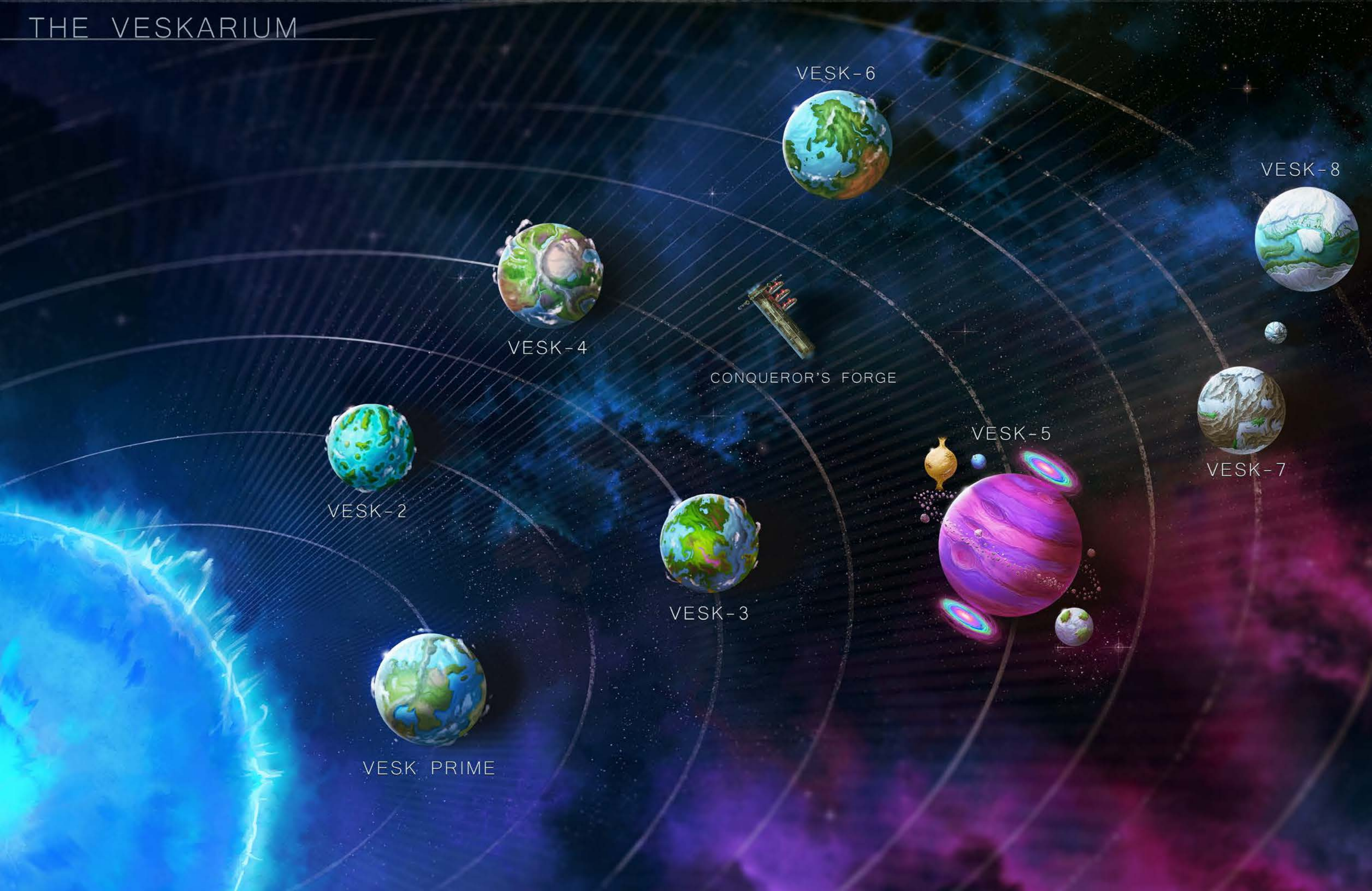


STARFINDER

The cover art for Starfinder: Near Space depicts a chaotic space battle. A large, green, dinosaur-like creature in a dark, heavily armored suit is the central focus, leaping from a green mechanical structure. It holds a glowing green energy weapon. To its left, a character with a red and yellow cape aims a red blaster. In the lower-left corner, a smaller, insect-like alien is visible. The background is a vibrant green and yellow space filled with laser beams, explosions, and other distant figures. The overall style is dynamic and action-oriented.

NEAR SPACE

THE VESKARIUM



VESK-6

VESK-8

VESK-4

CONQUEROR'S FORGE

VESK-5

VESK-7

VESK-2

VESK-3

VESK PRIME

STARFINDER[®]

NEAR SPACE



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

AA	<i>Alien Archive</i>	COM	<i>Character Operations Manual</i>
AA2	<i>Alien Archive 2</i>	PW	<i>Pact Worlds</i>
AA3	<i>Alien Archive 3</i>	SOM	<i>Starship Operations Manual</i>
AR	<i>Armory</i>		



WELCOME TO NEAR SPACE

In the *Starfinder* Roleplaying Game, the discovery of the hyperspace dimension known as the Drift has granted explorers access to a plethora of new worlds. Home to many sapient species both peaceful and otherwise, Near Space is not a single geographical area. Rather, it is defined by how quickly one can reach a world using the Drift, which depends on how many of the mysterious Drift beacons are nearby. One world might be virtually unreachable to another through normal travel, but the two might be neighbors via Near Space and can therefore reach one another in a matter of days.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

Near Space is a bigger place than could be fully captured in any number of books—or even datapads—but these 160 pages are packed with information about some of its most interesting places.

Chapter 1 is all about the Veskarium, the home system of the warlike lizard people known as vesk. Along with brand new in-depth information about the vesk species, each of the Veskarium's eight planets are covered in detail, as is the massive mobile star base and shipyard known as Conqueror's Forge.

Chapter 2 opens with a guide on exploring the reaches of Near Space, along with 20 prominent and diverse planets and systems that starfarers from across the galaxy might visit. Whether you want detailed home worlds of playable species or entire new systems to explore, this chapter has you covered.

Chapter 3 introduces new starships for several kinds of Near Space denizens, including six new vesk starships. There is also a selection of new starship options for those who wish to further customize their home away from their home world.

Chapter 4 is packed with player options, from alternate race options for nine Near Space-based species (including hobgoblins, osharus, and skittermanders) to new themes and archetypes. The chapter also offers new armor and weapon options, plus new shields (*Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 124) and spells, which can be used to flesh out adventures in Near Space.

Near Space is not only a big place—it is also a big collection of big spaces. There is little geographical sense to which planets are positioned in Near Space as opposed to those that are located in the Vast. What makes a corner of space part of Near Space is the proximity of Drift beacons, rather than proximity to other Near Space systems. Though the methods behind their function remain mysterious, Drift beacons are scattered throughout the galaxy and determine how easy it is to access a system using the Drift. If a system is near an abundance of Drift beacons, it's located in Near Space. If there is a dearth of nearby beacons, the system is located in the Vast, as it is more difficult to reach.

Some beacon-dense systems in Near Space might be geographically farther from the Pact Worlds than other systems in the Vast with less nearby beacons, but thanks to the Drift,

these planets in Near Space are much more accessible to those who wish to reach them. Traveling to a Near Space system or world takes 3d6 days with a Signal Basic Drift engine, the most common Drift engine in the Pact Worlds. More advanced Drift engines allow for much faster navigation, dividing travel times by as much as 5.

HISTORY

Near Space did not exist before 3 AG, when the tripartite artificial-intelligence god known as Triune sent out the Signal, gifting the galaxy with knowledge of the Drift—a hyperspace dimension that allowed space travel to astonishing geographically faraway places—and how to build starship engines that would grant access to it. With this profound change came the discovery of Drift beacons, which the church of Triune has tasked itself with placing and protecting throughout the galaxy, connecting more and more worlds to the interstellar network created by Triune. As the number of beacons became denser, Drift travel to certain areas of space became faster. Those places reachable in a matter of days—a few weeks at most—became known as Near Space, while those places still remote despite the Drift's blessings became known as the Vast.

INHABITANTS

Near Space is home to one of the most influential and powerful systems in the *Starfinder* setting: the Veskarium. Entirely ruled by the bellicose vesk empire, the Veskarium's system is composed of eight planets and an enormous starship forge, all of which orbit a blue star. Many species known across the galaxy originate within the Veskarium, including the stone-faced mollusks known as ijtkiri; the feline warriors called pahtras; the furry, six-armed skittermanders, known for their helpful nature; and, of course, the lizard-like vesk. This book's first chapter deals entirely with the Veskarium, as it details the overarching culture in the vesk realm, examines each of the individual planets in the empire, and provides never-before-revealed information about the history and the legacy of the Veskarium, as well as those who predated vesk rule in all corners of their tightly held realm. This book further illuminates the warmongering nature of the Veskarium, which until recently was locked in a cold war with the Pact Worlds.

Many other well-known species call Near Space home: the plantlike ghorans, who terraformed their adopted

planet of Ghorus Prime to become their home world; the colossus-threatened empathes known as damai, of the blasted planet Daimalko; the sluglike osharu, who timidly venture from the comforts of their home planet of Pabaq in the name of science; the embri, who are masked creatures from Embroi, a planet secretly ruled by Hell. Several species of giants call the geologically violent planet of Pholskar home and rule domains that align with their heritages. And then there are the myriad humanoids and other sapient life-forms that inhabit places such as Daegox 4, which is a planetwide prison for criminals of all types, and Preluria, a gas giant whose rings are home to some of the most elusive organizations in the galaxy. These species and their planets, along with many more, are detailed in Chapter 2 of this book.

All of these myriad descriptions provide merely a glimpse into the countless other species and societies that inhabit Near Space. Many of these peoples, their cultures, and their planets are detailed in the pages that follow, but surely the inhabitants of Near Space are not limited to the information in this book. Rather, this book provides a starting point for understanding this rich and varied part of the Starfinder setting.

RELATIONS

Near Space is a bustling, thriving throng of diverse creatures and cultures, with the many alliances, rivalries, and other connective threads that come with such diversity. If one thing unites most

worlds here, it is a sense of possibility and progress, of exploration and colonization of unpopulated worlds, and of the connection between myriad entities throughout the galaxy. Numerous tensions remain, however—especially between the Pact Worlds and the Veskarium, who only relatively recently put aside their cold war to unite against the Swarm, a massive hive of insectile species that attacked both systems simultaneously. While a tenuous peace reigns, there are those who would prefer a return to open war. And despite conventional wisdom in the Pact Worlds, these war hawks exist among both the Pact Worlds and the Veskarium. Those in the former rankle at the idea that the Veskarium once planned to summarily overrun their autonomy, where those in the latter believe themselves destined to rule any collective of planets that could be considered worth the effort to explore.

RULES OPTIONS

Just as the species who call Near Space home are many and varied, so is the variety among the members of each species, the upbringing and training one might receive on a Near Space world, and the areas of expertise that are common in this vast realm of space. To reflect this, Chapter 4 of this book offers a bevy of alternate racial options, character themes, and archetypes all tied to key Near Space commonalities and concepts. Chapter 4 further includes weapons and weapon fusions, shields, armor, and armor upgrades tied to Near Space. Finally, the book's rules offers a selection of new spells common among Near Space casters.



THE VESKARIUM

1



VESK

Intimidating and militaristic, the vesk have long had a reputation as little more than bloodthirsty conquerors. But following the recent alliance between the Veskarium and the Pact Worlds—uneasy though it may be—the vesk have proven themselves honorable warriors with a commitment to duty and service, a deep sense of dignity and fairness, and a rich cosmopolitan culture.

Originally native to the world Vesk Prime in an eight-planet Near Space system not far from the Pact Worlds, the vesk defeated all other contenders to become their home world's dominant species. Initially, the vesk considered it necessary to engage in endless military conflict to ensure the survival of their species. In short order, though, these unending conflicts forged vesk society into an efficient war machine focused on conquest—a drive that soon propelled the vesk into space. As they expanded their reach to the other worlds of their home solar system, the vesk created a mighty empire called the Veskarium. As the system fell under vesk control, the fearsome conquerors replaced the planets' native names using a characteristically utilitarian approach, until each world became just a name and a number, from Vesk-2 to Vesk-8.

Vesk are warm-blooded reptilian humanoids with an imposing physical appearance. Covered in tough scales, predominantly in various shades of green, vesk stand around 7 feet tall on average and are heavily built, with powerful muscles and long, thick tails. They retain their predator ancestors' claws and teeth, and their heads are edged with small horns. Visibly notable are the spikes that protrude from their lower jaws like bony "beards," which strengthen the skull and help protect a vesk's head in combat.

Occasionally, a vesk is born with spikes running all the way down their back to the tip of their tail. Such children are said to be especially favored by Damoritosh and destined for great glory in battle. Vesk display some sexual dimorphism; females tend to be larger than males, with vivid colors creating mottled patterns in their scales, while the scales of male vesk are plainer. From an evolutionary standpoint, vesk scientists agree that female vesk's size and coloration once helped them attract the best mates and produce the strongest offspring; even today, the vibrancy of a vesk's scales is viewed as a sign of good health and physical beauty. Vesk reach maturity at 16, and can live up to 90 years, though a strong or glorious death in honorable battle before that point is both common and even sought after.

Vesk reproduce by laying eggs. Once they've chosen a mate, female vesk produce clutches of three to seven eggs at a time. Vesk eggs are about the size of an ostrich egg, with dense shells that protect the embryos inside. The shells are white when first laid, but gradually take on a greenish or iridescent hue as they develop. Most vesk place their eggs in modern incubators, but recently a return to traditional methods of incubation has become fashionable, with some vesk parents constructing nests

within their homes to incubate their eggs with their own body heat. After an incubation period of 6 months, the eggs hatch into newborn vesk.

Female vesk can lay multiple clutches of eggs over the course of their lifetimes, which creates large extended families. Vesk are matrilineal, meaning they trace their lineage through their mothers. All vesk born of the same mother are considered siblings, even those from other clutches or from different fathers, but vesk have the tightest familial bonds with their clutchmates. In particularly large vesk households, each clutch of siblings might form one of several "sub-families" within the larger family structure and compete with their other sibling clutches for favors, recognition, and accomplishments, sometimes both inside and outside the family. Some clutches have even formed respected military units and mercenary companies, their members living their entire lives from birth to death in the company of their beloved clutchmates.

Vesk reproductive biology has resulted in a high population, a fact that early vesk society struggled to cope with. Vesk Prime simply did not have enough land, resources, or jobs for an ever-growing population. Rather than devolve into civil war, the vesk organized themselves along military lines and turned their aggression toward their neighbors, first on Vesk Prime, then on other planets. Even with the expansion of the Veskarium to multiple worlds, population pressure remains a concern, so vesk society is strictly regimented, and the military remains at the top of the vesk social hierarchy. As a result, military service remains the best career option for many vesk. Young vesk soldiers feed the Veskarium's war machine with their lives, conquering territory and plundering resources for the might of the empire, and the military repays that service with the opportunity for honorable combat and a glorious death.

The highly efficient, militaristic nature of vesk society extends even into childhood. At the age of 10, all vesk children are enlisted in their local planetary militia, where they receive basic military training as their primary education. There they learn self-defense, unarmed combat, and basic strategy, as well as the principles of honor and the importance of dutiful service to the Veskarium. Vesk living outside the borders of the Veskarium either send their children to the system for this instruction, or they form vesk-only academies where they can educate their young in traditional vesk values and fighting skills. It is not uncommon for young vesk to die during this period of training—combat is a dangerous undertaking, after

all—but a warrior's death, even one that results from training, holds no shame or dishonor.

When a vesk comes of age, usually at 16 years, they either enlist in the military (by far the most common choice), enter a military academy (if they seek more advanced military training or wish to become an officer), enroll in a university, or seek an apprenticeship in a useful trade. Vesks tend to dismiss any higher education as irrelevant and a waste of time—a young vesk will learn what they need through the trials of life or perish, according to widespread vesk beliefs—but they recognize society's need for more than just warriors, and a child who chooses a non-military vocation is respected for their choice.

Vesk children usually save a piece of their eggshell when they first hatch and carry it with them through their childhood. When they come of age, they ritually destroy this memento of their birth to symbolically leave childhood behind and enter adulthood. Traditionally, vesks dedicate this ritual destruction to Damoritosh to pledge their life and loyalty to their patron deity. Today, those vesks who do not worship the Conqueror or who are entering non-military occupations might dedicate their destroyed eggshell to another god or remove religion entirely from the equation, destroying their eggshells in quiet, private ceremonies with family and friends.

Because of vesk society's hierarchical organization, vesks tend to be fixated on social status. While all professions are respected, provided they serve the needs of the Veskarium, military service or prowess in armed combat are the true markers of status. Only warriors who have been bloodied in real battle wield political power in the Veskarium, even if their experiences were not in service to the empire.

Most vesks are as fixated on dominance, conquest, and the pursuit of glory in their daily lives as the Veskarium itself is on a larger scale. Vesks have a strong sense of honor and duty, but their society is a prideful one, and the combination of these two traits often leads to deadly duels over matters of honor. Vesks also pride themselves on their self-mastery and sense of propriety, but particularly egregious insults to a vesk or their honor can result in a blood debt, a brutal and violent custom that can only be considered paid when the offender and their family are slain in combat and have no more blood to shed for the affront.

Vesks respect strength, bravery, and victory, and the history of their species only reinforces their belief that the vesk way is the best way, and that all other species are inherently weaker and inferior. However, vesks also believe that they have a duty to treat their subordinates—including those they have

conquered in war—fairly and honorably, and aim to improve the lives of their subjects through education, the rule of law, and interstellar trade. Whether or not their conquered subjects appreciate these changes is a matter the Veskarium gives little consideration.

Although they evolved as carnivores and meat remains a mainstay of their diet, most modern vesks are omnivorous. Vesk cooking is as efficient and regimented as their society, with traditional recipes remaining unchanged for generations. However, the preparation of meat is considered almost an art, and the vesks have appropriated methods for cooking meat from almost every planet they have conquered, adding these techniques to their culinary culture.

Vesks speak a tonal language, in which the meaning of words changes based on the pitch or tone used to pronounce them. Although many humanoid species consider Vesks a difficult language to learn, it is the official language and common tongue of the Veskarium, spoken by a wide variety of non-vesk species. With increasing cooperation between the Veskarium and the Pact Worlds, Vesks are more widely spoken outside of the Veskarium than ever before.



THE VESKARIUM

Before Triune granted the secrets of interstellar Drift travel to the galaxy, the aggressive vesk had conquered all eight planets of their home solar system, forging an empire they called the Veskarium. Unlike the Pact Worlds, which are a coalition of independent planets, the Veskarium is a military dictatorship with one overarching goal: conquest. Yet all of the Veskarium's conquered subjects are made citizens, so the Veskarium is a diverse and economically thriving civilization with opportunities for adventure and honorable combat on every world.

Centered around a blue sun called Ghavaniska, the Veskarium occupies the closest inhabited Near Space solar system to that of the Pact Worlds. The Veskarium claims the entirety of the Ghavaniska system: Vesk Prime, the imperial capital and home world of the vesk; seven other planets, which the vesk have renamed and numbered based on their distance from the sun, from Vesk-2 to Vesk-8; and the immense mobile space station Conqueror's Forge. In addition, the Veskarium claims dozens of colonies scattered throughout Near Space and the Vast, but it is the eight worlds of the Ghavaniska system that most people consider to be the core of the Veskarium's stellar empire.

The Veskarium is an autocratic military dictatorship, ruled by a council of high-ranking military officers. Vesk dominate the empire and make up the majority of its inhabitants. However, dozens of planets are under imperial rule, and Veskarium citizens include many sapient species, such as formians, jitikri, kothamas, pahtras, and skittermanders, among others. Although most vesk consider themselves superior to other species, they nevertheless believe they have an obligation to care for vassals they've conquered and incorporated into the Veskarium. The laws of the Veskarium are strict and draconian, but standards of living are high, and most residents of the empire, vesk or not, are content with their lives and support—or at least tolerate—their government.

Only one sentient species native to the Ghavaniska system has not been conquered by the vesk and are not citizens of the empire—a fact that the Veskarium has tried unsuccessfully to keep secret from the rest of the galaxy. Zilbrees are a species that live deep within the sun itself, and the Veskarium only recently discovered their presence when they launched a satellite into orbit around Ghavaniska. To date, this space platform has been the only point of contact between the Veskarium's representatives and holographic projections of the reclusive zilbrees. Squat and armored with red-and-black tentacles and beaked mouths, zilbrees have advanced technology and claim to have lived inside Ghavaniska since before the Gap. The Veskarium is currently engaged in negotiations with zilbrees to persuade them to officially join the empire and enjoy the benefits of its protection in exchange for access to zilbrees'

technology, though some believe this is just a ploy until the Veskarium's military develops a means to attack the aliens inside the inhospitable interior of the sun.



HISTORY

The Gap affected the Veskarium along with the rest of the multiverse, and the empire's recent history stretches back only 3 centuries, to the end of that universal period of amnesia. Older records from before the Gap still survive, however, giving the vesk a keen sense of their species' history and destiny. Thousands of years before the Gap, when the ancient vesk first began recording their history in writing, they used the same word for themselves and for their world—vesk—but they were not the planet's dominant species. The vesk shared the planet closest to the sun with two other sapient species: the caiaгарas and the skeraskens.

Initially, the vesk had plenty of land and resources, but as they grew in population, the warlike reptiles began fighting among themselves for the best territories and resources. A powerful vesk warlord named Eshovok the Far-Sighted recognized the danger of never-ending civil war among the vesk and began uniting the warring tribes under his rule. When the last of his opponents had been defeated, Eshovok proclaimed a new empire, the Veskarium, and named himself emperor. At Eshovok's command, the Veskarium bent to the task of conquering the entire planet under the banner of Damoritosh, the vesk god of war and conquest.

In these early days of the Veskarium, the vesk first clashed with the skeraskens, a neighboring species of jackal-faced arthropods. The skeraskens were skilled warriors themselves, and though they initially resisted the vesk invasion, the Veskarium's legions inexorably pushed them back. After a series of devastating wars, the remaining skeraskens tried to sue for peace, but the vesk rebuffed their overtures. It was the vesk's destiny to conquer and rule their home world, the emperor decreed, and leaving even a single enemy to rebuild and seek revenge against their conquerors could threaten the survival of the entire vesk species. Within the space of a few generations, the vesk had eradicated the skeraskens and annexed their lands.

The vesk then turned their doshkos against the caiaгарas, a species of snakelike humanoids with great magical prowess.

WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

The caiagaras had witnessed the skerasken genocide at the hands of the vesk and resolved not to suffer the same fate. They craftily retreated into the vast cave systems that lay beneath their lands, and the caiagaras' powerful wizards moved entire cities brick by brick from the surface into subterranean caverns for protection before sealing the entrances to the caves with magical force fields. But these defenses only slowed the vesk onslaught. The vesk pressed on, first conquering the caiagaras' surface territories, then delving beneath the earth to raze their underground cities and slaughter their inhabitants. The caiagaras proved to be resilient foes, and their defeat was both more difficult and took more time than the conquest of the skeraskens. Finally, after centuries of struggle, the vesk eradicated the caiagaras, and the Veskarium encompassed the entire planet. But although the empire officially declared the caiagaras defeated, the reality was not so simple. Rumors persisted of caiagara cities deep underground that the vesk had never discovered, and the vanquished snake-people were blamed for assassinations, acts of sabotage, and other crimes that threatened the stability of the empire for millennia after their defeat. Even today, more than 300 years after the end of the Gap and with the threat of caiagaras but a dim and distant memory, vesk parents still admonish their children to behave and dutifully serve the Veskarium—or else the snake people will come out of their caves to drag recalcitrant children to a life of slavery in lightless caverns far beneath the earth.

But even after exterminating all opposition on their home world, the vesk's thirst for conquest was not slaked. Vesk astronomers had long ago discovered the existence of other

planets in the Ghavaniska system, and the Veskarium sought to expand its reach beyond the world of its birth. The vesk developed the technology for interplanetary travel and took to space, invading the next closest world to the sun. Now, however, with their home world conquered, the vesk no longer felt threatened as a species; as a result, any new cultures they defeated in battle were integrated into the empire rather than exterminated. Following the conquest of their nearest neighbor, a world largely covered by ocean, the Veskarium became a true interplanetary empire. The vesk renamed their home world Vesk Prime and the newly conquered planet Vesk-2. Over the next few thousand years, the Veskarium expanded until all eight of the system's planets—and their inhabitants—were under vesk dominion.

This was the state of the vesk empire when the Gap irrevocably shattered history. The Veskarium weathered the Gap surprisingly well, however. Although the vesk lost their memories and millennia of records along with the rest of the galaxy, the Veskarium's well-organized military archives provided a clear snapshot of the empire's pre-Gap history. The Veskarium had controlled the eight planets of the Ghavaniska system before the Gap, so the vesk set about relearning the boundaries of their ancient empire and re-establishing the Veskarium's rule over those eight worlds. Vessels were launched from Vesk Prime to make contact with the existing vesk garrisons on the empire's conquered planets, and once these "lost warriors" were brought back into the Veskarium's fold, the vesk had little trouble reasserting their dominance over their former vassals in the chaos following the end of the Gap, and

by 10 AG, the Veskarium once again encompassed all of its old territory, from Vesk Prime to Vesk-8.

The vesk longed to expand beyond the borders of their home system, but interstellar travel remained beyond their reach. Though Triune had broadcast the secrets of Drift travel to the entire galaxy in 3 AG, the All-Code's Signal had mysteriously failed to reach the Veskarium. While the rest of the galaxy built Drift-capable starships that opened the stars to exploration, exploitation, and colonization, the Veskarium remained isolated and confined to a single solar system. It was not until 12 AG, when explorers from the Golarion System first made contact with the Veskarium, that the vesk learned of the existence of Drift technology.

The vesk initially greeted the visitors with friendship, but once Drift technology was in their hands, the Veskarium quickly upgraded its warships for Drift travel and began eyeing the Golarion System as its next object of conquest. Relations soured and tensions escalated until 36 AG, when the Veskarium invaded the planet of Triaxus. The independent worlds of the Golarion System banded together to repulse the Veskarium's initial attack and soon after signed the Absalom Pact for mutual defense, creating the Pact Worlds.

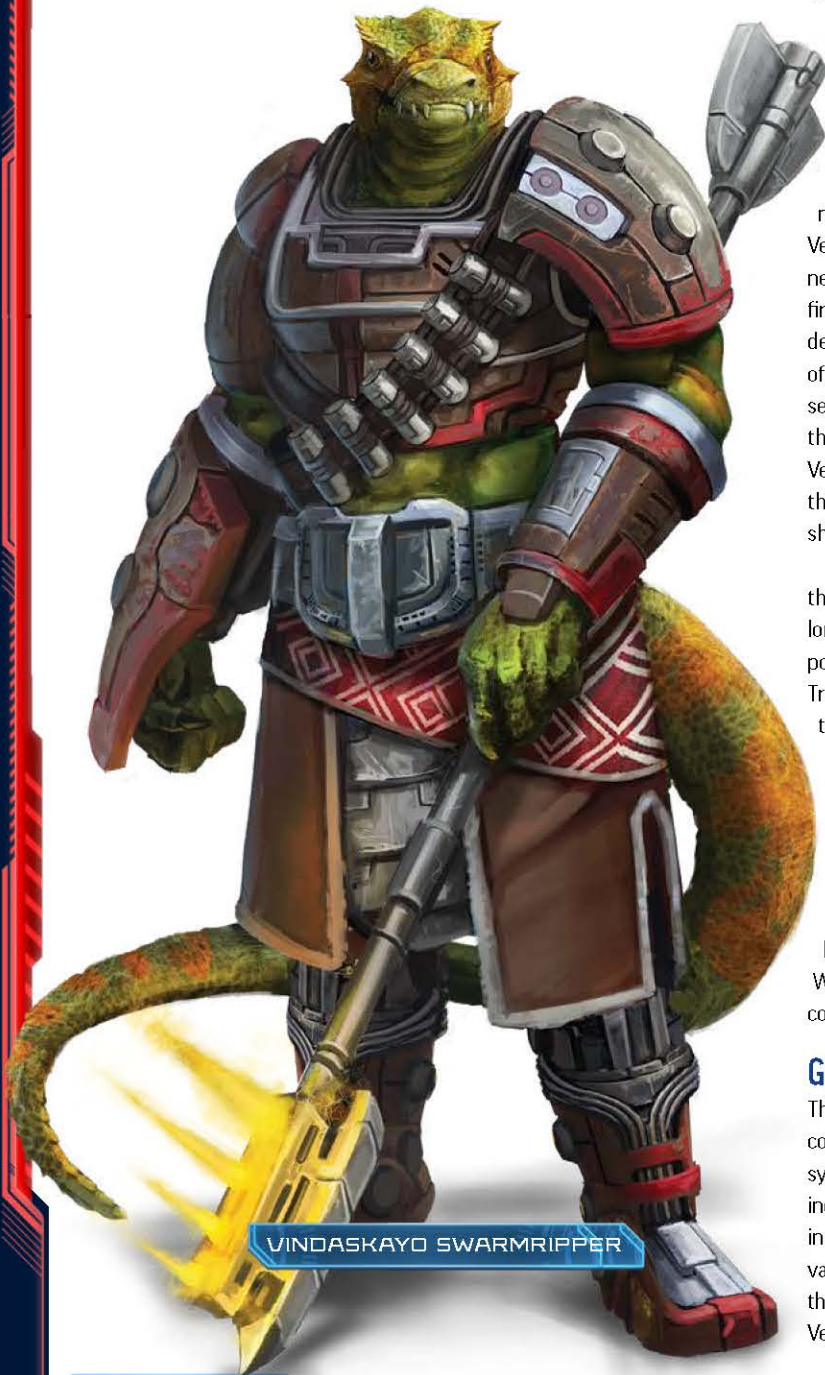
Together, the unified Pact Worlds proved to be an equal match for the Veskarium, and for the next 250 years, the two societies struggled for supremacy. Following the disastrous Battle of Aledra, neither side was willing to risk ships and troops in an all-out invasion, so the conflict cooled into border skirmishes and battles for far-flung colonies in Near Space and the Vast. During this time, the vesk constructed the huge space station and shipyard called Conqueror's Forge, a place to build new ships and armaments to support the so-called Silent War and develop weapons that could at last decisively defeat the Pact Worlds.

But the vesk's dreamed-of conquest of the Pact Worlds never happened. In 291 AG, the Swarm attacked both the Veskarium and the Pact Worlds simultaneously. The vesk had never faced a foe so numerous and implacable, and for the first time in its long history, it seemed the Veskarium would be defeated and overrun, putting an end to the glorious destiny of the vesk people. The Pact Worlds were suffering similar setbacks, however, and the two civilizations soon realized that their only hope to defeat the Swarm lay in cooperation. The Veskarium and the Pact Worlds signed an armistice that ended the Silent War, and together they drove the Swarm out of their shared region of Near Space.

Nearly 25 years after the end of the war against the Swarm, the insectile ravagers endure as a galactic menace, even if it no longer directly threatens the Veskarium, and so the Veskarium's policy of non-aggression with the Pact Worlds remains in effect. Trade has flourished between the two systems, and it's common to see Pact Worlders in the Veskarium and vesk in the Pact Worlds. But no formal peace treaty exists, and relations between the two governments—and their people—are often strained. This is a period of almost unheard-of peace for the Veskarium, and indeed many vesk are uncomfortable with the current state of affairs. The call of war and conquest sings in their blood, and it may be only a matter of time before the Veskarium's alliance of convenience with the Pact Worlds finally becomes too inconvenient, and the vesk seek to conquer the Pact Worlds once more.

GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY

The Veskarium is an autocratic empire and military dictatorship comprising nine worlds: the eight planets of the Ghavaniska system and the space station called Conqueror's Forge. The individual worlds and their native inhabitants have no autonomy in their governance or affairs, internal or external. As conquered vassals of the Veskarium, they are ruled and represented by the empire's military. It is almost impossible to separate the Veskarium's government from its military; they are effectively one



VINDASKAYO SWARMRIPPER

and the same. Executive and legislative power are the exclusive purview of the military, Veskarium courts are military tribunals, and vesk combat troops stationed on every world enforce laws and keep the peace. Any local representative assemblies or legislative bodies are only advisory in nature and also report to the military.

A military commander called a high despot rules each of the Veskarium's nine major worlds. The high despots have absolute authority over everyone and everything on the worlds they oversee, but in practice, day-to-day management of planetary and local governments is usually handled by the capable and skilled military bureaucracy, as the high despots focus most of their attention on larger matters. Together, they form the Council of Despots, a nine-member body that rules the entire Veskarium from the Imperial Palace on Vesk Prime. Beyond the Ghavaniska system, vesk colonies have a wider range of governing styles. Whatever their system of government, their rulers are not considered high despots and have no seats on the Council of Despots, but they are still subject to the Veskarium's laws and the council's decisions.

A high despot serves the Veskarium for life. In the past, most high despots died glorious deaths in battle, befitting their stature as the most honorable warriors in the empire. In the Veskarium's current state of peace following the alliance with the Pact Worlds, this is no longer the case—dying in battle is difficult if there is no war. In recent years, some high despots have engaged in military expeditions beyond the empire's borders in Near Space and the Vast (and some have met their ends there), but such "adventurism" is frowned upon by the current Council of Despots. This has led to a growing perception in the military's lower ranks that the current high despots might be getting too comfortable in their positions and are losing sight of the empire's military potential and ambitions.

Although the Veskarium calls itself an empire, the role of emperor is currently vacant. In times of war, the Council of Despots appoints an emperor to serve as head of state and prime general of the army. The council must be unanimous in their choice of an emperor. Although mostly a figurehead to unify the citizens of the Veskarium behind the war effort and provide a focus for their loyalty, the emperor is given an equal vote on the Council of Despots, which retains its role as head of government. This has been the traditional state of affairs for most of the Veskarium's recorded history.

The position of emperor is a wartime role, however, so in rare periods of peace, the emperor customarily abdicates, and the Council of Despots serves as head of state for the duration of the peace. Since the end of the Gap, this has only occurred twice: immediately after the Gap ended in 0 AG, when Empress Sinkeshmali VIII stepped down because no one in the Veskarium remembered who they were at war with or why; and again in 296 AG, when the "Dreadnought Emperor" Dmarangor I abdicated his throne at the end of the Swarm War. The Council of Despots has ruled the Veskarium without an emperor since that time. In cases of deadlock on the council, the high despot of Vesk Prime—currently Vindaskayo Swarmripper (page 22)—casts the deciding vote, though the council's current makeup makes this a rare occurrence.

VESKARIUM MILITARY RANKS

The Veskarium military uses the following ranks, ordered from highest to lowest. Although there are no separate service branches, those who crew the empire's starships (the "naval wing" of the Army of the Veskarium) often adopt more traditional naval ranks (these are listed in parentheses after the standard military ranks).

OFFICER RANKS

High Despot
 General (Admiral)
 Major General (Vice Admiral)
 Brigadier (Commodore)
 Captain
 Commander (Wing Commander)
 Sub-Commander
 Major
 Sub-Major

ENLISTED RANKS

Master Sergeant
 Sergeant
 Corporal
 Gunner

The Veskarium's military oversees all levels of government within the empire. The high despots are all experienced military officers, and in addition to presiding over the empire's core worlds, they are the commanders-in-chief of the Veskarium's armed forces. Admirals, generals, and lower-ranking officers are assigned to oversee smaller territorial divisions: colonies, outposts, moons, space stations, continents, regions, or former countries on conquered planets, as well as the Veskarium's innumerable military bases and starships. Beneath these officers, the ranks of the military bureaucracy administer the day-to-day tasks of planetary and local governance.

The high despots rule their worlds from enormous military bases placed in key strategic locations on each planet. These bases also function as centers of government for each world and are usually surrounded by cities hosting all of the civilian infrastructure needed to interact with the military government. Named for the planets they occupy (such as Command 3 on Vesk-3), every command base reports to the Veskarium's military high command at Command Prime on Vesk Prime.

The Veskarium's military is organized into a single force and is not divided into separate branches of service, so whether a soldier is a ground-pounding infantry grunt, a combat engineer, or a pilot on a Veskarium warship exploring the far reaches of the Vast, all are members of the same great armed force. Officially known as the Army of the Veskarium, most people refer to it simply as "the military" or "the army."

Smaller, specialized divisions and units exist within this unified command structure, but with a military and bureaucracy as vast as the Veskarium's, only a few of these organizations are large enough or powerful enough that their existence is well known to the larger Veskarium public.

Directive 9 is the Veskarium's military intelligence branch. The empire does not have a civilian spy agency, so Directive 9 is responsible for all information gathering, electronic warfare, espionage, and clandestine military operations, both within the

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Veskarium and outside its borders. Its agents are involved in intelligence activities at all levels, whether strategic, tactical, or operational. While Directive 9 sometimes cooperates with outside intelligence organizations like the Pact Worlds' Stewards, it carries out most of its operations on its own, with the specific details known only to the highest levels of the military's high command.

The Division of Criminal Extirpation (more commonly known as "the Hammers") is the Veskarium's peacekeeping and law enforcement agency. While most of the empire's worlds have smaller, local police forces, the Hammers are fully sanctioned by the Veskarium government and have jurisdiction throughout the empire and its colonies. The Division of Criminal Extirpation has agents on every core world under the command of each planet's high despot, but the agency is primarily concerned with threats to the established order and hierarchy of Veskarium society. Minor offenses committed by non-vesk citizens are generally left to local law enforcement agencies to handle, but the division targets vesk criminals with strict enforcement and harsh punishments for even petty infractions. In the eyes of the Hammers, the actions of individual vesk are most representative of the Veskarium's overall attitudes and goals, and any deviation from the Veskarium's monolithic and authoritarian culture must be "hammered down" immediately to prevent dissent or unrest in the empire.

The Division of Disloyal Organizations (DDO), on the other hand, focuses its efforts on groups and organizations that threaten vesk cultural superiority and the Veskarium's rule over its conquered subjects. This division investigates, infiltrates, and attempts to eradicate heretical cults, native resistance groups, and powerful organized crime gangs throughout the empire. Success is more important than the means to accomplish it, and DDO agents are given wide leeway in how they achieve their mission objectives.

Although a Veskarium citizen of any species can join the military, the vesk dominate the ranks of the army, and non-vesk soldiers are a minority. The vesk's high birthrate creates a large civilian population that would put a strain on society if the Veskarium's military didn't happily absorb the excess. A military career is available to nearly every young vesk looking for a job or a purpose, making it the single most common occupation among vesk. Both society and new recruits view the army as a meritocracy that rewards prowess in combat, but the reality is somewhat different.

Family status and political connections matter far more than honorable service in determining who advances quickly through the ranks. Nevertheless, the belief persists that citizenship and political power derive from military service, and thousands of new recruits throughout the empire enlist in the military every day. After a period of grueling (and often deadly) training in boot camp, these recruits join the army as gunners (see the Veskarium Military Ranks sidebar on page 13). The army has no set term of service. Most vesk who join the military do so for life, hoping to die an honorable death in battle, but at any time, a warrior may take the Soldier's Due, a time-honored vesk custom wherein the warrior is honorably discharged from their duties to the empire and takes their military-issue armor and

weapons as their reward for service. Even after leaving the military, however, many of these former warriors still serve the empire as mercenaries or in other capacities.

Since the conquest of their home planet, the Veskarium's military government has believed that it is honorable to accept an enemy's surrender and integrate the defeated foe into the Veskarium, where both cultures will grow from the other—with the Veskarium in control, of course. In the case of the Silent War with the Pact Worlds, however, the vesk never defeated the Pact Worlders in war, and their citizens did not join the empire. The Veskarium has prospered from its alliance with the Pact Worlds, but it still takes a guarded view of the system, and there is ample distrust in both civilizations thanks to their still-evolving history.

Other than its nominal alliance with the Pact Worlds, the Veskarium has no trusted allies. A few minor systems and colonies near the empire's borders pay tribute to the Veskarium and have so far avoided outright annexation, but most species give the vesk empire a wide berth—and often go running to the Pact Worlds or other regional powers to seek protection whenever the Veskarium seems to be getting too close. For the moment, the Veskarium's conquests and expansions have been limited to colonies in unclaimed regions of Near Space and the Vast, but many in the galaxy—and especially in the Pact Worlds—wonder just when the vesk will turn their attention to them.

ECONOMY

The imperial credit is the standard unit of currency in the Veskarium, and as it is based on the universal polymer base (UPB) standard, it is equal in value to the Pact Worlds credit. In large business transactions in either the Veskarium or the Pact Worlds, the two currencies are largely interchangeable, though in a remote rural area on Vesk-6, for example, visitors might find it difficult to pay for goods with Pact Worlds credits. The Veskarium does mint some hard currency, but most people use credsticks and digital credits, just as in the Pact Worlds.

