by a Drakefish.

## Drakefish

**Description:** The Drakefish is black and white striped with a mouth full of teeth and distinct nodules on their head. Their fins will stiffen when threatened, causing them to look slightly larger. They can grow up to 8 ft. long at maturity.

**Motivations:** They are not aggressive and will not attack unless provoked or encountered within a Drake's Anemone.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 15, Stamina 20, Initiative +8, Movement 25, Actions per round 2, Magic Resistance +2

**Combat:** Bite (Speed 3, Stamina 2, +4 Strike, 3 (L)): It lunges forward and bites. It does not require a grapple, and it does not trap the character in its jaws. Dodge +6.

**Powers:** Bad Breath (Speed 2, Stamina 5): It opens its mouth and releases a noxious cloud. Any survival suit will filter out the fumes, but any creature without protection within 20 ft. must make a Moderate (20) VIG + Fortitude check. If unsuccessful, they are stunned slightly and lose 4 Counts.

## Krakens (Fear 19)

**Description:** Almost 25 ft. in length, the Kraken is a monstrous creature that appears as a mixture of a giant squid and crab. Bony plates cover its form from its mouth to its pin, and it propels itself through the water with great speed. Its jaw differs from normal squids in that rather than having a beak, it possesses multiple sharp teeth and a powerful hinged jaw.

**Motivations:** The Kraken is smart and vicious, with a considerable size that makes it even more dangerous. Their brute strength means that there are few things in the ocean that can threaten them, and it defends itself with reckless abandon.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 65, Stamina 45, Initiative +8, Movement 30 (5 on land), AR 5/4, Actions per Round 4, Magic Resistance +6, Fortitude +18

**Combat:** The Kraken is simple but deadly when it attacks. It will try to entangle its prey with its two longer tentacles, then it tries to crush them. **Bonuses:** Strike +7, Parry +4, Dodge +12, Roll +12, Grapple +15, Damage +8

**Powers:** Half damage from fire

## Ramphus

**Description:** The Ramphus is a small schooling fish with a laterally flattened body and an elongated, sharpened “beak”. They pose no real danger alone, but are very dangerous in a group. They will not attack if in a group smaller than 10, and will instead only try to swim away. They will swarm larger individuals and attack when in schools. They are no larger than 2 feet, and can occur in schools of up to 25.

**Motivations:** Just to eat and survive. However, they will also attack if someone enters their breeding grounds.

**Statistics of Note (School of 10):** Health 30, Stamina 20, Initiative +12, Movement 30, AR 2/2, Actions per Round 4, Magic Resistance +1

**Combat:** The school works in unison as if they were one antagonist. Pierce (Speed 2, Stamina 4, 4 (L)): They swim at their target and attempt to pierce with their sharp snouts. Swarm (Speed 3, Stamina 2): They swarm the target to distract them, giving them a -3 penalty to all combat rolls for the remainder of the Round. Dodge +6

## Sharks (Fear 12)

**Description:** These sea predators are some of the most feared creatures in the world. They have large mouths full of teeth, a long streamlined body,

and thick skin to protect it from harm. They can range in size from one foot to twenty feet in length, depending on its breed. These stats are for the larger sharks.

**Motivations:** Sharks attack out of necessity of food and they need to eat a lot. Otherwise, they will fight if they feel their territory is being threatened by others, even battling other sharks if needed.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 61, Stamina 30, Initiative +12, Movement 15, AR 3/0, Actions per Round 2, Magic Resistance +2, Intimidation +8, Survival (Tracking) +4 (+9 if bleeding)

**Combat:** Chomp (Speed 6, Stamina 2, +6 Strike, 12 (L)): the shark bites down on their target. On a Natural 20, they remove a limb, Dodge +6

## Vastness Tentacles (Fear 16)

**Description:** These giant tentacles often appear without warning and wreak havoc upon Domainya. Each one acts independently, but multiple tentacles often work together to consume stubborn prey. Each tentacle has its own sensory system capable of detecting and differentiating between prey. Each tentacle is roughly twenty feet across and ends in a circular mouth lined with teeth. There are two stalk-like eyes on two opposite sides of the tentacle capable of giving it 360 degree vision. In addition there are large pores surrounding the mouth capable of electrical and vibration detection. The tentacle extends from the Dark Horizon where it disappears from view.

**Motivations:** They are rare, but come out to eat. Their attacks become increasingly abundant the closer one comes to Voltic-controlled areas. When defeated, the tentacles shrivel and retreat back to the Dark Horizon. The tentacles will consume everything organic it comes across even pausing to rip into blocking colonies, photosrooms, and other macrofauna of Domainya. They always go after mobile prey first.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 20, Stamina Unlimited, Initiative +8, Movement 20, Actions per round 2, Magic Resistance +4

**Combat:** Bite (Speed 5, +6 Strike, 6 (L)): The tentacles jaws open and attempt to bite the target. Pull (Speed 7, +4 Strike): It attempts to wrap itself around the target and pull it up into the Dark Horizon. A successful hit forces three contested Grapple checks. If the tentacle wins two out of three, the target is now out of the fight and being devoured. This is only attempted on targets at half or less Health. Dodge +4, Grapple +11

**Powers:** Every 3 Rounds, there is a 25% chance



that another tentacle will join the fray. When one is killed there is a 50% chance of two tentacles coming in search of the killers. The Vastness will, however, divert its attention elsewhere if it loses more than five tentacles.

## **Xanthydras (Fear 15)**

**Description:** This giant carnivorous plant is a major player in Domainya's ecosystem and one of the most dangerous predators. It consists of four tentacles-like leafy appendages and a central stem that houses a menacing mouth capable of consuming an entire Charcadon in one bite. Its body is covered in thin reed-like projections that give the appearance of a seaweed bed. In reality these projections detect vibrations in the water and give the plant the ability to detect prey even when it is in its fully camouflaged state. The Xanthydras buries its head and tentacles in the sediment while the hairs that cover its body sway gently back and forth alluring creatures with the false security the seaweed bed provides. Larger creatures are also drawn there in search of their own prey. They grow up to fifty feet tall when completely erect and are found in areas with loose sediment.

**Motivations:** Like other creatures in Domainya, it attacks by instinct just to survive.

**Statistics:** Health 72, Stamina 40, Initiative +6, Movement N/A, Actions per Round 3, Magic Resistance +3

**Combat:** When a Xanthydras senses prey it waits until it comes within reach and then snaps with amazing speed and accuracy while its tentacles form a barrier around the creature trying to keep it from escaping. When the Xanthydras is in its camouflaged position it is hard to spot, requiring a Tough (30) INS + Perception check. It takes the Xanthydras anywhere from 10-30 minutes to bury itself in the sediment.

- **Lash (Speed 2, Stamina 2, +5 Strike, 8 (L)):** It lashes out with its tentacles striking its prey.

- **Bite (Speed 5, Stamina 5, +3 Strike, 15 (L)):** Its stem snaps forward and its huge gaping mouth opens and closes on its prey.

- **Swallow (Speed 8, Stamina 7, +3 Strike, 10 (L) / 10 counts):** Its mouth encloses around the target and muscles inside of its mouth force it into a large digestive chamber filled with an acidic mucus. The victim receives 10 (L) every 10 Counts they are inside the Xanthydras's belly. If they can inflict 25 (L) to the interior wall, they can open a hole to escape that also sends the creature into convulsions. It will not die but it will no longer attack anything near it. This attack must be Dodged.

- **Cage (Speed 2, Stamina 2, +9 Strike):** The creature fills the area around its prey with its tentacles making it harder to Dodge or Roll from attacks. Its target suffers a -3 penalty to Dodge and Roll checks for the rest of the Round.

# Linx

Other Names: Schools, Quads, Slaves  
Stereotypes: Obedient, Sneaky, Weak-willed

## Origins

The Linx possess a rare trait that no other discovered race has exhibited to date. A single Linx is born as four different beings, called xohms, which share its consciousness in a kind of hive mind. They were conquered by the Sedrone, but few know their history beforehand. Their kind lived a symbiotic relationship with the Charcadons, shark-like predators in Domainya. Charcadons protected the Linx and the Linx not only acted as bait to lure weaker creatures for food, but also kept the Charcadons clean and healthy. Then the Lochs arrived, crushing the Charcadons with large claws and powerful ambition, and most Linx vowed loyalty to the Lochs in a desperate act of survival. They would keep their homes in order, nurse wounds, and became little more than servants over the course of a few generations. Each Linx would teach their children the likes and dislikes of their masters, ensuring that their bloodline would continue, since Lochs were quick to anger.

When the Servants Rebellion against the Sedrone began, many Linx were the first casualties, slaughtered for simply being nearest to Lochs that felt their livelihood threatened. Still, the Linx stayed beside their masters through thick and thin. They were truly neutral however, serving only because it was second nature to their kind. A few even served the rebellion, taken in as their Loch masters were slain. When the Contagion struck, the remaining Linx were set free... only to now be servants once again to their new rulers, the Voltics.

## Lifestyle

Linx are very happy living a life of servitude. It's the survival instinct for their race and their primal urge. This type of life can provide many different experiences, but real living is usually seen vicariously through their master.

Some escaped with the last remaining Charcadons, helping to nurse their wounds and repopulate their species over the last few centuries with plentiful results. Some Linx spend their day collecting plankton and other things to provide for those that do the majority of the real work, including acting as bait for their Charcadon masters' traps or devouring dirt and algae that collects on their skin. They know the day will come for the Charcadons to reemerge and take back the sea. Some served the Lochs whole-heartedly and were treated well during the golden era of their reign, treated like little more than pets or simple slaves. They relished in their work and were happy with even the slightest kind word from their masters. After the Lochs' fall, many Linx went on to serve Scryers in the rebellion, the Lochs as they fought

said rebellion, and now the Voltics in their new conquering. They easily blend into the background of any scene and can remain unseen simply due to their demeanor.

Today, many Linx have traveled to Earth with their Loch masters, only to find an even more capable race to form their relationship with... humans. They are now attempting to cultivate this connection through serving Apocalypse Prevention, Inc.

## Appearance

Each of the Linx's xohms stands up to three-feet tall, with scaly skin and long fingers and toes. They are extremely thin with little muscle mass and are not necessarily graceful. They consist on a diet of plankton and bottom feeders, primarily shell fish, but can eat the same foods as humans just as easily (Earth food doesn't always agree with their stomachs unfortunately). Average lifespan for a Linx is approximately 45 years of age.

## Recruitment

Linx that were not completely decimated by their Sedrone masters still attempt to follow the once-rulers to Earth. When the Lochs signed up for Apocalypse Prevention, Inc, the company received many Linx on principle. Some have decided to serve humanity itself and are just as happy to keep a human office clean as a Loch's. At the same time, those that serve the Voltics have become enemies to the company. A few have been found to be spies looking for secrets to return to their master, but are dealt with quickly.

## Gift – Aquatic

They can breathe above and below water normally and without penalty. They move at double their Movement in water and can speak their aquatic language while submerged. They get a +10 bonus to all Athletics (Swimming) checks and are immune to damage from the ocean's crushing depths or the Crushing spell from the Path of Telekinesis.

## Gift/Drawback – Many Hands

Linx are born into four bodies, called xohms, that share their consciousness. If one learns a new piece of information, they are all equally knowledgeable of it and having a conversation with one is speaking with all four. When together, they naturally speak in unison (which freaks some people out). This provides certain advantages and disadvantages to the character:

- **Skills:** When working together on a physical task, the Linx receive a +1 bonus for each xohm participating after two, giving up to a +2 bonus. They suffer a -2 penalty to any

## Linx Antagonists

**Statistics:** Health 8 per xohm, Stamina 24, Initiative +12, Movement 8, Actions per Round 3, Magic Resistance +3, Perception +7, Knowledges +5

**Combat:** Linx are not built for fighting, as they are often clumsy. **Bonuses:** Strike +3, Parry +3, Dodge +6, Roll +6, Grapple +7, Damage +1 (L)

task a xohm makes alone. There is no penalty applied to menial tasks.

- **Combat:** Like controlling left and right hands, Linx instinctually use two of their xohms for attacking and two for defensive purposes. They receive a +1 bonus to all combat rolls (including Initiative), +1 Action per Round, and a +4 bonus against Surprise attacks. Penalties to Simultaneous Actions are lowered to a -5 penalty (instead of -10). They fight in unison by default, but can be split up to fight in groups of two at a -4 penalty to all checks or as four individual xohms at a -8 penalty to all checks.