The Veskarium has a centralized planned economy under the direction of the military and its leaders. Since the economy revolves around the military, it is the empire's largest employer. The military decides what, where, and how much is produced, as well as how it is distributed. The military takes the largest portion of the Veskarium's economic output for itself, but there is always enough left to supply the Veskarium's citizens, as the honor-minded vesk believe they have an obligation to provide a high standard of living for all of the empire's citizens. Once the economic needs of the Veskarium have been met, the vesk export the remainder of the empire's production output for interstellar trade.

Although not publicly discussed within the Veskarium, both the recent Swarm War and the centuries-long Silent War before it had significant economic impacts on the empire. Traditionally, the Veskarium financed its wars and expansions by conquering other worlds and appropriating their resources for the vesk war machine, but neither conflict provided any significant new conquests, leaving the Veskarium with a major deficit in its military expenditures. The empire has ameliorated the problem to some extent with its recent colonial endeavors in the wider

galaxy, but outside economists who study the Veskarium believe that this state of affairs is untenable in the long run, and warn that the vesk will soon be forced to resume their old wars of conquest if their empire is to survive in its current form.

DAILY LIFE AND CULTURE

For a multi-planet civilization, the Veskarium has an incongruously unified culture: that of the vesk, who dominate the empire both politically and culturally. Vesk culture is not monolithic, however. When the Veskarium conquers a world and integrates its inhabitants into the empire, the vesk also adopt elements of the conquered civilization's art, culture, and music, such as the art of pahtra leaf-painting from Vesk-6, which is popular throughout the Veskarium. This cultural assimilation extends back to the earliest pre-Gap days of the Veskarium, for although the vesk exterminated the entire skerasken population, they also adopted the skerasken tradition of shell drumming, which went on to become an ancient and respected art among the vesk. Many among the Veskarium's vassal populations still practice their traditional cultural customs, but these are exceptions to the dominant vesk cultural norms that prevail throughout the empire.

The military dominates daily life in the Veskarium. Although not every Veskarium citizen is a member of the military, nonmilitary residents are just as subject to military laws and regulations as the army's greenest gunner. Veskarium society is highly regimented: there is little social mobility outside of a military career, and crime or dissent is harshly punished. Social status in Veskarium society is earned through excellence in combat—be it military service, mercenary work, dueling, or even adventuring—and skill in battle is one way for non-vesk to ascend through the social hierarchy.

Though their society is autocratic, vesk see both themselves and their society as deeply honorable. They believe that the Veskarium is an egalitarian society that treats all of its citizens equally, but in reality, the vesk's innate perception of their own superiority over other species means that vesk have the greatest opportunities for advancement. Non-vesk species in the empire just try to go about their business, pay lip service to the Veskarium, and do their best to avoid riling the vesk. It's hard to argue with the efficacy of the Veskarium's harsh laws, and life is peaceful throughout most of the empire, though the conscious and unconscious machinations of vesk society have considerable impact on non-vesk residents.

As in other interstellar civilizations, religion helps unify the Veskarium's disparate inhabitants. The most widespread faith is that of Damoritosh, the patron god of the vesk and the Veskarium, but as natives of the closest planet to the sun, many vesk also revere Sarenrae, whom they call the Firescale. Iomedae's faith is increasingly growing in adherents and influence, especially among non-vesk members of the military, and many vesk mercenaries pay homage to Besmara as goddess of strife. Worship of Talavet is popular among the civilian population. Some native religions remain on the conquered worlds of the Veskarium, and some of these inhabitants still pray to a handful of minor local deities, but these faiths seldom reach beyond a single planet. Even the vesk themselves venerate a pantheon of saintlike war heroes, honored emperors,

DAYS AND MONTHS

The Veskarium divides its years into 10 months of 91 days each, plus a "half-month" of 48 days. In wartime, hostilities traditionally cease during this half-month period, and vesk warriors spend the time preparing for next year's battles. There are seven days in a week and 13 weeks in a month. Months are named for honored warriors and legendary heroes of the Veskarium. Days of the week are numbered in a similar fashion to Pact Standard Time (Firstday, Seconday, etc.),

MONTHS

VESKARIUM MONTH	EARTH ANALOG
Kushaya	January
Dmokoraz	February
Ahalabok	March
Solakodari	April
Kalamatali	May
Oshorokesh	June–July
Jubotakama	August
Sarotesk	September
Ramitrala	October
Ygarakayo	November
Vaskalan-esk ("half-month")	December

and legendary generals elevated to demigodhood, but they are all subservient to the Conqueror and his church.

All of the Veskarium's nine core worlds (and many of its colonies) have their own planetary infospheres. These infospheres are not connected in one empire-wide network (though the military is currently investing considerable resources into developing such a network), but data sets are available for download (for more information on information networks, see the *Starfinder Core Rulebook* page 430). Frequent government broadcasts on every world remind the people that the Veskarium cares for them, provides for them, and protects them, but also warn them that they are surrounded by threats on all sides, and that rival "empires" like the Pact Worlds are not actually friendly, ensuring distrust of the Pact Worlds remains foremost in the minds of Veskarium citizens.

TIME AND CALENDAR

Absalom Station and its *Starstone* play a central role in interstellar trade and relations, and this has led the Veskarium to adopt Pact Standard Time in its interactions with the rest of the galaxy. For ease of comparison, all dates in this book use the traditional Pact Standard Time notation of PG (Pre Gap) versus AG (After Gap). Nevertheless, the Veskarium has its own official calendar and system of timekeeping based on the orbit and rotational period of Vesk Prime, where the local day is 28 Pact Standard hours and the local year is 3 Pact Standard years. The Veskarium names its years based on the reigns of its emperors; periods without an emperor on the throne, such as the present time, are called interregnums. It is currently the 8th year of the Veskarium's Second Interregnum, or 320 AG.

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VESKARIUM TIMELINE

All dates here are noted in PG—years before the onset of the Gap in the Veskarium, or in AG—years since the end of the Gap in the Veskarium.

Eshvok the Far-Sighted unites the vesk and establishes the Veskarium, becoming its first emperor.

UNKNOWN

The Veskarium conquers a second planet, the neighboring world of Iji, and renames it Vesk-2.

3,226 PG

The Gap ends. Empress Sinkeshmali VIII abdicates.

0 AG

The Veskarium completes its reconquest of the Ghavaniska system.

10 AG

The Gap

UNKNOWN

The Veskarium defeats the caiagaras and conquers the entirety of the vesk home world, Vesk Prime.

161 PG

The Veskarium completes its initial conquest of the eight planets of the Ghavaniska system.

3 AG

Triune grants the secret of Drift travel to the universe—but the signal somehow fails to reach the Veskarium, leaving the vesk without Drift technology.

UNKNOWN



After uniting into a single empire, the vesk battle two other species for supremacy on their home world—the skeraskens and the caiagaras. The final defeat of the caiagara resistance gives the Veskarium full dominion over the entirety of what is now called Vesk Prime.

3,226 PG



The Veskarium invades the planet Iji. The native ijtikris are no match for the vesk, who quickly overwhelm the ijtikris and occupy the planet. The Veskarium marks its first interplanetary conquest by renaming the vesk home world Vesk Prime and the conquered planet Vesk-2.

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First contact between the Veskarium and explorers from the Golarion System. The Veskarium acquires Drift technology.

12 AG

The Veskarium invades the Golarion System. The Silent War between the Veskarium and the Pact Worlds begins.

36 AG

First contact between the Veskarium and the Azlanti Star Empire. Azlanti armada destroys Veskarium colony on Najin-Korozayas.

259 AG

Construction of the second Conqueror's Forge completed.

294 AG

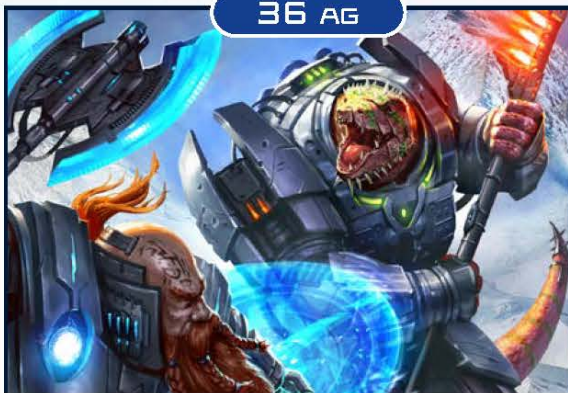
13 AG
Vesk renunciants establish a colony on Gaskar III.

47 AG
Construction of the first Conqueror's Forge completed.

291 AG
The Swarm attacks both the Veskarium and the Pact Worlds, prompting an alliance and ending the Silent War. The Swarm destroys Conqueror's Forge.

296 AG
The Swarm War ends. "Dreadnought Emperor" Omarangor I abdicates.

320 AG
Current year.



36 AG

The Veskarium invades the planet Triaxus, prompting the independent worlds of the Golarion System to band together under the Absalom Pact. The ensuing Silent War between the Veskarium and the Pact Worlds lasts for over two and a half centuries.



291 AG

The Swarm War begins when the ravenous Swarm attacks both the Veskarium and the Pact Worlds simultaneously. To ensure the survival of both civilizations, the Veskarium and the Pact Worlds sign an accord that paves the way for military cooperation and peace.

THE VESKARIUM



VESK-4

VESK-2

VESK PRIME

VES

VESK-6



VESK-8



VESK-7

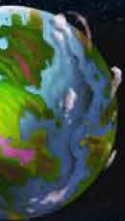
VESK-5



CONQUEROR'S FORGE



VESK-3





VESK PRIME

Diameter: $\times 2\text{-}1/4$

Mass: $\times 5$

Gravity: $\times 1$

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 28 hours; **Year:** 3 years



Vesk Prime is a hot, dry world with an abundance of land and rich natural resources. The closest planet to the sun called Ghavaniska, it is the vesk home world and the imperial capital of the Veskarium. Vesk Prime is densely populated, with large, modern cities surrounded by huge tracts of cultivated lands. Other areas are protected nature reserves, where sporting vesk hunt several species of large and dangerous beasts that still roam the planet.

The Veskarium began here long before the Gap, when the vesk defeated their rivals and brought the entire planet under vesk rule. Vesk Prime earned its designation when the Veskarium first expanded off-world, conquered the neighboring planet, and renamed it Vesk-2. Before that, the home world of the vesk had only one name, the same name they called themselves—Vesk—and that's the only name the surviving conquered species of the Veskarium have ever known for this planet.

GEOGRAPHY

Vesk Prime is a large terrestrial planet with a single moon. The majority of the planet's surface is dry land, forming a single supercontinent broken only by two connected saltwater oceans and a handful of smaller seas. The planet is tectonically active, with volcanic belts stretching along some of its faults. Small ice caps cover both of the planet's poles. Vesk Prime's moon, called Yterakesh, is home to Moon Base Prime, a military base dedicated to planetary defense.

The major bodies of water on Vesk Prime divide the planet's landmass into four broad regions: the Central Veld, the Eastern Wastes, the Southern Coast, and the Northern Reach. The boundaries of the Central Veld comprise the Veskesh Ocean to the east, the Sea of Gokolesh in the north, the North Sokora Sea to northwest, and the South Sokora Sea to the southwest. Vesk civilization first arose on the arid equatorial plains on the eastern side of the Central Veld, between the Otorozan and Nakahili Deserts. The capital city of Command Prime is located in this region, which is still considered the vesk heartland. To the west, the Doshkoraz Mountains and Nazratoli Mountains separate the vesk heartland from the savannas of the Skerasken Plains. Originally the homeland of the first species conquered by vesk, the arthropodal skeraskens (page 10), these plains are now

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covered by the automated industrial farms that feed Vesk Prime's teeming population. North and west of the Skerasken Plains, the savanna gives way to the tropical Jumakala Forest along the coasts of the Sokora Seas.

East of the vesk heartland in the Central Veld, across the Veskesh Ocean, is the Dmolangari Wall, a range of coastal mountains known for its large number of active volcanoes, which forms the western boundary of the Eastern Wastes. On the other side of the mountains lies the expansive Vaaranas Desert, once home to the since-defeated caiagara civilization (page 10). This desert stretches to the western shores of the South Sokora Sea, and portions of it are radioactive wasteland, the result of devastating weapons used in the vesk's ancient war against the caiagaras. Extensive cave systems lie under both the Dmolangari Wall and the Vaaranas Desert, and rumors persist of surviving caiagara cities deep underground.

The southern coast of both the Central Veld and Eastern Wastes overlooks the great Dakarresh Ocean, which covers Vesk Prime's south pole. The high cliffs of the Kakaranaz Mountains run along most of the Southern Coast, which also includes the Samakayo Marshes and Sodobok Swamp flanking the Bekran Sea, and the Gojori Mire between the Dmolangari Wall and the Gulf of Yranzaya. Beyond the North Sokora Sea and the Sea of Gokolesh are the wilds of the Northern Reach, a frontier region that encompasses Vesk Prime's north pole. The terrain here is mostly tundra and taiga, but a spur of the Dmolangari Wall called the Eshvad Mountains extends northward toward the pole.

RESIDENTS

The vast majority of the inhabitants of Vesk Prime are vesk. Vesk long ago eradicated the other native sapient species of Vesk Prime, making the empire the sole surviving civilization on the planet. This was the case for thousands of years, but as the Veskarium expanded and Vesk Prime grew into the capital of an interplanetary empire, the vesk home world became much more of a melting pot. Today, large numbers of non-vesk species live on Vesk Prime. Skittermanders (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 106) and pahtras (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 94) make up the largest proportion of non-vesk residents of Vesk Prime. Skittermanders fill many positions in the Veskarium's vast bureaucracy, while most pahtras on Vesk Prime serve in the empire's military. Small populations of ijtikris (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 3 54) and kothamas (*Alien Archive* 3 64) exist as well, the latter mostly conscripted into the military to work on navigational charts used by the Veskarium's starship fleets.

Since the end of the Swarm War, more and more Pact Worlds natives have come to the Veskarium, and most of them have settled on Vesk Prime. Perhaps unsurprisingly, ambitious humans are the most numerous Pact Worlders on Vesk Prime, even though many of them are still wary of vesk due to the two species' initial hostility toward each other and the long Silent War that followed. Lashuntas are the next largest group, with lashunta diplomats hoping to forge closer ties between the Pact Worlds and the Veskarium and lashunta warriors eager to train with the Veskarium's military. In addition, ysoki form a



NORTHERN REACH

EASTERN WASTES

Vaaranas Desert

NORTH SOKORA SEA

SOUTH SOKORA SEA

CENTRAL VELD

VESKESH OCEAN

SOUTHERN COAST

DAKARRESH OCEAN

Olanakama Bay

Eshvad Mountains

Blood Mountain

Doshkoraz Mountains

Isle of Kesh

Great Hall of the Conqueror

Otorozan Desert

Command Prime

Strait of Evmiraz

Jumakala Forest

Skerasken Plains

Pantheon of Honor

Ramavada Bay

Gulf of Jukagari

Kakaranaz Mountains

Dmolangari Wall

Jukulan Mine

Cojori Mire

Gulf of Yranzaya

Teribok Island

Gulf of Ahanka

Viskazi Bay

Nakahilli Desert

Samakayo Marshes

BEKRAN SEA

Sodobok Swamp

Nazratoli Mountains

Lake Katraka



significant minority population, integrating themselves into the gaps in Vesk Prime's society just as easily as they have on other civilized worlds throughout the galaxy.

SOCIETY

Like all of the Veskarium's worlds, Vesk Prime has a military government that controls the entire apparatus of society. Vesk Prime is ruled by a high despot, a military commander with autocratic power who holds the position for life. The high despot of Vesk Prime, **Vindaskayo Swarmripper** (LE female vesk soldier), is technically equal in rank to the Veskarium's other high despots, but her position as the ruler of the empire's home world and its imperial capital gives her far more influence, power, and authority than her peers. The military bureaucracy manages the planet's daily governance.

Vesk Prime has no independent nations; it is instead divided into 99 administrative districts, each overseen by a high-ranking military officer, usually a general. These districts roughly correspond to the ancient feudal landholdings of the most powerful vesk noble houses from the earliest days of the Veskarium before the Gap. A dozen of these great families still rule their ancestral lands today, as the military commanders the high despot appoints to administer these districts are traditionally drawn from these respected families. Members of these so-called Prime Houses have continuously served in the military since the founding of the empire and are the closest thing the Veskarium has to a hereditary aristocracy. Though no longer titled nobles, most of the descendants of the Prime Houses continue to serve in the empire's military at the highest ranks.

As the capital of the Veskarium, Vesk Prime also hosts the government of the entire empire: the Council of Despots, comprising the high despots of each of the Veskarium's nine worlds. Not all of the high despots are present on Vesk Prime all of the time, but they do regularly travel to Vesk Prime to attend council meetings and manage the empire between their normal duties on the worlds they oversee. The imperial government's presence on the planet also means that a large number of visitors come to Vesk Prime, both representatives and businesspeople from other Veskarium worlds as well as diplomats and ambassadors from planets and cultures outside the Veskarium, each seeking to curry some sort of favor, recognition, or dialogue with the imperial government.

Although the Veskarium is now a multi-planet empire, Vesk Prime is the original vesk home world, and their culture dominates the planet's strictly regulated society. Frequently, it can be difficult to distinguish vesk culture from military culture. Obsession with social status is common among all of Vesk Prime's residents, but skill in battle is virtually the only means of improving one's standing. Vesk Prime's people pride themselves on their deep-rooted sense of honor and abiding support for the Veskarium's military, though many vesk—particularly those native to Vesk Prime—believe that they are superior to all other species and that they truly embody the best the Veskarium has to offer.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Although vesk have been the undisputed masters of their home world since before the Gap, Vesk Prime still has dangers, and the

capital of the Veskarium is not as safe or peaceful as it outwardly appears. Vesk remain a bellicose people, and their value on honor means duels are a common occurrence, especially between vesk and visitors who are unfamiliar with vesk culture and unwittingly cause offense. More rarely, vesk blood feuds ensnare off-worlders as well, and non-vesk can end up as collateral casualties due to existing relationships with vesk friends or associates who are the targets of such feuds. Crime is another, though less frequent, danger, from street gangs in the run-down neighborhoods of Vesk Prime's largest cities to organized crime organizations like the Keepers of the Lie (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #16 40). Fortunately, the Veskarium's Division of Criminal Extirpation, the peacekeeping agency known colloquially as "the Hammers," keeps a close eye on such criminal elements and can be deployed by the high despot of Vesk Prime as she sees fit—particularly to deal with vesk criminals who flout the authoritarian strictures of vesk society.

Of course, not all of the Veskarium's conquered species are happy with their reptilian overlords, and several resistance groups are active on Vesk Prime, such as the Hidden Hand, an alleged underground skittermander organization, and the pahtra-dominated Pulong Independence Front. The Veskarium's Division of Disloyal Organizations does its best to root out these pockets of sedition in the imperial capital, but new resistance cells regularly replace those the government uncovers, and terrorist attacks in the very heart of the empire remain a constant threat.

While Vesk Prime is a mostly developed world, vast swaths of wilderness are preserved for those vesk (or others) who wish to test themselves against nature itself, much as their predatory ancestors did. These hunting reserves are stocked with a variety of dangerous creatures from across the Veskarium and beyond, including the aggressive armored thyreophorans native to Vesk Prime called rageshkors, defrexes (*Alien Archive* 3 12) from Vesk-2, stridermanders (*Alien Archive* 3 104) (which vesk call strovions) from Vesk-3, and nyssholoras (*Alien Archive* 2 86) from Castrovel. While hunting safaris organized for non-vesk visitors are relatively safe, unaccompanied forays into these backcountry areas can be deadly for the ill-prepared.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are some prominent sites of interest on Vesk Prime.

Blood Mountain

The headquarters of the Blood Mountain Clans has been located on the slopes of this volcano in the Doshkoraz Mountains since before the Gap. A major and influential corporation in the Veskarium's military-industrial complex, the Blood Mountain Clans have built spaceships for the Veskarium since vesk first turned their eyes to the conquest of other worlds. Now, they produce Drift-capable military starships, like the well-known BMC Mauler, for both the Veskarium's military and for private sale. The Blood Mountain Clans are currently developing a new state-of-the-art battlecruiser for the military, and several of BMC's competitors are quietly looking for independent contractors willing to engage in industrial espionage in exchange for handsome compensation.

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Cenotaph of the Fallen

A towering obelisk of pure adamantine surrounded by a paved plaza in the center of Command Prime (see below), the Cenotaph of the Fallen is a memorial honoring all of the warriors who have died in battle during the Veskarium's many wars and conquests. An honor guard of decorated vesk soldiers guard the monument 28 hours a day. Considered a sacred site by the church of Damoritosh, the cenotaph houses a shrine to the Conqueror in its base. Priests of Damoritosh maintain the site and host regular religious services in the shrine. The Cenotaph of the Fallen is the focal point for many remembrance celebrations and state holidays, such as the Day of Glory on the 1st of Vaskalan-esk, when the emperor (or these days, the high despot of Vesk Prime) visits the cenotaph to ritually sacrifice armor and weapons to Damoritosh in honor of the fallen. Recently, anti-Veskarium graffiti has mysteriously and repeatedly appeared on the sides of the cenotaph, even after the priesthood of Damoritosh has dutifully cleaned the monument. Neither the cenotaph's honor guard nor the priests have witnessed anyone engaging in such acts of vandalism, but the Division of Disloyal Organizations is investigating the mystery.

Command Prime

A sprawling metropolis and vast military installation in the center of the ancestral vesk heartland, Command Prime is the capital city of the Veskarium and one of the empire's largest population centers. Rising up from the center of the metropolis is the structure that gives the city its name: Command Prime itself, a huge pyramidal fortress that is the official residence of High Despot Vindaskayo Swarmripper and the headquarters of the Veskarium military's central command. Most of the day-to-day governance of the empire is carried out from Command (as most people call the military headquarters to distinguish it from the city, which locals usually just call Prime). As well as its aboveground floors, Command contains a classified number of deep, shielded subterranean levels that are reportedly able to withstand even orbital bombardment.

As the capital city of the Veskarium, Command Prime is a symbol of the empire's strength and glory, with long, straight avenues laid out in a grid and lined with statues, memorials, museums, gladiator arenas, and the imposing facades of government ministries and military agencies. Significant sites in Command Prime include the Cenotaph of the Fallen (see above); the Grand Archives of the Veskarium, which contains digital and written documents recording the history of the Veskarium since its pre-Gap founding (as well as blank or contradictory records from the time period of the Gap itself); the Imperial Cemetery, a huge expanse of raked sand interspersed with simple stone grave markers where the most honored and decorated veterans of the Veskarium's military are interred; the Imperial Palace (see below); and the Museum of Conquest (page 25). Some of the Veskarium's most esteemed combat colleges, military academies, research institutes, and civilian universities are located in Command Prime as well, along with a thriving creative community that showcases the art and culture of both vesk and other species from across the Veskarium in venues across the city. Command Prime also includes Vesk

Prime's largest spaceport, making the city a hub of interstellar commerce and diplomacy.

COMMAND PRIME

LE imperial capital city

Population 130,506,000 (83% vesk, 8% skittermander, 5% pahtra, 4% other)

Government military autocracy (High Despot Vindaskayo Swarmripper)

Qualities bureaucratic, cultured, military, spaceport, technologically advanced

Maximum Item Level 20th

QUALITIES

Military The settlement is associated with a nearby military installation or is itself a military base, its economy is centered on the military, and its residents may include a garrison of military troops.

Spaceport The settlement is home to a major spaceport that supports Drift-capable starships and enables interplanetary and interstellar trade with settlements on other worlds.

Great Hall of the Conqueror

Located on the sacred Isle of Kesh, the Great Hall of the Conqueror is the principal cathedral of the Church of Damoritosh and the center of the Grim Commander's faith. Founded by the mythical prophet Evrokama, who is said to have first brought the worship of Damoritosh to the vesk people, the Great Hall is also the diocese of Primate-General **Ahadigar "the Iron Chaplain"** (LE male vesk mystic/soldier), the Commander of the Faith and head of the galactic Church of Damoritosh. The Great Hall is the model for most other Damoritosh temples in the Veskarium, though on a much grander scale. The structure is easily fortified and bunker-like, built to withstand a siege. Its walls are lined with armor, weapons, and war trophies donated to the temple by devout worshippers. The Great Hall runs its own respected military academy, and the mercenary-priests who graduate from its grueling curriculum are highly regarded. Recently, the priests of two sects with different interpretations of Damoritosh's dogma battled inside the Great Hall of the Conqueror, resulting in over a hundred deaths and creating a schism in the church. The surviving members of the defeated sect, now calling themselves the Dishonored, were banished to the depths of the Vaaranas Desert, but they have vowed to return and seize control of both the Great Hall and the entire Church of Damoritosh.

Imperial Palace

Facing the fortress-pyramid of Command Prime (see above) across a long field called the Parade Ground, the Imperial Palace is the seat of the Veskarium's government and official residence of the emperor—when there is one to rule the empire. Traditionally, the Council of Despots meets in the Imperial Palace, which also contains quarters for the empire's high despots, but these days, the high despots usually meet and stay at Command Prime when they visit Vesk Prime. A small imperial household maintains the palace even in the absence of an emperor, but the palace sees little regular use other than for official ceremonies and state visits. The Imperial Palace is rumored to be haunted by

the ghosts of several of the Veskarium's past emperors, including that of Yokagari the Headless, who was beheaded by his own Council of Despots for treason against the empire.

Jukulan Mine

The Jukulan Mine, the deepest mine on Vesk Prime, harvests gold and is one of several profitable mines among the mountains of the Dmolangari Wall. Recently, miners at Jukulan broke through into a series of subhorizontal passages 10,000 feet below ground—the deepest natural cave system ever discovered on the planet. Upon returning to the surface, the miners reported finding what looked like an inhabited city in the deep caverns. When a team of archaeologists sent into the mine to explore this city failed to return, the military immediately took control of the mine and suppressed all news about the site. Fearing that the miners may have uncovered a lost city from Vesk Prime's ancient past—one possibly still inhabited by surviving members of the hated caiagara race—the military is currently assembling a team of soldiers and scientists to investigate the city and, if necessary, destroy it and every living thing inside it.

Museum of Conquest

A monument to the might of empire, the grandiose Museum of Conquest in Command Prime (page 24) is filled with exhibits extolling the glorious history of the Veskarium's military and containing trophies and relics plundered from the planets the Veskarium has conquered during its long history. Key highlights of the museum's collection include the Iron Doshko, an ancient five-bladed doshko supposedly wielded by the Veskarium's first emperor, Eshovok; the preserved exoskeleton of the last skerasken king on Vesk Prime; the *Aberanderen Helm*, a technomagical relic of the so-called Forerunners of Vesk-3 (page 32); and the shimmerstone orrery from Vesk-7, a model of the Ghavaniska system constructed entirely from translucent blue shimmerstone (*Alien Archive 3* 65). Smaller satellite museums on each of the Veskarium's worlds highlight the superiority of vesk culture and contain more localized exhibits and artifacts. These museums are often the targets of protest by the non-vesk inhabitants of those worlds who see the museums as symbols of vesk subjugation and repositories of their own stolen cultural heritage.

Pantheon of Honor

Built in the earliest days of the empire before the Gap, on the site of the ruined capital of the defeated skerasken kingdom, this ancient stone building houses statues of the Veskarium's greatest generals and warriors. But those sculptures of heroes from the time period obscured by the Gap have either disappeared completely or are formless lumps of bronze or stone with no discernible features, accompanied by plaques that once enumerated their names and great deeds but are now blank. Only one complete statue remains from the time of the Gap in the Pantheon of Honor, but it is just as mysterious as the Gap itself. The statue depicts an unknown quadrupedal reptilian alien that bears little resemblance to the vesk or any species they have encountered to date, and its nameplate is engraved with just a single word: "Serenity."

Sorotos Island

House Sorotos is one of the Veskarium's few surviving Prime Houses (page 23), and they have ruled this large island in the North Sokora Sea since the first emperor Eshovok granted it to the family's progenitor in the time before the Gap. In addition to being the family's ancestral seat, Sorotos Island is the home of one of Vesk Prime's most prestigious private military academies. General **Yragazaya Sorotos** (LN female vesk vanguard^{COM}), now retired from the military, is the commandant of the Sorotos Academy, which is famous for the highly trained vanguards (*Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 50) it produces. Although nothing conclusive can be traced back to them, the ambitious and extremist Abazobari family (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #15 47) has begun a campaign to discredit House Sorotos and increase their own influence at the Prime House's expense.



AHADIGAR "THE IRON CHAPLAIN"

WELCOME TO
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THE
VESKARIUM

WORLDS OF
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VESK-2

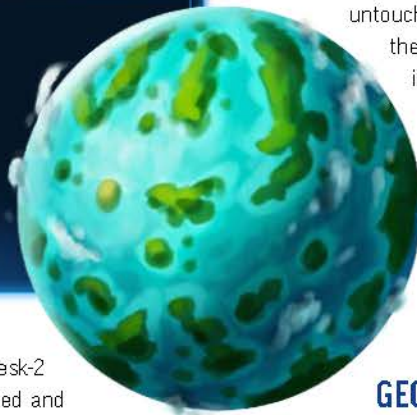
Diameter: $\times 5/8$

Mass: $\times 2/5$

Gravity: $\times 1$

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 1 day, **Year:** 4 years



The second planet orbiting Ghavaniska, Vesk-2 is a watery world, with an interconnected and shallow salty ocean covering much of the planet's surface. Dry land on Vesk-2 mostly consists of gently rolling islands, even the largest of which are too small and inundated with sloshing saltwater to be called true continents. The planet's atmosphere is largely warm and tranquil and rather welcoming to those used to harsher locales. Vesk-2 has no axial tilt, so its climate bands proceed north and south from the equator to the cold but iceless poles.

The sapient natives of Vesk-2, the squid-like *ijtikris* (*Alien Archive* 3 54), originally called this home world *Iji*. They had only rudimentary technology when vesk conquered their world before the Gap, but despite the age of that conquest, much of Vesk-2 remains untamed. Strange, ancient ruins that predate *ijtikri* culture dot some of Vesk-2's islands, remaining

untouched despite their commonality and hinting at the possibility of another sapient species that inhabited and dominated areas of the planet in the distant past. No other evidence of such a species has turned up, but similar ruins can be found on Vesk-5.3, a moon of the gas giant Vesk-5 (page 44), supporting the idea that this species had an advanced civilization—and that something cataclysmic may have happened to precipitate their extinction.

GEOGRAPHY

Vesk-2 is a terrestrial planet with no moons. Water covers most of the planet's surface, and its oceans are calm, shallow, and sun warmed. Because there are no tides, the water remains motionless, rather than shifting in its basin as it might on a planet with natural satellites. Even where the land is more than just islands and archipelagos, it is a wet and soggy environment. Marshland—salt marsh, brackish marshes, or freshwater swamps—is quite common on Vesk-2, and highlands on the planet are rare. In equatorial and temperate regions, marshland plants, especially grasses, grow strong and tall and are among the most frequent of the planet's scenery.

The surface structure and weather of Vesk-2 are still confusing to scientists. The planet's surface is very stable, as Vesk-2 has less tectonic and volcanic activity than usual for a

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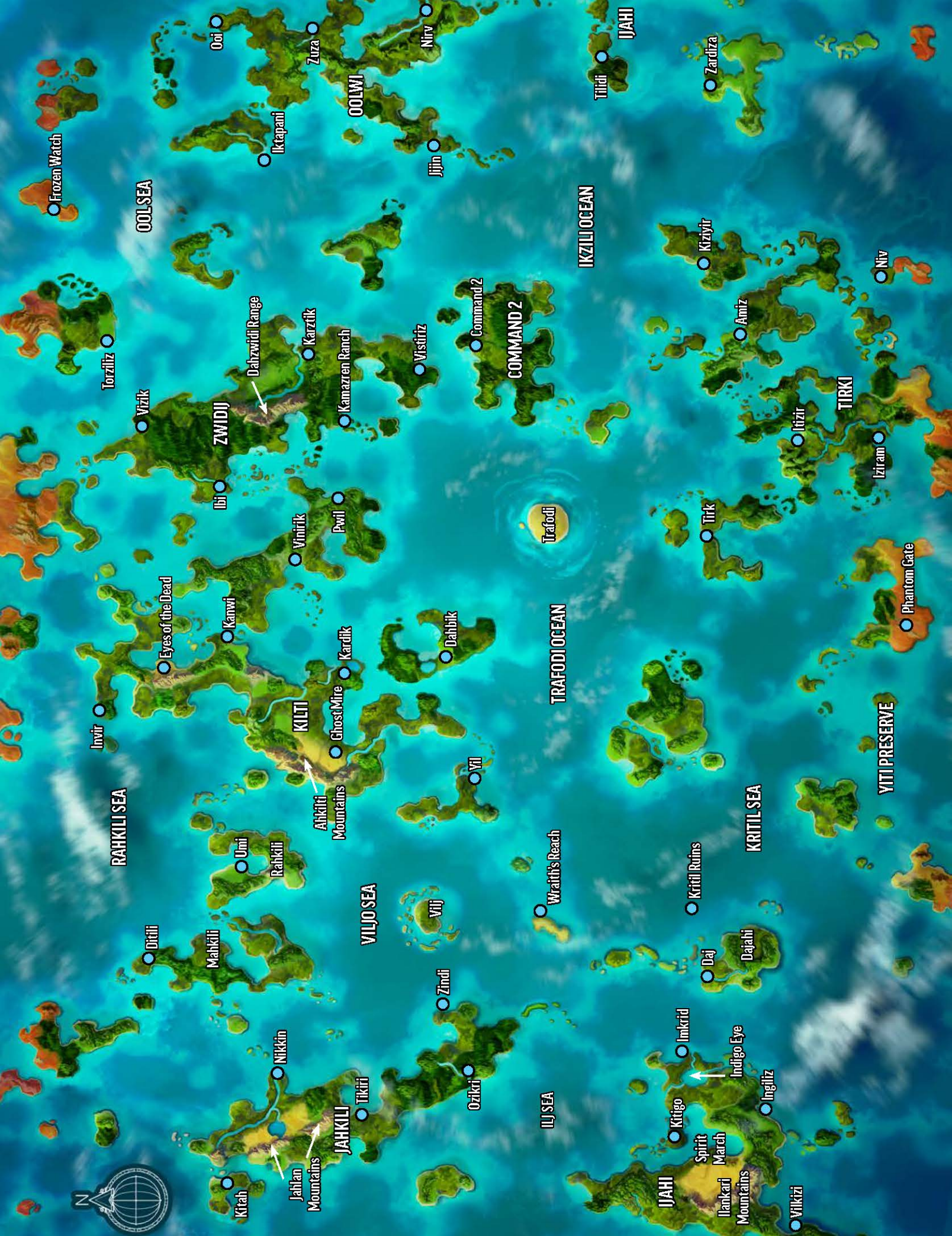
PLAYER
OPTIONS

terrestrial world. It also lacks an abundance of minerals and heavy elements, making the planet less dense than normal. The weather on Vesk-2, especially near the equator, is milder in temperature and less stormy than it should be, given the amount of water that covers the planet's surface. The poles are cold, but Vesk-2 has no ice caps. Some of Vesk-2's deserts are also climatologically anomalous, and they invariably contain sites of the planet's mysterious ruins. Most of these remnants are no more than paved plazas and foundations on the surface. Radiation fluctuates and can rise to dangerous levels in parts of these arid lands. Other unusual electromagnetic phenomena have also been observed in proximity to these places, along with unexplained space-time distortions, leading some to wonder if these are natural occurrences or vestiges of the mysterious, long-gone civilization that built the ruins dotting the planet.

When it conquered and subsumed the planet into the vesk empire, the Veskarium divided Vesk-2 into seven administrative regions based around the planet's largest islands, but these regions include numerous smaller archipelagos and islets. Although they renamed Iji to Vesk-2, vesk retained many native ijtikri names for regions and settlements on the planet. One such place is Jahkili, which is an island of swampy equatorial jungles and temperate northerly lowlands in the northern hemisphere. The Jahkili region also includes the marshy islands of Mahkili, Rahkili, and Vilj, which all hearken back to ijtikri names, as well as

the ruins of Wraith's Reach. The cliffs of mountainous Kilti rise from the waters of the Rahkili Sea to the east. The Eyes of the Dead and the Ghost Mire (page 30) are the sites of two major ruins on Kilti. Farther east is the island of Zwidij, known for its forested swamps that remain partially flooded year-round. The ruins of Frozen Watch lie on a barren island northeast of Zwidij. Continuing east across the Ool Sea, Oolwi stretches from a subtropical south to a temperate north, with a central band of high, dry land.

In the southern hemisphere of Vesk-2, the Ijahi region lies south of Oolwi. The region incorporates two major islands, Dajahi and Ijahi, both with a large stretch of arable land that sits relatively high above sea level. Ijahi was once home to one of the more sophisticated and mightier ijtikri city-states, which once boasted a robust population of ijtikri hailing from across the globe, and its interior contains one of the planet's largest deserts, the Spirit March. The submerged ruins of Kritil (page 31) lie just offshore of Dajahi, beneath the waters of the Kritil Sea. Across the Ikzili Ocean to the west is Tirki, a mostly temperate forested region that gives way to marshy tundra in the extreme south. The seventh region includes the equatorial island of Command 2 (page 30), the planetary capital and headquarters of the Veskarium's military on Vesk-2, and the most political relevant city on the planet. The restricted isle of Trafodi (page 31) and the protected islands of the Yiti Preserve (page 31) in the Trafodi Ocean fall under Command 2's administrative control.



Frozen Watch

OOL SEA

Ooi

Zuzza

Nirv

OOLWI

Iktapani

Jijin

Tiidi

IJAHJI

Zardira

Torziliz

Vizik

Ibi

ZWIDIJ

Dahzwidi Range

Karzlik

Kamazren Ranch

Vistriz

Command 2

COMMAND 2

Kiziyir

Amiz

Niv

Izizir

Iziram

TIRKI

Tirk

Phantom Gate

Invir

Eyes of the Dead

Kanwi

Vimirik

Pwl

Kardik

Dahbik

Trafodi

TRAFODI OCEAN

RAHKILI SEA

Invir

Umi

Rahkili

KILTI

GhostMire

Kardik

Vil

VIJJO SEA

Mahkili

Dikili

Umi

Rahkili

JAHKILI

Tikiri

Nikkin

Mahkili

Vij

Zndi

Ozikiri

IJU SEA

Wraith's Reach

Kritil Ruins

KRITIL SEA

Daj

Dajahi

YITI PRESERVE

Imkrid

Kitigo

Spirit March

Indigo Eye

Ingiliz

Vilikizi

IJan kari Mountains

IJAHJI



RESIDENTS

Ijtikris are Vesk-2's only native sapient species, but vesk have ruled and been present on the planet for many centuries. Because of the ijtikri life cycle, which leads extremely impressionable juvenile ijtikris to seek guidance and acceptance from whatever sapient creatures they first encounter, the two species are highly integrated. Vesk lead and ijtikris follow, and members of each species accept and don't question this natural hierarchy.

Despite this, however, ijtikris live independent and full lives on Vesk-2, largely unmolested from any tyranny or overbearing policy that one might assume the vesk would impose. The conquest of Iji was long ago, nearly forgotten except in ancient pre-Gap histories. In fact, most ijtikris on the planet consider vesk to have always ruled and their people to have also followed, even though the distant past proves this once wasn't the case. This fact, and because ijtikris assimilate so naturally with others, including their vesk overlords, means that life on Vesk-2 is socially harmonious for most residents. Few ijtikris feel oppressed—on the contrary, the social order of Vesk-2 seems proper, even comfortable, to them. Most are content in their vocations, whether they are aqua- or agriculturists, artisans, bureaucrats, explorers, scientists, technicians, or even soldiers. In general, ijtikri are happy to perform their assigned vocational duties as a service to the cohesiveness of society at large. Advanced medicine has made ijtikri life even better, from the point of view of many. The natural ijtikri life cycle once mandated that eggs were always laid in the open sea, and the laying of eggs always resulted in the death of the adult ijtikri, but these practices are no longer required for reproduction; ijtikris remain free, however, to observe these practices, if they desire.

Vesk lead similarly relaxed lives on Vesk-2. Ruling the compliant ijtikris is an easy task, and this calm world offers wild places of inspiring beauty that challenge athletes, explorers, hunters, and warriors alike. Vesk who have roots on Vesk-2 take as much pride in their home's natural splendor as ijtikris do, and many consider the ijtikris to be more their kin than fellow vesk from other areas of the empire. For its part, the Veskarium officially frowns on such attitudes, but because this cultural milieu has never led to actual tension in the empire or on Vesk-2, the leaders back on Vesk Prime have turned a blind eye to it for now.