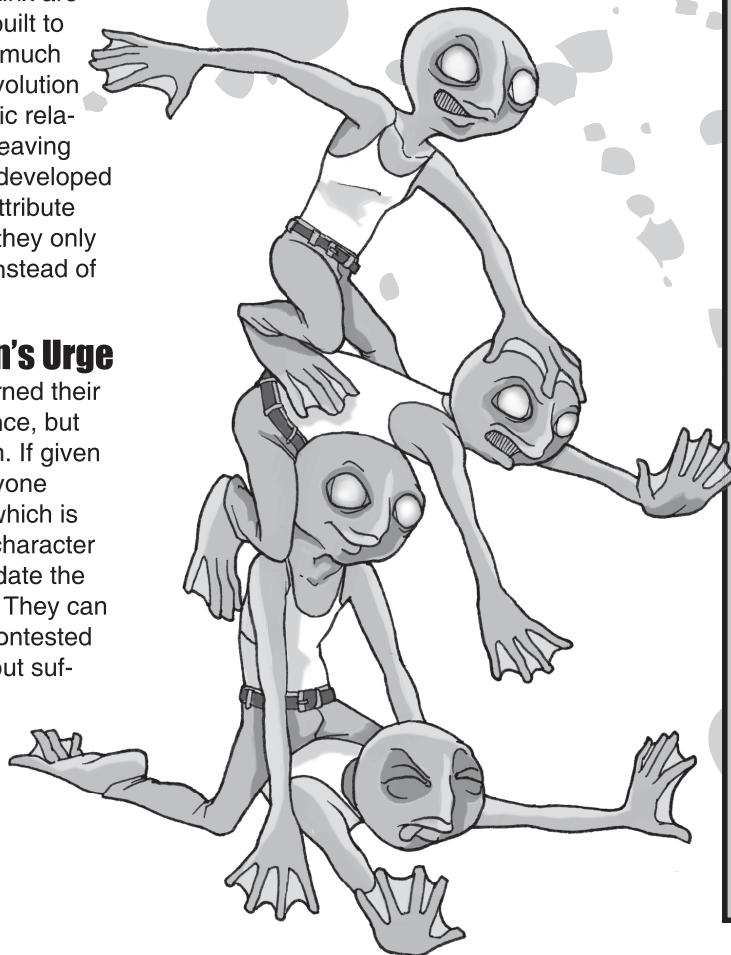
- **Health/Healing:** Linx receive an additional +10 Health during character creation and their total Health is then divided equally between the four xohms (i.e. if they have Health 32, each xohm has Health 8). Hits taken by the character can be taken by any of the xohms the player chooses, unless they are separated or the opponent uses a Targeted Strike. However, they heal quickly if all their xohms are near each other, gaining the Quick Healer Gift (pg 48 of Core) for free.

- **Separation:** Xohms cannot willingly move outside of a 300 ft. range of each other. Circumstances that separate them forcibly are akin to partially-lobotomizing the Linx and they suffer a -4 penalty to all checks for each xohm outside of range. That xohm is removed from the consciousness and exists alone, but the lost xohm's memories are integrated into the collective mind again when reintroduced. The Linx must also make a Moderate (20) check against Insanity or acquire a new Insanity upon reintroduction (i.e. depression or urge for vengeance). This effect is permanent if a xohm is destroyed.

- **Small Muscles:** Linx are small beings and aren't built to defend themselves from much stronger threats. Their evolution led them to form symbiotic relationships for protection, leaving them no reason to have developed muscles. As per Weak Attribute Drawback for POW and they only carry 20 lbs. per POW (instead of 25 lbs.).

## Drawback – Minion's Urge

Linx have recently earned their freedom and independence, but this is not natural to them. If given a direct command by anyone not viewed as a lesser (which is most other people), the character will attempt to accommodate the commander to the letter. They can attempt to resist with a contested INS + Discipline check, but suffer a -5 penalty to that check. They don't have to perform the act if they succeed, but will usually feel quite guilty for not doing so afterward.



## Kup

**Race:** Linx

**Passion:** Joy

**Age:** 22

**Background:** When Kup arrived on Earth, he encountered his first humans that were part of a traveling carnival. The young Linx became enamored with the ring leader who fed and took care of him and soon became known as the "Amazing Fish-Boy". The show embellished every season, claiming to have found the fish-boy's double, his triple, and finally a fourth identical specimen. To the crowd it was a miracle and quite the freak show, but for Kup it was a way to no longer have to hide his xohms during the show, which got bigger and bigger. He's part of the show in every way and is attempting to master tumbling and pyramids, but he never did top the popularity of the bearded-woman.

**Personality:** He's done a lot of performing and knows how to put on a show, but is also genuinely quite happy. He always tries to make his friends feel comfortable and would give up his life for the carnival if asked.

**Appearance:** He's often found in normal clothes unless there's a show to perform.

**Secrets:** None.

**Statistics:** Health 9 per xohm, Stamina 25, Initiative +15, Movement 8, Actions per Round 3, Magic Resistance +4, Acrobatics +9, Arts +8, Linguistics +6, Performance +11

**Combat:** Kup is not a fighter, but has learned to use his performance skills to aid in combat.

**Bonuses:** Strike +4, Parry +5, Dodge +9, Roll +7, Grapple +10, Damage +1 (L)

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Implementation:** Kup can be a fun addition to a group of demons. He can be used for any adventure set in a carnival or one that involves "freaks". He's always a pleasure to deal with, but his loyalty will always be to the show.

# ONDINE

**Other Names:** Mermaids, Sirens, Children of Poseidon

**Stereotypes:** Seductive, Territorial, False Demigods

## Origins

Ondine are a strange phenomenon on Earth with “divine” roots. Their people believe that they are descendent from a proud race of soldiers that served Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea. The Ondine wielded mastery of water magic and fought beside the gods themselves against massive kraken and sea serpents that plagued ancient humanity. Favored warriors to the sea god were blessed with unspeakable beauty, the males becoming Poseidon’s avatars on Earth and the females becoming the sea god’s many wives to give birth to future generations of Ondine. Their spoken history tells of a great battle of jealousy and megalomania between Zeus and Poseidon that forced their master to abandon the Ondine so they would not be destroyed. Only his chosen avatars and wives survived.

When left to their own devices, the majority of Ondine held humans (Zeus’ favorites) in contempt, a sentiment that continues even today. They constructed sprawling underwater cities to stay far away from humans, their green-eyed god, and their destructive ways. Some are the source of legends of helping the occasional drowning human to safety and are depicted as kind and selfless. Others used their entrancing voices to attract seamen and pirates, just to watch the sailors fight to the death for their hand.

Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. has run many tests over the years and found that Siren DNA is possibly a mutation on humanity’s due to many similarities in the basic codes. Boasts of divinity are usually ignored by the company as such beings are usually just influential and powerful demons. With the Lochs to act as the company’s eyes and ears, API has been able to gather a lot more information on Ondine culture, but usually only from one side of the territorial battle that now rages on beneath Earth’s oceans.

## Lifestyles

These demons have lived below Earth’s oceans for thousands of years. Their modern cultural doctrine paints Humanity as spoiled, dirty, and inconsequential, most of this left over from centuries of hatred between the races or the mass pollution being spread by humans. It is also due to an overwhelming sense of pride and arrogance among their race. They were chosen by the gods to rule the waterways. The Earth is covered by 70% water and that fact should make the Ondine the clear rulers of the planet in their minds.

However, the clear and present danger presented by human pollution into the oceans and seas has taken its toll on the Ondine. Their once beautiful underwater cities have

been covered in trash or disintegrated by toxic dumping. The few remaining settlements are clouded by illusionary magic, but that doesn’t keep the little-learned Lochs from attempting to take them over. Much of the Ondine’s everyday life revolves around avoiding humanity and fighting Lochs. Every so often, one may feel compassion for a human and save them from drowning or other horrible death (i.e. like being eaten alive by seas monsters) but the majority are just as happy to stay clear of humans entirely.

## Appearance (Fear 11)

Sirens are a race of half-human and half-aquatic people. Unlike a Half-Loch that is an equal mix of the two worlds, Ondine have a human top-half and long body of a fish (or dolphin) from the waste down with fins, webbed fingers, and a tail for optimal underwater performance. They may also turn their fins to legs for short periods of time to appear human. They are all born attractive to the point of obsessive behavior from people they interact with and have skin tones that match the region they inhabit. An Ondine can only be born from a female Ondine. Even if a male Ondine impregnates a human, the child will not be Ondine. Birthing experiments with Ondine and Lochs have yet to be attempted. Average lifespan for a Siren is approximately 140 years of age.

## Recruitment

Ondine don’t like working alongside Lochs, but they are still very useful to the company. Their abilities make them great for rescue assignments for agents lost on sea missions especially. Some are hired for espionage, such as seducing enemies in order to catch them with their pants down. They make the firm stance to only join the company if they are provided with aid in cleaning the oceans, but this also gives Lochs free reign in their territories to help with the efforts. This is not a deal easily made.

## Gift – Aquatic

As per page 58, but they can only breathe below saltwater, not freshwater. They don’t let this fact slip, but they can be drowned in freshwater just as easily as any human.

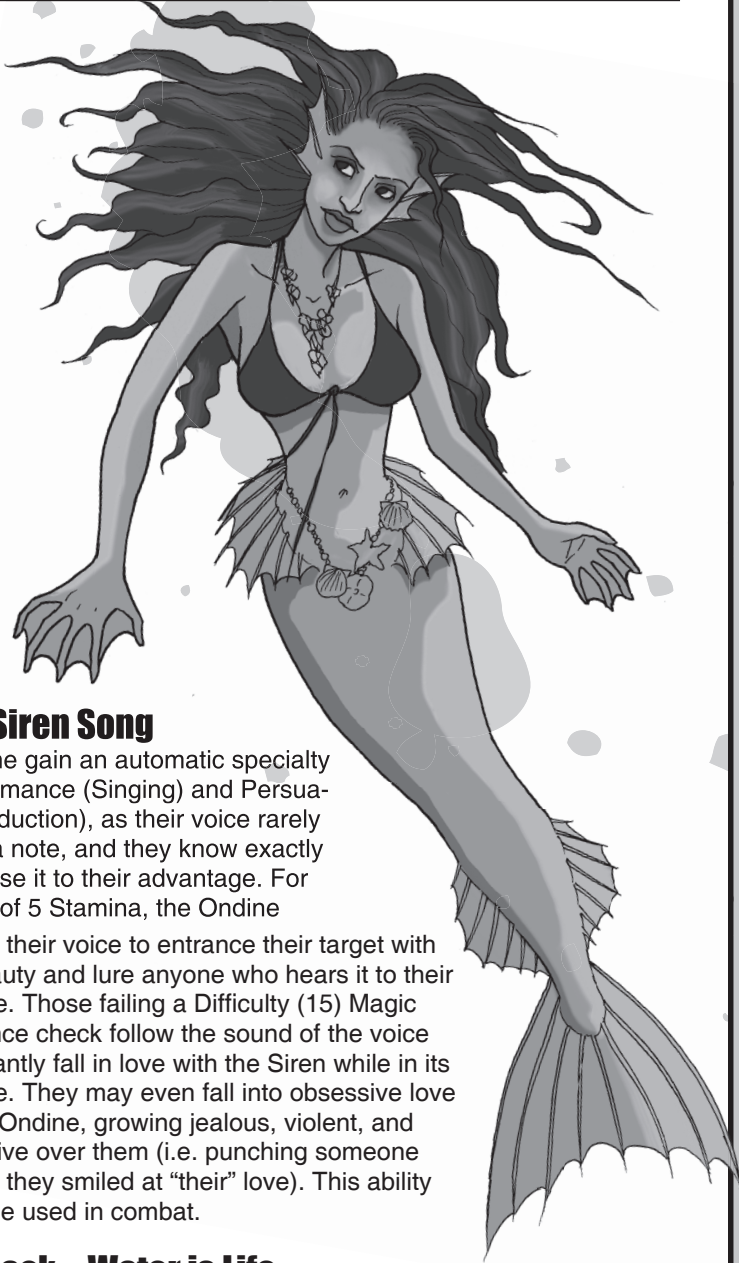
## Gift – Mother’s Milk

Both genders of Ondine can produce milk from their breasts at will and one sip gives the drinker the ability to breathe saltwater for about twenty minutes (does not work for freshwater). Attempts to extract the milk forcibly do not work, as it must be given willingly. This has been used in the past to help drowning victims get to shore without dying or to nurse newborns.

## Ondine Antagonists

**Statistics:** Health 32, Stamina 30, Initiative +11, Movement 14, Actions per Round 4, Magic Resistance +3, Athletics +8, Beast Handling +7, Deception +9, Fortitude +9, Persuasion +12

**Combat:** Ondine are born warriors and are very dangerous in groups. **Bonuses:** Strike +8, Parry +8, Dodge +8, Roll +9, Grapple +12, Damage +4 (L)



### Gift – Siren Song

Ondine gain an automatic specialty in Performance (Singing) and Persuasion (Seduction), as their voice rarely misses a note, and they know exactly how to use it to their advantage. For the cost of 5 Stamina, the Ondine may use their voice to enthrall their target with their beauty and lure anyone who hears it to their presence. Those failing a Difficulty (15) Magic Resistance check follow the sound of the voice and instantly fall in love with the Siren while in its presence. They may even fall into obsessive love with the Ondine, growing jealous, violent, and possessive over them (i.e. punching someone because they smiled at “their” love). This ability cannot be used in combat.

### Drawback – Water is Life

While the Ondine can leave their watery homes for a short time, they were never meant to live above water. They must be submerged in saltwater for an hour at least every six hours or their fins start to grow back and they begin to die. Every additional six hours that passes, they lose one-fourth of their Health, until they are brought to 0 and die. Sirens forced to live in cities circumvent this with frequent saltwater baths, but they always feel the urge to return to the sea for the real thing.

## Daphne

**Race:** Ondine

**Passion:** Warrior

**Age:** 51

**Background:** Daphne once led her own powerful colony at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico... until the Lochs arrived. She and her warriors fought valiantly, but in the end her kingdom was ruined by the dominating force of the invaders. They ran from colony to colony, letting other Ondine know of the impending danger the Lochs posed to their kind and were met with new Loch attacks at each. Daphne saw many of her friends and family killed before her eyes by the greedy Sedrone nature.

With no other place to turn to, she decided to appeal to Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. In exchange for her and her remaining warriors’ services, they began initial negotiations to relocate Lochs to other areas of the world. Her current squad includes humans, Scryers, and a couple burners, but she refuses to work with Lochs.

**Personality:** Daphne has a wonderfully pleasing personality and has been known to succumb to more than one sexual relationship with a squad-member. However, she has a bad temper when it comes to anything regarding Lochs.

**Appearance:** She is a beautiful female, stern and powerful in her demeanor. She was a warrior before the company and it shows. No matter what mundane clothing she wears, she always has a necklace of teeth around her neck. These teeth have come from the many Charcadons, Lochs, and other aquatic predators she has defeated in her long combat career.

**Secrets:** Daphne’s role within API has been secure for many years, but few know her true motivation behind joining. She has used her company access to locate Loch communities and secretly feeds this information back to the Ondine. She protects the Earth the same as any agent in other cases, but has yet to recover from her grudges against the arrogant Lochs.

**Statistics:** Health 44, Stamina 30, Initiative +12, Movement 14, Actions per Round 4, Magic Resistance +3, Athletics +10, Deception +11, Discipline +8, Fortitude +12, Persuasion +13

**Combat:** She is a seasoned warrior, capable of taking down much bigger enemies than herself. She is known for using a summonable trident that sparkles with gold and gems. **Bonuses:** Strike +10, Parry +10, Dodge +7, Roll +8, Grapple +14, Damage +3 (L) or +5 (L) with Trident

**Special Abilities:** Quick Healer Gift

**Implementation:** Daphne can be used as a comrade or internal antagonist to Loch characters. She fits nicely into any squad, possibly lending her combat expertise. However, she occasionally goes on her own personal missions to screw over Loch communities and resources. What happens if the characters get wind of her actions?

# Scryers

**Other Names:** Seers, Percievers, Floppers  
**Stereotypes:** Scientific, Historians, Rebels

## Origins

Scryers were the original inhabitants of the Spandrels, but were enslaved along with other races by the Sedrone. Before this incursion, the wisest of their kind held councils to promote peace and spread education to all other races. The First King, Opsanus, infiltrated their council chambers and eliminated their leaders, leaving them defenseless against the Sedrone forces. The majority of their race was wiped out in the bloody conquest, but some avoided this fate by serving the Sedrone. They vowed never to forget the brutal Sedrone takeover, constantly conspiring with other Scryers that hid away from the Spandrels. Their high intelligence and expertise with alchemy helped them develop a mutating virus that would eradicate the Sedrone and any chance of future lineages. The virus, dubbed the Contagion, is the reason the Sedrone cannot breed with each other and why they fled to Earth. The Scryers thought that this would bring the freedom that so many of them died for... but they were wrong.

During the Servants Rebellion, the Scryers sent out magical distress beacons to which the Voltics responded. When they arrived too late and the war was already over, the Voltics took the role of ruler, once again enslaving the Scryers, who are now fighting for their survival against yet another powerful enemy.

Even worse, unbeknownst to the Scryers, their species had a mutation in their genetic code that made them susceptible to the Contagion as well. These Afflicted (page 53) roam the Spandrels in packs, attacking and feeding upon anything they encounter.

The Scryers encountered Apocalypse Prevention Inc. soon after the Servants' Rebellion. They were looking for an escape from the Voltics and some followed the Sedrone to Earth. They have agreed to help the company to try to find a cure for the Contagion in exchange for help fighting against the Voltics. They hope that API doesn't give control of the Spandrels back to the Sedrone after they succeed, but the company did have contracts with the Lochs first. Who knows what the Reclamation Project will hold?

## Lifestyle

The Scryers used to be respected for their knowledge, but have now been enslaved by two different tyranni-

cal races. Many are downtrodden, as they escaped the grasp of one warmonger only to fall into the clutches of another. Yet, others believe that API could be their saving grace to turn the tide. They want only to return to the natural order of things, so they can live in peace and will be damned before they give up. They have used their natural ability with science and alchemy to create a number of helpful medical advances and are excellent at processing huge amounts of information at one time. They most often become researchers, historians, or scientists on Earth. There, some have escaped the fate that awaits their kin on Domainya, but aid API with the Reclamation Project (page 16).

Those that stayed behind in Domainya continue to rally a new rebellion against the Voltics. They live in the Underbelly of the Spandrels, forging their plans to take back their territory.

## Appearance (Fear 12)

They are the more graceful cousins of the Lochs. They have an extra pair of eyes that allow them to see the magical spectrum that are higher up and further out on their head. These eyes are barely noticeable when closed, but open to a creepy silver glow that cannot be mistaken. Scryers have fins on their wrists and ankles. Two canals, one on each side of their body, contain sensors that feel vibrations in the water or air around them that improves their overall sensory skills. Their skin is smooth and slightly moist to the touch, dark grey color in tone, and hairless. Their average lifespan is 170 years of age.

## Recruitment

The Scryers recruited to Apocalypse Prevention, Inc usually work as scientists. They are helpful in trying to cure the Contagion, but others have been allowed field work as well. Some are assigned to important scouting missions or tasked with tracking adepts, as their natural senses are much greater than many other races.

## Gift – Aquatic

As per page 58.

## Gift – Magic Sight (Speed 10, Stamina 3)

A Scryer's second set of eyes serve two purposes.

## Scryer Antagonists

**Statistics of Note:** Health 25, Stamina 25, Initiative + 8, Movement 20, Actions per Round 2, Magic Resistance + 4, Deception + 8, Stealth +10, Survival (Tracking) +5.

**Combat:** Many Scryers within the near century-long rebellion are trained fighters and have seen their share of combat. **Bonuses:** Strike +8, Parry +4, Dodge +8, Roll +3, Grapple +7, Damage +2

First, they can detect any magical beings (anyone that has opened their Inner Circles) through non-magical barriers, even sensing magical beings or items invisible to the naked eye. Secondly, they can see traces of any magic cast within an area within 24 hrs. They can track the adept that cast the spell with a Moderate (20) INS + Survival check. Each spell has its own “trail” left behind, dependent on both the caster and the Path it was cast from. With a Moderate (20) INS + Knowledge check, they can determine the Path of magic the spell was cast from or discern who cast the spell (if they have seen their trail before). In an area where five or more spells have been cast, the Scryer suffers a -5 penalty to these checks unless all the spells were cast by the same adept. While they use Magic Sight, anything that is not “magical” becomes only a black silhouette. They can use their Magic Sight indefinitely, but are effectively blind.

### Gift – Improved Sense

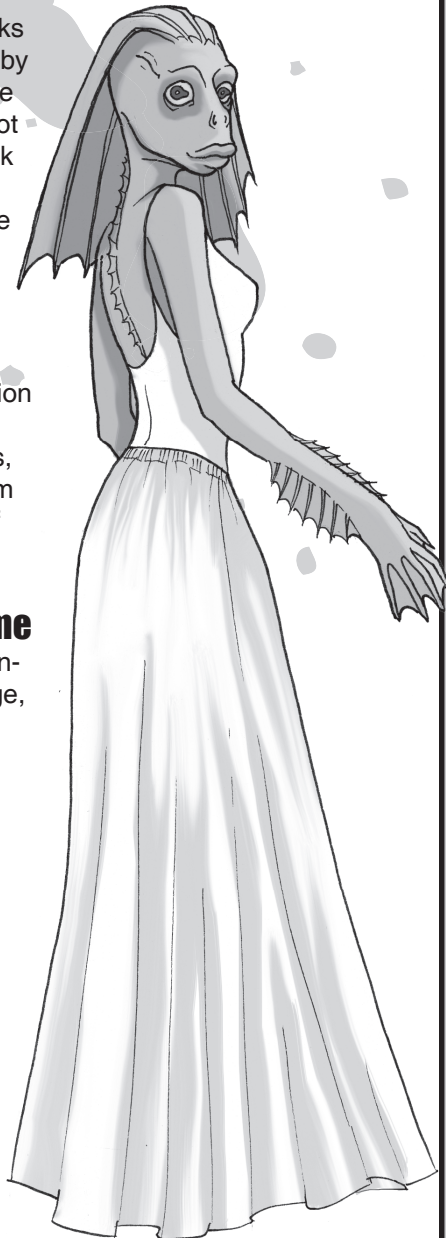
Their heightened senses provide a +2 bonus to Perception and Survival checks and a +5 bonus against Surprise attacks, as their body canals gives them a heightened understanding of their surroundings.

### Drawback – Fragile Frame

They are obsessed with gaining and utilizing their knowledge, allowing their intellect to grow while their bodies have weakened through the ages. As per Weak Attribute Drawback for VIG.

### Drawback – Aquatic Lungs

For one reason or another, Scryers have more trouble adapting to breathing air than any of the other aquatic races. They begin with the Water Breather Drawback (page 48).



## Kryxon

**Race:** Scryer

**Passion:** Redemption

**Age:** 36

**Background:** Kryxon’s grandfather was slain by Opsanus when he took over the Spandrels. Her father was executed by Lasizz, the Slaughter King, another casualty of the Sedrone’s bloody amusement. Many believe that Kryxon was Ishira’s (page 16) right hand, though this has never been confirmed. It is also rumored that Kryxon and Ishira had a falling out right before the Voltics arrived, leading to Ishira leaving the Spandrels. Then again, this could all just be part of a story used only to add to her mystique. Kryxon currently resides in the Underbelly of the Spandrels as leader of the new rebellion forces. She has a force of Scryers and Linx at her command that inflict damage to the Voltics whenever they get a chance.

**Personality:** Kryxon actively seeks the destruction of anyone who would keep the Spandrels from the Scryers. She remembers the stories of the Scryer Council and their golden days are well documented in the libraries. Kryxon does not take prisoners and won’t accept anything but the full return of the Spandrels to the Scryers. She is quick to anger and even quicker to act, so many walk on eggshells when in her presence. She is stern, but rewards loyalty in kind, even to the death.

**Appearance:** Kryxon is long and sleek, but much stronger than other Scryers. She wields the staff of her family heritage, passed down through generations of leaders and rebels.

**Secrets:** She has intricate knowledge of the Underbelly and its hundreds of passages. Also, Kryxon was Ishira’s right hand. She is the only one who knows why Ishira left the Spandrels. Some think it was a lover’s quarrel. She has first hand knowledge of the Contagion and practices aquatic alchemy so is probably API’s best bet to finding a cure, if Kryxon was willing to work with the company... which she currently is not.

**Statistics:** Health 55, Stamina 35, Initiative +15, Movement 25, AR 2/0, Actions per Round 4, Deception +6, Discipline +8, Fortitude + 12, Intimidation +8, Stealth (Hiding in Shadows) +9, Survival (Tracking) + 10

**Combat:** Kryxon is a master of combat, and excels in melee fighting. **Bonuses:** Strike +13, Parry +8, Dodge +4, Roll +5, Grapple +12, Damage +6

**Special Abilities:** She is an Aquatic Alchemist (page 32) and knows how to make almost all of the items. She has extensive information on Voltics and receives a +3 bonus to all combat checks against them. She usually has four bodyguards at any time.