Vesk who call this planet their generational home often consider themselves grateful to hail from one of the empire's more idyllic lands with such a rich native culture. Vesk-2 is also a popular vacation destination for vesk across the galaxy. Many areas that particularly welcome offworld vesk are rife with rugged nature preserves, resorts that emphasize the planet's natural beauty, and various cutting-edge beauty techniques and treatments, from a wide variety of masks made with local mud to full-body saltwater soaks.

Most other residents of Vesk-2 are temporary visitors who have come to see the planet based on its reputation as a place of wild majesty and rugged pleasures. Some of these tourists have imported the Green Faith to Vesk-2. Vesk have thus far tolerated this philosophy, which is generally good for

the planet's welfare and has yet to come into conflict with the predominant beliefs of the Veskarium.

SOCIETY

When vesk first conquered Vesk-2, ijtikris lived mostly in marshland settlements built out into the shallow seas. They practiced aquaculture and had made great strides in astronomy, biology, mathematics, and medicine, but they lacked abundant metal and their most technological personal weapons were crossbows. Various ijtikri city-states claimed territory across the planet, with less-developed settlements inhabiting smaller areas between them. Ijtikri city-states had their own names, often drawn from the long legacy of their presence in the area. The city-states maintained staunch alliances and rivalries, and each had differing levels of technology. However, the worldwide political influence of each city-state was small, and the ijtikris had even less power. When vesk arrived, they faced little resistance from the technologically inferior ijtikris, and vesk imposed their own government and culture, easily and fully subsuming the planet into the Veskarium in fairly short order.

The government of Vesk-2 is a military autocracy, with High Despot **Blesnaya Sobok** (LN female vesk mystic) as the current ruler. While Command 2 is the domain of the high despot, military governors oversee Vesk-2's other six administrative regions. These officers serve at the whim of the high despot, remaining in place only if they implement her edicts in ways she finds acceptable. In practice, however, the amenable population and economic prosperity of Vesk-2 make High Despot Sobok's job easy, and she takes a relaxed approach to rulership, giving the regional governors, including her daughter Brigadier **Alonya Sobok** (LE female vesk soldier), great leeway and personal authority.

Modern ijtikri culture is essentially a subset of vesk culture, with some unique roles apportioned to the ijtikris. Many ijtikris are still born without parents, sometimes in the open ocean, and they imprint on the first adults they come across when they leave their birthplace. This allows vesk to easily influence ijtikris by intercepting juveniles and teaching them the ways of the Veskarium. From a contemporary perspective, vesk were careless in their subjugation of ijtikri culture and have all but destroyed it. Only the careful records of a few vesk xenanthropologists preserve any of the traditional practices of ijtikris, and much of this historical accounting was lost during the Gap.

Many settlements on Vesk-2, while updated to current technical standards, still mimic the original ijtikri towns. Built on coastal marshes or plains, Vesk-2's cities feature vesk architectural styles augmented with ijtikri sensibilities. For example, many buildings are raised on supports so they remain above wetlands but still provide easy access to the water.

Vesk-2 is a breadbasket for the Veskarium, as well as a major source of salt. Fish and algae farms line the coasts, and dry land irrigated with brackish water hosts farms of native and salt-tolerant fruits, grains, and vegetables. Vesk-2 is famous across the galaxy for its ranches, where the planet's fierce defrexes (*Alien Archive* 3 12) are raised to produce rugged materials for durable outerwear, including modern armor.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Most conflicts on Vesk-2 involve encounters with predatory fauna. Wild defrexes are a threat in almost every forested region on the planet. Although most ocean predators are less aggressive, the crimson yiriki is a dangerous ray-like predator of equatorial waters, using its innate ability to control water to hinder and digest prey.

Although ijtikris are among the most compliant vassals of the Veskarium, they most commonly come into verbal conflict with vesk over the mysterious ruins that dot Vesk-2. Ijtikris have an ingrained antipathy for these ancient sites, but vesk have no such aversion and have explored many of the planet's ruins. Mutant strains of local fauna have been encountered within the ruins and in the deserts surrounding them. More bizarre, altered monsters known to come from other parts of the galaxy have also appeared in these sites, especially on and around the island of Trafodi (page 31). Those who wish to delve into these ancient ruins must gain the permission of the local Veskarium governor, and these public records quickly come to the attention of ijtikris who protest the invasions. None of these protests have risen to violent levels, but they have created enough political pressure that most examinations of the ruins have been in the form of surveys rather than true archaeological digs.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following notable locations can be found on Vesk-2.

Command 2

The capital of Vesk-2, Command 2 is the name of a military base, a city, and the large island that holds both. Sprawling but neatly planned suburbs surround this center of vesk power for many miles, stretching into the shallow waters surrounding the point on which the city stands. In addition to its high volume of residential homes, Command 2 is the seat of the Veskarium's military government on Vesk-2 and it is the domain of High Despot Blesnaya Sobok. Command 2 also houses Vesk-2's main spaceport, which bustles at all hours of the day and night with Veskarium officials, local vesk embarking on holiday and business travel, ijtikris coming and going as they please, and offworlders arriving for a relaxing vacation among the marshlands or returning from such, often glancing back with regret at leaving the serene world behind. As a result, Command 2 is a cosmopolitan and mostly peaceful city, sporting vesk architecture, sections that emphasize ijtikri style, and places where the two merge, perfectly illustrating the harmony between the conquering species and those who lived here long before. Ijtikris outnumber vesk in the city and fill roles throughout much of the city's hierarchy, excluding only the top tiers of the military bureaucracy.

The island of Command 2 is beautiful and offers a rich variety of experiences available only on Vesk-2. While an arc of land west of the city was designated a public park long ago, the densely forested island outside the city is the habitat of countless wild defrexes that includes hunting preserves and

safari tours. Everyone must file proper requests and acquire licenses to enter the wilds of Command 2, however. Other parts of the island house military test ranges and government research areas and are forbidden to civilians and visitors.

COMMAND 2

LN military city

Population 7,159,000 (58% ijtikri, 39% vesk, 3% other)

Government military autocracy (High Despot Blesnaya Sobok)

Qualities insular, military (page 24), spaceport (page 24), technologically average

Maximum Item Level 18th

Ghost Mire

Foundations of one of Vesk-2's ruins, called the Ghost Mire, peek above an arid marsh in the rain shadow of the Ahkilti Mountains on the island of Kilti. Ijtikris often refer to the ruins and the deserts around them in ways related to death and the supernatural. Vesk long chalked this convention up to superstition, but those who have returned from exploring the Ghost Mire have reported spectral apparitions wandering the night, especially when the weather is conducive for the marshland's notorious mists. In some cases, these apparitions have turned hostile, pulling victims into the fog to become ghosts themselves. Other stories say the "spirits" of the Ghost Mire are psychic remnants, some dangerous but none intentionally so. The most bizarre aspect of these phantoms is that most of them resemble large humanoids that are neither ijtikris nor vesk.

Indigo Eye

In northwestern Ijahi, west of the coastal city of Imkrid, is the Indigo Eye, a circular sinkhole lake easily mistaken for a karst formation. This enormous open cave is almost 50 miles across, with a flat bottom more than 600 feet down. Fresh water flows in vast quantities from underground springs filling the lake, then overflows the basin and forms three rivers flowing in different directions. While the sinkhole appears to be a natural formation to untrained eyes, geologists have determined that the Indigo Eye is artificial in construction, and that someone or something excavated it in Vesk-2's prehistory, with some estimates placing its construction more than 100,000 years ago. Adventurers and scientists have long looked for clues to the Eye's origin hidden in the sinkhole's walls or floor, but have so far found nothing but a few stones carved with indecipherable symbols, which may or may not be relics of the Eye's mysterious builders.

Kamazren Ranch

Once home to a large population of wild defrexes, the flooded swamp-forests of Zwidij are now the center of domesticated defrex ranching. One of the largest and most well known of these ranches is that owned and operated by the Kamazren family, which has been raising the aggressive predators for centuries. The current head of the family, **Oromeras Kamazren** (CG female vesk operative), lost an arm to a defrex when she was younger, but she's considered one of the best defrex handlers on Vesk-2. Oromeros claims to have developed a technique for fully

domesticating the notoriously untamable creatures but refuses to share any details of what she calls "a trade secret."

Kritil Ruins

These ruins off the coast of the island of Dajahi share many similarities with other ruined sites on Vesk-2, except they are submerged beneath over 100 feet of water in the Kritil Sea. There is no apparent explanation why these ruins are submerged while others are on dry ground, but their most interesting feature is an intact statue of an adult Ijtikri in the final reproductive stage of its life cycle, floating untethered 30 feet above a paved stone plaza. Ijtikris claim to know nothing of the statue's origins, and avoid the ruins of Kritil as they do Vesk-2's other ruins, but the statue's presence has prompted some scholars to hypothesize that some link may exist between Ijtikris and the mysterious culture that built Vesk-2's ruins.

Trafodi

Situated east of the island of Command 2, the rocky desert island of Trafodi rises from some of the deepest waters on Vesk-2. The circular isle seems like a spire that grew up from the seabed, with its top sheared off by some unknown force to create a flat island. Trafodi has few prominent natural features, other than its beaches of white sand that drop off quickly into the depths of the ocean. Like other sites on Vesk-2, Trafodi contains the ruins of paved plazas of pale stone amid low foundations, but unlike every other known ruin on the planet, Trafodi also holds intact, standing structures, all centered on a symmetrical stone edifice the original vesk surveyors dubbed the Trafodi Turret. Radiation and electromagnetic disturbances emanate from the Trafodi Turret, and the nearby ocean suffers some of the worst weather on Vesk-2. These atmospheric anomalies have been known to rise without warning and behave in ways contrary to prevailing meteorological and climate patterns.

The first vesk survey team sent to Trafodi disappeared along with all their gear and vehicles. Members of the second team suffered the same fate, but that expeditionary force was able to secure the island and breach the Trafodi Turret, discovering the mysterious orb called the *Trafodi Paradox* (*Starfinder* Armory 119) in one of the tower's upper vaults. Since that artifact was removed from the island long ago, Trafodi has become more hostile. For miles around the isle, sea creatures are aggressive, unusual in size, and often mutated. The infamous Trafodi Serpent is among these monsters, although most believe this "dragon" to be apocryphal. Crimson yirikis densely populate Trafodi's waters, and some biologists suspect the species originated there. Even short-term survival on the island is difficult, and numerous vessels disappear in its vicinity every year. Vesk patrols keep civilians away, and approaching the island without special dispensation from the government is a high crime, meriting prison time and permanent exile from Vesk-2.

Yiti Preserve

These southern islands between Ijahi and Tirki were only sparsely inhabited before the vesk conquest and remain wild

by government decree. Part of Command 2's administrative region, this preserve includes a variety of terrain, from temperate forests to southern tundra, and is home to uncounted defrexes and other fierce fauna. While a license is required to visit the preserve, it is easy to acquire, with little in the way of bureaucracy or other governmental hurdles to overcome. Despite that, the Yiti Preserve holds numerous criminal and poaching dens, making defrexes the least worrisome danger in some areas. Priests of the Green Faith have repeatedly sought permission to establish a sacred site in the preserve, but the high despot has refused all such requests. One of the southernmost islands in the preserve contains the ruins of Phantom Gate, named for a stone archway that still stands amid the ruin's other razed foundations. Some visitors have claimed to witness inexplicable energy fields appearing within the arch at times of celestial alignment, but such reports have not been scientifically verified.



OROMERAS KAMAZREN

WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACE

THE
VESKARIUM

WORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS



VESK-3

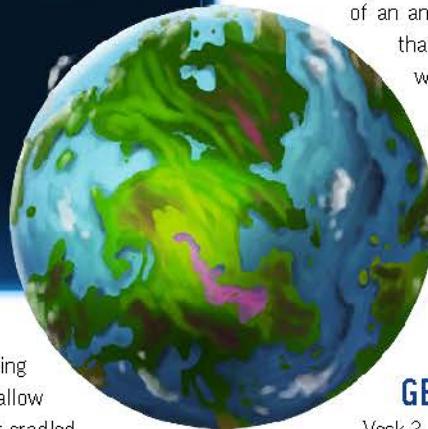
Diameter: $\times 9/10$

Mass: $\times 1-1/4$

Gravity: $\times 1-1/2$

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 28 hours; **Year:** 6 years



From orbit, Vesk-3 looks like a sparkling jewel thanks to its expansive forests, shallow oceans, and the distinctive pink sea that cradled its earliest civilizations. Constant volcanic activity fills the land and sea with abundant nutrients, and warm oceans churn out dense rainclouds that shroud half the planet. Combined with almost no axial tilt, Vesk-3 is a garden world, saturated in a constant, rainy spring and lush with plant life. Outsiders might expect such a planet to be a paradise, but vesk know all too well the frustrations of holding this valuable gem, home to ever-helpful skittermanders (*Alien Archive* 106) who still call their world Oeddertchonk.

Vesk-3's relative comfort came at great price. Millions of years ago, a massive asteroid that somehow escaped the gravitational pull of nearby Vesk-4 collided with Vesk-3 and realigned the planet's axis to its current position. Skittermander myths tell

of an ancient civilization they call the Forerunners that died in the rain of fire and centuries-long winter that followed, but many of the planet's life-forms survived the catastrophe by fleeing into the new cavern systems created by the shattering of the continental plates. A boom in evolution followed as skittermanders and other species moved into new environmental niches and adapted to take advantage of the rich soil spread across the globe.

GEOGRAPHY

Vesk-3 is a dense terrestrial world with a high content of heavy metals, including gold, iridium, mercury, and uranium. These heavy metals fuel a nuclear core that generates constant but low-key tectonic activity. Most of this volcanism manifests as gas seeps, hot springs, oceanic vents, and minor tremors, which are common across the planet. Vesk-3's relatively high gravity and constant tectonic shifts equalize much of its surface, capping mountain height and limiting the depths of the ocean.

With both verdant wilderness and dense urban megaplexes, Vesk-3 is a world of stark contrasts. Two primary continents define most of Vesk-3: sprawling Aberanderen and the smaller Kavarit. Thousands of small islands line almost every coastline, save for the western coast of Kavarit, where the continental

WELCOME TO
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shelf drops off sharply into the ocean. Aberanderen stretches almost from pole to pole. Hills, valleys, and low mountain ranges ripple across much of the northern half, broken up by massive forests, while ancient plateaus shattered by the asteroid impact, called the Cloud Islands (page 36), fill much of the southern interior. Two "arms" of land—Siksos Valen in the east and Otokorro to the west—that spin off from Aberanderen's main landmass are mostly mild, windswept lowlands of lush fields and rainforest. Aberanderen hosts the majority of the planet's skittermander population and contains huge mega-farms that help feed the Veskarium.

Cracked in half by the ancient asteroid impact which formed the Basin Sea (page 36), Kavarit is a rockier continent with more active volcanoes, deep canyons, and enormous mineral wealth. The Veskarium established their planetary capital and other cities, along with mines and light industry, on Kavarit, especially along the shores of the Basin Sea.

Vesk-3 has two major oceans, the Oedderttosch and the Veneratosch, and nine seas. Several of these are inland seas, most notably the Vermilion Sea. The waters of this warm, shallow sea have a rich, pink hue thanks to dense mineral deposits and the algae that feeds upon it. Oeddertchonk's earliest civilizations, from the Forerunners to skittermanders, arose on the shores of the Vermilion Sea, and the oldest cities still line its coasts. Skittermanders regard the Vermilion as sacred, and those who travel offworld often bring along a vial of its iconic waters as a good luck charm. Most of Vesk-3's bodies

of water are shallow; only the Veneratosch Ocean and the Basin Sea are more than a few hundred meters in depth.

A third region lies deep beneath the surface of Vesk-3. Skittermanders named this hidden world Gadraveech after the worst of their eight afterlives. This extensive network of tunnels and caverns—some larger than many surface cities—stretches across the planet and is a dark, twisting place of isolation and cruelty. Many of the planet's fauna survived isolated in Gadraveech in after the asteroid impact—including skittermanders' evolutionary cousins, the feared stridermanders (*Alien Archive* 3 104). A strange and dangerous ecosystem still endures in Gadraveech, clustered around warm volcanic lakes and underground rivers, and the Veskarium has seen little purpose in taming this strange frontier, though thrill seekers and big game hunters sometimes brave its depths to bring back trophies.

Vesk-3 has two small moons, which skittermanders call the Big Mother and the Firstborn (and which the vesk have renamed Vesk-3.1 and Vesk-3.2, respectively). The Veskarium maintains most of its planetary defenses on Vesk-3.1—or Big Mama, as vesk gunners call it—well out of the reach of any "helpful" skittermander defenders.

RESIDENTS

Although Vesk-3 was the third planet conquered by the Veskarium, it remains one of the most difficult to rule thanks to its indigenous population of skittermanders. Vesk have focused their colonial efforts on Kavarit, leaving skittermanders largely

OEDDERTOSCH OCEAN

- Vesk Cities
- Skittermander Communities

OEDDERTOSCH OCEAN



Glory Peaks

Dozad

Sankittmanara

Ewagadravona

BLACK EYE SEA

ABERANDEREN

Father's Arms Mountains

VERMILION SEA

Morandomandrana

Tiztiet

Nahana-ahan

OLD SEA

CRESCENT SEA

OTOKORRO

Obitanasho

VENERATOSCH OCEAN

ENDLESS SEA

Zoshanesk

Ridgeback Mountains

BASIN SEA

Skotana

Zayada

Command 3

Ruins of Tok

TRIANGLE SEA

Torath Vo

Torath Archipelago

SIKSOS VALEN

MISTY SEA

ICE SEA

CLOUD ISLANDS

Exoto

Dareeskana

Skaranan Archipelago

autonomous on their native continent of Aberanderen. Over half a billion vesk live on Vesk-3, mostly clustered around the megacity of Command 3 (page 37), supporting the large infrastructure projects that transfer the planet's wealth to support the empire.

The skittermanders far outnumber their vesk overlords, but they generally don't seem to understand the significance of their conquest. Vesk bureaucrats still argue if skittermanders have a single planetary government or countless chaotic city-states. As elsewhere in the Veskarium, many skittermanders serve the empire in various clerical and administrative roles on Vesk-3, helping vesk manage the planet.

Most of Vesk-3's indigenous life-forms have eight limbs like skittermanders. Stridermanders (called strovions by vesk), which prey on their skittermanders cousins, demonstrate the effectiveness of this design in predators. Skittermanders believe that even the mythical Forerunners possessed this body structure, with four arms and four legs, though they stood nearly as tall as vesk. Several large carnivores inhabit the tunnels of Gadraveech, coming to the surface seasonally. Eight-finned aquatic mammals, like the massive comanner and the sly etetet, rule the oceans alongside a variety of giant isopods and anemone-like carnivorous plants. In addition, skittermanders have domesticated two species of eight-legged herbivores: the bovine monouxes and the hircine achabrils, both of which skittermanders raise for meat as well as the silk and poison they respectively produce.

SOCIETY

The Veskarium has established several large cities on Vesk-3 focused around colonial efforts, generally farming and mining. These boxy, industrial megaplexes would appear at home anywhere on Vesk Prime. Economic opportunity attracts workers from across the Veskarium, making Vesk-3 one of the most cosmopolitan worlds in the empire. While vesk culture is dominant overall, the makeshift social infrastructure in these cities resulted from migrant workers bringing their cultures to Vesk-3 and isn't the result of amenities provided by the Veskarium. These immigrants have formed their own tightly knit enclaves in the cracks of vesk cities, complete with unlicensed restaurants, theaters, and shops selling curious imports from worlds across the empire and beyond.

Beyond vesk cities, Vesk-3 is agrarian, with large swaths of forest left untouched even after centuries of conquest and exploitation. Skittermander communities, which rarely grow beyond a few hundred thousand inhabitants, sprawl chaotically across the landscape, connected by railways. These settlements are more homogenous, both because they are difficult to reach—skittermanders notably control no spaceports or shipyards on their own planet—and because their buildings are all constructed to accommodate skittermander-sized residents. Visitors note a distinct small-town feel to even the largest skittermander settlements, as winding streets, low buildings, and abundant green spaces appeal to the residents far more than the utility prized by vesk. Schools and other services related to child-rearing are notably absent from these communities, because skittermanders spend their childhood years as non-sapient whelps left to hunt and fend for themselves in the forests of Vesk-3.

While not truly eusocial, skittermanders evolved a number of cooperative instincts as part of their rise to sapience—they

crave community and collaboration on a primal level, and so it is difficult for them not to view their own conquest as “helping” the Veskarium, even when it means giving up land or laboring in harsh conditions for little pay. They had already developed agriculture and advanced construction techniques by the time vesk arrived on the planet, but Veskarium colonialism introduced so much new technology and opened so much of their home world to skittermanders that most can't imagine what their culture would be like without vesk oversight.

Many in the Veskarium's higher ranks view command over Vesk-3 as punishment; despite the world's rich resources, common wisdom insists the native skittermanders are ungovernable troublemakers who cause no end of embarrassment. The current ruler of Vesk-3, High Despot **Teret Cahan** (LN male pahtra^{AA2} soldier), is the only non-vesk high despot in the empire. Teret earned his position through masterful political maneuvering, leaving his superiors no choice but to either promote him or lose face. He had planned to win command of his own home world, Vesk-6, but the Council of Despots found it amusing to assign the deadly serious military commander to rein in their most chaotic citizens. Teret despises his role, but he fully intends to bring his charges to heel. He oversees several projects intended to manipulate skittermander collectivism in a way that hones them into obedient, focused citizens of the Veskarium.

The residents of Vesk-3 celebrate all the patriotic holidays of the Veskarium, and skittermanders also celebrate their own semi-annual festival of Reetamander (the “Great Birthing”), when the larger of Vesk-3's two moons eclipses the smaller and then “births” it. Skittermanders gather to recite sing-song chants and soothe one another to help ease the Big Mother's pains, then participate in feasts and more singing, this time to celebrate a successful birth and drive the Firstborn into the woods where it can hunt and grow. This holiday encapsulates many aspects of skittermander spirituality—a sort of reverse-animism in which they must help tend the world, or else it may end for them as it did for the Forerunners.

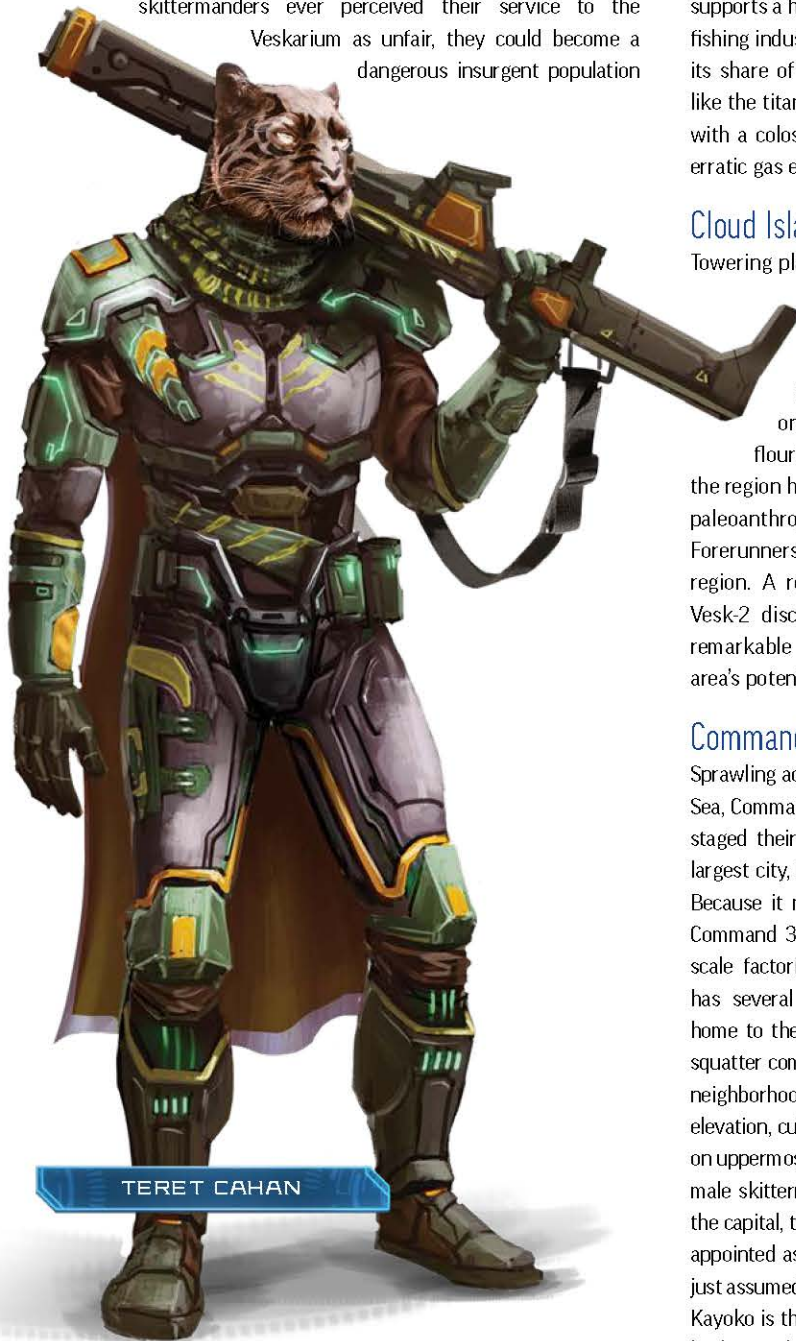
CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Most outsiders consider the monsters of Gadraveech to be Vesk-3's greatest danger. Those unfamiliar with the planet's terrain and natural cycles have no way of knowing when or where ravenous predators will emerge from beneath the ground to hunt, and those who consider Vesk-3 a garden world are often ill-prepared to protect themselves. In fact, several vesk starships lost their entire crews to such dangers in the first few decades after conquest.

Vesk-3's many active fault lines also pose practical dangers. Earthquakes are a weekly reality in most regions, and structures must be designed to handle minor, though constant, tremors. Geysers and fonts of toxic gas sometimes erupt even in settled areas, forcing locals to flee or adapt, while major shifts can change the local climate or drop land below sea level.

The true threat on Vesk-3, however, might be skittermanders themselves. The obsequious nature of the planet's natives grates on the practical-minded vesk, who commonly joke that “helpful” skittermanders will eagerly tear down your engine unless you eat them, and even then they'll stick around and help chew your food. This attitude highlights a deeper and darker truth behind the

Veskarium's claims of supposed equality for all species under its governance. While vesk management of Vesk-3 mirrors that of other worlds under their dominion—stripping the planet of valuable resources, appropriating or even corrupting cultural treasures, and treating its natives as second-class citizens on their own home world—they take far more advantage of skittermanders than they do of other vassal species. The Veskarium controls the skittermander populace by suppressing their native language, abusing their cooperative instincts, and imposing strict work quotas (always framed as “doing your part for the empire”) that compel long, often unpaid, labor from skittermander workers. Many skittermanders find their condition deplorable—they know they're being unfairly exploited—but resisting their instinct to come together for everyone's benefit is traumatic. If, as a culture, skittermanders ever perceived their service to the Veskarium as unfair, they could become a dangerous insurgent population



TERET CAHAN

intimately familiar with coordinated resistance and sabotage, and a threat to vesk dominance in the Veskarium.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are a few of the unique sites of interest on Vesk-3.

Basin Sea

Named by the practically minded vesk, the Basin Sea—or simply the Basin—is the deepest body of water on Vesk-3, over 12 miles deep in its center. Created by the ancient asteroid impact that rocked the planet, the sea divides the continent of Kavarit into two halves. The sea floor is littered with rich mineral deposits, including several valuable starmetals, and it also produces huge deposits of natural gas. The warmth of its many volcanic vents supports a huge diversity of life, which in turn sustains a thriving fishing industry that feeds most of Command 3. The Basin holds its share of dangers as well, including aquatic mega-predators like the titan anemone and the banthrana—a hard-shelled whale with a colossally long feeding tentacle—submarine pirates, and erratic gas eruptions that can sink the largest seagoing vessels.

Cloud Islands

Towering plateaus separated by steep, deep canyons break up the highlands of southern Aberanderen, creating hundreds of isolated ecosystems trapped on the heights. Many of the plants and animals found among the Cloud Islands are found nowhere else on Vesk-3, and several examples of preimpact life still flourish here. The rugged terrain and sheer cliffs mean the region has yet to be fully explored, and some skittermander paleoanthropologists speculate that descendants of the Forerunners may still survive hidden away somewhere in the region. A recent *ijtikri* (*Alien Archive 3 54*) expedition from Vesk-2 discovered an enclave of vine-based creatures with remarkable healing properties, spurring new interest in the area's potential for biomedical resources.

Command 3

Sprawling across a peninsula on the southwest shore of the Basin Sea, Command 3 is the original vesk landing site from which they staged their invasion of Vesk-3. Now the planetary capital and largest city, Command 3 houses much of the planet's population. Because it needed to provide all services for the early colony, Command 3 is today a military powerhouse consisting of large-scale factories, processing centers, and power plants. The city has several distinct layers, with the original settlement—now home to the criminal underworld, black markets, and a thriving squatter community—sitting well below the modern levels. Newer neighborhoods grow increasingly sophisticated as they rise in elevation, culminating in halls of governmental and military power on uppermost levels almost entirely occupied by vesk. **Kayoko** (LG male skittermander envoy) represents skittermander interests in the capital, though vesk are still not sure whether he was actually appointed as an ambassador to the Veskarium government or he just assumed the role to be helpful. Regardless of his official status, Kayoko is the closest thing the Veskarium has to a skittermander leader, so the government issues many of its edicts through him.

Due to the decentralized nature of skittermander society, however, few skittermanders listen to Kayoko's directives; instead, they simply go about their business as usual, trying to help when and where they can whether the Veskarium wants them to or not. Command 3 also contains traditional marine shipyards, which build and maintain the Veskarium's local planetary navy. Massive canals connect the capital to the spaceport in the neighboring city of Zayada and see round-the-clock traffic in both people and goods.

COMMAND 3

N military city

Population 29,000,000 (43% vesk, 21% skittermander, 7% formian, 5% pahtra, 24% other)

Government military autocracy (High Despot Teret Cahan)

Qualities industrial center, military (page 24), technologically average

Maximum Item Level 19th

QUALITIES

Industrial Center The settlement is home to large factories, processing and manufacturing centers, warehouses, and prominent commercial and trade organizations.

Ewagadravona

A skittermander town in northern Aberanderen, Ewagadravona is most notable as the site of a permanent entrance to the subterranean world of Gadraveech. Ewagadravona looks more like a vesk settlement than a skittermander one, with high walls and fortifications that protect its residents against dangerous creatures from the underground realm. Stridermanders in particular are an almost constant threat, but larger predators regularly appear as well. The inhabitants of Ewagadravona do not usually venture into the dark tunnels, but they are dedicated to defending the surface world from the horrors that regularly issue forth from Gadraveech, and a large number of skittermander military veterans have retired to Ewagadravona to lend their skills to its defense. Vesk, on the other hand, are drawn to the town precisely because of the dangers that lurk just beneath the surface, and several vesk-run hunting lodges have been established here to cater to these hunting expeditions.

Morandomandrana

Morandomandrana—often simply called Mandrana by outsiders—is the oldest skittermander city by far, dating back thousands of years before the Gap. Perched on the shores of the Vermilion Sea, the city marks the first true step toward modern skittermander civilization. The language of Morandomandrana spread to become the tongue of other skittermander tribes living near the Vermilion Sea, then eventually of all skittermanders as they collaborated and expanded across Oeddertchonk. Morandomandrana is a wonder of collective engineering. Its original foundations sank below sea level following an earthquake 300 years ago, but the populace endured, and the city now contains beautiful examples of rounded, organic skittermander architecture connected by pristine canals. Vestiges of traditional skittermander culture still flourish here, and the city archives include fragmentary documents from before the city's founding, including firsthand accounts of the vesk conquest that differ greatly from the official records.

NAKONECHKIN SALVAGE

Nakonechkin Ginnady (NG male vesk) owns and operates this small space salvage operation with his crew of four skittermanders, whom he met in various circumstances over the years. Originally from Vesk-3, Nakonechkin and his crew rarely have the opportunity to return home, spending most of their time salvaging derelict starships in Near Space and the Vast. While Nakonechkin's skittermander employees are helpful, they have a tendency to get themselves into (and eventually out of) trouble from time to time. The escapades (and pregenerated characters) of these four skittermanders—Dakoyo the mystic, Gazigaz the envoy, Nako the soldier, and Quonx the mechanic—can be found in the Free RPG Day adventures *Starfinder Skitter Shot* and *Starfinder Skitter Crash*, available on paizo.com.

Tiztiet

Vesk established this luxury resort city on a large island in the Vermilion Sea 80 years ago. Attracted by the island's picturesque flowering plants and pink waters, the Veskarium's wealthiest and most powerful figures compete for reservations at this exclusive resort. But the warm, arid island, which skittermanders call the Womb of Creation, is their most sacred holy site. Skittermanders believe Oeddertchonk first birthed them from this island and tasked them to piece the world back together after the Forerunners fell, and it is taboo to disturb its sacred sands, save to bury dead who have perished in great service to all. Skittermanders watch Tiztiet in anxious horror from the Vermilion's shores, unable to understand the ongoing vesk desecration of the divine mother of the skittermander people. As with much of Vesk-3, the Veskarium has expended few resources in studying the island's history, but it casually dismisses skittermander claims to the land. The Veskarium's elite hobnob in Tiztiet's luxury hotels and casinos without noticing the growing resentment of skittermanders who look on. Recent accidents have resulted in a few unfortunate deaths, however, and vesk authorities have begun to worry about sabotage.

Torath Vo

This extensive military base is the second largest on the planet, after Command 3. The Veskarium manufactures a variety of weapons here, including dangerous bio-weapons developed from Vesk-3's curious ecosystems. The entire Torath archipelago—a string of islands in the Oedderttosch Ocean—is a black site, with entry barred to all non-vesk. The Stewards have long suspected Torath Vo to be the site of a secret prison holding political dissidents and prisoners of war, including Pact Worlds agents captured in the Silent War over 30 years ago. The entire complex, overseen by Brigadier **Chano Zoshanesk** (LE female vesk operative), operates with unprecedented autonomy. As long as Torath Vo continues to provide technological innovations for warfare and espionage, the Veskarium looks the other way regarding how these technologies are developed and tested.

WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACE

THE
VESKARIUM

WORLDS OF
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STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS



VESK-4

Diameter: $\times 1\frac{1}{2}$

Mass: $\times 6\frac{3}{4}$

Gravity: $\times 3$

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 25 hours; **Year:** 8 years



Vesk-4 is the fourth planet from its system's sun, and the third world to surrender to vesk conquest. Originally named Talphirax by its native inhabitants, this world primarily consists of a single landmass that is a cradle of life teeming with lush jungles, swamplands, and volcanic mountain ranges.

Vesk-4 is far from an idyllic world, however. Rather, its inhabitants thrive in an environment that often proves deadly to nonnative species due to the planet's high gravity, natural radiation, and active volcanoes. Early vesk conquerors nicknamed this planet "the Glutton" for its tendency to pull celestial bodies—asteroids, comets, and even its own moons—into its powerful gravitational field. Over the course of the planet's millennia-long existence, such objects have periodically plummeted to the surface, resulting in numerous craters and areas of diverse geological composition.

After Vesk-4's integration into the Veskarium, many in the empire saw the planet only as an opportunity to harvest vital natural resources, as the crashed meteors coupled with natural ore deposits made Vesk-4 an important hub for mining raw materials. Early in the planet's days under the control of the Veskarium, most of Vesk-4's colonists worked the mines alongside the talphi, an indigenous species of sapient mole-like creatures that the vesk turned into their empire's vassals.

Just prior to the Gap, the planet's reputation changed when an enterprising vesk—who would become the planet's high despot—stumbled upon a pocket of crystals that could be refined to power solarian weapons. This crystal harvesting continues to this day, and Vesk-4 supports an academy specializing in training solarians. Now seen as an educational opportunity for talented youngsters, Vesk-4 continues to attract new colonists who seek solarian training, employment as an instructor in vesk solarian traditions, or fortune as a member of a mining company or an expedition.

GEOGRAPHY

Vesk-4's density has allowed it to survive, and in some cases subsume, meteor impacts that would have been catastrophic to other planets. Millennia ago, three of the planet's moons plummeted to its surface over just a few months, knocking

WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
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STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

its axis askew. The planet began to exhibit extreme tectonic activity, changing its topography and climate patterns forever.

Perhaps most notably, a massive range of volcanic mountains now bisects Vesk-4's main landmass from its northwest to its southeast. This is called the Vyskandi Range, and its central peaks contain two subterranean tunnel passes: the Upper Antreway and the Lower Antreway. Once highways of sorts for the tunneling talphi who once ruled this planet, the enlarged Antreways now serve as mining thoroughfares for the Veskarium.

Northeast of the Vyskandi Range, the arid Lodelands languish under the boiling sun. Chunks of crystal and ore litter this gleaming desert, hinting at the rich mineral deposits beneath the surface. Though the Lodelands are essential to Vesk-4's mining industry, elevated radiation makes prolonged excavations difficult. In ancient times, talphi limited their mineral harvests to reduce the health risks. Today, vesk mining operations equip laborers with protective environmental suits.

East of the Lodelands, the desert transitions into a collection of craters. Rain collects within these basins, resulting in miles-long stretches of treacherous mud known as the Mudflats. Fluted mud structures rise from the ground like skyscrapers across the land. Colonies of shuzirians, a species of ore-eating insects, create and maintain these buildings.

The massive swamp known as the Dredgelands is a haven for native life, but the environment here is hazardous—quicksand, volcanoes submerged in acidic pools, and hostile fauna threaten the individuals who live and settle there. Several small vesk settlements

such as Mossfist Outpost, Zakrizam's Hope, and Wardens' Rest are located in the Dredgelands, as are a few insular outposts of talphi and the amphibious humanoids known as ausrys.

Three of Vesk-4's most identifiable landmarks are the collision sites of the planet's former moons. To the north, Command 4—the capital of Vesk-4 that was once known as Moonfall—is the site of the largest moon's collision. Command 4 is a populous vesk city that sits atop a plateau formed partially from the fallen moon itself, and the settlement is a hub for commerce, space travel, and planetary government.

Thousands of miles south, nestled in the Dredgelands, rises a smaller plateau known as Second Sorrow—the site of the planet's second fallen moon. A major vesk outpost, Tribulation, lies on this plateau's northeastern slopes. The site of the third fallen moon is an island jutting from Spinebreaker Gulf off the southeast coast. The island's largest peak, Spinebreaker, dwarfs all other mountains on the planet, including the central stratovolcano, Cindertalon, which was once Vesk-4's tallest mountain.

RESIDENTS

Though vesk comprise most of the planet's population, they are not the only species inhabiting Vesk-4. The intelligent and mole-like talphi were the predominant species before the Veskarium subsumed the planet. Other life forms on Vesk-4 include vryids, a species of large, unintelligent crustaceans that inhabit the Dredgelands, and shuzirians, an insectile species that eats raw ore and lives a life of low technology in



IRON OCEAN

Titan's Tears

Irradiated Pass

MUDFLATS

Mudwater Range

LODELANDS

Valley of Gilded Dust

Command 4

Upper Antreway

VYSKAND RANGE

Moonfall Plateau

Lower Antreway

The Testing Land

Corona Academy

Ulkis Lake

ULKIS JUNGLE

VYSKAND RANGE

Stargift Craters

Spinebreaker Gulf

Spinebreaker Island

The Lonely Twins

Kolkis Reach

UNYIELDING OCEAN

YIELDING OCEAN

Azko Jungle

Vryid Watch

DREDGELANDS

Zakrizam's Hope

Tribulation

Second Sorrow

Mossfist Outpost

Warden's Rest

Poison Shores

the Mudflats. The ausyr are a species of amphibious humanoids that survived Vesk-4's various cataclysms by hibernating beneath the swamps, sometimes for decades at a time, making them among the most ancient cultures on the planet.

Before vesk conquered the planet, talphi traveled in a cyclical path across their world for millennia, tunneling through the Vyskandi Range toward mineral-rich craters and plateaus. The talphi established a rich and lengthy history as the planet's dominant civilization, as well as a storied culture that revolved around the cycles of the moons—before these natural satellites fell from the sky—and rituals tied to tunneling and mining. Talphi coexisted peacefully and traded mining rights with the planet's myriad other populations of sapient creatures. The mole-people were not ambitious, however, and were woefully unprepared when the Veskarium's military might rolled through their planet. After a series of ill-fated skirmishes, the talphi surrendered, and their home world was assimilated into the Veskarium.