**Implementation:** Kryxon can be used in any scenario involving Domainya, but would never leave her home dimension until she sees it returned to Scryer hands. She will most likely become a foe to agents as the company’s initiative is to return the Spandrels to the Lochs. She may however leave agents alone as long as there is an advantage to having them around. Characters may have fun as followers of Kryxon and fighting a worthwhile rebellion.

# Voltics

**Other Names:** Destroyers, Mind Eaters, Volteans

**Stereotypes:** Dangerous, Cunning, Overbearing

## Origins

The Voltics are a warrior race from the Voltic Empire, far east of the Spandrels. They arrived in response to the distress call sent out by the Scryers, intending to help the rebellion fight off the Sedrone. They arrived too late to help and felt infuriated and cheated out of the bloody war they had traveled such a vast distance to find. So much so that they replaced the Sedrone as tyrants and enslaved the Scryers and Linx to help them defeat their own ancient evil, the Vastness.

The Vastness is a kraken of phenomenal proportions and has escaped from a magical cell created by their god, Volt. It is on a rampage through the Voltic Empire and now the Spandrels. Their culture is infused with legends of their god and his son Zimm and their eventual goal of finding and capturing the Vastness once more. However, a horrible coup occurred within their army's ranks upon touching down in the Spandrels. Their new leader Shekra Kzahm has excommunicated his army from the empire and their barbaric beliefs in the Vastness.

Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. has listed these beings as Illegals based on treaties they have with both the Lochs and Scryers. Voltic attacks, and worse the Vastness, have spilled over into Earth on occasion, which makes them a viable threat for API to deal with.

## Lifestyle

The Voltics are an intelligent race. While they are not naturally the type to enslave other races, they feel that the circumstances have become dire enough to warrant that action. If they are to cut themselves off from the Voltic Empire, they needed a new kingdom to rule. The culture they come from is obsessed with war, even more so than the Sedrone, and they brought that same mentality with them to the Spandrels.

The Voltics communicate entirely through telepathy. Resonance Orbs that some carry allow the Voltics to communicate over extreme distances, even through dimensions, for quick communication of information between invading forces. They are warriors that use their natural thirst for power to defeat their enemies.

Today, Voltics of the Spandrels are fighting a war on many fronts. They have to deal with rebel bands composed of Sedrone and Scryers, the Afflicted (infected Scryers), the various monsters native to the Spandrels, frequent attacks from the Vastness, and now Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. They have gathered information about their tyrannical predecessors from the Scryers written records, so they have that one advantage... knowledge.

Some Voltics are sent on excursions to Earth for more

information, but these trips are rare. Those that are found on Earth were usually either exiled from the Spandrels or they traveled on their own, urged by the Fury of Volt.

## Appearance (Fear 16)

The Voltics are long humanoid, aquatic beings without a mouth. They drain life energy from organic matter through sucker-like tentacles that extend from their palms, but their hands end in sharp fingers. They have oval eyes that are a deep metallic blue, but no nose to speak of, instead having two small holes where a mouth should be that serves the same purpose. They have fins that cover their appendages allowing them to swim easily. Voltics have no vocal cords and communicate through natural telepathy. Their average lifespan is 90 years of age.

## Legal Status

At one point, Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. had hoped to make a pact with the Voltics to help defeat the Vastness in exchange for peace and freedom of those enslaved by the Voltics. The demons broke this deal in a terrible double-cross and now attack any API agents on sight. It is obvious that they have nothing but the worst of intentions for the company and for humanity as a whole, making them Illegals. Their ability to drain life, and some believe souls, from their victims makes them even more so.

## Gift – Aquatic

As per page 58.

## Gift – Telepathic

The Voltics are telepathic by nature and can send or receive messages within 100 feet of their recipient. They may also spend 3 Stamina points to extend their telepathic range to line of sight for a single conversation. They cannot sense feelings, motives, read minds, or any other empathic abilities. This is a mode of communication only, but allows them to be silent killers.

## Gift – Life Siphon

They use tentacles from their palm to drain life energy from other living creatures for sustenance. The tentacles have sucker discs at its ends, are retractable, and can extend up to 10 ft. Use is initiated with a successful Touch Action where their suckers attach to their target and are then considered to be in a Grapple with the Voltic. The target may attempt to Break Grapple per normal or by dealing 5 damage to each of the Voltic's arms.

- **Drain (Speed 6, Stamina 2):** The Voltic can choose to siphon Stamina or Health (their choice) from the target. They roll 1d20 (no modifiers) to determine their siphons effect: 1: No effect. 2-5: 2 points, 6-10: 3 points, 11-15: 4 points, 16-19: 5 points, 20: 6 points.
- **Weaken (Speed 4, Stamina 2):** They inject a venom into the target's bloodstream that slows them down. They



## Voltic Antagonists

**Statistics of Note:** Health 35, Stamina 35, Initiative +10, Movement 18, Actions per Round 5, Magic Resistance +4, Discipline +14, Fortitude +14, Survival +12.

**Combat:** Voltics are trained warriors, and they take pride in their warfare. They often take trophies of their victims to display their combat prowess. **Bonuses:** Strike +9, Parry +10, Dodge +7, Roll +8, Grapple +12, Damage +6

suffer a -3 penalty to combat checks for the next Round and are drained of 4 Stamina points, unless they succeed with a Tough (30) VIG + Fortitude check. Each time the opponent is affected by the toxin, they receive a cumulative +3 bonus to resist it in the future.

### Optional Gift – Orb Bearer (2 BP)

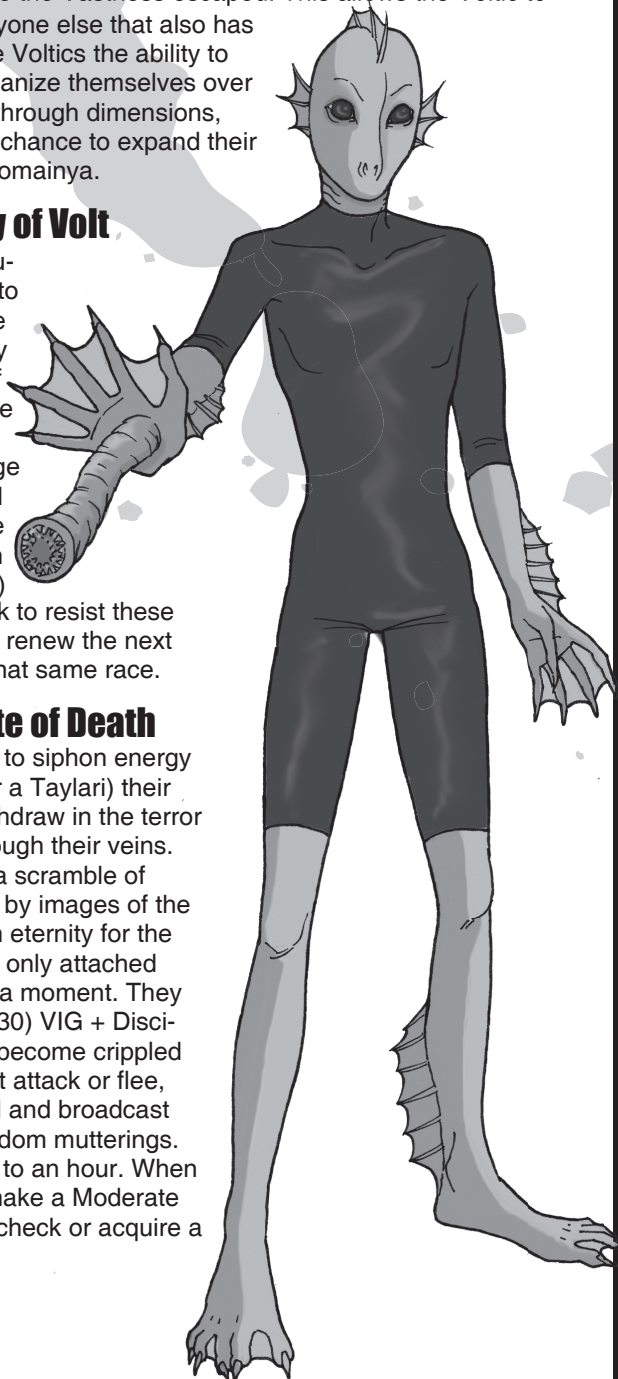
The Voltic is one of the few Orb Bearers left, as there are no new orbs being made since the Vastness escaped. This allows the Voltic to communicate with anyone else that also has an Orb. This gives the Voltics the ability to communicate and organize themselves over vast distances, even through dimensions, which gives them the chance to expand their reach so far across Domainya.

### Drawback – Fury of Volt

They have the natural instinct to attempt to defeat every new race they encounter. If they are in the presence of an organism they have not encountered before, they will challenge that creature to a duel (not necessarily to the death). The Voltic can make a Moderate (20) INS + Discipline check to resist these actions, but the urges renew the next time they encounter that same race.

### Drawback – Taste of Death

If a Voltic attempts to siphon energy from a dead target (or a Taylari) their tentacles instantly withdraw in the terror of death coursing through their veins. Their mind becomes a scramble of reality and is haunted by images of the dead. It seems like an eternity for the Voltic even if they are only attached to the dead target for a moment. They must make a Tough (30) VIG + Discipline (Fear) check or become crippled in horror. They will not attack or flee, only curl up into a ball and broadcast telepathic cries of random mutterings. This state can last up to an hour. When it is over, they must make a Moderate (20) INS + Discipline check or acquire a new Insanity.



## Voltaire

**Race:** Voltic

**Passion:** Questions

**Age:** 25

**Background:** Voltaire came to Earth and aided API with an attack against the Vastness. He was captured and processed multiple times by the company, finally being allowed to remain on Earth. Through invasive procedures, his Fury of Volt is gone. He now lives in a small apartment in New York and has become obsessed with accumulating knowledge, especially the works of the French philosopher Voltaire, who he named himself after. It is mainly due to the emphasis of freedom of the philosopher's work. He is still young, but has already accumulated more information than humans do in a life time.

**Personality:** He lives only for gathering knowledge of the ever expanding universe. His apartment is filled with books and how-to guides about everything. He loves technology, especially computers, and uses them to conduct much of his "research". He enjoys conversing with other intellects and takes well to people well-versed in philosophy, law, and the arts. He loves to match his wit against another's, but avoids the subject of his homeland and his people.

**Appearance:** Voltaire often wears a long robe and moccasins, but has embraced the many comforts Earth provides. He does not hide his face when in the confines of his home. He often looks relaxed and comfortable wherever he is. He is an Orb Bearer, and often a tennis ball-sized lightly glowing orb hangs from a chain around his neck. He dares not use it or other Voltics can answer.

**Secrets:** He has extensive knowledge of his people, their motives, and actions in Domainya since their takeover of the Spandrels. He knows of the Vastness and his race's enslavement of it to create communication orbs.

**Statistics:** Health 40, Stamina 25, Initiative +12, Movement 15, Actions Per Round 2, Computers (Research) +12, Knowledge (Demonology, Hard Science, Soft Science) +17, Persuasion (Oratory) + 10.

**Combat:** He fights only as a last resort, but growing up in a warrior society means that he has seen his fair share of combat. He'll take the first chance he gets to flee. **Bonuses:** Strike +3, Dodge +4, Parry +4, Roll +4, Grapple +7, Damage +2

**Special Abilities:** Orb Bearer.

**Implementation:** He can be used as a jumping point for agents. They may need access to some of his files or may need information on Voltic motivations. He'll likely tax the agents with question after question before sharing his info, but he craves the company. He could also be a potential suspect for a questionable murder or killing that happens near his residence.

# HALF-LOCHS

**Other Names:** Surfer Brats, Waterbabies, Lochlings

**Stereotypes:** Loners, Misfits, Surfers

## Origins

Half-Lochs are a relatively new species. A union between Earth's most prominent species and a race that is alien in every way, they come together to be the hope for the continuation of the Loch lineage. Due to the Loch's unique reproductive abilities, they can be born from any human or Loch, male or female. The chances of actually birthing a Half-Loch are extremely rare, making it a miracle for them to even exist.

They are born into a world that is often not ready to accept them and the act of their conception is controversial in both Loch and human communities. While some would claim to be tolerant of an individual no matter their heritage, the Half-Lochs present a radical view on race for some. The union is considered blasphemous by some and extremely creepy by others. The biggest factor is the death of one of their parents in exchange for their life. Even though their parent may have no problem giving up their life for their new child, it places an immediate stigma on their kind.

While those "known" Half-Lochs are those born through API experiments, a rare few have popped up under other circumstances as well. One Half-Loch was adopted by the Ondine in a twisted attempt to turn the Loch's offspring against them and others have also been conceived outside of the company through efforts of the Hope Foundation (page 40).

## Lifestyle

Curiosity defines the life of a Half-Loch. They are born without the ability to adapt to breathing air, so they are kept contained for the majority of their lives. When they are finally set free, they have a unique perspective on the world around them, learning about both cultures of their heritage.

Half-Lochs eagerly explore the world, whether it is the coral reefs off the coast or roaming a college campus. They want to see it all. Most Half-Lochs grow up well-educated in their API pods and are at least rudimentarily knowledgeable about human society. However, when actually experiencing life outside their kept environments, some let their curiosity lead them down many paths of bad decisions.

### A Quick Note on Half-Lochs

In API's current setting, the few Half-Lochs born are still small children. Lochs have only had a few successful matings with humans. Rules to play these new beings have been included because they are an important aspect of Loch culture.

The Half-Loch's surviving parent may also be uneasy with their child, as the child represents the cost of another's life. Some become detached from their child in order to prevent bringing back harsh memories, while others raise their new child in a home of anger and scorn. Most Half-Lochs are completely abandoned, left in the care of scientists or relatives who may never grow as close to them as they need. This can make some detached and others moody and temperamental compared to the somewhat laid back Lochs. The consequences of their birth would affect even normal humans greatly, after all.

## Appearance (Fear 10)

Half-Lochs are a mix between humans and their Loch parents. Where Lochs are larger and more muscular, Half-Lochs tend to look more like humans with slim, but firm bodies covered with small scales that range in color from near-human flesh to light blue. Swirls and other patterns can naturally be seen running along their shoulders and back.

Half-Loch eyes still appear fish-like to help them see underwater, but they are largely human looking faces. A thin fin runs from their forehead to the nape of their neck, but they can retract it in order to hide it in their human hair atop their heads. No one knows the average lifespan of a Half-Loch, but scientists suspect it will be similar to a human's based on their rate of maturity.

## Recruitment

Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. is a major part of a Half-Loch's life, as they spend the entirety of their early lives there and most hope to become agents when they reach maturity. They make for great underwater operatives, continually outperforming human divers in a way only surpassed by Lochs. Half-Lochs are also able to blend in more easily on the coasts and fit into situations where an Image Inducer may not be as effective.

Half-Lochs are an interesting predicament for API. On one hand, they are more versatile than Lochs and understand Earth culture much better, providing an advantage for field work. On the other hand, the consequences of their birth are rare and API doesn't know if risking this resource in the field is worth it in the end. The fact that they are usually born from the death of a human doesn't bode well for them in the company either. Half-Lochs suffer from these stigmas even as they reach higher ranks.

## Half-Loch Antagonists

**Statistics of Note:** Health 30, Stamina 28, Initiative +12, Movement 16, Actions per Round 3, Magic Resistance +2, Athletics +10, Fortitude +11, Survival +12.

**Combat:** Half-Lochs can use their mastery of both land and seas to their advantage, making them versatile in combat. **Bonuses:** Strike +7, Parry +6, Dodge +8, Roll +8, Grapple +12, Damage +3

### Gift – Half-Aquatic

Half-Lochs receive a few bonuses from their aquatic parents. Like Lochs, they can breathe above and below water normally without penalty, travel at double Movement in water, and can speak the Loch's native language while submerged. However, they still take half damage from the effects of pressure or the Crushing power from the Path of Telekinesis.

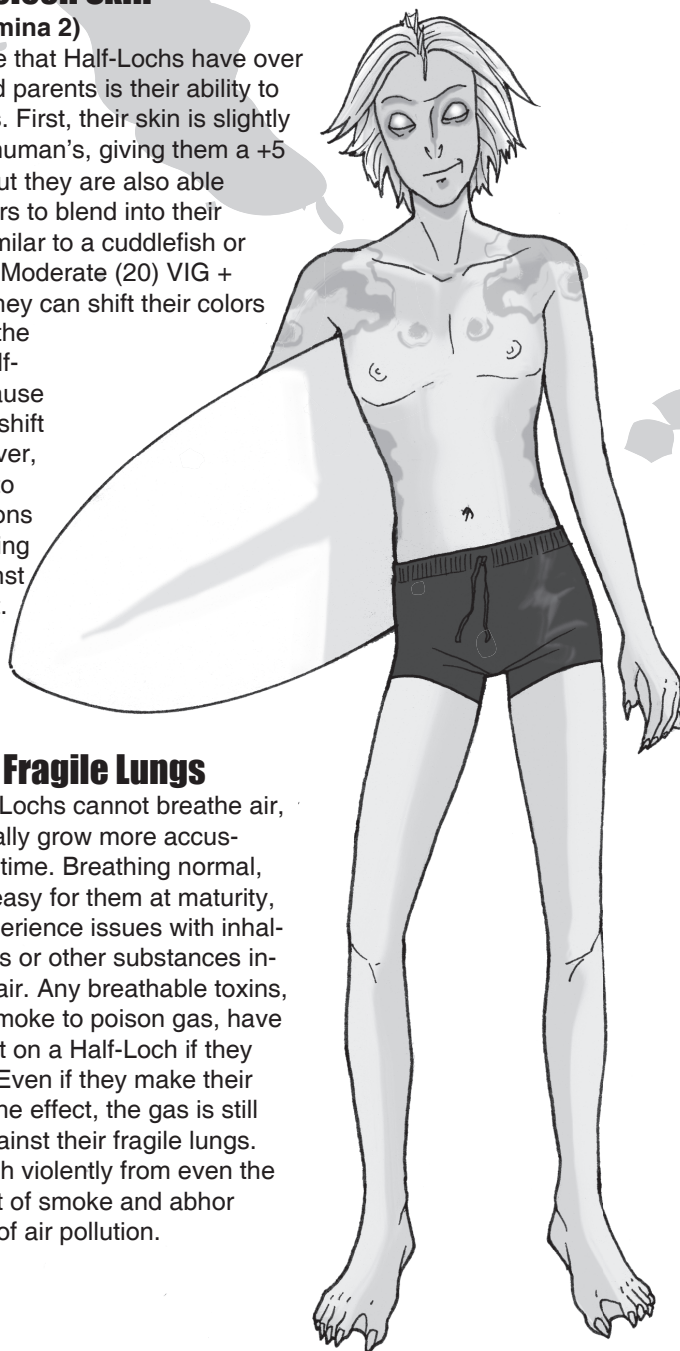
### Gift – Chameleon Skin

(Speed 10, Stamina 2)

An advantage that Half-Lochs have over their full-blooded parents is their ability to hide themselves. First, their skin is slightly tougher than a human's, giving them a +5 Health bonus, but they are also able to shift skin colors to blend into their environment, similar to a cuddlefish or octopus. With a Moderate (20) VIG + Stealth check, they can shift their colors to blend in with the background. Half-Lochs cannot cause their clothing to shift with them however, which can lead to awkward situations when their clothing stands out against the environment.

### Drawback – Fragile Lungs

At birth, Half-Lochs cannot breathe air, but they eventually grow more accustomed to it over time. Breathing normal, everyday air is easy for them at maturity, but they still experience issues with inhaling foreign gases or other substances introduced to the air. Any breathable toxins, from cigarette smoke to poison gas, have double the effect on a Half-Loch if they fail their check. Even if they make their check to resist the effect, the gas is still half effective against their fragile lungs. They often cough violently from even the smallest amount of smoke and abhor areas with a lot of air pollution.



## Peter

**Race:** Half-Loch

**Passion:** Approval

**Age:** 17

**Background:** Still young and just barely out of basic training, Peter represents the first of his kind to work as a field agent for Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. He was mentored by veteran Loch agent, Jonah. Together, they have enjoyed the splendors of surfing and training in the fight to protect Earth from undersea dangers. He has taken to Earth quite well and has traveled to several different countries in his service to the company.

**Personality:** Peter is excitable and easy going, but does get moody at times. He enjoys listening to others and is always quick with logical advice, even if he has yet to experience everything the world has to offer. He is a romantic and loves sappy love stories, but hasn't found the one for himself yet. He doesn't even know what'll happen if he tries to have children with a human or Loch and is slightly scared of the thought.

**Appearance:** Tall and slender, Peter works hard to keep in shape. When he is not wearing his Image Emitter, his body is a light tan color with dark brown and black stripes crossing his back and shoulders.

**Secrets:** Peter never knew his mother or father, so he is constantly seeking approval from those around him. He joined API to prove himself to the human and Loch community simultaneously. Whether this is a phase that he will grow out of or if this will lead to complications in the future is unknown, but for now he tries too hard to get everyone to like him despite how it's killing him on the inside.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 32, Stamina 36, Initiative +10, Movement 12, Actions per Round 3, Magic Resistance +3, Athletics +10, Discipline +7, Fortitude +12, Persuasion +13, Vehicle Operation (Cars, Boats) +9

**Combat:** Peter trains with precision and relies upon his demonic nature to get him through fights. He is fond of using a tactic where he lures attackers towards the ocean, then uses his natural mobility in the water to crush them. **Bonuses:** Strike +9, Parry +8, Dodge +7, Roll +10, Grapple +13, Damage +4 (L)

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Implementation:** Peter may be assigned to the characters' squad or may be called in if the mission takes place in a high profile area. Seen as a significant scientific accomplishment for the company, agents may be given the task to watch out for him to make sure he stays safe. Peter also is willing to listen to others and can provide advice.

# Adventure One: Deep Run the Tunnels

This adventure introduces characters to the many wonders and dangers of Domainya. Not only will the characters meet the rebels still hiding within the Underbelly, but also face the bloodthirsty Voltics that rule the Spandrels. Becoming familiar with Domainya's environment and history beforehand will allow the GM to more readily immerse the characters in the setting. This is best suited for 3-5 agents of any skill level with either the Aquatic Gift or comparable equipment to survive underwater. A Random Encounter Table has been included to aid the GM as well.

## Summary

The agents are sent to "the Box", API's relay station in Domainya, to follow-up on a report from a missing agent that claims to have proof of a Loch pregnant from another Loch. This would be a huge step to finding a cure for the Contagion. The agents will encounter a variety of individuals, including Kryxon, Thord the Crazy, and even Shekra Kzahn, the ruler of the Spandrels.

The agents will first encounter Voltic patrols and be escorted through the Underbelly to meet Kryxon, who points them in the direction of the missing agent. After finding the agent, there is a major conflict between Kzahn and Kryxon's rebel forces, where the rebel leader uses the agents as a distraction to reclaiming a powerful artifact, the Jaw of the Wicked Tongued King, which could change the tide of the war for the Spandrels.

The agents can learn the truth from the captured agent, Agent Arcides. Then they must escape the Spandrels and return back to the Box without being followed.

## Into the Portal

The agents are told to assemble on the rooftop of a large office building and then picked up by transport helicopter. Onboard are only the pilot and a bleary-eyed Agent Skinner. He is human and looks as if he hasn't gotten any sleep lately, but introduces the characters to their next mission, which can be used or modified by the GM. He is young, and clearly trying to ignore his exhaustion, to inform the

characters of the situation, which is obvious in his speech.

"We've been having some luck with the Contagion. I heard that advances have been made to allow Lochs to breed, but who knows if that's true. There's nothing concrete, and human lives are necessary in order to keep the Lochs going.

Early this morning, we received a transmission from Agent Arcides, a Scryer who was gathering various organic samples from the Red Zone with his team. They apparently stumbled across a pregnant Loch who claimed to have never even seen a human. Problem is, his transmission cut out and we haven't heard from him since that last report. We're sending you in as the first response team. You need to find out what happened to Agent Arcides and follow up with the pregnant Loch."

Agent Skinner know little information other than what he's shared with the players. He will ride the rest of the way to the API station in half-asleep silence, unless he is bothered. If so, he'll share his own personal experiences on Domainya. He just got back from a month in the Box, without a human woman in sight, and he was sure happy to be back on Earth. Even though he looks like he could be a field agent, he is actually a lab assistant with a tendency to party too hard. His only creature encounters came from researching the Ramphus individually, so he doesn't have much to talk about regarding the dangers.

The helicopter takes the characters a few miles off the Atlantic Coast, where they land on an API station created from a converted oil rig. In the bottom levels is a portal link to Domainya.