Historically, talphi spiritual leaders were solarians who understood the balance of stellar energies and its importance to underground life. Talphi populations looked to these leaders for everything from blessings for new subterranean tunnels to guidance for establishing new settlements and outposts. Many powerful talphi solarians tragically perished in their short-lived war with the Veskarium, however, and their knowledge of their old ways vanished with them. On the cusp of the Swarm War, only a chance discovery triggered events that would lead to a resurgence of talphi solarian traditions.

Two years before the Swarm attacks, a young vesk named **Kamilzanva** (LN female vesk solarian) accidentally discovered a pocket of irradiated crystals while exploring the Lodelands. Because of her latent solarian abilities, Kamilzanva felt an inexplicable connection to the crystals. She reported her discovery to a mining overseer, and what began as an initial curiosity became a powerful weapon in the impending war. The natural material Kamilzanva found was refined into *solarian weapon crystals*, and Kamilzanva became one of the first solarians to serve in the Veskarium's military.

Kamilzanva distinguished herself in combat and showed a potential for leadership noted by the Council of Despots. As a decorated general, Kamilzanva was eventually appointed as high despot of Vesk-4 and has served in this capacity for more than 20 years. At her urging, the Veskarium has established the Corona Academy, which specializes in training aspiring solarians from across the empire, near Ulkis Lake.

As mining operations continued across Vesk-4, workers found ruins near Ulkis Lake that were similar in structure to that of the Antreways. With the help of the talphi historian **Iyar** (N male talphi mystic), High Despot Kamilzanva uncovered and translated records of ancient talphi solarian traditions. The two began piecing together a lost history. Now, Kamilzanva incorporates this knowledge into the curriculum at Corona Academy. Kamilzanva's interest in talphi history has raised more than a few eyebrows in the Council of Despots. Still, Corona Academy continues to produce competent solarians and soldiers by incorporating talphi knowledge into Veskarium military training.

Other species of Vesk-4 weren't so easily integrated into the Veskarium. The vryids continue to threaten vesk settlements in

the Dredgelands. Vryids have an animalistic intelligence and lead a solitary existence, relentlessly fighting for territory until mating season. Vryids are opportunistic omnivores, and they often prey on creatures that venture too deep into the Dredgelands. Vryid flesh and eggs feature heavily in Vesk-4's cuisine, and vryid hunting is a popular sport among the planet's vesk inhabitants. Unfortunately, the vryids' irradiated flesh makes consuming large quantities of their meat inadvisable. The amphibious eels of Ulkis Lake and its surrounding rivers are also prized as a delicacy. Ulkis eels can grow up to 6 feet in length and have smooth, bluish skin and long stinging whiskers near their mouths.

The insectile shuzirians once peacefully cohabited with the talphi, who frequently left chunks of ore as offerings for the shuzirians to keep them away from their sacred crystal pockets. The shuzirians' predictable route between the Mudflats and the Lodelands generally kept interaction to a minimum.

Shuzirians communicate via pheromones and construct vast hives using mud and saliva. Shuzirian society is divided into four roles: drones, incubators, soldiers, and workers. Some populations of shuzirians, especially those that live near Veskarium mining operations, can be aggressive, and the vesk are often cruel in their attempts to rid their profitable mines of these creatures' influence.

SOCIETY

From an outsider's perspective, Vesk-4's citizens lead austere, regimented lives focused on labor and service. Residents take pride in serving the Veskarium through careers in mining or military service. High Despot Kamilzanva has absolute authority over the planet, though she is advised by a democratically elected Council of Labor. The high despot appoints officials to serve in her military-style court and policing organizations. Government officials are predominantly vesk, and the cardinal law on Vesk-4 is to serve the Veskarium with honor.

Under Kamilzanva's rule, all citizens of Vesk-4 engage in some form of labor, whether manual or mental, and receive basic health care, shelter, and rations in exchange. Luxuries are almost nonexistent, and material excess is discouraged. With little in the way of entertainment or amenities, young vesk seek amusement in the wilderness. Many thrill seekers race vehicles on dangerous tracks around the planet's myriad craters. While some vesk enjoy the laborious but simple existence offered by Vesk-4, others can't wait to leave the hazardous mining outpost for more glamorous locales. Joining the military is the best way for malcontents to get offworld.

Due to its hazardous terrain and pockets of natural radiation, much of Vesk-4's surface remains unsettled. Only a few regions have the resources and terrain to support cities, and most of Vesk-4's vesk population has squeezed itself into the overcrowded confines of Command 4 and Tribulation. Outside of these major cities, talphi and vesk workers have constructed transient cities around mining encampments, and only a few vesk outposts or long-standing talphi settlements stand in the swamps.

Vesk culture in Zakrizam's Hope and its surrounding villages differs dramatically from that of Command 4 and Tribulation. These vesk live off the land instead of relying on Kamilzanva's communal, labor-centered system. On paper, they're still

subject to the greater laws of the Veskarium, but these isolated communities frequently elect their own leaders and rely on vigilantism to dispense justice.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Life on Vesk-4 is generally difficult. Seismic activity, radiation, and frequent meteor collisions constantly threaten settlements. Inhabitants face threats from the unforgiving environment as well as clashes between cultures and political groups.

For instance, the Dawning is a group of talphi dissenters who formed as a result of ongoing civic unrest among their species. While many talphi adhere to vesk rule, some continue to resist occupation. Previous high despots mercilessly put down any insurrectionist activity, but Kamilzanva actively engages in the discourse. Most recently, she instated a law allowing talphi to apply for migrant worker status. The new law allows talphi laborers to travel their ancestral routes while maintaining employment as miners or within planetary infrastructure crews. The high despot's perceived soft spot for the conquered species is controversial within the wider Veskarium, earning her the derogatory nickname "the Diplomat" among some members of the Council of Despots.

As the shuzirians expand their territory, Vesk-4's miners fight a constant battle to keep the ore-hungry insects away from their production sites. The seemingly mindless shuzirians continue to forage for food, causing production setbacks that reverberate throughout the Veskarium. Unbeknownst to the vesk of Command 4 and Tribulation, the shuzirians are currently amassing an army in the Mudflats. Breeding and training enough soldiers for a war could take decades, but the shuzirians are a patient species.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following notable locations can be found on Vesk-4.

Cindertalon

Once the tallest mountain on Vesk-4, the stratovolcano Cindertalon rises above the surrounding Vyskandi Range in the center of the planet's supercontinent. A sea of smooth volcanic rock near Cindertalon's base forms the Obsidian Desert, an ever-expanding swath of desolation that supports no plant life. Cindertalon's proximity to the Lower Antreway was once beneficial to the talphi, but its near constant eruptions threaten the vesk transportation route. Geologists fear that a violent eruption could result in either a catastrophic collapse or lava flow into the tunnel. Vesk scientists and infrastructure experts scramble to devise an alternative transportation method should the Lower Antreway fail.

Command 4

West of the Vyskandi Mountains, on Moonfall Plateau, is the sprawling city of Command 4, which is made up of uniform steel buildings surrounded by dozens of interconnected mines and sifting facilities. A network of paved roadways accommodates mining convoys consisting of bulldozers, military transport vehicles, and mobilized shipping containers. Command 4 lacks the green spaces or stylish architecture found in many other metropolises of its size. An active spaceport in its eastern quadrant provides easy access for shipping and travel.

The most notable feature in this capital city is a dome-shaped structure of starship-grade steel that towers over the surrounding buildings. This is the Veskarium's governmental headquarters for Vesk-4, nicknamed the Dome, which houses High Despot Kamilzanva's high court alongside offices for several ambassadors, including Pact Worlds and talphi representatives. The Council of Labor operates under the high despot to review labor laws and address economic concerns. Citizens are encouraged to observe proceedings, and high-profile trials or governmental meetings are official holidays in Command 4. Paramilitary security amps up as thousands of workers throng to the Dome, hoping for a glimpse of the high despot.

COMMAND 4

LN military city

Population 5,076,000 (71% vesk, 20% talphi, 9% other)

Government military autocracy (High Despot Kamilzanva)

Qualities financial center, military (page 24), spaceport (page 24), technologically average

Maximum Item Level 16th

Corona Academy

This small military academy specializes in training solarians and is known for producing especially hearty soldiers as a result of these individuals' conditioning to a high gravity environment. Corona Academy was built near the banks of Ulkis Lake on the site of an ancient talphi solarian temple. Cadets who demonstrate aptitude through a series of difficult trials are accepted into the academy each year. Tuition is free for Vesk-4's citizens; visitors can gain entrance by enrolling in a work-study program. Due to its reputation, Corona Academy is an unofficial proving ground for non-vesk soldiers hoping to fight for the Veskarium.

Currently Lieutenant General **Prazhval** (LN male vesk soldier) serves as the head of Corona Academy. General Prazhval works closely with Iyar, the dean of talphi solarian studies, and occasionally the high despot to design the curriculum and assess cadets. Graduates have gone on to become military officers, powerful solarians, and highly paid mercenaries.

Mudflats

Rain collects in a series of enormous craters east of the Vyskandi Range, forming an expanse of mud dotted with shallow pools of stagnant water. The Mudflats are the shuzirians' prime nesting grounds. An early vesk settler famously observed that the shuzirians "devour ore like this world devours its moons," and though shuzirians craft branching aboveground nests using mud, the Mudflats lack the extensive mineral deposits found elsewhere on Vesk-4. Winged workers and soldiers regularly travel west to the Lodelands to collect nourishing ore for their colonies.

Second Sorrow

Called Skyrskuri in the talphi language, this plateau is the site of the second crashed moon. Second Sorrow is separated from Moonfall Plateau to the north by miles of swamps and forests. Hundreds of vesk mining camps operate here, and Tribulation is the final outpost before the perilous Dredgelands to the east.

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NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

Tribulation's architecture is nearly identical to Command 4's, characterized by uniform steel structures and wide roads. Only its distinctly rundown appearance differentiates Tribulation's construction from that of its larger counterpart. Tribulation was built atop a fault line, and minor earthquakes frequently plague the city; thus, the buildings and roads of Tribulation exist in a near-constant state of repair.

Tribulation lacks both a court of law and spaceport, so inhabitants in need of those services are forced to travel the week-long overland journey to Command 4 or contract private shuttles to reach the capital. Kamilzanva oversees a branch of the Council of Labor that governs Tribulation.

Spinebreaker Island

This ominously named location is the site of the third moon's collision with Vesk-4. The island's tallest peak, simply called Spinebreaker, reaches an elevation of 32,000 feet. Climbing Spinebreaker is a legendary feat on Vesk-4, and many adventurous vesk have died in the attempt. The population is minimal, though the landmass is made from rare minerals laced through the fallen former moon. Five years ago, Vesk-4's secretary of infrastructure, the engineer **Radulvaza** (LN female vesk mechanic), proposed the creation of a land bridge to Spinebreaker Island for the facilitation of mining these valuable minerals. Radulvaza's operation resulted in staggering worker casualties, however, and was shut down by High Despot Kamilzanva. Radulvaza has reworked her plans to patent a massive, automated drill nicknamed Damoritosh's Tooth, which she intends to use to complete the job soon.

Vyskandi Mountains

Meaning "world spine" in the talphi language, this range of volcanically active mountains splices the center of Vesk-4. The Vyskandi Range's snow-capped peaks rise to elevations of up to 28,000 feet. Seismic activity occurs frequently, causing avalanches at higher elevations. Crossing the Vyskandi Range overland is a harrowing prospect, and unpredictable wind currents make air travel hazardous. Only the discovery of the talphi's Antreways made bypassing the mountains viable.

The mountains that posed an early obstacle to vesk conquest were once an integral part of talphi life. The nomadic talphi saw the act of passing beneath the world spine as a necessary aspect of their people's existence and sheltered in the tunnels beneath the mountains to survive the planet's miniature ice ages after large asteroid collisions.

Zakrizam's Hope

Zakrizam's Hope is a small settlement in the Dredgelands. The slightly acidic waters support only the heartiest life, including aggressive vryids and mysterious ausyrs.

Today's swamp cities were originally settled by Zakrizam, a stalwart vesk who ventured into the Dredgelands with a ragtag group of explorers 250 years ago. Today, their descendants eke out an existence in clusters of insular settlements. Floating buildings are connected by bridges and planks of driftwood. A vesk paramilitary group known as the Marsh Wardens patrol

the Dredgelands. The Marsh Wardens follow a strict code that prioritizes protecting settlements from the vryids and other hostile life-forms as well as rescuing outsiders lost in the swamps.

As Zakrizam and his companions built their outpost, they encountered the ausyr. The ausyr struck a deal with the explorers: the vesk agreed to protect the ausyr's hibernation sites in return for learning to grow rice-like grains called kechki. Generations of ausyr and vesk maintain this charter today.

Outsiders who spend time in Zakrizam's Hope are initially treated with polite disregard, but often find themselves regarded as kin and integrated into the community. The settlement's isolation ended when explorers established contact with the Marsh Wardens 20 years ago. This reconnection set off a chain reaction of cultural exchange and conflict as the Veskarium scrambled to reintegrate its lost citizens back into the fold.





VESK-5

Diameter: ×12

Mass: ×290

Gravity: ×2 (at the "surface")

Atmosphere: Special

Day: 9 hours; **Year:** 13 years

Encircled by bands of red and purple gases, Vesk-5 is the largest planet and the only gas giant in the Ghavaniska system. Numerous moons orbit it along with a small, rocky ring system. Though beautiful and silent when viewed from space, this giant is anything but. The atmosphere's alternating currents surge with lightning and generate powerful storms with shrieking winds and pounding hydrogen rain. The planet's dense, unstable core constantly ejects valuable ore and minerals, so the Veskarium limits civilian travel to Vesk-5 as a means of monopolizing these resources. Despite this, Vesk-5 remains as active and tumultuous as its formidable storms.

GEOGRAPHY

As a gas giant, Vesk-5 does not have a geography in the terrestrial sense. Its atmosphere is primarily helium and hydrogen, stratified

into belts of vibrant red and purple that encircle the planet in opposite directions. Where these atmospheric currents rush past each other, swirls of deep magenta indicate the formation of immense vortex storms, flickering with electricity that radiates even beyond the swirling clouds. Dozens of tempests kick up daily and can rage for several of the planet's short days, or even longer. The most noteworthy of these storms is the Eternal Rage (page 48), a mega-anticyclone so massive that it dwarfs some of the Veskarium's smaller terrestrial worlds.

Descending beneath the "surface" of the mesmerizing cloud tops visible from space, Vesk-5's atmosphere adopts a magenta hue matching the color of the Eternal Rage.

The gases here shimmer brilliantly, evidence of the billions of microscopic mineral fragments ejected from the planet's core as well as dust from foreign bodies. The deeper layers of Vesk-5's atmosphere are composed of metallic hydrogen and are shrouded in darkness. The highly reflective and conductive nature of this metallic hydrogen means it amplifies light and arcs of electricity to produce violent reactions. The crushing pressure in these deeper layers disintegrates any matter into dust, and the intense gravity in the planet's interior is even powerful enough to disrupt radio waves, making long-distance communication impossible.

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VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

Vesk-5's core is an incredibly dense, hot, and unstable mixture of diamonds, starmetals, and other precious minerals. The only knowledge of the core's composition has been provided by scientists studying the large chunks of material that the core occasionally ejects into the planet's outer layers.

Due to its immense gravity, Vesk-5 has collected an array of natural satellites. More than two dozen reasonably sized moons orbit the planet, though most are gnarled, lifeless rocks. The largest of these moons—designated Vesk-5.1, Vesk-5.2, and Vesk-5.3 by the Veskarium—are more varied in composition and host some settlements (pages 48–49). Vesk-5 also features a slowly rotating ring system made up of smaller interstellar debris pulled into its orbit.

RESIDENTS

Vesk-5 isn't friendly to humanoid life, and conditions on the planet and its moons demand determination and resiliency from its inhabitants. The only sapient species native to Vesk-5 are formians (*Alien Archive* 50), who reside in orbiting hives in Vesk-5's rings. Curiously, ancient Veskarium records from before the Gap make no mention of formians inhabiting Vesk-5; instead, vesk first encountered formians when they were reestablishing their empire after the Gap ended. The origins of Vesk-5's formians remain a mystery—maybe they independently evolved in the planet's rings and were simply missed by the early vesk explorer and conquerors, or perhaps they somehow arrived during the Gap—but the formians of Vesk-5 are genetically identical to

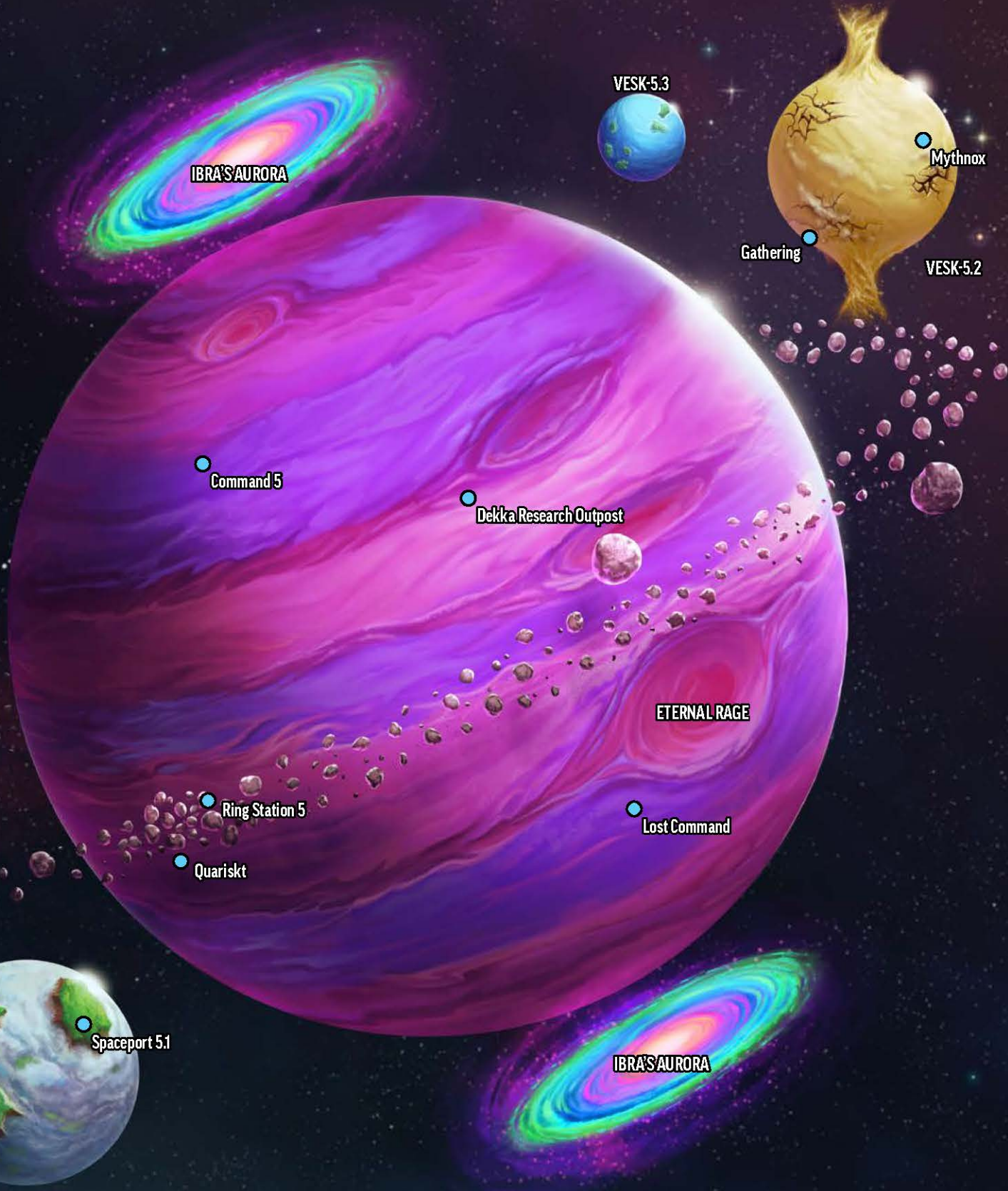
those found on Castrovel in the Pact Worlds and elsewhere in the galaxy. In any case, formians inhabit several colonies in the planet's rings, manufacturing livable space out of the loose chunks of rock and ice that slowly circle the planet.

Vesk's pride and unwillingness to be dominated by the gas giant's weather patterns and mega-storm make them ideal residents of Vesk-5. Still, most inhabitants, vesk and otherwise, stick to its largest moons, which are slightly more hospitable to life than the planet itself. Most vesk live on the planet's largest moon, Vesk-5.1, which also boasts a diverse civilian population, including other Veskarium citizens such as ijtikris (*Alien Archive* 3 54), pahtras (*Alien Archive* 2 94), and skittermanders (*Alien Archive* 106), as well as diplomats and visitors from worlds beyond the Veskarium. The planet's second largest moon, Vesk-5.2, hosts a large number of immigrant kasathas and shirrens, as well as members of a loose coalition of smugglers and thrill seekers who call themselves "stormrunners."

Other than the ring-inhabiting formians, native life on Vesk-5 and its moons is sparse. Electrovores (*Alien Archive* 44) living in the electrically charged upper layers of Vesk-5 are a nuisance to vesk troops, and transient omas (*Alien Archive* 88) sometimes unwittingly trespass into the restricted planet's atmosphere.

SOCIETY

Like many worlds in the Veskarium, Vesk-5 is first and foremost a military installation. As such, the military government tolerates the existence of civilian society only on the planet's peripheral



VESK-5.1

Not to scale.

moons, expecting every resident of Vesk-5 and its satellites to maintain strict adherence to Veskarium law. High Despot **Kesharkan** (LN agender vesk soldier), also known as “the Typhoon Tyrant,” commands the Veskarium’s military forces on Vesk-5 with unyielding discipline. A dedicated officer whose prowess in battle and strict adherence to the Veskarium’s ideology has earned them great respect, Kesharkan trusts that the overwhelming presence of vesk troops on Vesk-5 and its moons is sufficient to maintain control of Spaceport 5.1 (page 48) and other civilian population centers filled with inhabitants who might otherwise challenge vesk rule.

Nevertheless, communities uninterested in vesk martial affairs do exist on the peripheries of regimented military life. In the small city of Mythnox on Vesk-5.2 (page 49), many residents are more invested in spiritual than material matters. In contrast, the loosely organized group of independent fortune hunters known as the stormrunners are very much concerned with material wealth. These daring adventurers dodge military patrol craft and brave Vesk-5’s dangerous atmosphere to “mine” the valuable minerals ejected from the planet’s core using gigantic energy nets deployed from their ships. As a result, Vesk-5’s military government has branded them outlaws, a label that many stormrunners adopt as a badge of honor. Most stormrunners are self-serving smugglers, but they cultivate a wide and valuable network of black market and even military contacts throughout the Veskarium. The skills they’ve honed in the storms of Vesk-5 can be applied to a variety of situations (more information can be found within the stormrunner theme on page 141). The stormrunners have no organized leadership, but they do maintain a sanctuary on Vesk-5.2 called Gathering (page 49), where all stormrunners are welcome. As a group, stormrunners have a rough, pragmatic culture—the result of living and working on the fringes of society outside the law—and they embrace, rather than fear, the tumultuous and often hazardous nature of Vesk-5.

The formians of Vesk-5 are generally ambivalent toward their vesk overlords. While they initially resisted the vesk conquest, these formians soon realized that their home in the otherwise uninhabitable rings of the planet would insulate them from direct control and give them a de facto monopoly on any resources they collect in the rings. The formians maintain a facade of cooperation with the Veskarium, but they also buy smuggled ore from stormrunners and harbor illegal cargo or visitors from offworld.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Vesk-5 and its moons can be dangerous places to live or visit. One of the greatest conflicts on Vesk-5 is between the Veskarium and the elusive stormrunners. High Despot Kesharkan utterly despises these outlaws, whom the vesk leader views as weak, skulking, and dishonorable smugglers who trespass on Vesk-5 to pilfer the resources that the Veskarium has rightfully claimed. Kesharkan spares no mercy for anyone caught illegally gathering or trading Vesk-5’s valuable ores. Kesharkan’s obsession with absolute control and obedience from the planet’s inhabitants often leads to harsh punishments for even accidental infractions. Stormrunners risk their lives in more ways than one when they plunge into Vesk-5’s stormy atmosphere in search of riches.

Although the vesk were initially unconcerned with the formians who reside in the planet’s ring system, the government has grown wary about the ant-like species’ recent expansion, particularly around the colony of Quariskt (page 48). Kesharkan is aware that an impulsive reaction to the formians’ activities could cause an unnecessary and detrimental confrontation, so the Veskarium maintains a close and wary watch on them.

Vesk-5 poses considerable danger to vesk military installations in its atmosphere, as well as to the stormrunners who illicitly fly through the clouds. Even stormrunners who pride themselves on their ability to navigate the planet’s infamous lightning vortexes give the Eternal Rage a wide berth. Any ship entering the planet’s atmosphere risks delving too deep, to a point where its thrusters are unable to break free of the planet’s intense gravity. This can happen sooner than expected if the electrovores that feed on the electricity in the atmosphere attach themselves to a ship and leech even more power from the vessel.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following locations can be found on Vesk-5 and its moons.

Vesk-5 and Its Rings

The sites detailed below are located within the gas giant’s atmosphere or in its ring system.

Command 5

The Veskarium established Command 5, their primary military base on Vesk-5, in the northern hemisphere atop an enormous chunk of diamond discharged from the planet’s core—a not-so-subtle reminder of the vesk’s claims of superiority. Equipped with powerful antigrav generators that keep it at a stationary altitude, Command 5 floats beneath the first layer of clouds in the same layers of atmosphere that are prime for harvesting the core’s valuable minerals, a strategic advantage for quickly detecting and reaching these resources. The current Command 5 is actually the second base the Veskarium built on the planet, after the original Command 5, now dubbed the Lost Command (page 48), was destroyed by the ravages of the Eternal Rage.

Command 5 is the official planetary capital and center of power on Vesk-5, yet its secluded location means it’s mostly removed from the mundane governance of the planet. While vesk troops maintain control over the planet’s few population centers, the officers at Command 5 focus their efforts on training soldiers and pilots in the surrounding atmosphere, developing military strategies, and overseeing the collection of the rare resources spun out from the planet’s core. Civilians are invited to Command 5 only in certain circumstances, including for incarceration or punishment for serious crimes against the Veskarium.

Dekka Research Outpost

Hidden deep in the clouds of Vesk-5’s northern hemisphere, this remote station floats just above the planet’s metallic hydrogen layers. A clandestine partnership between the private defense contractor Dekka Defense Solutions and the military, the Dekka Research Outpost carries out secret and advanced weapons

development for the benefit of the Veskarium. Willing to turn a blind eye to questionable methods in favor of results, High Despot Kesharkan allows the outpost to experiment with temperamental magical and technological forces deemed too terrible to be exposed beyond the clouds of Vesk-5. Should anything go wrong, Kesharkan can send the entire station into the planet's dense core, obliterating any evidence of its existence.

Eternal Rage

Just south of Vesk-5's equator, a colossal anticyclonic storm of deep magenta churns through the gas giant's clouds, ripping open the atmosphere like a deep wound. This massive tempest, larger than some terrestrial planets, did not exist when the vesk first conquered Vesk-5 before the Gap, but the storm was there when they returned after the Gap, and has remained active for over 300 years. Liquefied elements and an endless static of billions of microscopic fragments swirl in the vortex, and wind speeds reach thousands of miles an hour at the outermost edge. Inside the storm, it's nearly impossible for inexperienced pilots to keep their bearings, as millions of lightning flashes are amplified by the surrounding reflective particles. Ghost visions of shadows among the flashing clouds unnerve even the most experienced of crews. Recently, a few pilots who have been lucky enough to make it through the Eternal Rage have reported witnessing a planet-sized, serpent-like monstrosity residing within the storm, but these rumors remain unconfirmed.

Ibra's Auroras

At Vesk-5's northern and southern poles, glowing auroras hover just above the cloudy atmosphere, a byproduct of the planet's strong magnetic field. Named for the inscrutable deity of cosmic phenomena, the permanent auroras are evidence of the magnetic connection shared between Vesk-5 and its two largest moons, Vesk-5.1 and Vesk-5.2. The gas giant's voluminous magnetosphere connects the poles of these celestial bodies, allowing them to share particles and energy in a demonstration of cosmic balance rarely manifested so elegantly. This ethereal connection attracts a surprising amount of traffic to the planet, as scholars and mystics alike come to study and revere the phenomenon, but their efforts are hampered by the civilian embargo of Vesk-5.

Lost Command

When the Veskarium reconquered Vesk-5, they did not fully understand the planet's storm activity, and their original military base—established on a chunk of rock in the atmosphere of the southern hemisphere—suffered severely. The Eternal Rage (see above) swept over the compound, fiercely buffeting the station with intense winds, hydrogen rain, and unrelenting lightning. The vesk were completely unprepared for the devastation the mega-storm wrought; thousands of soldiers died, and the survivors were forced to abandon the site.

Since the tragedy, the doomed station has remained mostly undisturbed. A handful of stormrunners has reported reaching the Lost Command, as the base is now known, but they stayed only long enough to hide from pursuing Veskarium ships. Vesk have forgone attempts to retrieve assets from the deserted facility after a scouting mission revealed that forces of the

Eternal Rage interacted with the base's power core to create a living apocalypse (*Alien Archive 2 80*), which rests dormant in the station's rubble.

Quariskt

The largest of the formian colonies in the rings of Vesk-5, Quariskt outwardly adheres to the Veskarium's laws and restrictions, but communicates little of its status or activity, making the formians token subjects of the Veskarium at best. Stormrunners and other outlaws take advantage of this state of affairs to utilize the formian colonies as intermediaries in their illicit business. Quariskt has recently expanded, linking the larger rocks in the rings to form sizable orbital hives. The rapid rate of the formians' expansion, and the potential military use of such orbital emplacements, is beginning to alarm the government. The Veskarium has established a covert surveillance outpost nearby called Ring Station 5.

Vesk-5.1

The surface of Vesk-5's largest moon, Vesk-5.1, is covered with oceans, but the water is frozen completely solid. It's apparent that the moon's frozen oceans are not a naturally occurring phenomenon, as their temperature remains constant despite fluctuations in Vesk-5.1's otherwise mostly temperate climate, but no one has yet discovered why or how the oceans remain frozen. The ice is preternaturally smooth and exceptionally clear, creating a glassy surface that allows unobstructed views into the depths of the frozen seas. A few continents rise above these ice oceans, and Vesk-5's largest population center, Spaceport 5.1 (see below), is situated on a continent in the moon's northern hemisphere.

Spaceport 5.1

Like most vesk settlements, Spaceport 5.1 is a military installation as well as a civilian city. With the entire planet of Vesk-5 off-limits to civilian traffic and visitors, Spaceport 5.1 is also the center of civilian society in the Vesk-5 system, with thriving business and politics. Diplomats, traders, and arms dealers mark Spaceport 5.1 as a mandatory visit when seeking positive relationships with the Veskarium, and the city's vivacious entertainment district is patronized by wealthy corporate representatives and high-ranking vesk officers on leave from Command 5. Spaceport 5.1 offers the finest cuisine, entertainment, and shopping, and it's known for its criminal underbelly, which reportedly has its tendrils in nearly every business and entertainment venture on the moon yet always manages to avoid being shut down by vesk authorities. The Veskarium keeps tight control over the settlement's spaceport, however. Ships carrying illegal cargo or suspicious passengers are wise to avoid customs inspectors here.

SPACEPORT 5.1

LE spaceport

Population 1,582,000 (64% vesk, 14% formian, 22% other)

Government military

Qualities military (page 24), notorious, spaceport (page 24), technologically average

Maximum Item Level 16th

Vesk-5.2

Orbiting Vesk-5 at a position almost precisely opposite to Vesk-5.1, Vesk-5.2 is the planet's second largest moon. Its surface is a brittle crust composed of gold-tinted metallic stone. Canyons rip open the landscape between swaths of metallic-sand deserts and mere footsteps on the surface kick particles of metallic dust into the air. These metallic particles move through the atmosphere as though swept by an imperceptible wind toward the moon's poles, where they blend into towering, swirling columns that visibly outline the magnetic field that connects the moon to Vesk-5.

Gathering

This rough and unruly settlement hides precariously in the brittle cliff walls of one of Vesk-5.2's canyons, offering sanctuary and respite for any stormrunners looking for a place to lay low and escape the notice of the Veskarian authorities. The stormrunners closely guard knowledge of Gathering's exact location and have kept the secret so well that the Veskarium suspects only the group has a hideout somewhere among Vesk-5's many moons. Several excellent mechanics reside in Gathering, developing and maintaining the enormous energy nets the stormrunners use to harvest valuable minerals from Vesk-5's atmosphere. Visitors to Gathering find its residents skeptical of strangers, yet ripe with gossip, information, and knowledge from across the galaxy for those they trust. The best way to earn that trust is by smuggling ore out of Vesk-5, sharing information restricted by the Veskarium government, or proving one's piloting skills in the frequent canyon races organized by the daredevil stormrunners.

Mythnox

In Vesk-5.2's northern hemisphere, where the column of golden particles swirling above the moon's north pole is visible in the sky, mystics, scholars, and religious pilgrims established the small city of Mythnox. The settlement is centered around an open-air temple to Ibra that was erected long before the vesk conquered Vesk-5. The temple's circular walls contain diagrams of Vesk-5's magnetic field and icons of the surrounding moons. It's not entirely clear who originally built the temple or when, but its hodgepodge of architectural details and varying gaps between new constructions imply that a rotating cast of acolytes has maintained the site for centuries, if not millennia.

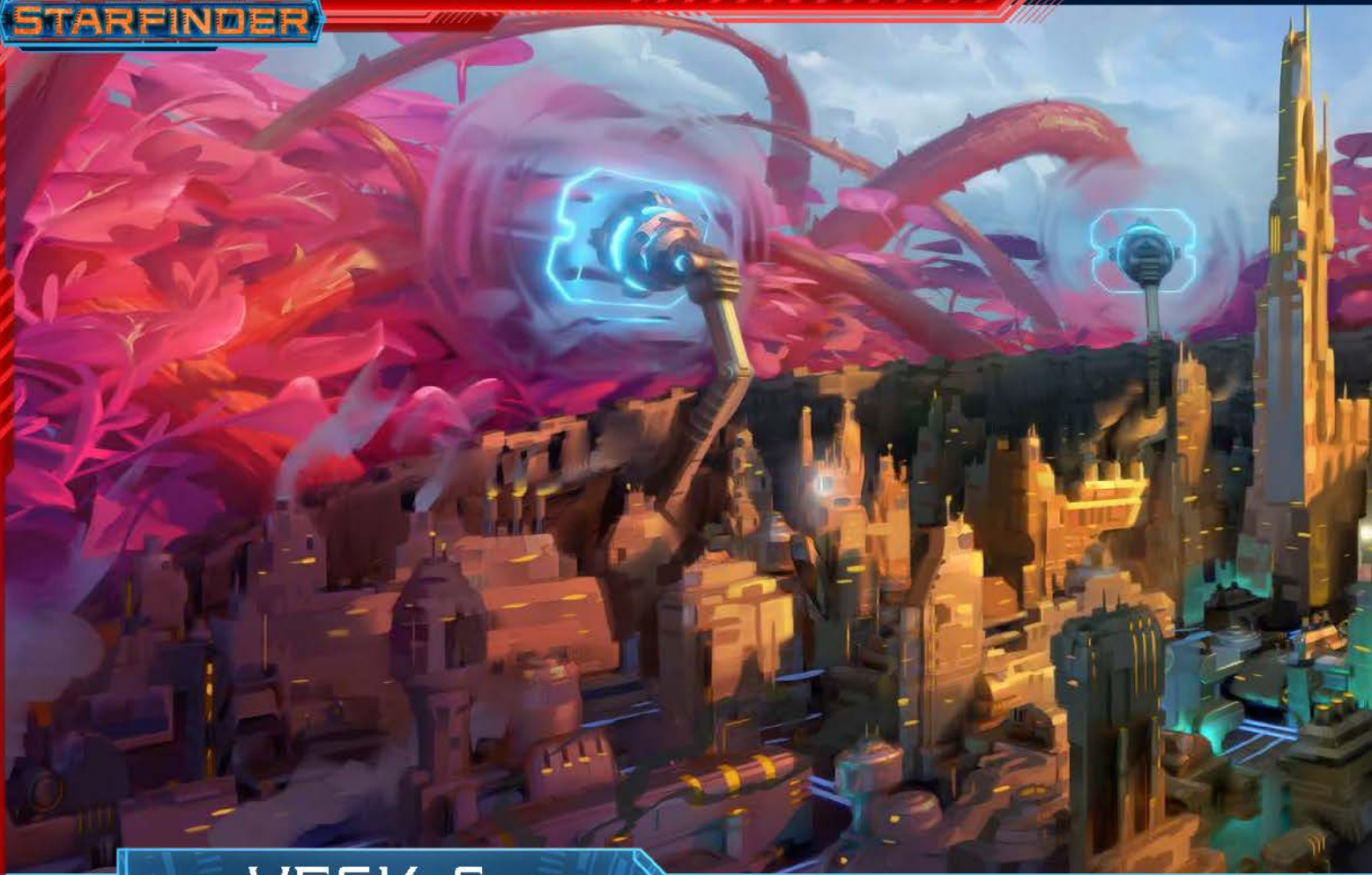
Mythnox is home to mostly humble, spiritual people, many of whom were originally attracted to the mystical nature of the moon's poles. Most of them are not permanent residents but remain on Vesk-5.2 for several years at a time, peacefully appreciating the moon's ethereal connection to its planet.

Vesk-5.3

Vesk-5.3 is best known for its global ocean of liquid water, which the government uses to provide water to Vesk-5's other moons and stations. As Vesk-5.3 passes through the gravitational fields of the other celestial bodies orbiting Vesk-5, its ocean experiences

extreme tidal fluctuations, revealing different landmasses above the water's surface depending on the current position of the moon and nearby satellites. One of the landmasses occasionally revealed by the moon's shifting tides has caught the attention of galactic scholars due to its strange ruins-paved stone plazas and foundations similar to those found on Vesk-2. Why these ruins only appear on Vesk-2 and a single moon of Vesk-5 is unknown. Most of these ruins' features have been worn away by the action of Vesk-5.3's tides, but scouts have witnessed an oddity when waves break against the barren plazas: the same waves appear to crest twice, or even hesitate, before splashing over the ruins, as if stuttering through time. Further investigation has been hampered by the fact that explorers have at most only 18 hours to explore the ruins before the moon's ocean swallows them again.





VESK-6

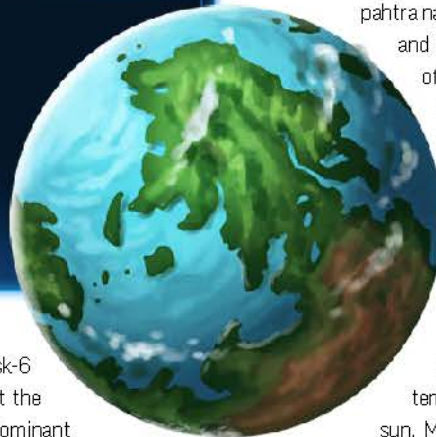
Diameter: $\times 1/2$

Mass: $\times 1/12$

Gravity: $\times 1/3$

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 54 hours; **Year:** 20 years



An inexplicably warm jungle world, Vesk-6 was called Pulonis before its conquest at the hands of the Veskarium. The planet's dominant sapient species, the catlike pahtras (*Alien Archive 2* 94), initially resisted vesk invasion, but their technology was significantly less advanced than that of the Veskarium and their world was eventually incorporated into the empire. Vesk-6 presents a curious paradox to planetary scientists and geophysicists. Though distant from the sun Ghavaniska, the planet is hot and humid, and its relatively low gravity has resulted in towering trees, gigantic insects, and other titanic flora and fauna that struggle ruthlessly with one another to survive. A powerful magnetosphere helps Vesk-6 retain its atmosphere, but the magnetic winds it generates devastate many forms of technology. As a result, the planet's surface remains mostly untamed, despite the Veskarium's colonization efforts and the presence of organized

pahtra nation-states. Vesk-6's few modern settlements and installations are isolated in massive tracts of wilderness, relying on heavy magnetic shielding to avoid complete destruction, and many residents must travel for hundreds of miles to visit a digitized library or advanced medical facility.

Recent investigation by vesk scientists has unveiled a larger mystery inside Vesk-6: the planet's core appears to have been altered some time in its prehistoric past, allowing the planet to maintain warm temperatures despite its distance from the sun. Most theories posit that an as-yet-unknown, advanced alien species was responsible for the planetary engineering of Vesk-6's core, but no proof of these aliens has been found anywhere in the Veskarium, and no ruins of an ancient civilization have been discovered on Vesk-6. However, vesk have begun drilling into the planet's mantle in search of ancient technology or magic they can put to military use.