The characters are given time to shower and perform any personal rituals they normally perform before a mission, but are ordered to meet Agent Penelope Garner at a specific area and time. If the GM has been using a reoccurring agent to act as the link between the higher ups and the agents, Penelope is easily replaced with their familiar face. If they do not assemble at the designated meeting area on time, agents will come to their temporary

## Random Encounter Table

Roll	Antagonist	Description
1 to 2	1-2 Charcadon(s), page 53	As the characters have been searching through the Spandrels, they have come across a large cavernous opening. This could be a major entrance down into the Underbelly or an abandoned lair holding hidden treasure. As they approach, this creature opens its massive jaw in a grin filled with rows of fist sized teeth and bolts toward in hunger.
3 to 8	3-6 Afflicted, page 53	The character may notice random black shadows tracking them (Moderate (20) INS + Perception). Then without warning, a pack of Afflicted leap into the middle of the group, tearing at them with claws and tooth.
9 to 12	15 -20 Ramphus, page 56	A large school of fish is flowing back and forth cutting quick angles above the characters. Then without warning, the creatures descend... the characters have stumbled upon the Ramphus' breeding grounds.
13 to 15	Drake's Anemone and Drakefish, page 55	The tentacles of a large anemone drift lazily back and forth with the current. As the characters approach, a large black and white striped fish appears behind them. The creature opens its mouth, large needles jutting out at all angles, and its fins stiffen.
16 to 18	Patrol of 5 Voltics, page 64	The characters have been discovered by a Voltic patrol unit. They look at the characters hungrily, taunting them telepathically. One among them has a belt made from various bones of creatures the players have most likely never seen. Tentacles slither from their palms and they attack with the true Fury of Volt.
19 to 20	Xanthydra, page 57	The characters move slowly through a sea grass bed. Their bodies brush against the thin reeds as they move deeper through the bed. Suddenly, the ground begins to shake and a large mouth pulls itself out of the sand, and four leafy tentacles shoot towards them. The mouth launches itself into the middle of the group.

quarters to gather them, urging them to prepare immediately.

There they will meet Agent Penelope Garner. She is a beautiful woman, with a warm personality. She explains the portal processes and the side effects of traversing dimensions. The sudden shift in environment from Earth to Domainya can shock the system if the traveler is not ready. The agents will receive a full briefing at the Box, API's relay station on Domainya. Penelope's focus now is to make sure they get there safely. The characters are suited up with special jump suits and given a tablet. If they ask what it is, they are told "It's something to keep you from imploding when we reach the other side" and then Penelope takes one as well. They take an elevator down, whose sides are clear allowing a beautiful view of the ocean as they descend to its depths. They arrive in a large warehouse type room, which houses a giant floating metal circle. When they are there, the attendants begin saying how lucky the agents were to arrive just in time...

they can only open the portal at certain times of the day. The agents must hurry through immediately.

### At the Box

Agent Penelope travels with the agents to the Box (page 18). The suit and tablets keep the characters in one piece, but they are slightly dizzy from the trip. There isn't time to overcome the side-effects, before being led straight to a briefing room. She now informs the characters of the details of their mission and gives them any equipment they might need.

She explains the basic history and politic situation of the Spandrels if they are unaware, including how it was before and after the Lochs left. If there is a Loch agent in the party, she may even leave the floor open for them to explain in their own words. The agents are to bring back anything of interest that they might find and turn it in for study, as they are still trying to find out anything they can about

## An Early Return

The characters may find themselves in a situation where their only option is to return to base. Though, if this happens, they must still lose their pursuers. If the agents use the long range transmitter, API will send out agents to meet them halfway and help fight off their attackers. Either way, an early return means the life of Agent Arcides and loss of the truth of the rumors. The adventure could continue with the characters learning what they can from Kryxon (which will be lies) and can still learn of the sad fate of Agent Arcides. The GM can also have Kryxon get his hands on the alchemy item and take the adventure in a different direction.

this dimension, but their main goal is still to find Agent Arcides and the pregnant Loch.

Agent Garner alerts them to the major dangers of Domainya, from Charcadons or schools of Ramphus, but pays special attention to the Voltics. Shekra Kzahm will not tolerate API's presence within the Spandrels and she will likely be hunted down by a large war party if they are discovered. Which brings her to the most important point... the agents cannot lead enemies back to the Box. While mostly camouflaged, its location is top secret and more important than any mission.

The key is to be informative but brief, you don't want to bore the characters with too many details before they get into the heart of the adventure, but get them the information they need!

## Equipping the Players

MUES suits (page 49) are supplied for all non-aquatic agents. More charming characters may be allowed to keep theirs with a Moderate (20) CHM + Persuasion. The other characters need to be careful not to damage their suit while on the mission, or it will come out of their pay. Agent Garner might offer some initial resistance due to a shortage of supplies on the base, but she will eventually give in. Also, each agent has a standard GPS locator, along with a waterproofed two way radio which can be used to communicate with each other and with the base within five miles. Both audio input and output channels can be open simultaneously. Aquatic players won't generally be offered assisted equipment for obvious reasons.

## If Spotted

Voltics that the agents encounter will stay and fight no matter what, hoping to bring the characters' skulls as a trophy to present to Kzahm. However, if spotted by Scryers or Linx that serve Kzahm, they will run and try to inform the Shekra of enemy presence. This will most likely end with a war party led by Kzahm and the death of Agent Arcides, as Kzahm won't risk his rescue.

Characters with large, exposed cybernetics are not suggested for this adventure unless their cybernetics are waterproofed. Characters should be allowed the ability to waterproof on the spot, as it doesn't take long and only costs 1 BP per implant.

Agent Garner wishes them luck on their mission and stays behind, unless the squad is considered undermanned. The Box is well within the Red Zone and roughly 20 miles from the Spandrels, so the characters are then taken by two HICCUPS (page 48) five miles from the Spandrels to travel the rest of the way in stealth.

## At the Spandrels

The agents make their way to the Spandrels, eventually coming to large blocking ruins. Anything could be hidden in these ruins (Good place for a random encounter). The heart of the Spandrels is marked by the large mountainous projections at its four corners. Voltic units don't usually patrol past this area, meaning the characters are safe from Voltics for a short time. The four peaks are at each major compass location. The characters arrive near the West Peak, the farthest point from the East Peak which houses the last major events of the adventure. If they choose to explore, use the following:

### Northern Peak

The outside face of the Northern Peak is riddled with blocking ruins. There is not much of note besides entrances into the Underbelly. These (and all others mentioned) can be found with a Moderate (20) INS + Perception check. The inside face houses the Voltic barracks. This can be identified with a Simple (10) IQ + Perception check, as there are far too many Voltics moving in and out of the area for it to be anything else. The players should avoid this area or they will quickly be outnumbered.

### East Peak

Past the outside face of the East Peak lies the Feeding Field (page 9). There are many photoshrooms ringing this area and the Field itself is large (three football fields together) and piled with bone and decaying matter. The inside face houses the Theater of Blood. This is where Agent Arcides is being held by a small patrol of Voltics.

## West Peak

The West Peak is mostly deserted, having had the least amount of reconstruction. There are large chunks of blockings everywhere, most likely statues and landmarks rubble or destroyed walls and crumbling buildings. There are numerous entrances to the Underbelly here. Voltic Patrols tend to shun this peak the most.

## South Peak

The Southern peak has a few obviously reconstructed buildings, housing many servants quarters. The majority of Scryers and Linx reside here and are constantly working on rebuilding the area with blockings. The agents might try to seek help from the workers, but they will most likely refuse to aid the squad from fear of retribution from Shekra Kzahn. They are even more likely to betray the characters at the first chance they get and alert the Voltics oppressors. There are also entrances to the Underbelly located here, which may be their own way out if the plan goes south.

## The Center

At the heart of the Spandrels rests what is left of the White Opus now decaying under Voltic rule. Shekra Kzahn and his elite forces hold close to this landmark and should be avoided at all costs. The center of the Spandrels does house entrances to the Underbelly, but they are usually heavily patrolled to keep rebel forces from overtaking them. Agents may require Moderate (20) to Tough (30) Stealth checks to avoid Voltic patrol units even while in the Underbelly.

## Deep Tunnels of the Underbelly

When the agents come into the Underbelly tunnels they'll notice that they are created from layers and layers of blocking structures that have fallen. They can lose most any pursuers if they enter and make two consecutive Moderate (20) IQ + Survival (Tracking) checks, as there are a number of passages and places to lose pursuers. This check can

only be made by one squad member (whoever is their tracker or navigation expert). Checks are performed every thirty seconds. A roll of a Natural 1 or four consecutive failed Survival checks means the party becomes lost as well. They can attempt to find their way out with additional checks or wait until they are picked up by Kryxon's men.

There are all sorts of creatures in the Underbelly and the walls are riddled with dead bodies. It is also infested with Tenguil Moss (page 15), as the moss feeds upon the mass decay, and this phenomenon can be used to psych the characters out by implanting their minds with its many voices.

They can find an exit if they make a Tough (30) IQ + Survival (Tracking) check and they can find an exit to the Tunnels. If they exit the Tunnels at any

### Thord the Crazy

Thord was a Scryer that served the Sedrone near the end of their rule. He became consumed with the lifestyle the Sedrone lived and was a servant of their bloodlust. The last Sedrone Kings kept him as keeper to their bestiary used in various public executions at the Theater of Blood. Thord was driven insane by the slaughter of so many of his own kind during the Servants' Rebellion. He tends to say things that do not make any sense and is prone to bouts of crazed laughter. He has learned to control Afflicted (page 53) as if they were animals and they will listen to his commands to the death. If Thord dies before the Afflicted are killed, they will still attack the agents. Thord will try to flee if all his pets die, but if captured he will beg the agents not to kill them and then lash out when they are least expectant. If he is confronted about the missing agent, he'll point to a pile of bones in one of the tunnels, assuming that their friend is just one of the dead. This is obviously not the case, but may throw the agents off.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 40, Stamina 40, Initiative +10, Movement 20, Actions per Round 3, Beast Handling (Training) +9, Intimidation +6, Survival +7

**Combat:** Thord will fight as long as his Afflicted stand alongside him. Strike +8, Dodge +5, Parry +2, Roll +4, Grapple +1, Damage +6

**Special Abilities:** Thord has all the spells from first and second levels of Path of Animalia found on Page 85 of the API corebook. His chosen animal type is the Afflicted.

point, they will encounter the Council with Kryxon.

At some point during their wandering, they will come across Thord, a Scryer gone insane. He has control of a small pack of Afflicted through the Path of Animalia. They will instantly ambush the agents. This encounter can also be included after the Agents meet with Kryxon, if they do not enter the Underbelly prior to being escorted there.

## Council with Kryxon

A rag tag group of six Scryers and Linx will eventually approach the party, either when they are wandering the Spandrels or inside the Underbelly. Kryxon, the leader of the rebellion, knows the agents are there and wishes to speak with them. The rebel party is cautious, not aggressive and professes that Kryxon has information for them regarding the missing agent. If the characters do not know of Kryxon, the rebels will inform them (page 63). If they agree to the meeting, the agents will be guided to a dark chamber of the Underbelly, lit only by the eerie green glow of Tenguil Moss. Whispers play through their heads, as they take in the sights before them and a tall, thin Scryer, presumably Kryxon, stands before a Linx gibbering on his knees. Something similar to the following takes place.

*"I did not know Linx could be so bold,"* Kryxon, who is surrounded by eight imposing guards, growls at the Linx cowering before her.

*"I'm, I'm sorry mi'lord –"*

*"You knew the rules Druval, and you still chose to spit in my face!"* Kryxon roars.

Kryxon holds out her hand, and one of her men produces a large, elegantly carved blade. Lightning fast, Kryxon lashes out, slicing the first xohm in half. The three others wail in anguish, and she pulls all three xohms toward her.

*"You make a mistake like that again... and you'll lose another."*

The agents should realize that rebel rules and politics are different to what they had thought.

Kryxon motions for the Linx to clean up his dead xohm and then it is led off by a couple of servants. Then she turns to the agents.

*"So these are the Sedrone's puppets?"* she asks, as she hands the blade back to a Scryer standing behind her.

Kryxon is a stern but honorable Scryer that will kill anyone who proposes a policy other than the return of the Spandrels to the Scryers. She expresses sympathy for the captured Agent Arcides only because he is a fellow Scryer, even though she has few urges to aid API directly.