GEOGRAPHY

Vesk-6 is a small, lush, terrestrial world with a single supercontinent that makes up the majority of the land. Vesk-6 lacks ice caps, and its hot climate is nearly uniform across the planet's surface. The planet's low gravity has allowed truly towering flora to evolve, with forests reaching as high as

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mountain ranges on other worlds. Vesk-6's actual mountains are even taller than its forests, and the tall, jagged peaks can seem impossibly steep to offworlders.

Though Vesk-6 technically only has one ocean, cartographers split the seas into three major bodies of water. The Ketemare ocean is the safest to travel, as its distance from shore leaves it relatively unaffected by the pull of Vesk-6's twin moons—called Hinirinn and Yolaku by the pahtras, but designated Vesk-6.1 and Vesk-6.2 by the Veskarium. The Tideflight Ocean and Tereltos Sea, in contrast, are known for dangerously extreme tides that cause daily floods for miles inland.

While most of Vesk-6 is covered in lush plants and fungi, an important exception exists in the form of a blasted rocky plain near the center of the continent, where the worst of the fighting and destruction of the Veskarium invasion took place. Though these badlands have yet to completely recover from the war, new flora and fauna have crept into the region, rapidly adapting and covering the scar with native life. Pahtras refer to this place as the Holy Lands, in honor of all of pahtras who died fighting there and whose bodies were never recovered.

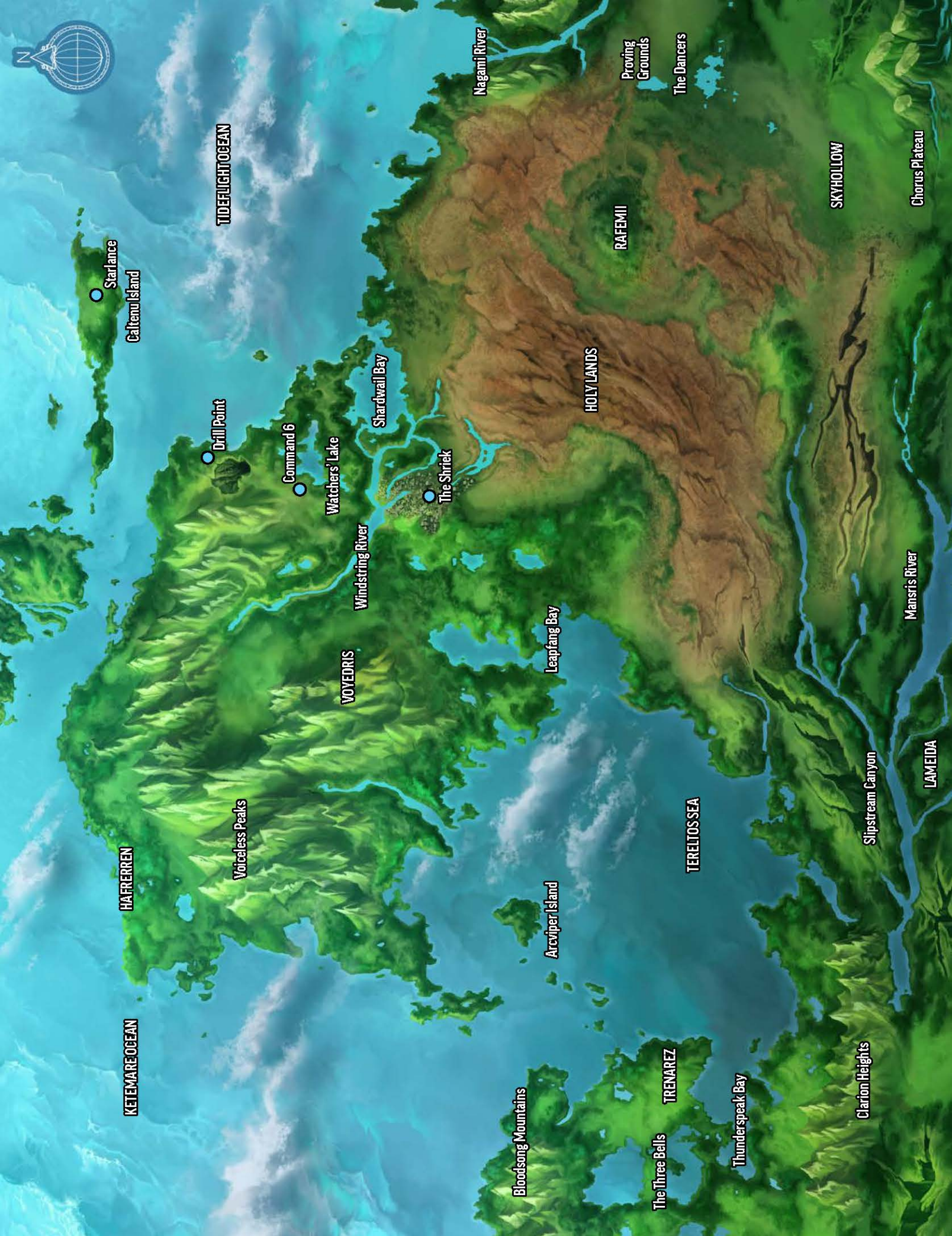
RESIDENTS

Vesk-6 is the home world of pahtras, lanky feline humanoids who evolved in their planet's low gravity to be swift predators. Although pahtras are the dominant species on the planet, they are among the smallest. Much of the flora and fauna on Vesk-6 are truly colossal, from human-sized ambulatory fungus spores

to gargantuan screaming sky vipers. Pahtras conquered their environment through adaptability, ferocity, and training rather than strength, thriving within a brutally competitive ecosystem—an ancestral legacy that encourages fierce competition between pahtras to this day. While the magnetic fields encasing Vesk-6 meant that pahtras were not a technologically advanced species until their subjugation, warrior traditions and a familiarity with their jungle planet allowed them to challenge the Veskarium's vastly superior military force.

Vesk maintain an occupation force on Vesk-6, but consider the planet dangerous and inhospitable. All vesk-controlled facilities on Vesk-6 are protected by magnetic shielding, but the powerful magnetic fields that cover the planet mean that most starships, vehicles, and buildings are one system failure away from complete destruction. Many vesk officials consider this state of affairs to be unacceptably precarious, although those who focus on their own personal strength and endurance find the concept thrilling. As a result, vesk present on the planet endure either as survivalists who push themselves to the limits, or unfortunates who have been sent to Vesk-6 as punishment for infractions.

Vesk-6 is also home to a sapient species called hymothoas, who lurk in the most humid and stagnant swamps. Despised by both vesk and pahtras, these bulbous ichthyoid oozes are known to crawl inside of other sapient creatures, slowly devouring the victim's organs, bones, and eventually portions of their brain. Hymothoas adapt to replace the function of these missing organs, but they are not bound to their hosts in any way, so a



KETEMARE OCEAN

HAFRERREN

TIDERLIGHT OCEAN

Voiceless Peaks

VOYEDRIS

Watchers' Lake

Windstring River

Shardwail Bay

The Shriek

Bloodsong Mountains

Arcviper Island

Leapfang Bay

HOLY LANDS

The Three Bells

TRENAREZ

Thunderspeak Bay

TERELTOS SEA

Nagami River

RAFEMII

Proving Grounds

The Dancers

SKYHOLLOW

Clarion Heights

Slipstream Canyon

Mansri's River

Chorus Plateau

LAMEIDA

Starlance

Caltenu Island

Drill Point

Command 6

hymothoa can abandon its victim to perish at any point. While there have been a few cases of hymothoas infesting prominent vesk dignitaries, the overall society and motives of the species remains largely unknown.

SOCIETY

Although vesk rule Vesk-6, the treaties that pahtra nation-states signed with the Veskarium offer pahtras an unusual amount of autonomy, which they take full advantage of. Vesk are only truly in control of Command 6 (see below), their military base and capital. Elsewhere on the planet, the high despot appoints consuls—mostly vesk, but some pahtras—to oversee remote regions in cooperation with local pahtra governments.

Vesk-6's pahtra nation-states are extremely competitive and seek to distinguish themselves from each other in much the same way that individual pahtras do; most of these nations share cultural traditions derived from pahtra rites that existed before the arrival of the Veskarium. To pahtras, these ancient ways of life enabled them to challenge a highly superior conquering force, and now allow them to keep their culture distinct from their conquerors. As a result, many pahtras seek to excel within very specific social roles and frameworks. Even the most revered traditions give way to social change and new ideas, however, and exposure to both the Veskarium and Pact Worlds has caused younger pahtras to rebel against this conservative mindset. The practice of assigning young pahtras a social role based on a pahtra mystic's interpretation of their fur markings, for instance, has fallen sharply out of favor with recent generations.

Pahtra culture reveres battle and music as the two most prestigious callings in life, and often combines the two. While the pahtras' vesk overseers are usually ambivalent towards music, they highly respect battle prowess, and military service to the Veskarium is a common career path for many pahtras. This practice is accepted among pahtra communities, despite the desire of most pahtras to keep their distance from their vesk overlords. Individual success stories, such as that of Teret Cahan, pahtra high despot of Vesk-3 (page 32), continue to inspire young recruits, though most pahtras rarely reach such heights due to conflict between the self-expression desired by pahtra soldiers and the conformity demanded by their vesk superior officers.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

The most common dangers on Vesk-6 come from the planet's unusual environment. Much like the planet Castrovel in the Pact Worlds, dangerous megafauna and carnivorous plants thrive in Vesk-6's hot and humid atmosphere, eagerly devouring anything small enough to be considered prey. While vesk patrols and eager pahtra warriors keep most major settlements safe from such threats, nature is unpredictable, and population surges or environmental disruptions create swarms of pests and predators that overwhelm the most dedicated guardians. Far more dangerous, however, are the heavy magnetic fields and winds that sweep the planet and keep Vesk-6's atmosphere in place. Without proper magnetic shielding, the simplest of tools—even something as basic as a steel piton—can become unreliable, and advanced technology that depends on radio waves or electronics is useless at best and deadly at worst. Visitors to the planet

who wish to use high tech equipment must have their supplies specially modified, and a single flaw in this electronic or hybrid hardening can result in gear failure at a critical moment.

Vesk-6 is also a planet under foreign rule, and pahtra resentment of their vesk overlords occasionally boils into open conflict. While the Veskarium's relatively light hand in pahtra cultural matters keeps most pahtras pacified, some groups remain openly hostile, seeking to expel the conquerors and reclaim Pulonis for its native peoples. The end result is usually protracted, messy battles between pahtra guerrillas and vesk peacekeepers. More sinister and quiet are the depredations of Vesk-6's other native sapient species, the hymothoas, who seem just as offended by their planet's colonization as the most rebellious of pahtras. The hymothoas seem perfectly happy to infest vesk and visitors alike in order to further their mysterious goals, discarding the tormented husks of their victims whenever convenient. While pahtras seem to have an uncanny sense for detecting the parasitic oozes, born from evolving alongside the hymothoas, other creatures have no such protections.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are some of the most notable locations on Vesk-6.

Command 6

This massive military complex serves as the planetary capital and center of Veskarium power on Vesk-6. Most vesk prefer to remain in Command 6 when not required elsewhere, as the city provides a variety of amenities that vesk prefer, including artificial gravity that matches that of Vesk Prime. While Command 6 is magnetically shielded against the harmful effects of Vesk-6's magnetic fields, the potential danger to starships from magnetic storms in the planet's atmosphere means that the base does not have its own spaceport; all space traffic is instead routed through the Starlance space elevator (see below). Command 6 also serves as the training facility for all pahtras who choose to join the Veskarium's military, as pahtras require heavy training routines to adapt to standard gravity before they can even depart the planet. High Despot **Kavadroz** (NE male vesk envoy) rules Vesk-6 in the name of the Veskarium. Kavadroz is considered more open-minded than most vesk in the military's high command, and he is known to be preferential toward pahtra recruits. The high despot has had great success creating integrated special forces that pair every vesk soldier with a pahtra specialist. That this practice has found little support in Veskarium military units beyond Vesk-6, mostly due to conservative vesk commanders, causes Kavadroz no end of frustration.

Drill Point

After the discovery that Vesk-6's core has been altered in its primordial past, the Veskarium began to drill into the planet in search of advantageous magic or technology. Situated northeast of Command 6, Drill Point is the staging ground for this herculean endeavor, as vesk push their technology to the very limits to pierce through the planet's crust and mantle. Vesk have so far found a few tantalizing traces of metals with highly unusual properties, but the excavation at Drill Point is both slow and dangerous—Vesk-6's powerful magnetism seems to increase the

deeper one digs, and the drill site is plagued with accidents both mundane and bizarre. In the most recent operational problem, drillers have hit a point where any equipment sent into the planet's mantle can't be brought back out again without breaking.

Hafrerren

Located on the northwest tip of Vesk-6's supercontinent, this pahtra nation-state is known for its biomedical and organic science research and for the practice of traditional low-tech medicine, attempting to advance Vesk-6 with techniques that the planet's heavy magnetic fields won't affect. Beneath this veneer, however, Hafrerren is also riddled with rebel sympathizers who smuggle medical supplies to pahtra resistance fighters and harbor active terrorist cells. The heavily bio-engineered rebels known as the Kreyvash—mutated pahtra warriors who are barely recognizable due to experimental biotech augmentations—are the most famous and arguably most successful of pahtra guerrilla groups still active on Vesk-6, and have so far managed to avoid having their allegiances traced back to their home.

Lameida

A nation-state more in name than in practice, Lameida is not as centralized as other pahtra coalitions. Lameidan pahtras hold a place of pride as heirs to the many merchant and courier collectives that thrived on Vesk-6 before the invasion. In the past, these daring travelers were essential to trade and communication, and even today, after so many technological advancements in the planet's history, Lameidan pahtras are still important, as long-range communication equipment is all but useless on the planet. Lameidan couriers travel via magsails, flying ships with sails of electromagnetic energy propelled by Vesk-6's strong magnetic winds. Though the dangers inherent in these journeys cannot be overstated, Lameida is never short of eager young pahtras clamoring to join magsail crews for the thrills and the sights.

Proving Grounds

This tract of wilderness near the Holy Lands is dangerous even by the standards of Vesk-6, wracked with savage tides, magnetic storms, and occasional earthquakes, but the mystics of Rafemii (see below) also consider it a nexus of natural power. As a result, the Proving Grounds are one of the most prestigious places for pahtras to hold their coming of age ceremonies. All pahtras are expected to participate in this ancient rite in their 15th year, when they are sent into the wilderness to compete against their peers in battles and tests of survival that span several weeks. Every pahtra nation-state is permitted to send twelve youths to the Proving Grounds every year, and competition for these positions is brutally fierce.

The spectacle of these rites has drawn unwanted attention. At least a few vesk officials make a point of viewing the challenges every year; although they are usually respectful enough to silently watch, some pahtras worry vesk might try to assert themselves into this foundational aspect of pahtra culture by sending vesk adolescents to take part in the ceremonies. The Proving Grounds have also attracted the interest of the entertainment industry on Eox, and the undead entertainer Zo! (*Starfinder Pact Worlds* 94) has offered increasingly ludicrous sums of money for a chance to film and televise pahtra coming-of-age rites.

Rafemii

Situated near the center of the devastated Holy Lands, Rafemii was originally founded as a coalition of pahtra collectives who gave up technology altogether, considering it unclean due to its association with their vesk conquerors. However, Rafemii's ruling council quickly realized they needed something to keep them on par with the advancements of the Veskarium and other pahtra nation-states. They turned to magic, recruiting powerful pahtra mystics from all over Vesk-6. As a result, Rafemii did not fade into irrelevance like other collectives did. Though it is not the largest or most powerful nation-state on Vesk-6, Rafemii holds an outsized influence as the spiritual center of the planet, and its nominal leader, Councilor **Esketi** (NG female pahtra^{AA2} mystic) is viewed as a spiritual authority by many pahtras.

The Shriek

During the invasion of Vesk-6, an overwhelming magnetic storm set off the munitions inside a vesk destroyer in low orbit, causing an explosion that wiped out the rest of the destroyer's squadron and created a region of starship-sized shrapnel on the planet's surface. Now known as the Shriek, this graveyard of razor-sharp scrap and unexploded ordnance is now a mobile hazard; whenever magnetic storms reach a critical threshold, they fling boulder-sized clusters of jagged metal through the air and across the planet. The Veskarium high command declared salvage and cleanup efforts impossible years ago, and both vesk and pahtras would be happy to disregard the Shriek as a hazardous wasteland if not for one issue: the Shriek seems to be slowly but inexorably moving toward Command 6 with every magnetic storm. Vesk agents sent to investigate the Shriek have discovered that the haunting voices of long-dead vesk soldiers can be heard within the electromagnetic static of partially shielded communication devices, attempting to send desperate, distorted messages back to their superiors.

Skyhollow

Hidden among the jungles south of Rafemii and surrounded by pahtra nations all sworn to keep it secret, Skyhollow is the last remaining vestige of precolonial pahtra culture, founded when it became apparent that pahtras would lose the war against the Veskarium. Pahtras who formed Skyhollow agreed to live in complete isolation, maintaining their traditional ways of life without inviting contact from outsiders. While a few residents of Skyhollow follow developments in the outside world out of necessity, most Skyhollow pahtras know nothing of the Veskarium or the true history of Pulonis following the arrival of vesk. Rafemii's treaties with the Veskarium have allowed them to keep Skyhollow secret and safe for now, and Rafemii's border guards are quick to intercept any wide-eyed, curious explorers that choose to permanently leave Skyhollow in order to explore the greater world beyond their isolated home.

Starlance

A magnetically powered space elevator, Starlance is the only spaceport on Vesk-6 and is the planet's second-largest city. Its terminus in orbit above Vesk-6 means that starships can

safely dock and depart without entering the planet's dangerous magnetosphere, while magnetically shielded containers regularly run along the tether, ferrying passengers and cargo between orbit and Starlance's anchor station on Caltenu Island. Almost all non-vesk visitors to the planet reside in Starlance, as do many pahtra civilians who hope to leave Vesk-6 someday. Starlance is one of the few settlements on Vesk-6 known for its luxury, in contrast to the austere military quarters of Command 6 or the technologically unreliable residences of most pahtras. In addition to the eclectic storefronts set up in the hope of attracting cosmopolitan wealth, Starlance is home to arcades, holothaters, virtual reality cafes, and high-tech spectacles of all kinds, as well as massive gyms and spas established to support the extremely rigorous physical exercise regimens many vesk residents practice to keep themselves from losing bone density in the low gravity of Vesk-6.

STARLANCE

N spaceport

Population 2,187,428 (55% pahtra, 22% vesk, 23% other)

Government military

Qualities financial center, military (page 24), spaceport (page 24), technologically average

Maximum Item Level 14th

Trenarez

Situated on a peninsula between the Bloodsong Mountains and Thunderspeak Bay, this pahtra nation-state is at the cutting-edge forefront of music culture, holding multiple music festivals and engaging in government-sponsored residencies for promising artists. Trenarez also considers itself a bastion against the influence of foreign media from the Veskarium and beyond, boasting that its music is solely fueled by pahtra ingenuity. Whatever its true influence on the musical trends of Vesk-6, Trenarez certainly has a lock on the most spectacular musical shows, with its towering electric "singing coils" able to release high-voltage discharges that reproduce musical tones. This combination of musical mayhem and lightning-fueled destruction attracts crowds from miles around, as the maestros blast both the latest musical hits and the nearby atmosphere.

Vahateen

Modern computers, and the knowledge they contain, remain some of the most sought-after commodities on Vesk-6, as the planet's conditions make semiconductor-based technology an incredible challenge to maintain. In response to this problem, the two nation-states of Voyedris (see below) and Rafemii (page 54) collaborated to create the Vahateen, five mobile computing complexes made of stone and powered by magical circuits. The Vahateen rove randomly over Vesk-6, providing pahtras across the world fair access to their resources, though some superstitious pahtras claim that the Vahateen appear whenever and wherever they are critically needed. Some smaller pahtra collectives that are more disconnected from planetary politics even consider the Vahateen to be ancient artifacts or gods, appearing from distant lands to offer technology that is rarely seen and barely understood.

Voyedris

The closest pahtra nation-state to Command 6, Voyedris has the luck—or misfortune—of holding the Veskarium's interest. To tame the mammoth flora and fauna that consistently plague both pahtra and vesk settlements, Voyedris is developing advanced military technology engineered specifically for Vesk-6. While traditional assault enercopters and hover tanks have been set aside as impractical due to planetary conditions, Voyedrisi engineers have made rapid progress on an alternative: massive, piloted ceramic mechs that move with the assistance of embedded magnetic "muscles." While the mechs are currently unreliable, they have had some success routing local wildlife, and vesk officers are watching the machines with great interest.



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VESK-7

Diameter: ×1
Mass: ×1
Gravity: ×1
Atmosphere: Normal
Day: 39 hours;
Year: 72 years



VESK-8

Diameter: ×2/3
Mass: ×4/9
Gravity: ×1
Atmosphere: Thin
Day: 17 hours;
Year: 72 years



The distant, icy worlds of Vesk-7 and Vesk-8 are the outermost planets of the Ghavaniska system, home to the shaggy behemoths called kothamas (*Alien Archive* 3 64). Kothamas refer to Vesk-8 and Vesk-7 as simply "home" and "new home" in their native tongue. These planets are poor in minerals and other natural resources, so most vesk assign little value to them, and their remote location on the far frontier of Veskarium space means that a posting to either of the two frozen planets is usually a punishment for dishonored vesk or those exiled for controversial or troublesome political views.

Vesk-7 and Vesk-8 share virtually the same orbit (making their planetary years equal as well), though Vesk-7's orbit is retrograde, taking it in the opposite direction from Vesk-8 and Ghavaniska's other planets. Twice each planetary year, the two planets are in opposition, located on opposite sides of the system, but as they continue along their paths around

the sun, the two worlds approach each other until their orbits nearly converge, bringing them so close to one another that their shared moon, called *Traverse*, transfers its orbit from one planet to the other. *Traverse* orbits Vesk-7 for half a planetary year (equal to 36 Pact Standard years), then relocates to orbit Vesk-8 for half a year before returning again to Vesk-7. Magical gates located on both worlds and their moon activate only at these times of convergence, allowing the kothamas to engage in a traditional, deeply sacred journey from planet to moon to planet and communicate face-to-face with their peers from their sister world in a ritual they call the *Meet*.

GEOGRAPHY

Vesk-7 and Vesk-8 are both terrestrial planets covered in ice. Vesk-7 has a hot molten core that keeps the planet from freezing entirely, allowing liquid water to exist in its



equatorial region. Most of Vesk-7's northern and southern hemispheres, however, are too cold for liquid water. Massive glaciers stretch from the poles to the tropics, giving way to frozen plains and rolling, windswept hills covered in this icy snow. Approaching the warmer equatorial regions, hardy vegetation is able to take root and grow, and the land is dotted with rivers and lakes that only freeze seasonally. A deep ocean called the Ice Sea forms a band around the planet's equator, littered with vast ice floes and gigantic icebergs, some as large as continents. Most of the frigid ocean is lifeless, but deep beneath the water's surface, hydrothermal vents on the sea floor create small ecosystems able to support life, where wide arrays of aquatic vegetation and deep sea creatures flourish. The Ice Sea encompasses three small equatorial continents: Asekora, Offinik, and Ulathaz, each supporting an ecosystem of plants; insects; and small, furry mammals.

Vesk-8 is extremely mountainous and prone to volcanic eruptions, the result of the gravitational tug of war between that planet, Vesk-7, and Traverse (page 61) that heats the planet's core. Vesk-8 has so many mountains that many joke its environment is so hostile that it is covered in thorns that point out into space. It has the highest mountain peaks of any world in the Veskarium, most notably Mount Matha (page 60), which reaches up toward the edge of the planet's atmosphere. Shimmerstone (*Alien Archive* 3 65), a translucent blue mineral with psychic calming properties, is found only in Vesk-8's frozen mountains. The only surface water on Vesk-8 is found at the

bases of these mighty mountains, where liquid water bubbles up from the volcanic depths to form sulfuric hot springs. The deep valleys between the mountain ranges are frozen deserts, devoid of nearly all life. Beneath Vesk-8's mountains, lava tubes and natural fissures form an underground network that spans the entire planet. Geothermal heat and meltwater in these tunnels create a thriving subterranean ecosystem of lush fungus forests that fill large caverns and glow with pulsing bioluminescence. These fungal colonies are believed to be among the largest and most diverse in the galaxy, but Vesk-8's subsurface tunnels are mostly unexplored, and only one major entrance to the labyrinth exists on the planet's frozen surface. Reports of a civilization of large, sentient plant creatures living in the tunnels remain unverified.

RESIDENTS

The contemplative kothamas are the only sapient species native to Vesk-7 and Vesk-8, inhabiting the frozen glaciers of the former and the high-altitude mountain peaks of the latter. Kothamas are well suited to extreme cold environments, making them the most populous species on both planets. Although they originally evolved on Vesk-8, kothamas' ancestors made their way to Vesk-7 in the distant past by way of the moon Traverse, using the magical gates that allow transit between the worlds when their orbits converge, and have flourished there as well. However, kothamas' solitary nature means their population is greatly dispersed.



VESK-7



TRAVERSE



VESK-8

Not to scale.

Vesk represent the next largest population on Vesk-7 and Vesk-8. The Veskarium military maintains outposts on both planets, garrisoned with vesk troopers, who far outnumber vesk civilians on the two worlds. Other species are a distinct minority on the two planets, though the city of Forget on Vesk-7 (page 60) hosts relatively sizable populations of non-vesk humanoids. Forget welcomes everyone, so more and more species have representation in the settlement. Most of the miners working in the shimmerstone mine at Penal Colony 8 on Vesk-8 (page 60) are vesk convicts, though members of several other species also labor in the mines.

SOCIETY

Those areas of Vesk-7 and Vesk-8 that vesk directly control follow the typical Veskarium command structure and hierarchy. A military government rules each planet, with control of Traverse changing hands as the moon transfers its orbit. High Despot **Sarthis Wrathmaker** (LN female vesk vanguard^{COM}), a no-nonsense leader who believes in long, hard work hours, rules Vesk-7. Her counterpart on Vesk-8 is High Despot **Jularaz the Frozen** (NE male vesk technomancer), who often has “important business” on other worlds that takes him away from his post, leaving most of the planet’s governance in the hands of his subordinates. Their positions as high despots of the Veskarium’s most distant core worlds means they are the least influential members of the empire’s Council of Despots, much to their frustration.

Nominally, the entirety of both planets and their moon are under vesk rule. In practice, however, the Veskarium’s authority extends for only a few kilometers around major settlements like Command 7 and Command 8, leaving most of the frozen worlds’ resident kothamas free to do what they wish. While officially considered Veskarium citizens, kothamas don’t have much interaction with their vesk overlords. Their solitary and contemplative lifestyle leaves them with little need for either a centralized government or a justice system of their own. While most kothamas are pacifists, even those very few kothamas who become aggressive rarely act violently against other kothamas due the species’ supernatural calming auras. Vesk are just as affected by kothamas’ calming presence, which makes enforcing any sort of discipline on kothamas difficult. Vesk are aware of the effect of these auras, and since kothamas recognize the Veskarium’s rule (or don’t challenge it, at least) and have little of value to the empire, both species tend to ignore the other unless interaction is absolutely necessary.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

The settlement of Forget on Vesk-7 is largely independent, but the Veskarium occasionally sends troops to remind residents they still live under vesk rule. Forget has a volunteer militia to defend the city, and while this group hasn’t yet come to blows with the Veskarium, tensions run high when both forces encounter one another. Residents usually welcome experienced combatants to Forget, hoping they might consider joining or training the militia. City leaders actively seek good diplomats capable of negotiating with vesk authorities, especially as Forget grows and its inhabitants seriously consider declaring independence from the Veskarium.

Marine vessels from both the Veskarium and Forget ply the waters of the Ice Sea, but the ocean has become more and more dangerous, especially in the region between the continents of Asekora and Offinik. Multiple ships have mysteriously disappeared in the area, and there are rumors of a titanic aquatic creature akin to a plesiosaur (*Alien Archive 2 38*) or even a diaspora wyrm (*Alien Archive 3 16*) defending its territory. Officially, the Veskarium claims that no such creature exists, but High Despot Sarthis has issued a bounty for thwarting whatever is responsible for the vanished ships in the area.

The shimmerstone miners at Penal Colony 8 on Vesk-8 are tired of their lot. While there are no concrete plans to rise up against the guards yet, there has been talk about throwing off Veskarium rule and selling the shimmerstone themselves. It wouldn’t take much to set off this powder keg, though how successful such an uprising would be against the military might of the Veskarium is very much an open question. Some of the prisoners at the mine hope to take advantage of High Despot Jularaz’s frequent trips off world, or even somehow arrange for his assassination or disappearance to help their cause. Of course, if the high despot ever learned about such plans, he would likely respond with ruthless force—and possibly reward those who brought the information of an impending prison break to him.

The nature and origin of the magical gates linking Vesk-7 and Vesk-8 to Traverse—as well as their exact number—remain little understood to both the Veskarium and kothamas. The gates are crafted of shimmerstone and activate only when the moon’s orbit shifts from one planet to the other, but not even the kothamas remember or know who originally built them, other than that they were constructed well before the Gap and the Veskarium’s initial conquest of the two worlds. However, kothamas do seem to have an instinctive ability to sense nearby gates. The kothamas have no interest in the gates beyond their use in their traditional Meets, but the Veskarium has shown great interest in learning the secrets of the gates for military purposes. So far, Veskarium scientists have been unsuccessful in learning how to control the gates, and the most promising line of research recently ended with a magical explosion that destroyed one of the portals, an event that horrified kothamas and strained relations between the two species.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following locations can be found on Vesk-7 and Vesk-8, and on their shared moon, Traverse.

Vesk-7

The sites detailed below are located on Vesk-7.

Command 7

Built beneath a massive glacier in the planet’s northern hemisphere, Command 7 is the seat of Veskarium rule on Vesk-7, though in function it is little more than a repository for the Veskarium’s hazardous waste and a glorified supply depot for military vessels on the remote fringes of the Ghavaniska system. Most of the huge military base is concealed below the ice, with

only a small portion of it visible on the surface. The snow-covered hills surrounding Command 7 make for excellent field training, and besides perimeter defenses and a small spaceport, most of the base's surface structures are barracks and facilities for Veskarium troops temporarily assigned here to train in conditions of extreme cold.

High Despot Sarthis Wrathmaker resents her assignment to this frozen wasteland and believes her position on the Council of Despots has suffered because of it. To remedy this, she remains constantly on the lookout for anything that could increase her influence on the council or the prestige of her command, and is currently attempting to woo the Norikama Syndicate into establishing a greater presence in the Veskarium proper by relocating its primary starship manufacturing facilities from the colony world of Norikama to Vesk-7.

Forget

The remote nature of Vesk-7 and its marginal habitability compared to Vesk-8 make it an ideal place to settle for those who want to disappear, and the small but growing colony of Forget on the continent of Ulathaz in the Ice Sea is home to many of them. An apocryphal local story claims that the city's founder, a vesk named Ahakoyo the Malcontent, was asked why she had chosen to come here, and her simple answer, "I forget," gave the settlement its name. In any case, most of Forget's residents are looking to escape their old lives for one reason or another, and firmly believe that as long as you follow the rules and contribute to society, your past should remain forgotten.

A variety of species live in Forget, with humans, androids, and pahtras (*Alien Archive 2 94*) making up the lion's share of the population. Recently, a herd of dromadas (*Alien Archive 3 28*) settled in the city and founded a secretive company called Impossible Exports there. Vesks are a very small minority in Forget, and often face suspicion of being Veskarium spies from Forget's normally friendly inhabitants. Currently, no kothamas permanently reside in Forget, but several individuals are frequent visitors, and are considered honorary citizens by many residents.

While Forget's residents pay lip service to the vesk government at Command 7, most don't consider the settlement a part of the Veskarium. The city is run entirely by cooperative decision, and town hall meetings can be very long as the majority of the city's citizens gather around computer screens to discuss and hammer out policies and decisions that the entire group can be comfortable with. Scratching out a life on this icy world isn't easy, even in Vesk-7's warmest climate. The harsh summers and even harsher winters have forged the residents into a strong community built on the support and trust of each member. Newcomers are welcome, but they are looked on with some suspicion until they have proven themselves. Justice in Forget almost always takes the form of exile from the settlement, which can lead to a quick death from exposure if one is unwilling or unable to return to Veskarium society.

FORGET

NG small city

Population 12,400 (31% human, 24% android, 17% pahtra, 28% other)

Government democratic utopia

Qualities insular, technologically underdeveloped

Maximum Item Level 8th

Vesk-8

The sites detailed below are located on Vesk-8.

Command 8

Like its counterpart on Vesk-7, Command 8 primarily serves as a supply and storage depot for the Veskarium military, though the base's warehouses hold shimmerstone mined at Penal Colony 8 (see below) for export off world rather than hazardous waste. Otherwise, the garrison at Command 8 is responsible for supporting and defending the shimmerstone mine and keeping an eye on the kothama monastery at Mount Matha (see below).

For a planetary command post, the base is relatively spartan, with few amenities for either the garrison or visitors to enjoy, though it does include a small starport. Vesk-8's extreme cold is a true nightmare for most vesks, and with little native life to hunt or fight, a posting here is cold, boring, and honorless. Even High Despot Jularaz spends as little time here as possible. Ground and air patrols over the planet's surface are rare and are mostly assigned as punishment to enforce discipline, though regular transports ferry troops and ore to and from the nearby penal colony and shimmerstone mine.

Mount Matha

Kothamas are fascinated by the starry void of space and spend much of their time studying the stars and meditating on the nature of the cosmos. The highest peak on Vesk-8, Mount Matha is a sacred site to kothamas. At the top of the mountain, as close to the stars as possible, where the temperatures are their lowest and the atmosphere is at its thinnest, kothamas built a monastery dedicated to meditation and contemplation, centered on one of the magical gates linking the planet to the moon Traverse. Constructed almost entirely of shimmerstone, the monastery is open to the sky, and on clear nights the stars can be bright enough to make the walls and gate sparkle with light.

A few kothamas can be found year-round within the monastery observing the stars and contemplating their connection to them, but twice each planetary year, when Vesk-7 and Vesk-8 converge, thousands of kothamas make sacred pilgrimages to the monastery to travel to Traverse for the biannual Meet. The journey is arduous and difficult, and must be made on foot, as there is no place for aircraft to land on the peak (even if they can even fly in the thin atmosphere) and there are no roads for ground vehicles on the mountain's slopes—only a steep, winding path worn into the rock by the passage of thousands of kothama feet over centuries. Kothamas do allow others to travel with them, though they expect travelers to see to their own needs and to respect the kothamas' sacred meditations.

Penal Colony 8

One of Vesk-8's few natural resources is shimmerstone (*Alien Archive 3 65*), a rare mineral unique to Vesk-8. Kothamas have long constructed meditative foci out of the psychically-attuned

WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

stone, and its rarity makes it valuable for use in jewelry, but vesk are most interested in shimmerstone's military applications. While the government does permit kothamas to mine small amounts of shimmerstone for personal use, the Veskarium holds a monopoly on all shimmerstone production on Vesk-8. To that end, vesk have established a shimmerstone mine and penal colony not far from Command 8. Convicted criminals from across the Veskarium are sent to Vesk-8 to work in the mine, officially designated Penal Colony 8. Most of the miners have received lifetime sentences of hard labor, though the unforgiving conditions on the planet's surface and in the mine itself mean such sentences are usually brutally short.

Most of the mine is situated underground; only the miners' living quarters, a fortified bunker housing the mine's guards, and a landing pad are located on the surface. As the shimmerstone is mined, it's brought up to the surface and stored in the bunker until the weekly air transport from Command 8 arrives to transfer the mined ore to the base's larger storage facilities. Vesk troops watch over the mine, the bunker, and the landing pad, but the miners' quarters are unguarded, as anyone attempting to escape would likely die in minutes from the extreme cold on the planet's surface.

Traversal

This moon, shared by both Vesk-7 and Vesk-8, has no atmosphere and low gravity, and is even more barren than the planets it orbits. The moon's surface is mostly ice and rock, but when it transfers its orbit between worlds, the planets' gravitational forces cause Traversal's core to expand and contract with tremendous intensity, leading to frequent volcanic eruptions. The lava from these eruptions rapidly cools once on the surface, leaving deep maze-like canyons across the moon's surface. These canyons make for excellent hiding spots, and the remains of abandoned outlaw or pirate camps, crashed ships, and lost smuggler caches litter the canyon floors, providing potentially valuable salvage to those brave enough to venture out into the canyons.

Traversal's name is an outlier in the Veskarium, where vesk renamed and numbered most other moons. The commonly held explanation for this exception is that the vesk bureaucrat responsible for renaming conquered planets and moons could not decide which planet to base the moon's numerical designation on and gave up in exasperation, keeping the translation of the moon's kothama name.

Gathermount

There are no permanent settlements on Traversal, but when Vesk-7 and Vesk-8 come closer twice each year and trade possession of the moon, thousands of kothamas from both planets use the briefly active magical gates to journey

to Traversal for their biannual Meet. The kothamas assemble at the top of the moon's highest volcanic mountain, called Gathermount, to discuss their meditations and trade news. Besides a magical shimmerstone gate, only a single structure sits atop Gathermount, sized for kothamas and containing machinery that draws power from the moon's core to create and maintain a bubble of breathable atmosphere covering the mountaintop. Non-kothamas are welcome to attend the Meet, but can expect little more than long discussions about the spiritual nature of the cosmos. As the planets begin to draw apart again, the gathering ends. Those kothamas who have become inured against the dangers of space and are ready to join the cosmos take advantage of the moon's low gravity to fling themselves into space, to the awe of their peers, and those remaining behind return to their homes planet-side before the gates become inactive once more—until the next Meet.



SARTHIS WRATHMAKER



CONQUEROR'S FORGE

Diameter: 2-1/2 miles

Mass: less than $\times 1/100$

Gravity: $\times 1$ (artificial)

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 28 hours (artificial);

Year: 3 years (artificial)



While the worlds of the Absalom Pact were forming their coalition to defend against the vesk threat in 41 AG, the Veskarium began to put its own plans in place. Because the Veskarium somehow missed Triune's Signal that broadcast the secret of Drift travel to the galaxy, the Council of Despots became concerned that their technologies might fall behind those of the newly formed Pact Worlds. To address this perceived technological gap, Emperor Rakakama III announced the construction of a massive space platform and shipyard where new military tech, weapons, and starships would be designed to aid the war effort against the Pact Worlds. Completed in 47 AG, the station was dubbed Conqueror's Forge in honor of Damaritosh, the vesk's patron god of war and conquest, and placed into orbit around Vesk Prime. Conqueror's Forge was so important to the war effort that it was given full status as a core world, with a high despot appointed to command the station.

Thanks to the valuable developments coming out of Conqueror's Forge since its creation, the Veskarium's military technology reached previously unseen heights during the Silent War, but a surprise Swarm attack destroyed the station in 291 AG, cutting off further research. The Veskarium soon rebuilt the station, but unlike the original, the new Conqueror's Forge was not locked in orbit around Vesk Prime or any other planet. Instead, it was fitted with powerful engines that enabled the station to travel throughout the Veskarium and beyond, either for strategic placement or defense against surprise strikes like the attack that destroyed the original station.

When the Swarm War ended and the Veskarium's alliance with the Pact Worlds remained intact, the Council of Despots realized the empire could benefit from selling the technological developments from Conqueror's Forge to other species. The profits from these sales would help fund additional research as well as recoup some of the extensive costs of the Swarm War. While research continued as normal on the station, its facilities were expanded to facilitate trade with interested buyers. Today, Conqueror's Forge travels throughout Veskarium space, collecting resources for research and production and selling weapons and starships, but it avoids staying in one place for too long to decrease the risk of another attack.

WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

GEOGRAPHY

Conqueror's Forge is essentially a large cylinder approximately 2-1/2 miles in length. Huge solar arrays and three long auxiliary modules extend from the forward end of the cylinder, giving the station the distinct silhouette of a doshko when viewed from the correct angle. Two components form the body of the cylinder: an inner core housing the station's command and control center, and an outer shell containing a shipyard and various modular sections dedicated to research and development. A series of connecting arms join the core and shell together, and a multitude of weapons emplacements stud the exterior hull.

With the exception of the station's shipyard and Visitor Sectors, Conqueror's Forge constantly rotates at a high rate, using centrifugal force from the station's rotation to create pseudogravity equal to that of Vesk Prime. Although the Veskarium has artificial gravity technology, the delicate nature of much of the research and development work on the station means that keeping interfering forces to a minimum is a must.