Her men overheard Agent Arcides being forced by Voltic soldiers to report false findings to Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. in order to lure agents to their deaths. She relays that the agent is being held at the Theater of Blood and can provide a rough estimate of the number of Voltic guards there. She doesn't support current API policy of working towards Sedrone repopulation and has already contradicted her convictions enough just by helping them as much as she has, so she won't help

### Agent Arcides

Agent Arcides is alive in his cage, but is exhausted and bleeding from a number of wounds. Basic first-aid measures can stop the bleeding with a Moderate (20) IQ + Medicine check and he'll be able to move. If Arcides is not tended to he'll likely bleed out before the adventure is over. If they can sneak to his cage, he quickly tells the squad that his men were ambushed and killed by Kryxon and he was taken hostage. Kryxon personally tortured him until he made the transmission that lured the agents to this point. He overheard Kryxon speaking about a powerful item called the Jaw of the Wicked-Tongued King (page 11) hidden among the littered remains in the theater. The rebel forces were attacked by a large group of Voltics as they were making their way to the theater. Kryxon and her men were forced to retreat, but Arcides was taken as a trophy by the Voltics.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 30 (reduced to 15), Stamina 15, Initiative +15, Movement 10, Actions Per Round 2, Computers (Research) +7, Knowledge (Demonology) +10, Knowledge (Science ((Hard)) + 9, Knowledge (Science ((Soft)) +6.

**Combat:** Arcides is a scientist, not a warrior. He will aid the characters in anyway his limited condition allows. Bonuses: Strike +3, Dodge +5, Parry +1, Roll +2, Grapple +1, Damage +2



the squad directly. However, Kryxon will have two scouts guide them to an exit from the Underbelly with a concealed view of the Theater. If both scouts are killed it will take a Tough (30) Survival check to find the appropriate exit.

## At the Theater

Shekra Kzahn has been preparing to enjoy a show with Agent Arcides as the main act. Kryxon has gathered her own forces with plans of ambushing the Theater and finding the Jaw of the Wicked-Tongued King. The rebel leader sent the characters to the Theater in hopes that they will be discovered to provide an advantageous distraction.

The Theater is a massive stage and surrounding seating built from blockings with blood stains, bones, and discarded body parts all over the place. To the right of the stage there is a cage hanging from a large column with a Scryer matching Agent Arcides' description. In the stands are ten Voltics preparing for the arrival of Shekra Kzahn. This will be the perfect time to attack and, if done quickly, the agents can get to Arcides before Kzahn or Kryxon arrive. They can reach the cage without alerting the Voltics by making two Moderate (20) AGY + Stealth checks. Opening the cage or removing it from the column at any point will alert the Voltic guards as Agent Arcides will point out, but communicating with him quietly will not.

After a short time, Shekra Kzahn's procession will arrive, only to be ambushed by rebellion forces led by Kryxon. There are over 50 Voltics in Kzahn's procession and a force of about 70 rebels, including Scryers and Linx. Some of the rebels are not active in the fight, instead searching the grounds. Voltics and Rebels alike will attack the agents if they cannot keep themselves out of the way. Arcides was simply bait, so his escape is largely ignored once the battle has started.

Arcides' rough description of the Jaw of the Wicked-Tongued King allows the characters the chance to locate the item amongst the dead bodies on stage before the rebels do. This requires an extended Tough (30) INS + Perception check requiring four successes. They are likely to draw into combat by either of the two forces during their search. If the rebels find it first, they'll return to the heart of the rebel formation. If the agents don't intercept the rebel carrying the item, they won't be able to retrieve it.

## Jaw of the Wicked-Tongued King

This is a magical item supposedly made from the Jaw of an old Sedrone King, Razix. It is inserted over the bearers own Jaw and alters their words to a listener's ears. Kzahn doesn't know of the item, and Voltics have no mouth to speak from even if they did. The Jaw's surface is rough and there are various blemishes on it. If taken out of water, it has a terrible smell of decay about it. This item gives the bearer the following bonuses: Health + 10, Stamina + 10, and Persuasion +10. It is a part of Sedrone history and many demonologists would love their chance to examine the jaw. It cannot be used in combat.

## Escaping the Fray

The agents can try to fight their way out, but this will only attract more attention to them and any enemies that are not already dealt with will follow them back towards the Box. They can escape unnoticed with a Tough (30) AGY + Stealth check, but suffer a -3 penalty to their Stealth checks if they are taking Agent Arcides with them. Failed checks draw enemies to attack, but the characters can reroll after each encounter. If they never shake their followers, they need only make it to the rendezvous point, where they are greeted by reinforcements. None of the chasing forces will be able to keep up with the HICCUPS if the agents manage to contact the Box prior to making the rendezvous."

## Experience

+1	Finding out the truth about the pregnancy rumors
+1	Agent Arcides survives
+1	Acquiring and turning the Jaw of the Wicked-Tongued King over to API
+1	Completed at least one random encounter
+1	Defeat Thord

# Adventure Two: Jaws Snapping in the Dark

## Magazine Article Clipping

### *Freak Lightning Storm Cancels Pier Firework Display*

The 14th Annual Pier Party had its traditional fireworks display cancelled this year after a sudden lightning storm swept in across Hudson Bay. Despite assurances by meteorologists that weather conditions should have been fine for the event, a large tempest blew in across the bay and lightning knocked out power along the pier. Pier Party organizers apologized on behalf of the event and sent party guests home, concerned with their safety.

What was peculiar about the storm was its localized, intense nature. As meteorologist Lance Timbers said during last night's broadcast, "I've never seen an electrical storm slide in so quickly or disappear just like that. It's practically unheard of for one of these things to fade in and out of the blue like this one did."

## Newspaper Clipping

### *Sewage Worker Maimed by Accident (From Section E of the "City" section for the Manhattan Herald)*

The lower Eastside was shocked this morning by the horrific maiming of 26 year old John Oslo, a maintenance worker in the tunnels below Manhattan. According to a city spokesman, Oslo worked a job clearing debris when a cave in occurred and he was trapped beneath several tons of stone for more than an hour before he was rescued by emergency personnel. His severe injuries necessitated the amputation of both of his legs.

What seems most peculiar about this accident is the report from several of his coworkers of strange growling noises preceded the accident. Also, there are claims of similar accidents that have occurred in the same area recently.

Oslo's condition has been upgraded from critical to stable, but we are told that he is currently undergoing psych evaluation as he is unable to give a coherent statement regarding the accident. One anonymous source claimed he told tales of "strange brown creatures in the sea." No one truly knows what happened out there though.

When the Lochs arrived on Earth, several of them became isolated from the rest. The water gateways summoned by the alchemists were not perfect, and in some cases they went wildly off course. These Lochs were not lucky enough to be found by Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. and instead ended up in the hands of those less than scrupulous.

One small, confused, and unled group of Lochs was quickly captured by a small science firm devoted to the idea of cloning. Most died in their first experiments and the few that remained were fading fast. The firm needed a researcher who understood the complexities of their demon DNA in order for them to be of any use to them.

They soon welcomed Dr. Franklin Sieger to their firm, a former API researcher who was let go after attempting to clone Lochs before. He somehow was able to reverse his mind wipe so he could continue his experiments, which were quite promising. He was able to clone the Lochs successfully, but every batch created were rabid creatures so bloodthirsty that many agents died trying to contain the project. Upset that the company let him go after so many years of loyal service, he welcomed the opportunity to try again with cloning Lochs and harnessing the power of these feral creatures.

The new project went poorly. Numerous scientists were slaughtered by the Ferals, and once again Dr. Sieger was close to losing everything he had created. The Ferals were too uncontrollable to be of any use as soldiers and at best were mindless killing machines obsessed with breeding and protecting their partners. Desperate for results, Dr. Sieger created one last batch of Ferals that he had hoped would be his opus, his shining proof of his brilliance. He, unfortunately, was correct.

These final Ferals were cunning, brutal, and efficient planners. They quickly overwhelmed the guards and managed to escape from their pens. As the company did its best to contain them, several of the Ferals managed to escape to an old lab that was conducting special dimensional rift projects. The machines were turned on during the fighting and 13 of the Ferals were pulled through the rift to another part of Earth, ending up off the island of Manhattan in New York.

Jaws Snapping in the Dark is an adventure that's

suitable for 4-6 agents with at least one or more Lochs involved.

## Mission Briefing

The agents are summoned to Elite Julius Parker's office at around 1pm. Any agents who ask about the summons are redirected to their own supervisors, who then direct them back to Agent Parker. There is no sense of urgency regarding the matter, so anyone who has something they need to attend to will have the time to finish it, even though the summons says to report "as soon as possible".

Agent Parker is in his early-forties and walks with a limp that requires him to use a shiny black cane. Despite his handicap he moves at a quick pace, buzzing about his office as he checks his files or pulls up information on his computer. He responds to any questions rather curtly, preferring to work quietly until he is ready to begin.

The Elite begins by describing events from over a month ago. Gruesome attacks have been occurring in New York that are ferocious in nature and are being kept quiet by the company until they could find some leads. He hands out newspaper clippings detailing a large lightning storm that shut down the docks on the lower Eastside of Manhattan, a storm which lasted no more in an hour but was known for its strength. He further details strange attacks on sewer workers over the past few weeks that at first seemed to be accidents but which happen too often to be a coincidence. The characters, whether new or the best in their field, are the only ones not actively assigned to a case, as others are busy attempting to contain the aftermath of a Tark rampage through Queens. The only lead that Parker can give at this time is to start by the docks, specifically Welmont Pier.

Support for this mission is minimal. While Parker promises to send aid to the agents as soon as it's available, he leaves them to their own devices when it comes to investigating the storm. At the very least he can give them a car and basic equipment to perform the investigation, but he won't authorize any equipment beyond that without proof of necessity.

## The Investigation Begins

Welmont Pier is located on the lower Eastside of Manhattan. It has the same sad story that many buildings have in New York; it was built in 1880s to handle fishing vessels and was vastly outclassed by larger and more industrial piers located on the island. Lately

the pier only sees cargo shipping. The docks are run down and many of its warehouses are abandoned. The only business some of these warehouses see is when they are occasionally rented out for parties or by unscrupulous businessman looking for a place to store stolen wares.

Dock visitors require IDs to enter. Due to strange events that have occurred over the past few months the three guards working the gates refuse to let the characters by. If they present themselves as working for a government agency and are convincing enough, the guards will summon the dock manager to meet with them. If the characters want to simply take the guards out, use standard Thug stats (see page 164 of API corebook).

Vern O'Hennessey is an old Irish dock worker who takes great pride in his heritage. He towers over other dock workers at 6'9" and is often seen combing the big red beard that covers most of his face. Despite his appearance he is a jovial fellow whose first reaction to meeting new people is to smile and shake their hands.

Vern takes the agents back to his office, where he offers them coffee as they sit. Even without being asked any questions, he starts off by giving a short history of the pier and what business they have had recently. Vern must be actively confronted about the murders before he'll volunteer that information. He'll at first deny them and try to misdirect the agents. Vern is normally a very honest man, so lying is something that does not come easily. His misdirections will be rough

### Not So Witty Responses

The following are some more humorous lies that Vern may use to confuse the characters.

*"Murders? What murders? Only thing we murder around here are the rats and the occasional beer!"*

*"Clearly you're confused. We've only had a couple of really minor accidents, and the police have only been called a couple of times. Hell, I've heard no complaints from the workers who were in those accidents!" (Note: Those workers are dead.)*

*"Look, if you go poking around in there you might get me in trouble with the Union. I'd love to help you guys, but how do I know that you aren't part of some Big Management scheme to get me fired?"*

*"We're not really a dock, we're actually a theme park. Rides are closed, no refunds."*

and sound completely made up (which they are).

He will eventually be worn down (especially if the agents are posing as detectives or government agents) and give his own accounts of what happened on the docks.

The docks have seen more traffic than usual recently. The 14th Annual Pier Party was held last month, even though a lot more addicts and gang members have begun using the docks for their own purposes. The dock workers have tried to keep the troublemakers out, but most of their security guards have been downsized. So, it is impossible to keep everyone out. They even had to remove a number of security cameras in order to keep within budget.

The first murder was discovered a week after the party. A girl from the party so drunk that she could barely stand up wandered away from the celebration and ended up lost on the docks. The security cameras last placed her as wandering into an unused storage warehouse on the northern end of the docks. She never walked out again.

Vern will start to get personal with the agents as he recounts the scene. His eyes start to water and he's visibly upset by what he is conveying. He recalls that they discovered the body three days after the party and that it was badly mangled. Her corpse was heavily mutilated and partially eaten by rats, and they would never have been able to identify her if not for her purse nearby.

The police issued a statement declaring that the girl died of alcohol poisoning and all the mutilation was due to the rats. Most dock workers were content to leave it at that until the second murder occurred a week later. While clearing away old shipping containers by crane they discovered a fresh corpse of a local drifter had been stashed away. His body was mutilated as well and had no rat bites, despite what the police claimed in their reports.