Two banks of huge thrusters, one at either end of the station, propel Conqueror's Forge through space when necessary. Hundreds of smaller thrusters run along the station's length to assist with steering. The station is rumored to utilize a powerful Drift engine that makes it capable of interstellar travel, but whether these rumors are true is a closely guarded military secret.

Regardless of its physical location, Conqueror's Forge uses the local day and year of Vesk Prime, which are equal to 28 Pact Standard hours and 3 Pact Standard years, respectively.

RESIDENTS

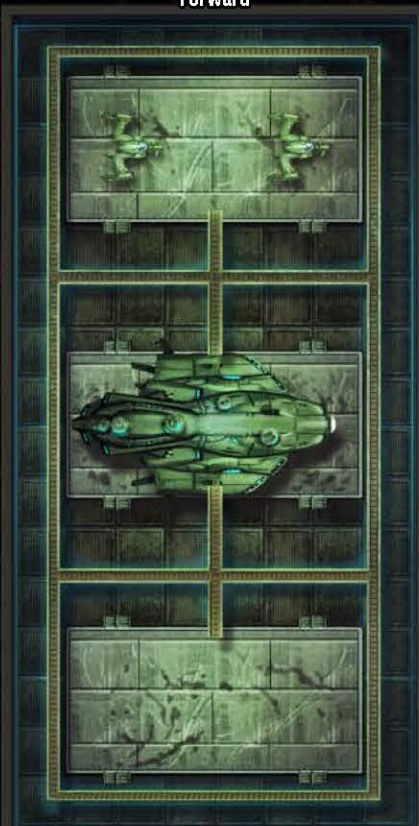
The majority of the inhabitants of Conqueror's Forge are vesk, befitting the station's status as a major Veskarium military installation. Most of these individuals are active duty military, intelligence officers, or scientists, spearheading the Forge's many research projects and following the dictates of the Veskarium's ruling council and the station's high despot. Outside of these groups, the rest of the vesk living on the station are noncombatant civilian contractors who keep the station running smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

Other Veskarium races are a distinct minority on the station, and skittermanders (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 106) make up the largest share of permanent non-vesk residents. While almost none of these skittermanders work as official employees of the station, they often aid the station's staff with their daily duties, especially with cleaning and maintenance. The skittermanders mostly keep to their homes, most of which can be found in the station's Recreation Sector (page 66) and have organized themselves into club-like groups called Forge Crews, each with a unique nickname like the Gun Kids or the Star Chompers.

A large number of outside visitors from a variety of species travel to Conqueror's Forge for various reasons. These include patrons purchasing wares, guests to the station, and the rare non-vesk consultant brought in to share their expertise on a particular matter. The majority of these visitors stay within accommodations in the Visitor Sectors (page 67), though

Forward

SHIPYARD



Solar Arrays

2000 FEET



VISITOR SECTORS

CUSTOM STARSHIP SOLUTIONS

Solar Arrays

Experimental Engines

Starship Research Division



TECHNOMANTIC LABORATORIES

Magitech Augmentations

Diabolic Research Division



RECREATION SECTOR

Startown

Nighttown

Jukravni Park

Temple of Damoritosh



FORGEWORKS INNOVATIONS

Automated Manufacturing

Virtual Intelligence Developments



ARSENAL

Testing Field 3-A

Robotic Soldier Division



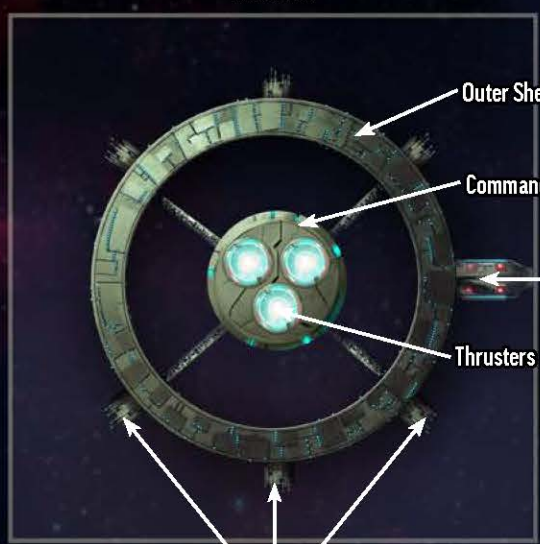
VESK-9

Gene Manipulation Lab

White Hole Particle Storage



END VIEW



Outer Shell

Command Core

Visitor Sectors

Thrusters

Weapons Emplacements

some hired consultants are assigned quarters in the research modules where they work.

SOCIETY

Like all Veskarium military installations, Conqueror's Forge has a strict chain of command, from the station's commander to the greenest gunner, but even outside the military, the regimented and dutiful lifestyle of most vesk means much of the Forge's population falls in line on their own with little guidance. High Despot **Dantromal Kominar** (LN male vesk mechanic) commands Conqueror's Forge and has executive oversight on all of the station's research and development projects. He also has the final say on the station's overall management, though like most high despots, he delegates much of this work to his subordinates. Kominar is a generally easygoing leader, preferring to allow the various research and development teams on the Forge to manage themselves to maximize efficiency and morale. He is not one to suffer teams that squander their resources, however, and he is quick to come down on any he sees as wasteful.

Each of the station's research modules has several teams dedicated to individual projects. Usually these teams are permitted to initiate projects they feel are worth their efforts and are quick to establish project parameters and assign duties without any outside input. Only on rare occasions does the high despot or another high-ranking officer order a team to switch projects or create new teams from scratch to work on a specific project.

Not everyone on the station is a member of one of these research teams. Once a project has moved past the research step, other teams take responsibility for mass production and assembly of the finished product, be it a starship or new personal weapon. Production and assembly teams are just as dedicated as any research team, and occasionally commission research to improve their own efficiency. Other groups are dedicated to creating custom commissions for paying customers, handling all research, development, and production among the same team.

Civilian society on the station functions much as on any world in the Veskarium. Civilians adhere to military laws and regulations, but otherwise go about their daily business. Certain areas of the station are off-limits to civilians, but this is no different than in other cities attached to military installations throughout the empire.

When not working, residents enjoy the facilities of the station's Recreation Sector (page 66), or take shore leave on nearby planets, if available. High Despot Kominar encourages occasional downtime and relaxation among the station's crew, believing it helps them maintain focus on their high-priority work projects. In addition, all station employees receive paid vacation time during the "half-month" of Vaskalan-esk at the end of the Veskarium year. In keeping with the vesk tradition of preparing for the next year's battles during this period, most use this time to brainstorm new projects for the upcoming year, iterate on existing designs, or carry out work on personal projects.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Conqueror's Forge faces very little in the way of conventional threats. When constructing the current Conqueror's Forge, vesk engineers added a huge array of defensive weapons emplacements

to the station's outer hull, both visible and concealed, that cover the station from all angles at all times. Hundreds of ships buzz around the station or are docked to its exterior as well, allowing the station commander to deploy a defensive flotilla in a matter of minutes. In addition, though it does take time to warm up the station's massive thrusters, Conqueror's Forge is surprisingly maneuverable and can move at unexpectedly high speeds for a vessel of its size and mass. When operating at peak efficiency, the Forge is thus a difficult target to hit. If invaders manage to board the station, nearly every vesk working here is combat trained, willing to mobilize to repel the boarders, and equipped with a variety of powerful, experimental weapons from the Forge's research modules.

The majority of threats to Conqueror's Forge come from within, from experimental and dangerous research projects or technologies. To minimize any potential damage to the station, the station's command crew can seal off any lab, office, or research station with blast doors or force fields, or even seal an entire module from the station if the damage is excessive. As the station is staffed with loyal Veskarium troops, any attempts at rebellion or sabotage are often suppressed immediately.

CONQUEROR'S FORGE

LE military space station

Population 82,000 (94% vesk, 4% skittermander, 2% other)

Government military autocracy (High Despot Dantromal Kominar)

Qualities academic, modular, military (page 24), technologically advanced

Maximum Item Level 20th

QUALITIES

Modular The compartmentalized nature of this settlement's construction allows for relatively easy and quick additions, renovations, and even physical rearrangement. Parts of the settlement can also be physically separated for quarantine or security purposes.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Conqueror's Forge is divided into several modules, each holding thousands of researchers, technicians, and other staff.

Arsenal

Vesk militarism has led to many developments in the fields of armor and weapon technology, and the purpose of the module called the Arsenal is to push combat technology to its limits. Researchers in the Arsenal develop bleeding-edge weapons such as those capable of piercing through planes, dimension-robbing grenades, armor capable of withstanding the crushing gravity of super-dense planets, and autonomous robotic soldiers, just to name a few.

Beyond its research facilities, the Arsenal also contains areas dedicated to testing its new tech. Volunteers from the ranks of the Veskarium's military try out the gear in both physical and virtual testing fields, allowing the Arsenal's staff to receive immediate feedback on their designs. On occasion, the researchers hold tournaments to test the latest armor and weapons against each other. Research teams eliminated in the early stages of these tournaments often find their projects

have been immediately shut down. This results in the Arsenal's staff having the highest turnover on the station. While many of these researchers ask for reassignment when their projects are scrapped, it's not uncommon for some to die while testing their own designs.

Command Core

The largest component of Conqueror's Forge is also its most critical. Filling the entire length of the station's inner core, Command Core is the Forge's central command center, where staff monitor the status of the station, keeping tabs on critical life-support systems, staff schedules, and progress on various research and development projects. If the station is attacked, its weapon systems are operated from Command Core as well.

A high-speed elevator runs down the station's center line, connecting all of the core's levels together.

Staff are usually stationed in Command Core for several months at a time, and the core includes barracks to house these troops. High Despot Kominar's office is situated at the forward end of Command Core. Although generally a hands-off leader, it's not uncommon for Kominar to arrive unannounced on the bridge or at an ops station to request a status report.

Custom Starship Solutions

The majority of Conqueror's Forge's income comes from the sale of custom starships. Custom Starship Solutions (CSS) designs commissioned starships, with orders ranging from starships with custom specifications to components for existing vessels, such as new computer systems, Drift engines, or expansion bays. Smaller ships are built on-site in the CSS module, while the station's shipyard (page 67) handles construction of larger vessels with oversight from CSS engineers. Most clients choose to collect their purchases at Conqueror's Forge itself, though for an extra fee, a CSS crew will deliver a custom purchase anywhere in the known galaxy.

CSS's Starship Research Division is also tasked with developing new starship technologies. Researchers constantly create new systems to improve vesk ships, often using the best parts of alien designs as a basis for further innovations. This process also allows researchers to become familiar with the design specifications of other species, making it easier not only to build commissioned ships in the same style, but also to design weapons capitalizing on those designs' weaknesses.

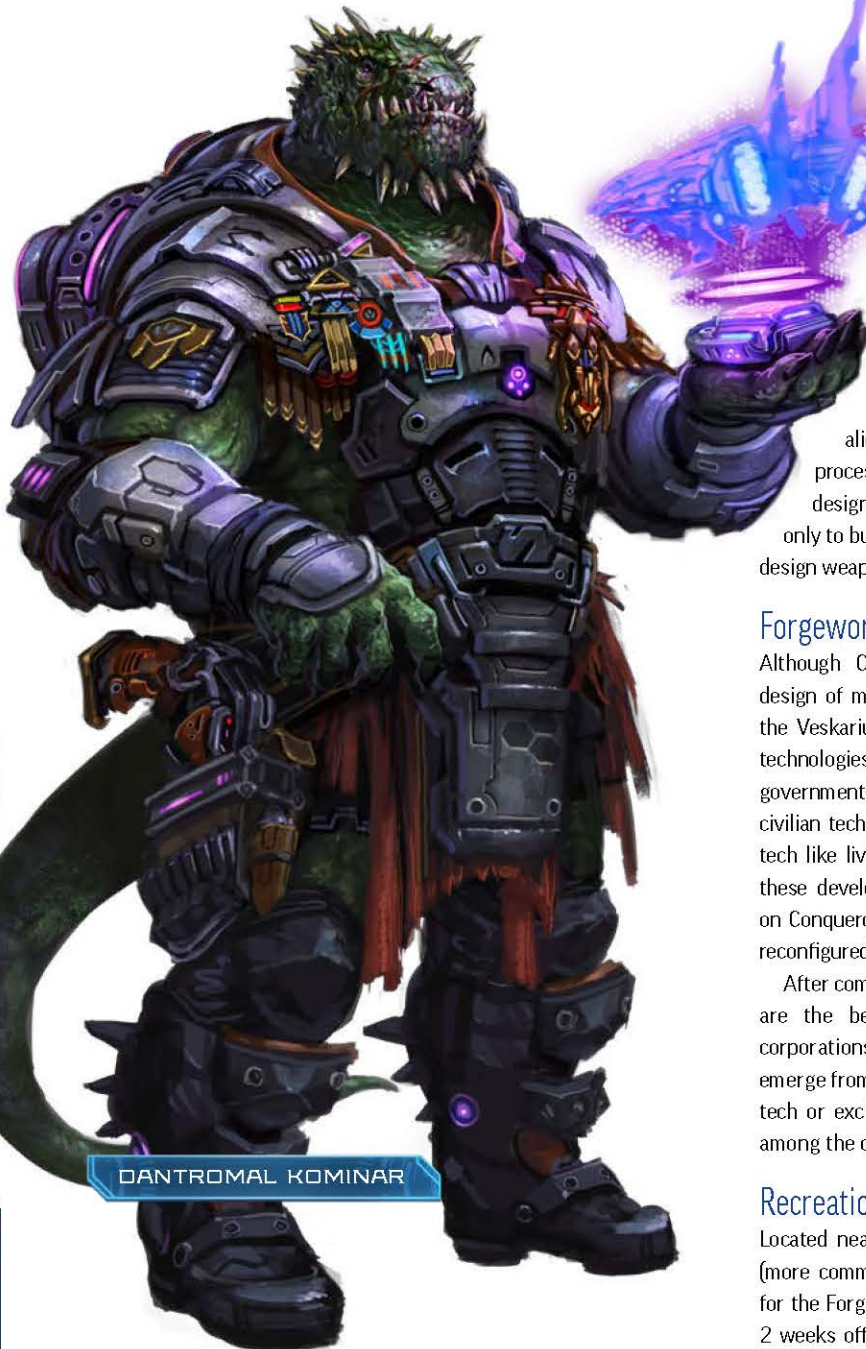
Forgeworks Innovations

Although Conqueror's Forge is primarily dedicated to the design of military technology such as weapons and starships, the Veskarium recognizes the importance of developing other technologies to aid the empire. Forgeworks Innovations is a government-owned corporation that focuses on developing civilian technology, from basic tools to vehicles to more unique tech like living nanofibers or virtual intelligence. A number of these developments have become the basis of other projects on Conqueror's Forge, such as cleaning nanites that were later reconfigured into grenades to disintegrate enemy batteries.

After combat tech and starships, Forgeworks' breakthroughs are the best-selling products on the station. Dozens of corporations send liaisons to purchase the latest pieces to emerge from Forgeworks, and this arms race for the newest hot tech or exciting gadget encourages creativity and innovation among the company's staff.

Recreation Sector

Located near the center of the station, the Recreation Sector (more commonly known as RecSec) provides leisure activities for the Forge's staff. Most research teams receive a minimum of 2 weeks off between major projects, and RecSec is effectively



DANTROMAL KOMINAR

a small resort designed to tend to their needs during this downtime. Filled with bars, casinos, entertainment venues, parks, restaurants, sparring gyms, and more, RecSec has the largest staff of all of the station's modules, second only to Core Command.

The Recreation Sector is split into two districts, Nighttown and Startown. Nighttown, lit only by neon and holo-advertisements, is home to RecSec's eternal nightlife. In contrast, Startown is bathed in constant light and features more tranquil locales, as well as the station's temple of Damoritosh, overseen by Priest-Captain **Jakazi Two-Blades** (LE female vesk soldier). The station's skittermanders inhabit their own neighborhood in Startown, informally known as Little Oeddertchonk.

Shipyard

Unlike the rest of the station's modules, the shipyard does not rotate, remaining stationary to take advantage of the full effects of zero gravity for building starships. Conqueror's Forge offers a number of standardized starship models for easy purchase. With a menu of common customizations, these standard models are usually available within a few days to a few weeks. Commissioned starship orders go through Custom Starship Solutions (page 66). Starships of many sizes are constructed in the shipyard, ranging from personal craft like racing skiffs and military interceptors to larger vessels like troop transports and freighters. Many of these projects are on the smaller end of the scale, and can be constructed entirely within the module. Exceptionally large starships, such as cruisers, carriers, and battleships, are first built in sections inside the shipyard and assembled outside of the station.

The shipyard employs hundreds of drones and robots, each capable of short-range spaceflight, to aid in starship construction. This mass of automated workers can assemble a complete Tiny or Small starship in a matter of hours, and if the station is attacked, these constructs can be repurposed as defensive weapons. More than one enemy fleet has been repelled in their attack as these robots literally unmake the enemy's starships around them.

Technomantic Laboratories

Most of the advancements created on Conqueror's Forge are technological in nature, but the station does not neglect magical developments. Staffed with mystics, technomancers, and witchwarpers^{COM}, the station's Technomantic Laboratories develop new magic items, hybrid items, magitech augmentations, spells, and other magical breakthroughs, including diabolic research. Because of the dangerous magical energies involved in many of the labs' projects, this module features a number of magic-nullifying emergency fail-safes.

One of the longest ongoing projects at the Technomantic Laboratories involves memory reconstruction magic. If the Veskarium knew even some of the history lost to the Gap, it would gain information that no one else in the galaxy has, and the empire could use that knowledge to great advantage against its enemies. To date, these efforts have been unsuccessful, returning only contradictory information, but researchers have come up with a promising new approach to the problem—attempting to tap into a parallel universe where the Gap doesn't exist.

Vesk-9

Located at the aft end of the station, this module's very existence is officially denied by the Veskarium government. Known only by the codename Vesk-9, it is devoted to confidential research, advanced experimentation, and other secret projects that remain classified to all but those with the highest security clearances. If Conqueror's Forge does have Drift capability, its experimental Drift tech would most likely be housed here. While most of Vesk-9's projects involve technological advancements, it has dabbled in more unscrupulous experiments on occasion. These include efforts to genetically engineer more fearsome soldiers using Swarm DNA and even attempts to manipulate the metaphysical makeup of the Drift.

More recently, the researchers in Vesk-9 have experimented with time manipulation. Using a captured time dimensional (*Alien Archive 3 116*), Vesk-9's scientists were able to identify some of the component particles of the Dimension of Time and create a new type of particle called anti-relative particles, or "white hole particles," which can invert the relative dilation of time near a black hole, making time pass more quickly. A research vessel equipped with these particles was able to increase the flow of time aboard the ship relative to the rest of the universe, allowing scientists to develop technological advancements at a great rate. The use of these white hole particles was not without a cost, however, as the ship and its crew aged and decayed at an accelerated rate even faster than that of their relative time. After just two successful tests, the Council of Despots banned any further use of white hole particles, though Vesk-9 still contains a large stockpile of the unique particles.

Visitor Sectors

The three auxiliary modules at the forward end of Conqueror's Forge (the "blades" of the station's doshko silhouette) are set aside for visitors. Each module features a number of shops, showrooms, and guest accommodations and amenities, including docking facilities for small, private starships. Customers commissioning work in the Forge's shipyard or one of its research modules are welcome to visit the station for the duration of their projects, and Guest Relations Manager **Yoroko** (NG skittermander envoy), one of the few skittermanders with an official position on the station, works hard to ensure visitors' needs are met. However, all guests must remain in the Visitor Sectors unless escorted by station staff with the proper security clearances. Outside of these paying clients, the station tightly restricts visitors.

Due to the highly sensitive nature of the work taking place on Conqueror's Forge, the Visitor Sectors are designed for easy separation from the rest of the station. If the station comes under attack, its crew can jettison all three modules. This capability is presented to clients as a safety feature to keep them out of harm's way in a conflict, but the modules can also serve a defensive purpose: the station's tactical doctrine is to drive any boarders toward the Visitor Sectors, which the vesk can then eject into a nearby star or planet's atmosphere, incinerating the aggressors and modules at the same time.



WORLDS OF NEAR SPACE

2



EXPLORING NEAR SPACE

Near Space is a broad term for many vastly different pockets of space, united in the relative ease with which adventurers can travel to them. Closer than the worlds in the portion of the galaxy known as the Vast, but further away than the sprawling solar system home to billions known as the Pact Worlds, Near Space represents boundless opportunity for exploration and adventure. This chapter presents 20 new and expanded worlds and systems for you and your party to explore.

NEAR SPACE ADVENTURES

There are many reasons to set an adventure in Near Space rather than the core solar system of the Starfinder setting, the Pact Worlds, or the furthest reaches of the galaxy known as the Vast. A party of vesk characters, for instance, is likely to hail from the Veskarium, a significant solar system not just in Near Space but in Starfinder in general—the entire first chapter of this book is dedicated to it for good reason! However, there are many other, more nuanced reasons to venture into Near Space. Starfaring characters with dreams of exploring the wide galaxy might look beyond the single, relatively unified system of the Pact Worlds, toward weirder, wilder, more independent worlds on the fringes of the populated galaxy. And traveling to Near Space destinations takes much less time and carries a much lower chance of a dangerous encounter in the Drift than travel to the Vast, where help—even simple contact with home—is also much farther away. Near Space too carries with it ample opportunity for wheeling, dealing, mercenary work, and if not first contact, early contact with new and interesting cultures and species.

USING NEAR SPACE WORLDS

There are numerous ways you can use the worlds presented here to enrich your Starfinder games, whether you're a Game Master or playing a single character.

Player Characters

These worlds are rife with playable species, and your character might therefore be from any one of them and be influenced by its culture, one or more of its notable locations, and relationships it has with other Near Space (or other) entities. Of course, your character can be any species and still call one of these worlds home, adding even more options for a deep backstory and interesting interactions. Many of the player options presented in Chapters 3 and 4 of this book are also directly tied to Near Space entities, so learning about their source can give you plenty of ideas for enriching your character's background with exciting details.

Game Masters

You can use any of these worlds, those of the Veskarium, and those of your own creation (see the Building your Own Near Space Worlds sidebar) to enliven your setting or even provide

a brief break from the current overarching adventure your PCs are on. You can set parts of your adventure on a Near Space world, choosing to focus in on what makes it unique and having the characters directly engage in the culture and conflict there. You can also use these worlds as inspiration, backdrop, or interesting set dressing while the player characters go about whatever business brought them there.

When the PCs travel to a Near Space world, remember that while there's only a 10% chance of a random encounter in the Drift when traveling to a Near Space destination—there's still a chance! So be sure to roll the dice, especially if your PCs make a habit of regularly hopping from one Near Space world or system to another.

NEAR SPACE ADVENTURE HOOKS

Each world entry provides its own notable locations and adventure hooks. The adventure seeds that follow here could theoretically occur in other parts of the galaxy, but they have deep ties to the Near Space worlds and systems that are described in this chapter of the book, often involving two or more such entities.

A Blight Upon Them: The copaxis on Tabrid Minor (page 106) are facing a terrible blight. They enlist the PCs to travel to the ghoran home world, Ghorus Prime (page 80), under false pretenses and extract the plantfolk's secrets for curing the blights that have previously plagued their island-sized trees, the kinwoods. If the ghorans discover that the heavily industrialized world is eyeing their home world via the PCs, a large-scale conflict could erupt.

Devils' Gates: There have been increasing reports of secretive, unauthorized operations taking place on the worlds of Helfen-Thel (page 84) that involve the investigation, and even possible sabotage, of their teleportation gates. Evidence from a recent failed operation points directly to the involvement of operatives from Embroi (page 76), though the government of that secretly Hell-ruled planet denies any complicity. A deeper investigation is needed before tensions escalate any further.

Expedition Sunlight: A party of astronomers, mystics, and xenobiologists from Pabaq (page 94) and Nemenar (page 90) have joined forces to investigate the latter planet's mysterious and enduring curse of combustion. The exploratory group plans to head to the Riven Shroud (page 102), where they hope to find clues for coping among the defunct star station's technology.

BUILDING YOUR OWN NEAR SPACE WORLDS

While this chapter presents 20 worlds and systems in Near Space, there are many more you might like to explore. The *Starfinder Deck of Many Worlds* is a 110-card accessory that helps you invent countless new worlds, providing randomized attributes, creatures, and even multiple story hooks that combine in interesting ways to generate millions of possible worlds.

Whether you use the *Deck of Many Worlds*, your own creative devices, or both to generate a new world, ask yourself questions about it to bring the world to life. Who lives there? Are they the original inhabitants? What sets this world apart from all others? What makes it the same? How does the level of technology, magic, religion, and interaction with other cultures, worlds, and systems affect daily life there? What might surprise, horrify, or delight the PCs? What conflicts exist and how likely is it that they will affect visiting PCs—and how might the PCs influence those conflicts?

You can ask and answer such questions on your own, but including the other players in your game in this creative process can add a lot, helping you create worlds that everyone feels interested and invested in.



However, the expeditionary group is woefully underprepared for defense, both for the journey and once arrived at their dangerous destination. Fortunately, they are as well funded as they are undefended, and they might be willing to take on a formal escort.

Joining the Collective: The PCs' home world has just experienced a strange phenomenon: an unpredicted meteor shower has just deposited dozens of enormous, mysterious crystals. Top engineers and mystics have discovered that these crystals serve as mystical interstellar communication devices, connecting the PCs' world to the Szandite Collective (page 104) across many leagues of space. But communication via the crystals stopped working abruptly, just after the Szandite Collective shared the locations of its several worlds. Whether the two events are connected is anyone's guess, and now the only hope the PCs have of understanding what meaning might lay behind their planet's strange visitation lies in travel to the Szandite Collective.

Pirate, Prisoner, Plunder: After spending time among the many self-interested and feuding factions in the rings of Preluria (page 100), the PCs have learned of an infamous space pirate imprisoned on Daegox 4 (page 72). According to the rumors circulating through Preluria's many miniature worlds, this pirate managed to stow the vast majority of his loot before being captured and sent to the prison planet. While details vary from telling to telling, the story is consistent enough that it likely holds a kernel of truth. If the PCs can outwit the prison planet's defenses to break into the prison (and more importantly, to get back out again), they might gain

access to a treasure trove that would make them the envy—and target—of every villain of Preluria.

Precipice of Peace: Brenneri mediators on their home world of Varturan (page 110) are gearing up to host a secret meeting between representatives of two warring factions, the Gideron Authority (page 82) and the Marixah Republic (page 88). While the Marixah Republic has so far vacillated between conflict and negotiation with the aggressive Gideron Authority, this is the first time a representative from the latter has put forth an offer of peace. The representative is not popular among their own system, however, so the two factions selected the brenneris' home world as a removed neutral ground on which to meet, with guidance from the otterfolk. However, there are rumors that several kanabo (*Alien Archive 2* 89) assassins are en route to end the peace talks before they can begin, and the PCs have been tapped to protect the proceedings that may be the Marixah Republic's only hope for peace with the Gideron Authority.

A Rebellion's Cause: The anti-Veskarium rebels of Landahl (page 86) are increasingly desperate for solutions that will turn away their would-be vesk overlords once and for all. They have gathered intelligence of a recently retired prominent vesk general who eschewed her empire and went to live on the world of vesk exiles known as Gaskar III (page 78). If the PCs can travel to the isolated world, find this general, and convince her to share her knowledge of vesk military strategies—or even to return to fighting, but on the rebel side—it might serve as the turning point in the Landahl resistance.

DAEGOX 4

Inescapable Corporate Prison

Diameter: $\times 2/3$ Mass: $\times 4/9$ Gravity: $\times 1$

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 20 hours; Year: 2 years

An insular world in a small system, Daegox 4 is a planetary-scale prison. Aside from its wardens, all inhabitants here are prisoners.

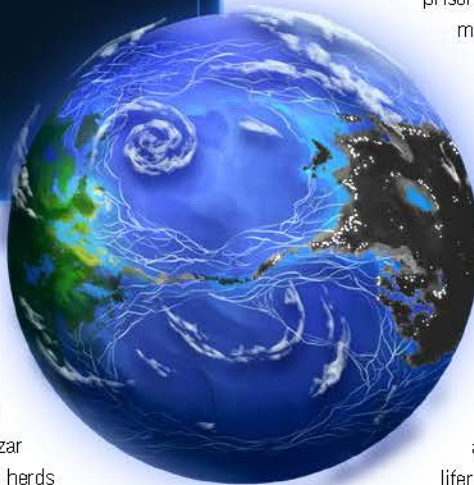
Two hundred years ago, Daegox 4 was a wild planet, inhabited only by native flora and fauna, such as towering kaezar trees, grasslands of waving tchothein, herds of docile rimbets, predatory felrots, giant buzzing skivvlers, and the soshsurus fungal network that forms a global mesh in the planet's oceans. The creatures who lived there followed only their own instincts and the normal forces of nature. Then, the Daegox Corporation discovered the untamed world and claimed it for their own. Corporate explorers established the first of their outposts, and in short order the corporation began building prison structures on the planet's lush surface.

As far as most in the Pact Worlds and Near Space know, the Daegox Corporation is solely in the business of incarceration. The corporation's members are all mysterious beings who call themselves "wardens"—beings who are humanoid with crimson skin, black eyes, nearly transparent hair, and six-fingered hands.

The Daegox Corporation has other prison planets in other systems, though Daegox 4 is the largest and most well known of these holdings. As a practice, the corporation takes over unclaimed planets or conquers those that put up little resistance. It then renames the planet Daegox with a numeral indicating the order in which the corporation claimed it. The corporation accepts prisoners from any government or entity it judges as legitimate—for a fee, of course.

One of the main things that attracted the Daegox Corporation to this planet was its atmosphere. The atmosphere's outer layer is a thin, one-way membrane that physical objects, including starships, can enter but cannot leave. In fact, once inside this membrane, teleportation magic is unreliable. Some ships have accidentally penetrated the membrane and had to negotiate their release from the corporation. In addition, the atmosphere contains the spores of the world-spanning soshsurus network, which make most sapient creatures docile and uneager to commit violence. The humanoids that populate the corporation were pleased to discover that they were immune to the placating effects of the spores, though most of the planet's prisoners are not.

Daegox 4 is mostly covered with saline seas and has two large continents connected by a thin strait. While both



continents are generally aligned along the planet's tropical band, portions of them stretch into temperate regions. This allows for bountiful farmlands and comfortable seasons. Control, the eastern continent, is completely covered with a sprawl of squat buildings that house millions upon millions of prisoners. Bounty, the western continent, is a mostly untouched wilderness dotted with a few industrial settlements. On Bounty, the prisoners are allowed to roam freely, and they gather in camps and settlements throughout the continent. Some of the incarcerated have been there long enough to be grandparents to children born on the planet who scarcely recognize that they are imprisoned on the world.

While some people incarcerated on Daegox 4 have sentences for an appointed amount of time, most are lifers. The Daegox Corporation prides itself on its claim of having never allowed a successful escape, but tales among underground groups speak of a figure known as the Wren, who is said to have escaped the planet single-handedly—a claim the Daegox Corporation vehemently refutes.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

While all inhabitants of Daegox 4 are prisoners—with the exception of the wardens—life on Bounty couldn't be more different than the experiences of the people housed on Control. Bounty is green and lush, rich with verdant vistas and plenty of wildlife, while Control is bleak and gray, covered with steel and concrete and whose skies are abuzz with the constant flights of surveillance drones. On Control, every moment of one's days is observed and regulated. Most of the prisoners here aren't solely confined to their cells all day—most of them are forced to work in dangerous factories and mines. However, facilities that prisoners call "Voids" subject the incarcerated to solitary confinement for years on end.

What follows are some of the planet's significant locations.

Checkpoint One

Built on the narrow strait that links Bounty and Control, Checkpoint One is a highly militarized stronghold constructed to repel insurrections from those confined on Control. Checkpoint One also processes shipments between the two continents. This mostly involves moving resources and goods from Bounty to facilities on Control, but sometimes prisoners incarcerated in facilities on Control win appeals to transfer to the freedom provided by life on Bounty. Though it's advertised that revolts and escapes are unheard of on Daegox 4, Checkpoint One has seen a number of violent insurrections over the two centuries since its construction. Prisoners who have made it to Bounty from Control use the phrase "I broke one" as a code phrase to indicate that they were processed out. The few escapees who have achieved this feat say they "slipped one." Wardens who serve at Checkpoint One often rise through the ranks of their branch of the corporation.

Freedom

Freedom is the oldest settlement of prisoners on Bounty, and its inhabitants are constantly at odds with the Daegox Corporation. By the planet's laws, though, the corporation can punish these loosely guarded prisoners, via banishment to more secure colonies or facilities, only for the most extreme crimes, such as murder or insurrection. In fact, the corporation leans heavily on Freedom—and other prison colonies on Bounty—for food and other supplies, which they use as supplemental provisions for the millions imprisoned on Control. Some of these goods and resources are sold to other planets and organizations, with the Daegox Corporation taking all of the profits, of course. However, a democratically elected council leads Freedom and can petition the corporation to barter exceptional goods for requested items that they can't procure themselves.

The Mountain

The Mountain is an imposing structure located in Bounty on the Kassilikan River. Visible from miles away, the Mountain serves as the headquarters and administrative center of the members of the Daegox Corporation, housing thousands of guards and corporate leaders. Deep in the center is a heavily guarded technomagical gate that is the only method for getting off planet. The gate connects to Skywatcher (see below) in orbit around

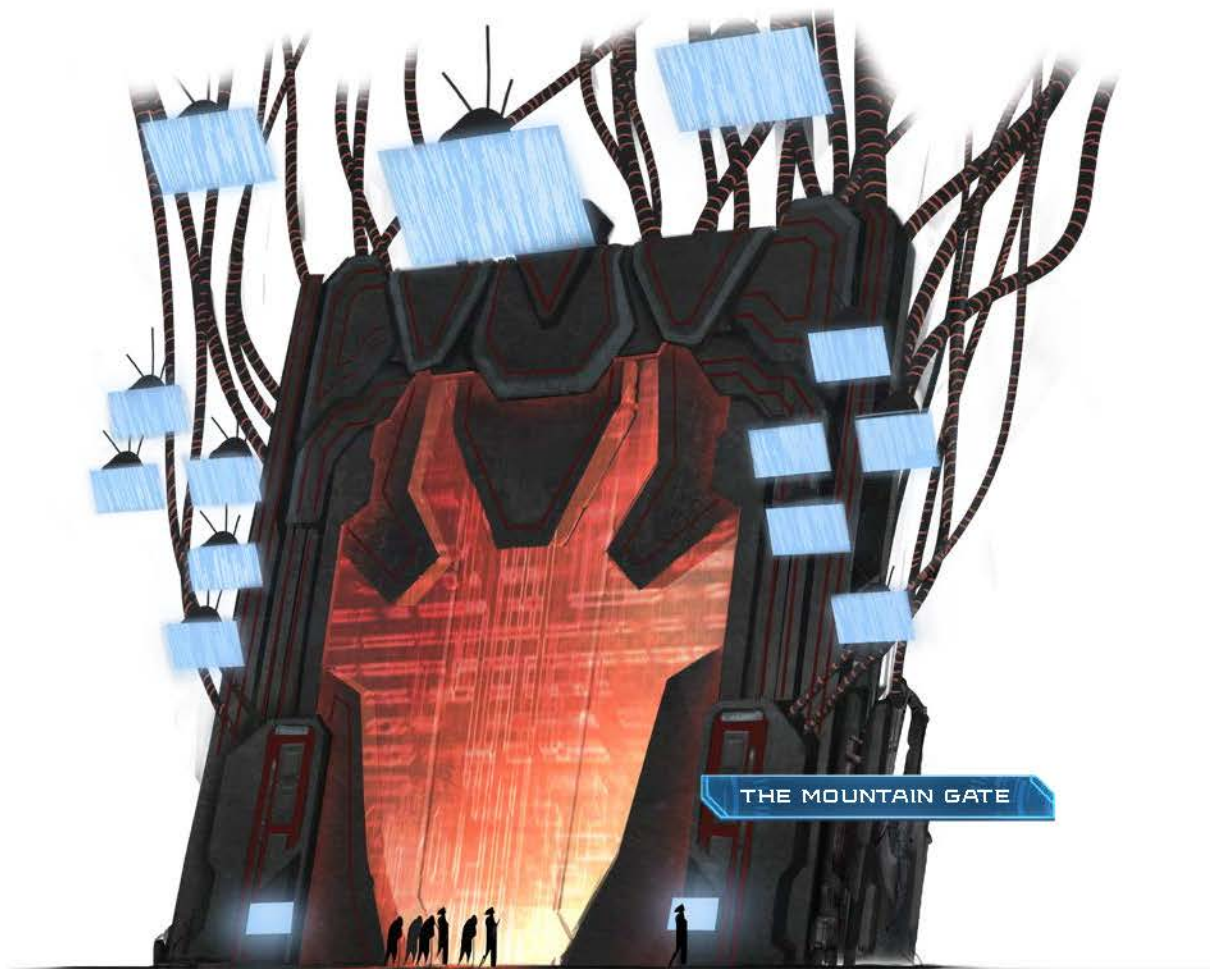
the planet, allowing Daegox staff to travel from the surface to the ship, though some special prisoners are processed through this method.

Sanctuary

Those who transfer to Bounty out of facilities on Control almost always seek out Sanctuary. Among the prisoners in facilities on Control, Sanctuary is rumored to be a utopia—however, the reality is anything but. New arrivals to Sanctuary are prime targets for the swindlers and con jobs, often exploited and coerced into serving the interests of local gangs and their ongoing schemes. Sanctuary claims to be able to provide any vice one could want, and prisoners processed out of the hellish cells on Control sometimes stay in Sanctuary for weeks on end after release, often getting into trouble and sometimes losing their lives.

Skywatcher

Orbiting Daegox 4 is a massive generational starship that serves as the receiving station for new prisoners as well as mobile administration offices. The ship is so large and flies at such a low orbit that it is visible from the planet's surface. Newcomers to Daegox 4 are issued their identification numbers and entered into the system on the ship. Then, prisoners are placed in pods and dropped through the membrane to the facilities in which they will be housed.



DAIMALKO

Ruins and Rampaging Colossi

Diameter: $\times 1/4$

Mass: $\times 1/16$

Gravity: $\times 1$

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 48 hours; **Year:** 3 years

A single planet orbiting a tiny star, Daimalko was not always a dry, blasted planet teeming with rampaging colossi and struggling survivors. Lush greenery once covered this world, sustaining two advanced civilizations: the psychic Confederation of Volkaria and the Holy Queendom of Ykarth, a state that claimed a divine mandate from the empyreal lord Duellona, the Warrior Maiden. Then, 200 years ago, the prophecies that once lived only in children's rhymes and bedtime stories became all too horrifyingly real.

In the course of a month, the planet's major oceans evaporated, its greenery withered, and earthquakes reverberated across the planet. From the rocky terrain of the empty seas rose nightmarish colossi—monstrosities covered in armored plates and bearing rows of tongues, teeth, and worse. Without delay, the colossi set about destroying the planet's population centers. Many of the colossi were kyokors (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 72), though some were rare technological tekenkis (*Alien Archive* 3 108) or even stranger beasts. Despite the fact that two generations have passed since then, xenobiologists are still at a loss to identify and catalogue all of the roving horrors on this planet, as getting close to one without the cover of a significant distraction is most certainly a recipe for a horrific death.

Daimalkans remember the event that shattered their planet as the Awakening. In just a few short weeks, the planet's population—consistently primarily of gray-skinned damais (*Alien Archive* 2 32), but encompassing all manner of peoples of other heritages—dropped from many millions to just a few thousand. The shell-shocked Ykarthans broke their military ranks, the terrified Volkarians let down their psychic guards, and all survivors fled to the only place they knew the colossi would not follow: underground, in subterranean enclaves they came to collectively call the Refuge.

After more than a century of subterranean survival, a brave group of leaders stumbled upon rune-scribed orbs that allowed them to empathically sense and steer the roving colossi aboveground. These leaders became the first Guardians, and they used the orbs to safely usher colonies aboveground, away from the murderous colossi. (For more information about the first Guardians, see *Alien Archive* 2 32-33.)

Daimalko is still a blasted ruin of a planet. The cliffs and valleys that compose its rocky terrain consist largely of desiccated seabeds. Its forests are long dead, leaving skeleton-like fields of petrified trunks. Yet the planet has escaped utter desertification.

A few salty seas and large freshwater lakes support tenacious lifeforms such as poisonous lichens, carnivorous vines, enormous mountain eagles, two-headed griffons, six-legged goats, and hairless yetis capable of psychic blasts that can lay even the hardiest adventurer low. The vistas both natural and urban alike are ruined, as the colossi have destroyed the planet's once-glittering megacities, its industrial centers, and even its sweeping rural areas.

For the first time in generations, though, notable populations of humanoids have returned to the surface, primarily under the watchful eyes of the Guardians. The people both above- and belowground are primarily damai, though aasimars, elves, lashuntas, ryphorians, and even some humans live here, too. Most are descended from survivors of the Awakening, although a few are adventurers or the children of those who sought fortunes on this scrappy planet and fell in love with its rich culture of empathic and psychic magic, communalism, and heroism bordering on foolishness.

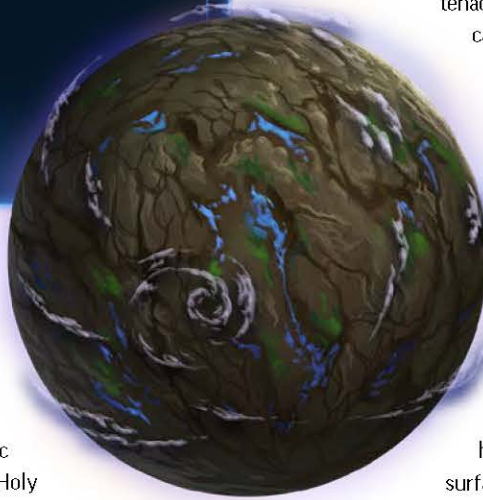
NOTABLE LOCATIONS

From orbit, Daimalko still appears to be a smoldering ruin. However, numerous prominent locations are ripe for adventure and intrigue here. Additionally, smaller outposts of survivors have formed across the world that, thanks to guidance from their Guardians, have managed to create sustainable lives aboveground, where resources are more plentiful and the sky overheard is far less oppressive.

Below are some of the most notable places on the planet.

Carapace Caverns

This aboveground field of caverns and cliffs is not a geological feature, but rather a graveyard of fallen colossi. In the Awakening's early days, dozens of colossi converged here and engaged in a brawl that shook the rural region to its core. Now, the colossi's fallen bodies, decayed aside from their armor-like plating and their strangely metallic bones, create a labyrinthine series of caverns. This field is rife with materials to make kyokor plating armor (*Alien Archive* 73), EMP weapon fusions (*Alien Archive* 3 109), and much more. The colossi seem to shun this place now, but nearly since it's existed, Carapace Caverns has been home to a strange cabal of silent scavengers including dwarves, hobgoblins, ikeshtis, strix, vesk, and others, led by a one-armed man known only as **Gorgarth** (N male dwarf). These scavengers rove the 20-mile-wide field, creating magic-infused technology found nowhere else in the universe, and seeking trade with passersby for the strange materials needed to complete their inscrutable creations.



Houses of Glory

Among the strangest points of interest on Daimalko is the outpost known as Houses of Glory, which is a small military-like compound located in the rural heart of the former Confederation of Volkaria. Houses of Glory is a recent establishment of the Veskarium and some of its most extreme and enterprising businesspeople. For a fee, these vesk offer guided safaris into the most dangerous Daimalkan wildernesses—and these outings attract everyone from diehard glory-seeking warriors to knowledge-hungry scientists and more. First Hunter **Wertnabe** (CN male vesk), a former high-ranking Veskarium commando, offers his infamous money-back guarantee of at least a cursory colossus sighting on all trips.

Karnath

The ruined capital of the Holy Queendom of Ykath, Karnath was once a teeming megacity of towering techno-cathedrals, massive public shrines to Duellona, and glittering mosaics of the nation's millions-strong army of shining, holy robo-warriors. Nature has since reclaimed much of the city, and its formerly breathtaking architecture hosts particularly strange creatures. Three-headed mountain lions, conjoined boars, massive flightless hawks, gazelles with spiked tails, and more make their homes in this makeshift habitat. Their mutations stem from the high levels of radiation pulsing from the ruined city's center—the result, most xenobiologists believe, of a tekenki-like megacolossus's radioactive implosion. The city's innermost districts are uninhabitable due to this radiation, but warped fauna and a strangely feral damai-like species of sentient inhabitants are rumored to live in the sprawling ruins.

Lorvelle

This former capital of the Confederation of Volkaria was once an ostentatious display of the powers of psychic magic—with entire blocks of elegant minarets and spires floating magically half a mile in the air—but the skyline now looks like a rusty, decayed scrapheap. Strangely, colossi still roam here, despite the fact that the city no longer has a notable sapient population. Even more disturbing, the city's broken streets are home to roving mini-colossi, most of which resemble miniature versions of kyokors and tekenkis that are only about twice as tall as most native humanoids. Some xenobiologists speculate that the true colossi roaming Lorvelle have evolved the ability to reproduce and that these smaller creatures are their offspring. In recent years, an unidentified group of damais has been sending weak distress signals from the center of Lorvelle, claiming to have gained control of these miniature colossi yet lacking the resources to survive

much longer in the city. So far, no others have answered these distress calls, leading Lorvelle's damais to become increasingly desperate in their calls for help.

New Valor

The largest aboveground colony on Daimalko is dubbed New Valor, where the resident damais and other motley citizens are orders of magnitude brasher and braver—and some might say more foolish—than their underground counterparts. New Valor is a settlement of colossi hunters, vehicular scientists, mechanics, support staff, and pilots who strive to build nigh-indestructible armored vehicles to hunt the planet's roving monstrosities before their town becomes the next target. Known as valkos, these colossi-hunting vehicles currently include four bi- and tripod creations outfitted with advanced weaponry, tracking systems, and anti-colossus cloaking devices—all powered by a mysterious geological core around which New Valor arose. However, this unique power source limits the valkos' effective range, a point that limits them to fighting colossi in the region and drives scientists to somehow store the strange core's energy so that valkos can hunt farther afield. Unlike most Daimalkan settlements, typically led by a single Guardian, New Valor is under the watchful eyes of two Guardians: **Honara Tren** (NG female damai^{AA2}) and **Zupisha Loralu** (NG female damai^{AA2}), who tenuously use their orbs and the settlement's life-giving geological core to both power the valkos and protect the town from harm.

Scrapden

Located in a shallow cavern in the Refuge, Scrapden is among Daimalko's most accessible and welcoming settlements. And that's for good reason, as Scrapden is a haven of crafters, scrappers, tinkers, and traders, all of whom welcome outsiders into the settlement to barter the myriad supplies Scrapden needs to fuel its commodity-based economy. Further, although Scrapden is located near a few key fields of naturally occurring fungi and other Refuge comestibles, the townspeople crave fruits and meat that aren't easy to come by locally. The guild of craftspeople and traders who run the settlement, in conjunction with Guardian **Dareo Viree** (N male damai^{AA2}), actively court trade contingents from nearly any other planet, offering premium access to the settlement's best goods in exchange for very specific supplies.



DAREO VIREE

EMBROI

The Iron Thrall of Hell

Diameter ×3/4

Mass ×9/16

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 18 hours; **Year:** 1 year

A moonless world of amethyst-colored seas and purple stone, Embroi glitters alone in the void. Like the sapient mollusks who dominate the planet, however, Embroi wears a mask. The planet's peaceful beaches and gentle violet hills hide underground slave-pits and diabolical factories operated by agents from Hell.

The intelligent races native to Embroi all evolved from the planet's mollusks, embri (*Alien Archive 2 48*), who in turn arose from aquatic progenitors. In those prehistoric days, embri crawled from the seas on four clawed limbs, just civilized enough to hold coral spears and spit cries of bloodthirsty rage. They clashed with the gentle snaillike yeddins, who had already evolved a nuanced society based on working advanced metals and employing well-honed empathy. Yeddins were no match for the violent embri, who soon mastered the land. The embri conquerors quickly adapted yeddin technology, but adopting yeddin cultural norms took much longer. Now, however, embri are keen judges of emotion and work hard to keep all their feelings—violent or otherwise—carefully concealed behind metal masks. The immense, squid-like othinni are among many aquatic races that still swim Embroi's shallow seas. Legends of the enormous othinni somehow instigating the embri rush to land pervade embri's etiological myths.

Six large continents cover the surface of Embroi, all but one dominated by embri. Each is ringed by archipelagos too regular in shape and placement to be anything but artificial, even though they predate embri's rise to civilization. Demagallo and Irralo Kellad are the most populous continents, as they hold the hearts of embri administration and industry, respectively. Antikawara is dotted with large lakes heated by magma vents; only Embroi's wealthiest citizens enjoy the salubrious mineral baths there. Chapru Von is mountainous but lacks the iron deposits prevalent on other islands. It instead holds enormous fields of garbage from across the planet, and grim embri unfortunates live hardscrabble lives sorting through the rubbish. Kanfrei contains great prisons and slave-pits where the poorest embri and unwanted offworlders toil to death manufacturing components for embri technology. The Baskar Expanse, Embroi's largest but least populated continent, is a wasteland that the embri military bombarded generations ago. It is used predominantly as a bomb testing range, although there are tales of renegade embri enclaves in the wasteland.



Under each continent sprawl enormous networks of passages and boreholes occupied by devils who carefully guard their domains and their infernal machinery from outside observation. The devils engage in vast campaigns to control embri society and direct embri labor to their own inscrutable ends. As a result of generations of diabolic influence and social conditioning, Embroi is a joyless place where toil is the highest virtue and independent thought is ruthlessly suppressed. The malebranche devil Occhiorasoi rules all the secret devils on Embroi, making her one of the most powerful beings on the planet.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following locations are points of particular interest on or beneath the planet Embroi.

Alladaroi

The largest spaceport on Embroi is in the efficient city of Alladaroi. Although offworlders can easily reach smaller spaceports in other embri cities across the planet, unfamiliar vessels are all directed to Alladaroi. The town has a more cosmopolitan feel than most of Embroi, and its violet coastline is a draw for tourists who don't mind the byzantine paperwork required for all visitors. Situated on the coast of Kanfrei, Alladaroi is also the home of the Assembly of Emissaries, the embri diplomatic corps. Visitors who openly question embri bureaucracy or who spot the devils lurking in the city's shadows learn that the Assembly of Emissaries also employs heavily armed guards to arrange one-way trips into the continent's prison-factories.

Anthellon Station

A sprawling complex of undersea structures that serves as Embroi's premier oceanographic laboratory, Anthellon Station operates as a quasi-independent nation in the planet's rigid hierarchy. Its computer banks hold the most complete catalog of life in Embroi's seas, including maps to several underwater othinni settlements. In fact, othinni delegations occasionally visit Anthellon Station to meet with its scientists and discuss issues related to pollution dumping and oceanic wildlife management. That these delegations often include silent sarglagons (fiends known as drowning devils) hints that othinni might also be subject to infernal influences. A pending embri scientific expedition to the othinni city of Great Trench will be the first time the surface dwellers are permitted to visit an othinni settlement, and the embri scientists are seeking dependable—and expendable—offworlders to serve as security for the historic voyage.

Baskar Fleshforge

Corrupted into dangerous freethinking individuality by renegade embri and psychic cuttlefish-like humanoid creatures called hiskorins, the Baskar States sparked a philosophical war with the rest of Embroi prior to the Gap. Embri bombed the entire

continent into a wasteland known as the Baskar Expanse, and today “baskar” is an embri curse word indicating shame and ruin. Although this official history isn’t far off, the truth is that legions of devils carefully burrowed beneath the Baskar States for years before engineering the war. When the dust of war settled, the population of the Baskar States was utterly gone. Other embri assumed their war machines had obliterated their enemy. In truth, the people of Baskar Expanse were whisked underground and funneled to a massive subterranean prison-pit known as the Baskar Fleshforge. Even now, millennia later, devils clone imprisoned descendants of the former Baskar States again and again, only to feed them into enormous sacrifice machines. There are no hiskorins in the Fleshforge, however; these mysterious creatures must have somehow escaped the cataclysm, but no one knows where they fled to.

Open Mind

Hidden yeddin enclaves exist high in remote mountains of garbage-strewn Chapru Von. As yeddins can sense aggressive intruders from miles away, and the supernatural hostility of devils from even farther distances, they can hide themselves with ease and promote the general belief that they are extinct. Only the truly peaceful can find these enclaves. The largest, called Open Mind, is home to several hundred yeddins and a few embri enlightened and brave enough to have found them.

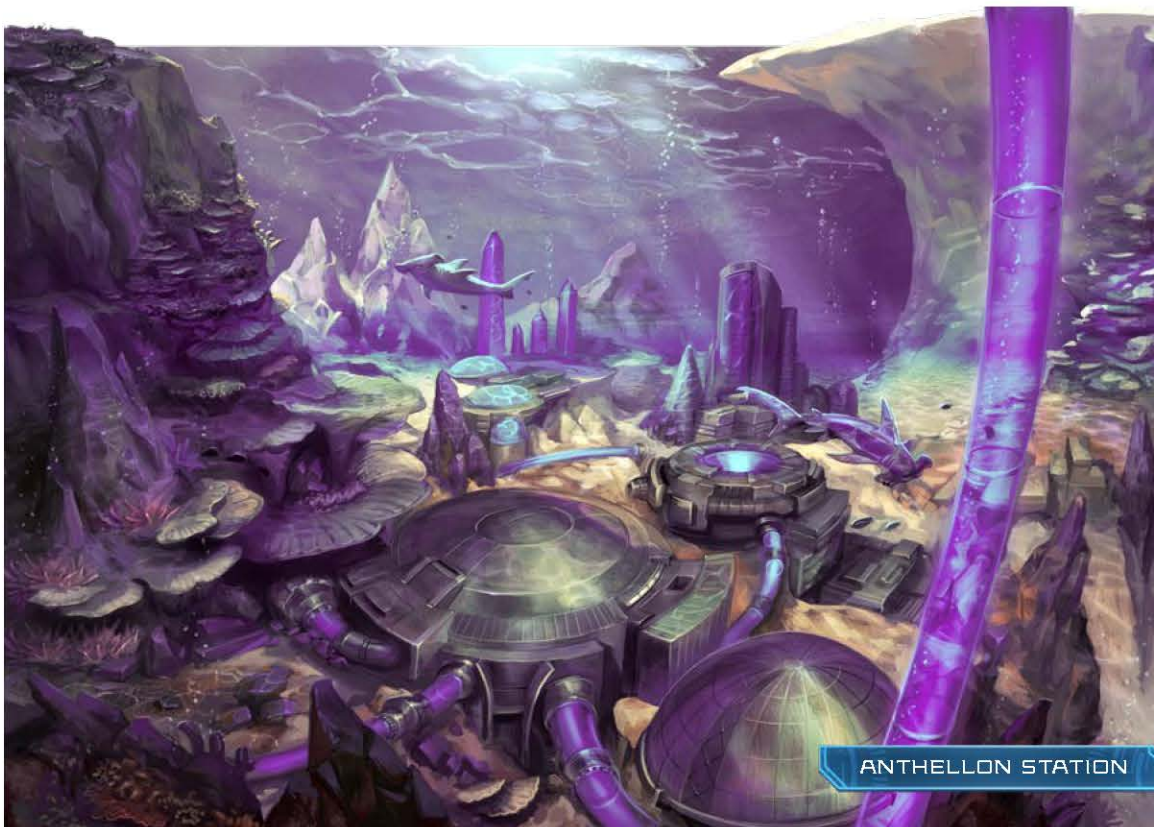
Pentaxion Prime

The temple-palace of Occhiorasoï, ruler of the devils who secretly control Embroi, is concealed within the magma vents on Antikawara. Shaped like an immense pentagram, Pentaxion

Prime is surrounded by an entire city of devils and adherents of Asmodeus from several worlds and other planes. Devils and devil-bound embri speakers have been spotted rushing between Pentaxion Prime and Demagalto to stoke revolutionary sentiment among the embri there. Just why rebellious whispers issue from Pentaxion Prime is unclear; perhaps Occhiorasoï’s seneschal, the horned devil Carvexichal Misery-Bringer, is making some long-ranging ploy to usurp Occhiorasoï. More likely, Occhiorasoï plots to visit ruination upon Demagalto just as she did on the Baskar Expanse to force yet more souls into her clone-fed sacrifice machines.

The Salver

A dry lake bed on the coast of Irralo Kellad, the Salver is an immense flat, silver plain made of crystallized minerals. Known across Embroi as an asylum for those embri reported as holding “unapologetic artistic inclinations,” the Salver is surrounded by electromagnetic fences and tall buildings populated by stern emotion-scientists and representatives of the bureaucratic Office of Expressive Regulation. On overcast days—when the silver ground isn’t too hot to traverse—hundreds of embri squirm in ecstatic dances across the Salver, wholly free from the rigid social strictures that oppress the rest of the planet. Most embri consider a sentence to the Salver an irredeemable social stain, but a few rebels actively seek to be exiled there so they may dance, love, and even lounge about unmasked. But everyone imprisoned at the Salver is subject to extensive re-education, so even some of these rebel embri learn sufficient contrition to merit discharge (though they’ll never obtain high social standing again); the rest die, exhausted, on the silver plain.



ANTHELLON STATION

GASKAR III

Aquatic World of Exiles

Diameter: $\times 1\text{-}1/3$

Mass: $\times 1\text{-}1/2$

Gravity: $\times 1\text{-}2/5$

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 36 hours; **Year:** 228 days

A watery world third from its star, Gaskar III consists of the crescent-shaped continent of Lavnovya and an irregular ring of islands, all surrounded by the massive, storm-wracked Yulalov Ocean. When forming billions of years ago, Gaskar III collided with an unnamed planetoid, reversing its rotation and knocking away the ejecta that would form Rhelko, one of its two moons. In more recent history, comparatively speaking, the planet sustained a millennia-long ice age that weighed down much of the continental plates, and the continent Lavnovya has gradually been rising from the ocean ever since as the surface of Gaskar III reclaims its largely submerged continent.

The planet's vast ocean, now-warm climate, and slow rotation drive massive evaporation and form immense storm fronts, with the terrestrial inhabitants rarely enjoying full sunlight for the innumerable clouds. These clouds regularly evolve into violent cyclones that smash into the eastern coast's mountains. The western reaches enjoy marginally calmer winds and clearer skies, and most humanoid life—all of it settlers from other worlds—on the planet has congregated in those rocky lowlands and river valleys. Gaskar III's sturdy flora and fauna have evolved to weather the storms, with kelp, ferns, worms, arthropods, fish, amphibians, and reptiles in abundance. Of these, some grow to enormous sizes, such as the peschkery, or cave centipedes, and the ryugar, or leaping eels.

The first known humanoids to settle Gaskar III hailed from the Veskarium, which they departed as self-imposed exiles. Most of these vesk refer to themselves as renunciants, followers of the pre-Gap vesk prophet Gaskar Yulalov who received visions from Weydan, god of equality, and preached against the growing Veskarium's violence and tyranny. Far before any vesk ever ventured to Gaskar III, the authorities of the time arrested Yulalov for his dissension, reckless advocating of freedoms, and inciting the public to eschew vesk norms. His execution followed swiftly, and his disciples rallied around their new martyr and continued to gather in secret in far-flung corners all throughout the Veskarium for generations, nurturing new generations of radical thinkers, artists, writers, and scientists.

When the Veskarium at last mastered Drift travel, Yulalov's followers built the Gaskari, a colony starship upon which

they escaped their oppressive kin. After mere months, they reached the system they named Gaskar, which they deemed a good candidate for colonization due to it being uninhabited. Not only were its five planets unsettled, but the system orbits miraculously closely to a Drift beacon, as though left as a gift from Weydan himself.

Although the renunciants believe they escaped the Veskarium thanks to Weydan's blessing, rationalists point out that to the other vesk, Gaskar III is a convenient release valve for ridding itself of pesky dissidents. Veskarium leaders largely ignore these self-selected exiles, only intruding when criminals flee there seeking asylum from vesk justice. Even then, the government prefers to hire independent contractors and bounty hunters to extricate convicts on Gaskar III. After centuries of relative solitude, the renunciants bear little ill will toward the Veskarium and allow these minor incursions to keep the peace.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

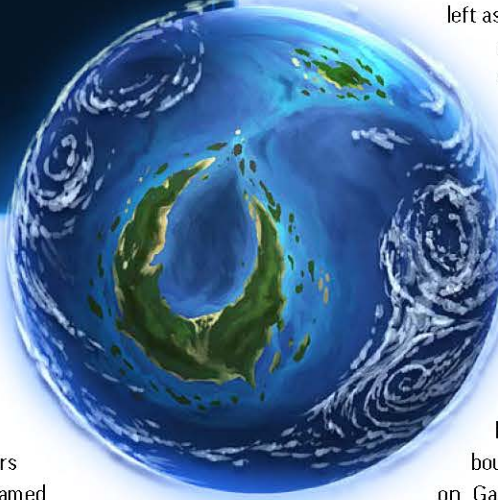
The following are points of interest on Gaskar III.

Gaskari

The planet's major settlement, Gaskari, is built in the shelter along the western foothills of Lavnovya's Summer's Mercy Mountains. There the early renunciants landed the eponymous colony ship, converted the forward section into a temple to Weydan, and built the city outward from there. The metropolis's core is orderly and modern, with its outer neighborhoods forming the more individualistic Sprawl.

While the majority of Gaskari's inhabitants were born there, many immigrate—not only from the Veskarium, but from all over the universe—with bright-eyed notions of living in a free-wheeling society that's ripe for whimsical exploration. The reality is more serious. With Gaskari pummeled by storms, the city's leaders require that everyone pitch in to keep the settlement intact so that everyone who lives there can prosper. The elected council, voted upon in staggered elections to serve out five-year terms, regularly reins in the unruly and irresponsible. Those who commit crimes must repay their debt to either their victims or society. Those who cannot compensate for the damage they've done risk exile—a grievous punishment, considering many come to Gaskari after having already suffered exile from other worlds.

Gaskari provides an excellent base for deep ocean explorers, mountaineers, and pilots. Explorers closer to home comb the coast for chunks of fragrant resin so prized in alien perfumes, and the tectonic uplifting gradually reveals pristine caves full of wonder and danger alike. For starfarers, there are few better places to recruit daring travel companions than a city full of Weydan's faithful.



WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

Horizon's Eye

During the last ice age, miles-thick glaciers blanketed the continent of Lavnovya and carved out a deep basin along its western reach. The basin remains below sea level, forming a huge lagoon with eerily clear water. On the rare clear-skied nights when the basin faces the system's Drift beacon, the water glows faintly, illuminated by miles-long lines that shine from beneath the silt. Those flying overhead can witness the complex patterns that form, and although the most popular theory is that the lines form a stellar map to some great destination Weydan wishes to share, nobody has successfully deciphered the ephemeral images to date.

Iortin

Gaskar III's treacherous seas and heavy cloud cover are a boon to smugglers and criminals alike, who often see the planet as a promising place to lie low. The narrow, volcanically active archipelago of Iortin hosts dozens of hideouts, secret harbors, and concealed landing pads suitable for myriad nefarious projects. Gaskari authorities try their best to live and let live with their disreputable neighbors, but whenever the threat of one group grows too great, Gaskari assembles teams of mercenaries willing to root out the proverbial vipers. The subsequent peace rarely lasts. Within a matter of months, new vagabonds invariably take up residence, and the cycle begins anew. Of late, the disgraced Free Captain **Qhuomiz** (CN female shirren) has set up shop here, supposedly after making off with her old rival's latest haul. It's only a matter of time before the Free Captains show up in force, catching Gaskari in the crossfire.

Prozbyra

The largest of Lavnovya's islands is almost a subcontinent in its own right. Storm-swept Prozbyra's sharp crags harbor powerful creatures that attract their share of bold and foolhardy biologists. Of the myriad beasts, called utesras (giant arthropods colloquially called "cliff anglers") are infamous for hypnotizing and stunning unsuspecting prey with their electrically charged dorsal stalks.

Other thrill seekers take suborbital flights to comfortable facilities nestled in the Prozbyran cliffs, where travelers can sleep suspended over the hundreds-foot drop. Business is brisk, yet the growing tourism trade polarizes Gaskari's residents. Attracting visitors encourages the same wonder and travel that Weydan espouses. That said, many still see Gaskar III as a sacred space for unjust societies' refugees and for introspective mysticism, and they believe that monetizing the planet's beauty undermines its spiritual sanctity. The conflict is largely verbal, but council arguments grow increasingly heated and might soon spark brawls—or worse. Of course, if Prozbyran entrepreneurs can't secure enough help to fend off the utesras that raid their cabins, the tourism industry might collapse altogether, making the entire argument moot.

Tyamov

The town-sized underwater station of Tyamov perches on the edge of Lavnovya's continental shelf, where the ocean floor plummets into a deep crater known as the Pripast Abyss. Named for one of the prophet Gaskar's most notorious prosecutors, a hotheaded vesk who was known for violent bursts of outrage when Veskarium oversight was lax, the Pripast Abyss is in fact one of the most life-filled regions on the planet, thanks to the volcanic vents that pepper its interior. Massive ryugars prowl the area's smoky waters, preying upon a host of aquatic beasts. Stranger still are the bizarre elemental creatures and ryugars with crystalline features spotted in the area. Marine biologists are desperate to document these life-forms more closely, yet the vents' chemical ejecta interferes with smaller drones' operation. Cutting-edge submersibles are nearing completion, but even the bravest explorers hesitate at the venture's risk. What's more, rumors of terrible beasts roaming the crevices of the Pripast Abyss have made many explorers hesitant to take on the job.



RENUNCIANT

GHORUS PRIME

The Inheritance

Diameter: ×1

Mass: ×1

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 1 day; Year: 1 year

Despite its appearance in ancient times as a barren, rocky world, Ghorus Prime has always been a place of possibility. For eons before the first humans took to the stars, when it appeared as just a husk hung against the tapestry of space, the planet was simply dormant. However, island-sized mounds on its surface were in fact enormous slumbering trees called kinwoods. These deciduous trees lay winterized and fallow, dormant for an unknown reason despite the consciousness that pulsed within them.

It was not until the ghorans (*Starfinder Alien Archive 2 57*)—a species of intelligent, humanoid plants sometimes hunted for their sweet flesh—took to space from lost Golarion and stumbled upon the planet that the kinwoods again came to life. The ghorans coaxed the kinwoods into springtime, using a blend of science and mysterious magic to engineer the trees' expulsion of the starship-sized seeds that grew within them, guiding the growth of new forests across nearly the entire planet's surface. And although they had been scattered throughout the universe until this experiment began, the ghorans began to see this planet as both the species's metaphorical legacy and even its progenitor, given the similarities of the kinwoods' history and biology to their own people. Eventually, the ghorans came to call the planet Ghorus Prime, and today most ghorans consider the planet their ancestral homeland.

Most of Ghorus Prime is now entirely covered by forests, their varied foliage punctuated by hundreds of mountainous kinwoods whose crowns glitter with the lights of settlements and integrated biotech. The Fallows, a barren circle of non-terraformed rock, mars the planet's western hemisphere and comprises one full quarter of its surface. Beneath the forests lie mountain ridges, continental shelves, and dry ocean basins. Despite the lack of surface water, the planet's climate is solidly in the normal terrestrial range. Kinwoods tap an immense aquifer of mysterious origin to produce clouds, regulate local atmosphere, and distribute water through the planetary root network.

Ghorans form the majority of Ghorus's population. Many ghorans are suspicious of outsiders, some due to humans' ancient predations against their people, but most simply

because they are protective of their unique and hard-earned home. Extraplanetary emigration to Ghorus Prime has increased since the end of the Gap, however, largely as the ghorans recognize its importance to a stable economy. Vesk businesses import arms and specialized machinery, while a sizable vlaka (*Alien Archive 2 134*) exclave dwells near

the Fallows. Enticed by the ghorans' collectivistic society, the vlaka also seek terraforming solutions for their own world, and many are the vlaka scientists who seek apprenticeships and partnerships with ghoran scientists to learn the finer points of biological terraforming.

Ghorus Prime remains a largely idyllic world. The planetary government ensures good working conditions, fair wages, and robust social programs, which leaves citizens with

ample leisure time. Many cities boast parks sheltered beneath multicolored foliage that filters light into different "tastes" for ghorans' photosynthetic outer layers. Living sculptures and fashionably dressed inhabitants fill such spaces. Current styles include wide-brimmed hats and heliotropic clothing, all in a variety of natural materials featuring ingrown tech.

Most population centers are safe, but Ghorus Prime's forests host a growing threat. In some places, formerly beneficial plants now choke hinterland cities—climbing sparkjewel vines are slowly dissolving abandoned settlements, for example. Further, ghoran scientists have lost control of some of the semi-intelligent flora that once worked at their direction, and these overzealous organisms sometimes attack sapient life. Most common is the sapphire tiller, whose barbs integrate interlopers' nutrients into local soils.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

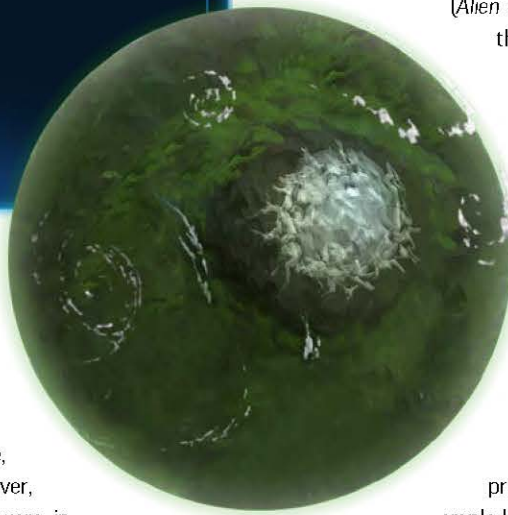
Ghorus Prime's residents do their best to hedge against the planet's uncertain ecological future. Such efforts require management and rest in equal measure. What follows are some of the planet's significant locations.

Deepkin

Tucked into a primeval forest is an enormous, foliage-rimmed sinkhole that widens out into a vast underground chamber of sorts. In the middle of the chamber is the kinwood known as Deepkin, surrounded by a lake of bubbling, phosphorescent water punctuated by broad platforms made from Deepkin's protruding roots. Deepkin's connection to the aquifers that sustain all kinwoods is indisputable, but the exact nature of that relationship is a mystery.

Dreaming Flats

Located in the mid-northern latitudes, the kinwood called the Dreamer has gone mute in recent decades, and it now



slowly grows nothing but tiered weaves of branches, despite the ghoran scientists' best efforts to coax seeds for new forests from it. These efforts haven't stopped, but to make use of the unintended growths, a few planetary corporations have turned the kinwood's new growth into starports that take advantage of the Dreamer's still-functioning autoimmune system. All new arrivals to the planet must first let the landing fields' questing vines scrub their ships of potentially dangerous foreign material.

This, of course, means delays. Warehouses, biological testing stations, and government field offices ensure visitors' paperwork is in order, and hotels and entertainment venues accommodate them while they wait. A vesk named **Emkobazi** (LN male vesk mechanic) oversees most of these businesses, and can purportedly "expedite" the official quarantine process with unsanctioned biotech. He and his trademark fluttering purple hat have recently been spotted alongside the captain of the orbiting Xenowarden arkship *Lucent Promise*.

Memory Willow

Ghorus Prime's capital city spreads some 20 miles out from the equatorial kinwood from which it takes its name. Greenery-laden bridges arc among enormous roots that contain pedestrian paths, roads, and structures alike, all carefully shaped from Memory Willow's living wood. A variety of research and biotechnology facilities swell from and wind through the kinwood's trunk. Pneumatic elevators, some large enough to carry a starship, take traffic to and from the upper Crown districts. Academic institutions, luxurious lottery-granted housing, government offices, and small starports all coat Memory Willow's dangling branches. Among them is a park full of miraculously healthy pre-Gap plant specimens. The mid-trunk Vineside district is not so lucky. Gritty white sap has begun to seep from the district's walls, and ominous scraping is heard beneath some streets, leading some to speculate that criminals or other nefarious elements are illicitly harvesting the sap for some unknown purpose.

Mirendian's Roost

A moribund, nameless kinwood languishes on the Fallows' western edge. Its remaining pale blue foliage is stark against the bone-white bark of the region's dead trees. Some flora still ekes out an existence here, however, including transparent, rubber-barked trees that crouch atop and digest the old growth. It is here that a vlaka delegation planted an oracle of Oras (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 3 74). Their leader, **Mirendian** (CG female vlaka^{AA2} mystic), uses flowing signs to direct scientists and faithful pilgrims as they research the nature of this surprisingly resilient region and seek to understand its origins. The oracle is using its mental prowess to gradually catalogue the kinwood's memories and genetic information. It plans to alter the great tree's very nature in order to revive it. Some ghorans see this as desecration, and lead a raging debate on the project's legality. Mirendian worries that the tide of public opinion may sweep away her work, and that she may soon spot law enforcement's lustrous skiffs on the horizon.

Shimmering Arcades

The moisture-loving eyeflower's rampant growth has created giant banks of pollen clouds that now sweep through the forests of southern Ghorus Prime. Contact with this glittering haze overwhelms most species' synapses and sends them staggering after phantasms—often into the churning undersides of strange new plants apparently dependent on the eyeflower's excretions. Environmental suits are all but mandatory for the area's residents. Worried by the potential depletion of the region's aquifer, they have turned to an unusual means of addressing the overgrowth: hunters. Thrill seekers pay good credits to stalk new prey through the shifting clouds, and there's money to be made for ghorans willing to serve as guides. Municipal government merely asks that hunters bring back eyeflower cuttings of equal weight to any trophies collected.



THE DREAMER

GIDERON AUTHORITY

Expansionist Hobgoblin Regime

GIDERON PRIME

Diameter: ×1**Mass:** ×1-1/4**Gravity:** ×1-1/4**Atmosphere:** Normal**Day:** 25 hours; **Year:** 302 days

Of the Gideron system's six planets, only Gideron Prime meets conventional standards of habitability. Of the other planets, four are lifeless rocks that provide ample mining opportunities, and the last is a gas giant. Arasu, the larger of Gideron Prime's two moons, hosts extensive spaceport infrastructure, whereas the smaller, Alenku, supports tireless shipyards.

Overall, Gideron Prime's climate is frigid, with large icecaps, broad temperate zones, and a warm equator with sprawling jungles. Polar animals tend to be small and hibernate to survive, and plants have adapted to grow at explosive rates during the short summers. Equatorial organisms instead tend toward slow metabolisms, poisonous defenses, and gigantic proportions, such as the towering shinglebark trees and the lumbering three-toed sopeterms now hunted nearly to extinction.

The planet has no native sapient species that developed traditional societies. Instead, its intelligent occupants mostly hail from the Pact Worlds, with hobgoblins and their kin as the majority. The Gideron system's harsh conditions played into the colonists' hardscrabble mentality, inspiring them to band together and adopt simple tenets: cooperation, discipline, and strength through unity. After the Gap, the system attracted immigrants from across the galaxy, and Gideron Prime has grown many times more populous and powerful in the past century. Huge cities have arisen in the temperate zones, with Linshu-Koto as the capital. Where once an elected council ruled, a recent military coup has imposed an authoritarian government. Officially, the overthrow occurred because the council inadequately protected citizens against privateers from the Marixah Republic (page 88), though outside observers consider this a farcical excuse for a power grab. Now calling itself the Gideron Authority, this government controls the entire system and has rapidly expanded to occupy at least a dozen other planets beyond. Guiding its growth reigns a new motto: tradition, discipline, and sacrifice.

Hobgoblins—and to a lesser degree kanabos and ja noi (*Alien Archive 2* 88–89)—remain the majority, both in population as well as in leadership roles within the Authority. However, the ja noi favor spiritual roles, guiding the Authority's philosophies and actions through their kanabo children. The rest of the system includes a mix of species from throughout



Near Space, though most are descended from families that relocated to the system generations ago. The Authority has carefully controlled immigration and the flow of ideas since its establishment, entrenching notions of xenophobia that grow stronger with each year. At this point the only reliable link between this system and the Pact Worlds is the drow house Zeizerer, which thrives on its role as a covert arms dealer.

The Marixah Republic commands the Authority's attention as its current nemesis. Not only is the Republic its closest neighbor and rival for territory, but the Republic's free-thinking and multicultural society represents a clear threat to the Authority's control. Gideron news channels present lengthy segments about the Marixahs' destabilizing influence, irresponsible freedoms, and doctrine of pirating the Authority's starships. In addition, Marixah space includes numerous pre-Gap hobgoblin ruins, which the Authority insists are proof of its ancestral right to those planets. The two forces skirmish regularly, often hiring freelancers and other deniable assets to strike at each other's fringe settlements. It's only a matter of time before the Authority pursues all-out war.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are points of interest on and near Gideron Prime.

Furidaimu Shipyards

The Gideron war machine requires a vast starship fleet, and the Furidaimu Shipyards on the moon Alenku industriously churn out warships to match the Authority's ambitions. Engineers have towed and chained large asteroids to the low-gravity moon's surface, creating small satellites that support even more docks. However, the shipyards' productivity is second in notoriety only to its host of labor camps, a practice the Authority reinstated within the past decade as a form of punishment. Accidents occur nearly every day, often with fatal consequences. Rumors persist that many of these workplace catastrophes are merely convenient ways to dispose of problematic prisoners, and the fraught working conditions are a breeding ground for potential rebellions.

Hanoko Spaceport

Although Gideron Prime has numerous military spaceports across its surface, the sole civilian and shipping spaceport is on the smaller moon, Arasu. Swaths of storage facilities, processing plants, and customs offices here process visitors and imported goods, and a traveler typically needs powerful connections or something of significant value in order to pass muster. However, the ja noi have voracious appetites, and a good smuggler can make a small fortune by sneaking high-end goods through the spaceport. In order to stem the tide of illicit imports, Gideron technicians are attempting to develop techniques to override or

even replace the nearest Drift beacons with specially encoded replicas accessible only to Gideron ships. Understandably, this has upset many of Triune's faithful, who are eager to reconnoiter and even sabotage this initiative.

Koboden Arena

Intensely physical competitions are commonplace entertainment in the Authority, held in towering arenas and broadcast widely to demonstrate its citizens' might and to match military squads against one another in glorious combat. Few opportunities are so prestigious as competing at the capital's Koboden Arena, which hosts immense tournaments, historical reenactments, and grand melees. To maintain the shows, arena masters are always looking for new challengers and strange beasts to showcase, and serving as a gladiator is one of the most reliable ways for a non-citizen to visit Authority space. Thanks to its merciless reputation, the Authority must often suppress rumors that it uses political prisoners or even slaves as arena fodder, particularly since slavery is officially outlawed in its territory.

Ministry of Science

The Authority instated the Ministry of Science shortly after the coup to direct the system's academic talent toward developing its military prowess. The Ministry posts representatives throughout schools and universities, not only to identify promising researchers, but also to ensure instructors follow culturally approved lesson plans. Although the system's sciences have suffered from the limited outside

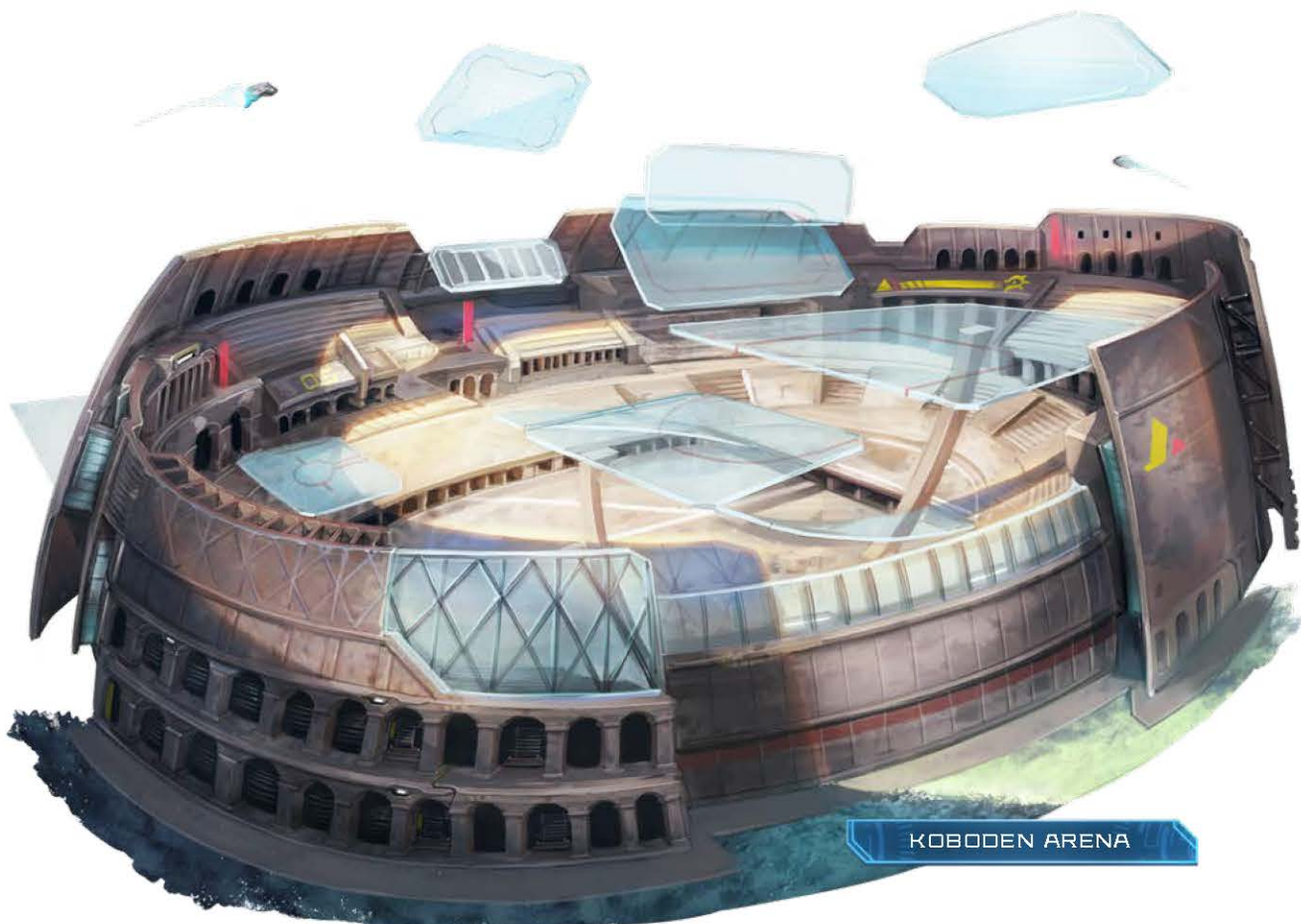
contact, the Ministry has made promising breakthroughs in its top project: improving Drift travel, particularly through the development of so-called Helldrive crystals. Representatives from Triune's faith, the Pact Worlds, and beyond have eagerly appealed to visit Gideron Prime to learn more—and some secure travel permits to give guest lectures—yet the Authority remains vigilant to the point of paranoia that foreign spies might steal their technology. The ministry disavows all rumors of secret facilities and dismisses myths of their abducting and interrogating foreign scientists, claiming that the stories amount to little more than slander from the Marixah Republic.