The murders have continued once every few days ever since, and the dock workers are nervous, some even quitting or putting in for transfers. A few have gone vigilante, routinely searching the docks themselves to find the murderer and clear them out, but the murders have continued. The dock's rat problem seems to finally be going away, having been about a week since Vern's seen one.

Vern gives the characters a number of places they can search for evidence. Most of the locations have been scrubbed thoroughly however, as keeping the

places bloody is not only bad for business, but could bring the rats back. He suggests that the likeliest place that may still have evidence would be in the northern warehouse where the girl was found. They cleaned it up, but only so much as it's rarely in use.

He also suggests that the characters check the Common Hills apartment buildings not far from the Welmont pier. There's no apparent connection, but that's where the drifter was known to stay and he's heard of a few murders there too. So far, the police have ignored the connection, since the apartments are in regular gang territory.

## Walking on the Pier

After their talk, Vern lets the agents investigate the pier at their leisure, figuring that at the very least they may find a slight clue. He tells them to stay out of any locked warehouses and to not bother any of the workers who are busy on the docks. He is responsible for protecting the privacy of those few who rent his buildings, and his crew is already far behind due to the murders. He also makes the note that he doesn't want the media to find out and report that the docks are unsafe, because this would likely force them to close.

The docks themselves are old and beaten down. Many of the buildings have foundation stones which say when they were built around 1905. The newest structures on the docks themselves are the shipping containers and the cars the workers drive.

The warehouse the squad is seeking is old and falling apart. Wooden beams show signs of termite damage and an old wooden sign barely hangs onto the front of the building. The sign reads "Simon Brothers Wares", but on looking inside the warehouse it is clear that the Simon Brothers have not used it in years.

Numerous footsteps run along the dirty floor. It is a safe assumption that many of them are from the police and medical personnel who were on the scene weeks ago. Long, thin lines leading to and from the scene indicate that a gurney was brought in to remove the body. Faded brown and red stains still cover the floor and the walls covered in bugs.

The warehouse seems to have already been inspected thoroughly, and no scrap of evidence remains except for the blood splatters. A Moderate (20) INS + Perception (Search) check will divulge new information, however. One undiscovered clue remains at the back end of the warehouse, facing the water front. On the floor near the door is trace signs of strange

webbed footprints remarkably similar to a Loch's.

A Loch (or other aquatic) character can investigate the waters outside the dock and will find that it is extremely polluted with all sorts of waste. It is difficult to see on the ocean bottom, but they can find several human skeletons caught up in the seaweed on the bottom. From the seaweed, they can also find an old amulet inscribed with ancient alchemist symbols. Loch characters get an instinctual vibe that it is important and recalls its full history on a Moderate (20) IQ + Knowledge (Lochs) check. Calling back to HQ will require them to send the amulet to a nearby field office, which promises research results to them within a day.

The amulet is an inscribed, heart-shaped rock wrapped with silver strands of seaweed and was a common piece of jewelry from Domainya. The runes that line its surface are supposed to protect a traveler on their journey, but as for why it would surface on the ocean bottom no one knows. An inscription in old Sedrone is on the bottom that reads "To my beloved, may we never be parted."

## Impromptu Call

The characters find little else that will help them at the docks. Also, after a while Vern will ask them to leave, citing that he can't let them walk around the docks forever without raising undue attention. From here, the characters should consider investigating to find other leads. NYPD is uncooperative, with any detective questioned refusing to provide more information into what they consider a small case. The Welmont Pier Company likewise refuses to offer anything helpful towards their investigation.

Fortunately, they do not have to look far for their next lead. One of them receives a phone call from a tabloid reporter wanting to interview them about the murders. He offers to trade clues for the opportunity.

Frank does have credible information. He knows that several of the murders happened near the water and that they were gruesome in nature. During the phone call he'll let one tidbit slip: there were several murders that took place at nearby apartments that never received a lot of publicity. These apartment buildings are pretty run down, but seem like they may have some clues as to what's going on.

It is important to note that while Frank will keep the conversation short, as he's trying to force a meeting.

If the characters choose to go the meeting, he

says to meet him at a small diner near Midtown called the Sweet Pot. It's a real dive, with dim lighting and cigarette smoke filling the air. Characters that walk in wearing fancy clothes will immediately be noticed by everyone there, but they don't get a second glance if wearing street clothes.

Frank Colcutt is hard to miss in the diner. He is sitting near the back wall in one of the booths with an old Polaroid camera on the table in front of him. His hair is parted sharply to the right, and his suit appears wrinkly and ill-fitting.

Frank will attempt to negotiate with the agents first, choosing to bargain his information in exchange for theirs. He was not allowed on the dock premises, so he wants to know about what had happened there. After they share their info, he provides his current theory: some sort of giant rat is running about eating people.

### Frank Colcutt, Freelance Journalist

**Description:** Frank Colcutt wears cheap suits and makes do with outdated equipment that he purchases from second hand stores and garage sales. He appears in his early forties, his black hair fading to gray and his fingers getting thinner and wrinkled. In his old age he has also lost much of his hearing, so using the Sonic Memory Scrambler will not work on Frank.

**Motivation:** Frank is out to get the story, no matter what it takes. A believer in "Information Should Be Free", he works to reveal the secret deals and stories that New York thrives on. While he is a fanatical reporter, he is also a kind soul and is willing to help out his friends even if it sends him to the poor house.

**Secrets:** His secret is that he's reporting (and recording) both their phone conversation and their meeting. He could become a thorn in the characters' side. After all, Frank believes the truth should be known, and while he won't do anything to stop the characters from solving the murders, he will take an interest in them in the future.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 20, Stamina 18, Initiative +6, Movement 10, Actions per Round 2, Magic Resistance +2

**Combat:** Frank will do his best to avoid combat, fleeing at the first chance he gets. **Bonuses:** Strike +3, Parry +2, Dodge +8, Roll +7, Grapple +6, Damage +0

## Common Hills Apartments

These apartments were once considered some of the best in New York. Built in 1960, they were home to radicals and philosophers, artists and poets. Over the years the better elements moved out only to be replaced by seedier types. Prostitution and drug dealers are so rampant that the police only step up their patrols in the area if they feel a need to look good in front of the press.

Agents who drive through the area will notice two things before approaching the apartment building. First is the lack of modern buildings. Most buildings are brick, and most storefronts have heavy iron grills over the windows. Secondly, a successful Moderate (20) INS + Perception check will reveal a lack of homeless in the area, even in the alleys.

The apartment buildings themselves are three large towers placed next to each other, forming a triangle. The fencing on the outside is grey stone with old stylized iron spikes set in the top. All the outer windows either have air conditioning units or are boarded up, depending on the weather.

Going inside the building is like stepping into the 1960s. The walls are painted lime green and the beaten down carpet looks like it once had a pattern, but has run down with time. Threadbare curtains cover the walls and remains of an old intercom system rest on the wall with wires coming out of it.

If the characters try to seek information about the building, they can easily find the supervisor, Gregory Tully. He's a short weasel-faced man with thick glasses and an unnaturally crisp suit. If asked, he'll loudly reveal that he's currently on site trying to conduct repairs to the buildings so that he can sell them soon. Tully is short and to the point in everything he says.

Tully does not know what has happened in his apartment buildings, only mentioning that several residents have gone missing over the past few weeks. It's obvious that he doesn't live in the building himself, but he's had enough to do with law-types. Tully refuses to let the characters into the apartments to search without official documentation. If the players refuse to leave, he calls his private security guards to force them out (use Police stats on page 164 of the API corebook). The guards are on sight mainly to keep up the appearance that Tully keeps drug-users out of the building, but they are no slouches and are physically intimidating.

When the agents leave (by choice or otherwise) a

teenager approaches them waving. Laurence, one of the building residents, lacks subtlety and asks the characters if they are there to investigate the murders. Those who respond honestly and treat Laurence with respect will get respectful answers out of him, but anyone who treats him rudely will be treated that way in return. He tells them about the strange figures he's seen running around at night, lurking around the buildings wearing long robes or coats and sneaking into the buildings. He says he saw one sneak into one of the victim's apartments recently. He points the characters to an old garage nearby that the figures appear to be sneaking to and from. He hadn't told anyone, doubting that the police would believe his story, but he has "a good feeling" about the characters.

## Down Below

When investigating the garage, the characters find an old workshop that used to belong to the building's maintenance worker. Old parts line the walls in various states of rust and decay, and the entire place smells of mildew.

In the corner lies several damp robes which have a fishy smell to them. Even touching them makes a swarm of roaches scatter across the shop. If a robe is actually lifted up, they'll be hit with a blast of sewer air. The fact that the robes are wet suggests that they have been used recently.

Underneath a workbench is a manhole cover that is sitting ajar and when removed it reveals an old maintenance shaft to the sewers. The lights in the sewers appear to be a mixture of work lights and old fashioned bulbs that barely keep it lit. The smell in the sewers is overpowering and may make some characters nauseas as they go on. The GM can call for a Moderate (20) VIG + Fortitude check at regular intervals while traveling below.

There is a trail along the sewer floor, headed in the direction of the docks. They'll also notice the distinct lack of rats, even though there are other bugs and algae in the area. The tunnels even appear to be cleaner than one would expect, with debris and trash swept into corners and out of the way.

Eventually, the characters can make a Simple (10) INS + Perception check as they walk to notice bubbles in the water. They'll have the feeling of being watched, like a predator stalks its prey. Those who look into the water will see their reflection and beneath that they will see a fanged face staring back at them. Two Ferals will assault the characters and try to drag them

into the waters. The waters are not particularly deep (3 ft.), but they'll use the water to their advantage and try to drown the non-aquatic agents. They will target Loch agents, as they are seen as the strongest threat, but will also react adversely to Burners or Wolf People. Any agent with the Sedrone necklace found earlier is left alone.

As they fight, the Ferals make a shrill whistling noise that echoes through the tunnels. Soon, the characters will see that it summons more of its kin. Three more Ferals will come rushing from the sewers to join the fight. Only after killing at least four of them will the remaining Ferals attempt to flee.

## Feral Nest

Tracking the creature is difficult, since the Ferals move quickly in water. Other aquatic agents are capable, but this would separate them from their non-aquatic squad-mates. However, pursuit of any kind will eventually lead the characters to a sunken subway station that has become the new nest for the creatures.

The nest lacks eggs, but is full of small bunches of plants and trash that the Ferals have worked into beds. Having built their homes in old subway cars, the nests are littered with the remains of their victims. The Ferals themselves are hiding out and will continue to do so unless the characters continue to seek them out. If provoked, they'll fight to the death to protect their lair and their queen, especially the chieftain, who is larger and stronger than the other Ferals. The queen is smaller in size, but is currently pregnant, assuming that they learned to mate with their victims before eating them.

There is no real peaceful way to end this adventure. The agents either back off and call in for back-up or they take down the nest themselves. The chieftain will fight to the death, but if the characters can capture him or the queen, they will prove great subjects for on-going experiments. The queen is a timid creature and refuses to fight, instead only hissing and screeching.

## Experience

+1	Find Loch footprints
+1	Retrieve Loch necklace
+1	Meet with Frank
+1	Take the Chieftain or Queen alive
+1	Clear the nest without backup

## Ferals

**Description:** The Ferals are larger Lochs, cloned from their demon DNA. They have elongated talons and their fins are topped with sharp points. Their colors are often duller than a Loch's, with dark browns and deep reds covering their scales.

**Motivations:** Ferals lack the sentience that natural Lochs possess. They only take care of their own and treat whatever territory they are in as their hunting ground, like other predatory animals.

**Statistics of Note:** Health 55, Stamina 30, Initiative +10, Movement 12, Actions per Round 4, Magic Resistance +2 Athletics +13, Fortitude +13

**Combat:** Ferals attempt to stalk their prey, but are really better at straight forward attacking. They will run from any fight except one to defend their nest. **Bonuses:** Strike +10, Parry +7, Dodge +7, Roll +12, Grapple +14, Damage +4 (L)

**Powers:** They get a +2 bonus to all checks while in water.

## Loch Chieftain

**Statistics of Note:** Health 66, Stamina 45, Initiative +15, Movement 14, Actions per Round 5, Magic Resistance +5 Athletics +15, Fortitude +16

**Combat:** The chieftain's main goal is to defend the queen and will sacrifice any of the lessers to ensure her safety. **Bonuses:** Strike +15, Parry +7, Dodge +10, Roll +10, Grapple +16, Damage +5 (L)

**Powers:** He gets a +3 bonus to all checks while in water.

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