Pagoda of the Spirits

Tracing its construction to the Gap or earlier, this ancient temple towers over an equally old, overgrown, and ornate garden. The aging structure still houses an order of Susuman monks, dedicated to an old Golarion war god whose traditions the ja noi preserved. The pagoda serves as both a museum and a place of learning, though unbeknownst to the public, the site has sprawling basements filled with state-of-the-art surveillance technology. Here the Third Eye of Gideron, the Authority's secret police, oversees the state's espionage, manages state secrets, and plans high-risk missions into other star systems. Information is always in high demand, and the Eye has no qualms about contracting independent information brokers across the galaxy. Those willing to serve the Eye—or unaware of their patron's true affiliation—can count on dangerous yet lucrative work.

WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

KOBODEN ARENA

HELLEN-THEL

World of Arches and Gates

Diameter: ×3

Mass: ×9

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 31 hours; **Year:** 2 years

The Helfen-Thel system consists of nine worlds orbiting an orange-red sun called Ombrut. The predominant species on these worlds is maggedli—stony-skinned humanoids standing 3 feet tall. Maggedlian civilization is founded on magic rather than technology, and maggedli occultists occupy its highest social ranks. Maggedli technology is at best archaic by the standards of the Pact Worlds, although advanced materials and weapons find ready buyers within the system.

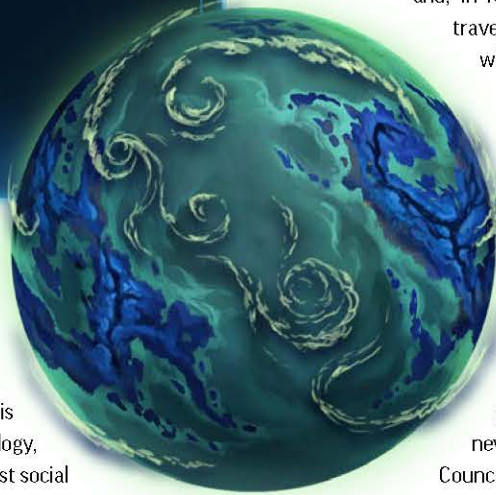
Maggedli never invented space travel beyond rudimentary rockets propelled by magical cartridges, yet they have nevertheless populated all nine worlds of their system. They travel by means of magical gates they call far-step arches. On the maggedli home world—Helfen, the second from the sun—geological arches built along natural ley lines enhance teleportation magic, allowing for the stable formation of gates across a planet or even to nearby worlds. On the system's other planets, such arches didn't exist, so early maggedli explorers could initially only make one-way trips to other planets. There, occultists labored for generations to grow natural stone into arches sufficient to enable return journeys. Now thousands of far-step arches exist across the system, and travel between them takes only a single step.

Maggedli encountered one other intelligent race while expanding and exploring throughout their system. On the ice planet Thel, intrepid maggedli explorers encountered friendly, furred quadrupeds calling themselves halaths. These peaceful, ram-headed ice-shapers had terraformed their warming planet long ago to preserve the sub-zero temperatures they prefer. Skilled astronomers, halaths knew of maggedli from intercepted radio transmissions and celestial observations. Maggedli and halaths became allies, even though halath technology—founded principally upon cunning molecular arrangements of ice crystals—melted when removed from Thel. Maggedli also learned another harsh truth about their planetary neighbors: halaths are entirely unaffected by teleportation magic and cannot use far-step arches, so while maggedli continued to expand, halaths remain trapped on Thel. Halaths are nevertheless influential members of the Ninefold Council that governs the system, even though they must deliver their votes via maggedli pages.

Maggedli now number in the hundreds of millions across their system. The largest maggedli cities sprawl across many

worlds, with neighborhoods connected by far-step arches as large as a city block. A maggedli courier might visit six worlds in a single day, thinking no more of the trip than a cross-town courier would on other worlds.

Although trips through far-step arches are routine and, in fact, vital to maggedli society, a few travelers have reported malfunctions with the magical gates in the past few months. Some of these travelers have emerged from stepping through the far-step arches aged several weeks or even several months, muttering about being lost in a lonely, unfamiliar, mountainous land beneath two yellow suns. Other travelers emerge riddled with tiny wounds and drained entirely of blood, falling dead to the ground immediately. Some travelers never emerge at all. The Ninefold Council is keeping word of these strange occurrences under tight control, lest panic fracture Helfen-Thel civilization.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following worlds make up the Helfen-Thel system.

Arpeddanna

The sixth planet from the sun and the only one in the Helfen-Thel system with moons, Arpeddanna seems to have received far more celestial satellites than its share. This lush tropical planet, barely a third of Helfen's size, is orbited by dozens of moons that cause the planet to wobble wildly on its axis. The vegetation across Arpeddanna is fast-growing and seemingly young—perhaps a few millennia old—and all of a lush green color that the maggedli consider strange. Beneath the greenery is a network of ancient ceramic roads that follow the planet's ley lines exactly, so establishing effective far-step arches is quite easy there. The original builders of these concealed roads remain a mystery.

Canora-Kellana

An ocean world with a few jagged peaks clustered in archipelagos, Canora-Kellana is the fourth planet from the sun and has maggedli settlements in vast underwater domes kept stable through magical pressurization. Far-step arches on the planet are made of coral, but collapse with frustrating regularity; thus, the undersea settlers living here must sometimes contend with extended periods of isolation before their occultists erect new gates. Canora-Kellana has deep ocean trenches that even maggedli magic can't reach, and explorers interested in investigating the strange lights that issue from the depths are in high demand.

Habbaba

The third planet from the sun, the world of Habbaba is strangely peaceful for a volcanic planet. Vast plains of fertile fields, enriched by volcanic ash, cluster around the planet's equator along with most

maggedli cities. The planet's volcanoes trigger distinctive seismic signatures months or years before erupting, allowing communities to relocate with plenty of warning. More concerning are the fiery behemoth-worms and elementals that cavort in the lava-filled calderas. Although these creatures rarely venture down from their mountain lairs, they are occasionally stricken by weeks-long rages that cause them to thrash across Habbaba's surface.

Helfen

The home world of the maggedli and the second planet from the sun, Helfen is a beautiful land of rolling hills and vast seas. The native flora on Helfen is predominantly deep blue in color, to better draw energy from the orange-red sun. Traditional maggedli clothing and the sail-like cloth they use as building material are all dyed blue from these plants. Other colors aren't unknown, but maggedli consider them unpleasant or even downright radical. Maggedli long ago domesticated all the animals on Helfen with magical enchantments, and the world is a place of peace and plenty. Although Helfen is best known for its far-step arches leading to other planets, the majority of its magical gates lead to sites across the world's four continents and innumerable islands. The Ninefold Council is based in the capital city of Azrefen-Zhar-Nento, a cosmopolitan metropolis with districts spread across the planet and even on the neighboring world of Habbaba.

Thel

Left untended, this fifth planet from the sun would have melted long ago, becoming a world of flowing magma and blistering temperatures. However, the native halaths have prevented this fate using their advanced geological expertise and powerful

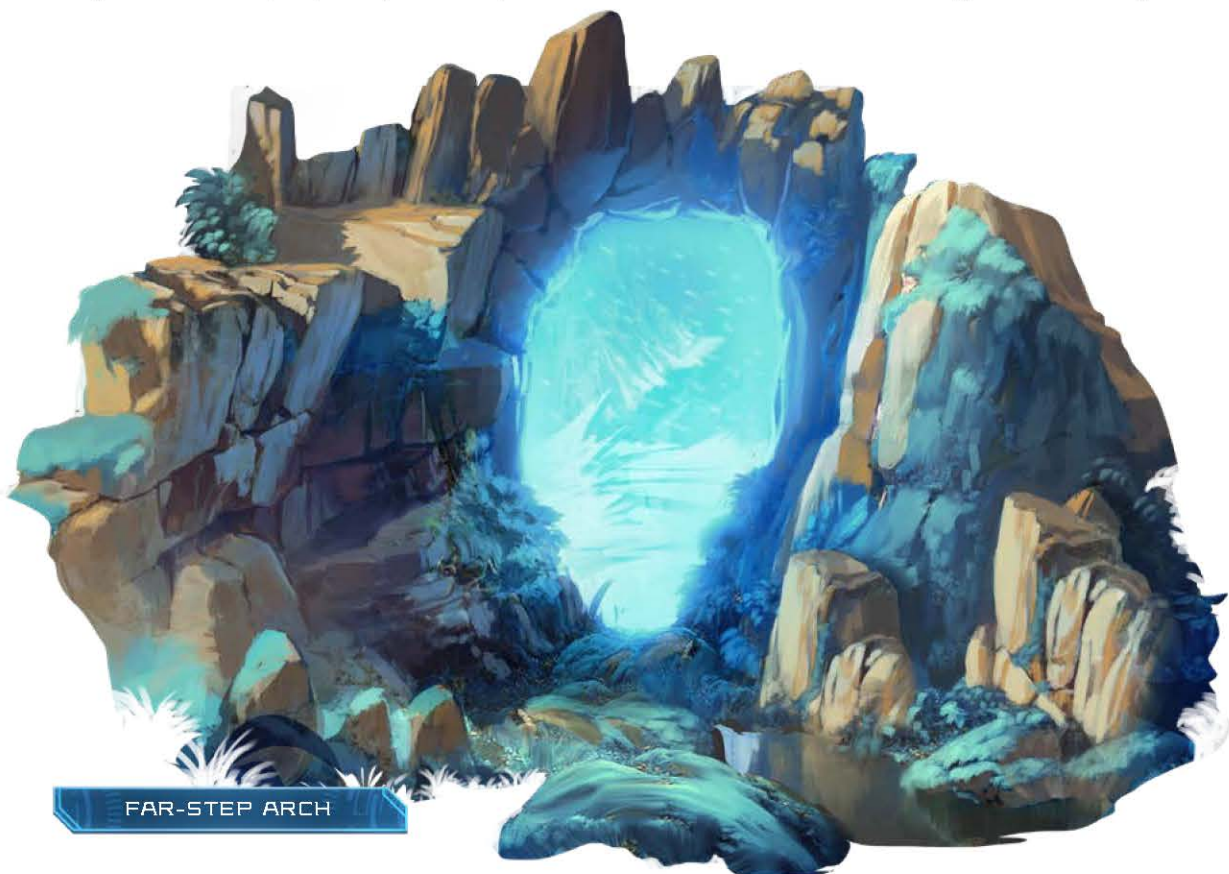
ice magic, though it's clear that Thel's days as an ice world are numbered. As halaths can't escape their world on their own (they can travel on starships with the proper environmental accommodations, but most don't have access to such vessels, and they don't want to leave the locus of their deep religious culture regardless), they are coming to grips with being a doomed people and exploring increasingly desperate solutions. Several maggedli communities live on Thel in their own magically warmed cities, and trade between these maggedli and halaths is common.

Yaroi

The system's closest planet to the sun, Yaroi is a world of stark mountain ranges that holds several magical metals critical to maggedli industry. As a result, several mining companies and the infrastructure necessary to support them dot Yaroi's surface. The planet spins remarkably quickly; a single day lasts barely 50 minutes, so these cities keep bright magical lights burning at all times. These lights also serve to keep away Yaroi's massive insectile predators, who shun the daylight and dart quickly from their dark holes to feed in the planet's short night.

The Yawning Triplets

The outermost orbit in the Helfen-Thel system contains three very similar planetoids revolving around the sun in a single, stable orbit. Stony and barren, the three worlds have very little atmosphere and are each barely a thousand miles in diameter. All three have the same unusual shape: an oblate sphere with a massive equatorial crater resembling a mouth open in a yawn or a scream. All three planets bear similar ruins of some impossibly ancient civilization that fascinate maggedli xenoarchaeologists.



FAR-STEP ARCH

LANDAHL

Peaceful World
Resisting Conquest
Diameter: ×1
Mass: ×1
Gravity: ×1
Atmosphere: Normal
Day: 24 hours; Year: 755 days

Lush and vibrant, Landahl is a world of rich rainforests and abundant natural resources. The planet's three major continents—the mountainous Assica, the comparably dry Pothyria, and the jungle-choked Tabisaan—span much of the surface, separated by vast, shallow oceans teeming with life. It is here that the bioluminescent quadrupeds known as illyrs evolved, developing a peaceful culture and hegemony that spread across much of Assica and Pothyria. In recent decades, illyrs developed spaceflight technology, exploring the stars beyond with a sense of innocent wonder. Veskarium scouts were all too happy to greet these strange pioneers and follow them back to their home, yet when the vesk visited, they didn't bring overtures of peace—they brought war.

Any of the illyrs' aspirations of peaceful exploration died with the Veskarium's invasion. Landahl's feeble military was no match for the vesk, and the illyrs were swiftly subdued and conquered. However, despite its initial success, the Veskarium underestimated the illyrs' stubborn strength. Within a year, pockets of insurgency flared across the planet as the illyrs formed independent resistance cells and lashed out against their new oppressors. Hoping to quell the rebellion with a show of force, the vesk annihilated the city of Hizzala in a devastating orbital strike remembered as Tradger's Reckoning. The plan backfired. The grief-stricken illyrs rallied against the vesk in violent revolt. For more than two decades, the illyrs have engaged in a guerrilla warfare against the vesk, fighting to reclaim their homeland and frustrating Veskarium leadership with remarkable regularity.

The invasion fleet's early commanders failed to defeat these rebels, suffered disgrace, and were promptly removed from their posts following a series of embarrassing miscalculations. Since then, Commander **Koben Adalandil** (LN male vesk envoy) has overseen Landahl's slow annexation. Where other leaders favored dramatic assaults, Koben bides his time and launches targeted strikes at key objectives to weaken the illyrs and conserve resources. He dreams of strangling the insurgency and being appointed high despot upon victory, yet the length and expense of the campaign has spawned whispers in the Veskarium that the war is too costly to sustain. This has not deterred the commander. Even as the Veskarium gradually

scales down his resources, Koben has adopted a dual strategy of winning hearts and minds in vesk-controlled territory while engaging in underhanded operations in insurgent regions. His hired mercenaries regularly spy on the opposition, assassinate leaders, and act as false-flag envoys from other planets to poison the illyrs' perception of any allies beyond the Veskarium. The illyrs are increasingly wise to the canny commander's ploy, and they have begun buying out the more ethical mercenaries to aid the planet's bid for independence.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are noteworthy locations on Landahl.

Camp Bestillen

The illyr military base at Camp Bestillen fell within a month of the vesk invasion, and the new rulers wasted no time in converting it into a prison camp for insurgents. When stories of Tradger's Reckoning trickled into the prison, its enraged inmates broke free and reclaimed the base, which stubbornly survives as a bastion of illyr resistance and symbol of vesk shame.

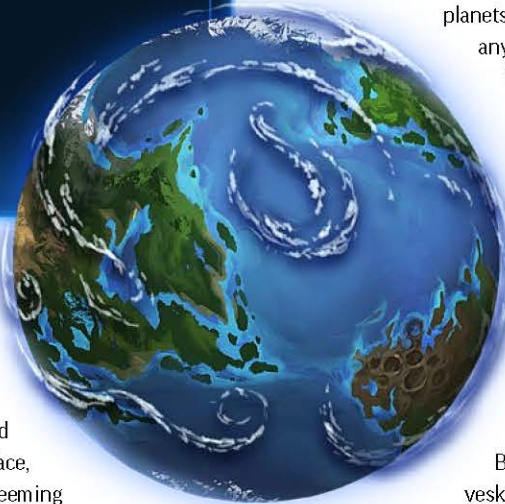
Camp Bestillen is key to the illyrs' efforts, for the vesk had no opportunity to destroy their munitions or scuttle spacecraft to avoid their weaponry falling into enemy hands. For all the illyrs' advanced science, their military technology paled in comparison to that of the Veskarium, and the rebel scientists have tirelessly dissected and repurposed their enemies' tools to manufacture starships unlike anything seen before. Such advances would be difficult without the leadership of **Chief Technician Klizagg** (CG agender illyr mechanic), who eagerly pays for any scrap Veskarium technology brought to them. As their reputation has grown, so too have the efforts of vesk assassins eager to execute the charismatic researcher.

Hizzala

This once-prosperous city on Pothyria survives only as a graveyard and monument. The orbital bombardment remembered as Tradger's Reckoning left Hizzala in ruins, and now vesk and illyrs alike shun the dead city. Even the bravest scavengers grow nervous in the shadow of its skyline. Whispered rumors speak of terrible "things" that have risen from the ashes—things that care nothing for the ongoing war for control over the planet and exist only to feed. These tales aren't enough to discourage foolhardy offworld looters in search of the dead illyrs' lost riches.

Kallibria

Whereas most of Landahl rebelled against the Veskarium, Kallibria's leaders urged capitulation and peaceful transition of power upon seeing the devastation at Hizzala. The vesk now control Kallibria, a metropolis whose famous gardens and temples remain largely unharmed by the ongoing conflict. For this, many other illyrs resent the Kallibrians' selfishness.



However, the acceptance of vesk rule isn't monolithic, and many rebellious illyrs remain, serving as resistance spies and planning for their next strike in the ongoing covert war.

In particular, a cadre of rogue priests led by **Zahel** (N female illyr technomancer) embrace the ancient legends of Kallibria's temple to Eloritu, which claim the temple's hidden cellars contain a forbidden ritual capable of destroying the casters' enemies—albeit at a dire cost. The vesk occupiers have heard this legend and keep watch for zealous illyr trespassers while also trying to uncover the secret vaults for themselves.

Obedurn Associates Research Colony

Landahl's plight hasn't escaped the Pact Worlds' notice, though the Pact Council has opted not to interfere and inflame its tenuous peace with the Veskarium. That hasn't stopped an independent consortium of androids sympathetic to the illyrs' liberation. This group founded Obedurn Associates, a research corporation forwarding various scientific initiatives across the planet. Now entrenched, the corporation has formally recognized the illyrs as Landahl's sovereign rulers, hoping to provoke an angry response from the Veskarium and subsequently draw in Pact Worlds military intervention. So far the vesk haven't taken the bait, but that hasn't stopped Obedurn Associates from sheltering rebels and creating a corridor for weapons smugglers.

Petran 1

Once the regional capital for the continent of Assica, Petran 1 now serves as the command post for Veskarium operations planetwide. The city's original illyr architecture—famous for its delicately carved tuff edifices—has gradually disappeared beneath the steely vesk-inspired facades and screens proudly promoting Veskarium propaganda. The messaging has grown increasingly forceful over the past few years, driven by the insistence of Vesk Prime generals and ever more suspicious Veskarium soldiers. Even so, Commander Adalandil launches rebuilding initiatives from the city with the hope of earning enough illyr trust that he can conquer the planet through diplomacy—all while reining in his predecessor, Tradger Lorthal.

Sycalline Forest Preserve

Dating back to the Gap, illyrs and the fey Minecine Court have maintained a careful boundary and uneasy truce, though neither side remembers the conflicts that led to the need for armistice. Most of the fey cautiously remained in the Sycalline Forest, uneager to risk further violence from the outwardly peaceful illyrs. However, the Veskarium's assault and occupation have united the fey and illyrs, with the forest serving as a refuge for the latter fleeing vesk occupation. Veskarium ships and soldiers have yet to penetrate the dense woods, which the fey shield with powerful enchantments and illusions that have stymied even orbital sensors.

Commander Koben Adalandil regularly hires teams to survey the forest's outer reaches, always probing for some weakness in the defenses or some crack in the illyrs' alliance.

ECOLOGY OF THE ILLYR

Illyrs are intelligent quadrupeds most famous for their secondary circulatory systems that run along the surface of their skin. By regulating the flow of blood and bioluminescent proteins, illyrs create intricate and even flashy patterns that form the basis for their communication with one another. These opportunistic omnivores have expressive mouths and prehensile, bifurcated tongues that they've adapted for delicate tool use. Their limbs end in stubby digits that offer only a clumsy grip—enough to hold a device, but not enough to operate it unaided.

Wathlitan

Even after being formally stripped of her command for obliterating Hizzala, the vesk Tradger Lorthal defiantly continues to attack illyr guerrillas with the legion that remains loyal to her. Her primary objective is the Wathlitan, the illyrs' manufacturing center on Pothyria. Thanks to the city's ample stockpiles, Lorthal's forces have managed to resupply regularly, despite the lack of reinforcements from the Veskarium (which publicly denounces them as deserters, despite now using Lorthal as a deniable asset to weaken the illyrs). However, Lorthal's escalating war crimes in Wathlitan make future peace more unlikely every day, and Commander Adalandil desperately wants her neutralized.



HIZZALA

MARIXAH REPUBLIC

Jewel of Unity

MARIXAH

Diameter: ×1

Mass: ×1

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

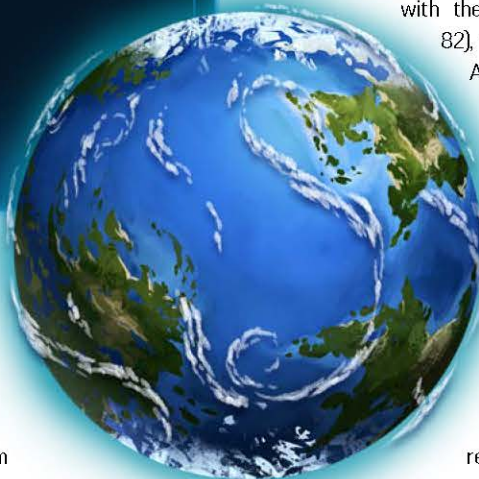
Day: 24 hours; **Year:** 405 days

Pact Worlds colonists dispersed far and wide before and during the Gap, settling on planets such as the Golarion-like Marixah. After the Gap, Marixah's inhabitants realized just how isolated they were and united with their neighbors on the planet Kizmatta to form the Marixah Republic. Their core star system consists only of these two habitable planets, two other lifeless rocky planets, and three gas giants. However, the republic's prosperity and equitable laws have attracted immigrants from far and wide. With growing strength, the government has expanded to colonize eight other worlds beyond the Marixah system—each new acquisition providing new spaces for the republic's increasingly diverse populace, from the planetary seascape of Flentil to the heavy gravity and methane atmosphere of Ptekik-3.

Second from its star, Marixah is a temperate world with six continents and productive seas, so much so that the planet has few terrestrial life-forms. Its settlers—predominantly humans, half-elves, half-orcs, and hobgoblins—considered it a paradise, though several endemic insects have grown and evolved swiftly to exploit the Marixah farms, and their size, numbers, and appetites are such that they pose an ever-greater threat to citizens, not just agriculture. Farthest from the sun, Kizmatta is a frigid world riddled with extensive caves carved by ongoing geothermal activity and periodic meltwater events. Many inhabitants still exploit this subterranean warmth, though terraforming efforts have increased the surface temperature enough that it's not outright deadly.

The republic holds elections every 6 years, filling a voting body of 257 representatives across its constituent planets. Thanks to the array of viewpoints, the representatives who gather in the capital, Rajadhan, have organized into a host of political parties that form coalitions to pass initiatives. Although the republic doesn't have a sole leader, it does appoint chief representatives as needed to represent its interests when dealing with other nations or handling emergencies.

With its steady successes over the past few centuries, the Marixah Republic fancies itself an equal to the Pact Worlds and Veskarium, even though it commands only a modest fraction of either entity's military and political might. The Pact Worlds remain on cordial terms, though the Pact Council grows weary of Marixah posturing. Meanwhile, the Veskarium openly laughs at the notion that denizens of the Marixah Republic could ever be peers of their empire. The republic could supply only a small fleet



to assist allied forces against the Swarm in 291 AG, and its leaders intend to provide greater military assistance in any future conflict in order to prove the republic's mettle on the galactic stage.

These starships haven't seen service against the Swarm.

Instead, the Marixah Republic has increasingly clashed with the aggressive Gideron Authority (page 82), which contests Marixah control of the Acalata system and the planet Sansorgis in particular. Ruins on Sansorgis suggest that a vast hobgoblin empire once stretched across Marixah and Gideron space, though few have explored the blasted sites to understand why that civilization ultimately fractured. As the Gideron Authority grows increasingly belligerent and brazen, the Republic has struggled to establish a formal response. Many representatives urge further negotiation, whereas more hawkish members insist on using the anti-Swarm fleet. The overwhelming majority wishes to avoid war altogether, yet that prospect grows fainter with every year of border skirmishes and raiding.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following sites are on Marixah and in its capital, Rajadhan.

Convocation Hall

The republic includes dozens of constituent species, virtually all of whose artistic and architectural traditions are represented in this massive governmental building. In addition to the grand hall for legislation and representatives' offices, the structure's staff issue permits of all sorts and provide meeting space for countless other governmental matters. Lower-ranking bureaucrats gather to lobby for regional interests, turning some hallways into riots of negotiation and debate. However, some residents find that the Republic's drive to be inclusive when making decisions also enables the government to be slow to react and irresolute when faced with urgent matters. Particularly for the outlying colonies that don't command immediate attention, coming here to hire freelance mercenaries or scientists to handle a problem is more expedient than waiting for the legislature to act.

Embassy Row

Forming a U shape around Kedutaan Park, Embassy Row houses dignitaries, politicians, and clergy from more than a hundred worlds. The Marixah Republic provides all interested governments a place to build their respective embassies, and the array of visiting aliens has resulted in giant aquatic bubble homes, clear domes filled with poisonous gases, and estates with artificially low gravity. Competition has resulted in ever more elaborate edifices, and Embassy Row expands farther every year as the republic makes overtures to every society it learns of. Not all respond well. The Gideron Authority famously withdrew its embassy a year ago, going so far as to detonate the building, leaving behind a smoldering pit and damaging nearby properties.

Heavens Gaze Plaza

Each group of immigrants has brought its gods into the republic, and Rajadhan's temple district hosts dozens of these temples and shrines. At the neighborhood's core is the Heavens Gaze Plaza, bordered on three sides by sprawling complexes dedicated to Desna, Eloritu, and Ibra. The plaza's a favorite location for protests and rallies, and the three largest temples attract tourists from across the galaxy. However, recent architectural and historical studies have produced muddled conclusions as to who built Eloritu's edifice, with each species having assumed some other group was responsible. Rumors attribute the temple's construction to some since-vanished predecessor group, with the hypothesis being that Rajadhan's founders settled here because of the temple. Explorers eagerly petition to explore the site's deepest basements, though the priestly custodians have been reluctant to invite the public to snoop around the temple's sacred spaces.

Kdavian Deep

Marixah's shallow oceans teem with life, yet a network of deep-sea trenches remains only partially explored. Cryptid enthusiasts speculate that primordial fish people still live in these sheltered depths, with the trench known as the Kdavian Deep as the most infamously undocumented of these fissures. Oceanic surveys suggest the trenches' surfaces are jagged, as though studded with underwater towers, and remote submersibles sent to investigate disappear suddenly with disconcerting regularity. Whether a forgotten society, a sea monster, natural forces, or something else is responsible remains unknown, which only goads prospective explorers to fund and launch their own expeditions beneath the waves.

Sundaratu University of the Arts

Intent on understanding and celebrating its constituent cultures, this university in Rajadhan funds ethnographic and archaeological expeditions within

and beyond the Republic's territory. This has put these scholars on the front line of the Gideron conflict, who claim the numerous hobgoblin ruins as their own. University staff regularly hire mercenaries with an academic bent to guard their researchers. Closer to home, the university trains exceptional artists, most renowned of these being its holoivid producer and metalworking alumni.

Vartaikam Bazaar

The Republic's cosmopolitan composition boasts a wide range of appetites. This ancient bazaar dates back to the Gap, and historical preservation societies have ensured that many of the seemingly original buildings survive and see continued use. While some visitors consider the structures outdated, locals take pride in their history and the buildings' aging eccentricities. The Marixah Republic carefully regulates an array of vices and drugs, yet the bazaar provides a host of illegal goods to those who know the proper code phrases. Defunct sewers, buried cellars, and smugglers' tunnels form a web of passageways beneath the market, providing a haven for countless ne'er-do-wells. Authorities do what they can to pinpoint and eliminate this black market, which regularly moves to evade repercussions.



EMBASSY ROW

NEMENAR

The Prismatic Shadow

Diameter: ×1

Mass: ×1

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 13 hours; **Year:** 243 days

Nemenar is an enigmatic planetoid, the only celestial body orbiting its brown-dwarf star. Millennia ago, its sapient inhabitants constructed a massive black-light filter that still encapsulates the entire world. This filter allows only the ultraviolet light-range in. Because of this, shadow shrouds the entire planet, and visitors to Nemenar who don't have some form of blindsight or special equipment are quite literally left in the dark.

The planet's sole sapient species, nemenaris, are a cursed people. Long ago, thousands of years before even the Gap, nemenaris were already a scientifically advanced, space-faring race. In their exploration of the galaxy near their home planet, they came across an unusual asteroid orbiting the neighboring star in an erratic path that all of the nemenaris' calculations concluded should be impossible. An insatiably curious species, the nemenaris sent out a crew to land on the asteroid and explore its surface, where they hoped to find answers about the bizarre phenomenon.

But the nemenari explorers found only more questions. Nestled in a shallow alcove on the obsidian-black asteroid was a small shrine, with only a 4-foot-tall statue of some unknown deity and an offering bowl worked from pure amethyst. The visiting nemenaris tested the statue's materials and discovered it to be millions of years old. Shocked and thrilled at this discovery, one of the nemenari scientists decided to leave an offering in the bowl—a single empty vial from their research material. Thinking nothing of it, the scientists completed their research, left the asteroid and returned to Nemenar—to find their entire planet ablaze in violet flames.

To the nemenaris' horror, though no living thing on their home planet's surface was killed by these flames, they all suffered in perpetual agony, as the light from the sun lit every organic substance—including plants, fauna, and nemenaris—ablaze in a mystical violet fire. After fleeing the planet's surface, recuperating, and studying the catastrophe closely, nemenari scientists discovered that their planet had been eternally cursed to combust and burn if the surface—or anything thereafter originating from it—is ever exposed to any wavelength of visible light from their system's sun. Refusing to give up their planet to what they assumed to be a petty and malicious deity, nemenaris instead created a massive barrier between Nemenar and its sun, blocking all commonly visible wavelengths of energy. Over the

ensuing millennia, the flora and fauna, including the nemenaris themselves, have adapted to ultraviolet light, and creatures that use vision can now see perfectly well on the planet's surface. To this day, nothing originating from Nemenar is able to be exposed to visible light from the system's sun without bursting into unrelenting flame.

In the modern era, nemenaris rarely settle on the planet's surface; most populations have migrated underground, where they live prosperous lives in scientifically advanced settlements. The world's government is as enigmatic as the people and planet themselves, and is a cross between a democracy and an autocracy. Nemenaris elect a cosmocrat, a powerful magic user who spends their life purportedly communing with the deity that cursed their planet, a god now known as Nylessa.

Through the cosmocrat, Nylessa guides the people of Nemenar away from further violence and catastrophe, and she grants them gifts of great discovery and prosperity should they heed her warnings.

Despite the planet's unusual circumstances, Nemenar is a bustling tourist hub. With special gear—and thanks to nemenaris retrofitting large habitable areas on the surface—the planet can be a beautiful sight to behold. Nemenaris are a friendly and accommodating species, and have built thousands of massive, crystalline spires that jet the entire spectrum of visible light into the sky like mystical geysers. These spires create areas of visible light for most species. The nemenaris' surface settlements, which are mostly for tourism purposes and rarely actually house communities of nemenaris, are painted in phosphorescent colors that react to the ultraviolet light hitting the planet's surface.

The planet is lush and diverse with biomes mostly on the cooler side, though still tolerable to most species; with taigas, deserts of cool sand and tundra, oceans of nitrogen, and unfathomably tall ice-capped mountains.

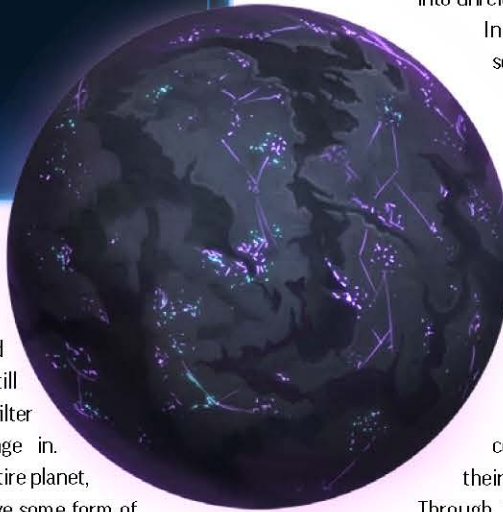
NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are several notable locations across Nemenar.

Bulwenu

A grand, carefully excavated cave almost 300 feet below the planet's surface holds Nemenar's capital city. The bustling metropolis called Bulwenu, unlike those settlements on the planet's surface, contains all manner of architecture, from squat, one-story buildings to towering 200-floor skyscrapers. This city is where the largest population of nemenaris live, work, and play, and they are welcoming of all with open arms—both tourists and immigrants looking to settle permanently.

Thanks to the largest demographic in Bulwenu being nemenaris, there is little natural—or even artificial—light except in the most traveled zones. Nemenaris are accustomed to darkness, after all, and they have given less consideration to



outsiders in this city than they have in the surface settlements. Most of the city is in complete darkness, aside from the various bioluminescent flora and fauna found throughout the caverns.

In the city's center, in front of the city's Great Hall, stands a massive statue of the mysterious deity Nylessa. The statue is identical to the one found by the ill-fated crew of explorers on the asteroid so many millennia ago. Unlike that modest ancient shrine, though, this statue stands over 200 feet tall, with glowing, draconic eyes gazing down at worshippers and passers-by with smug condescension. Nylessa's imposing, five-armed figure holds four daggers, all pointing inward to her central hand, which holds a single glass vial. This dedication was built by the first of the cursed nemenaris to travel underground, as commanded by Nylessa through the very first cosmocrat.

Garalufin

In the frigid sandy deserts of the northern continent Veruvera, a tear in space known as Garalufin forms a relatively stable portal to the Shadow Plane. It's not known where this tear came from, though some theorize it was part of Nylessa's divine punishment, while others think it might have formed naturally due to the planet's descent into shadow.

It's a dangerous trek to this portal, as the deserts can drop to temperatures as low as -350 degrees Fahrenheit at seemingly random times. Not only that, but the portal works in both directions, creating a dangerous breach that creatures from the Shadow Plane sometimes find their way through. Many local and global organizations are engaged in research for ways to potentially close the portal once and for all. Mystics and witchwarpers from Nemenar and beyond have attempted to close Garalufin, and they have even met with limited success,

seemingly closing the gate only to have it reopen in a new spot somewhere in the Veruvera desert within weeks—if not days or minutes.

Prismatic Spires

Throughout the settled areas on the surface of Nemenar, thousands of constructed glass spires, stretching anywhere from 20 to 200 feet into the sky, dot the streets. These bizarre magical shrines are not just for show; like great fountains, these spires project colored light into the area immediately surrounding them, out to a distance nearly equaling their height. These areas are awash in visible light, serving as havens of visibility for visitors who lack darkvision or precise nonvisual senses.

Vehenstrenal

Vehenstrenal is Nemenar's honorary surface-capital, where the majority of the planet's spaceports are located and in which most visitors to Nemenar are greeted and processed. Here, tourists can buy portable prismatic crystals that emanate a constant aura of visible light or special goggles that enable them to see in the dark.

The buildings in Vehenstrenal are relatively short, rarely reaching higher than 100 feet, and the skyline is dotted with crystalline prismatic spires that tower over the rest of the architecture, emitting rainbows of light.

Being a tourist city, this area is bustling with all manner of folks both nemenari and otherwise, and many criminal organizations take advantage of the tourists who constantly pour into the area. Crime is a growing problem in Vehenstrenal, from pickpocketing and other minor offenses up to kidnapping or worse, and the unfortunate nemenari law enforcement are finding the situation spiraling more and more out of their control.

WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

PRISMATIC SPIRE

ORRY

Blasted Cluster of Floating Islands**Diameter:** $\times 1/2$ **Mass:** $\times 1/4$ **Gravity:** $\times 1$ **Atmosphere:** Thin**Day:** 28 hours; **Year:** 2 years

Long before the Gap, the planet Orry was a technomagical utopia where scientists and spellcasters worked in concert for the betterment of all the world's peoples. However, before the inhabitants could achieve faster-than-light travel and reach the stars, a tragic accident at a gravitational research facility created an anomaly at the planet's core. Subsequently, the planet's entire geological core cracked open, killing much of the population in devastating earthquakes, tsunamis, and gouts of lava. Instead of completely shattering, however, large chunks of the planet's landmass merely hung in space, caught in the anomaly's mystical gravity. These areas of land retained a thin atmosphere, and those who survived have rebuilt their society—although it is a far cry from its former glory.

Orry now consists of 10 country-sized swaths of land—Akmines, Dreyx, Ivanush Major, Ivanush Minor, Modrunia, Nefaeton, Pluetana, Rehzeon, Uthis, and Yabarea—as well as several dozen smaller islands of land that slowly orbit the central anomaly in regular periods, often drifting within mere feet of one another but never colliding. These land formations rotate so that their bottoms always face Orry's former core, and so each area's relative gravity always remains the same.

Orry's native sapient population, known as phentomites (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 96), are blue-skinned beings with large, hairless forehead ridges, powerful backward-bending legs for jumping and climbing, and limited thermographic vision. Phentomites have since adapted to the thin atmosphere and complete loss of their former advancements; much of their technology not destroyed during the cataclysm was lost during the Gap. As such, phentomite society today is a low-tech affair, with their ancestors' achievements mostly forgotten.

Phentomites craft, trade, farm, and hunt the same as many other worlds' populations do, though travel between the floating country-islands is a sometimes difficult and dangerous proposition. Roads of an unknown material run across the larger landmasses, some of the few remnants of the past that have withstood the test of time. These make it easy for phentomites to journey between cities on the same island, by either walking or in carts pulled by six-legged draft animals called jhurlls.

However, when goods need to be transported from one island to another, phentomite merchants employ the aid of an elite group of individuals known as bridgers. Bridgers leap over the gaps between islands and build temporary wood-and-rope structures that allow others to safely cross. The landmasses of Orry move slowly, so such journeys can take months as travelers patiently wait for a favorable alignment of islands.

Each of Orry's country-islands has its own governmental body, with most involving councils whose members serve lifetime appointments, unless the majority of the citizenry loses confidence in an official. In that case, the remainder of the council can oust that individual and appoint a new member—usually someone who has the support of the people. As exceptions, families of monarchs rule Ivanush Major and Ivanush Minor, though the population of Ivanush Minor has recently begun to express discontent with that system.

Overall, Orry's populace is peaceful, with the struggle of surviving—and occasionally defending against a mutated monster from one of the ruined underground labs from Orry's past that dot the landscape—leaving phentomites little time to fight among themselves.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

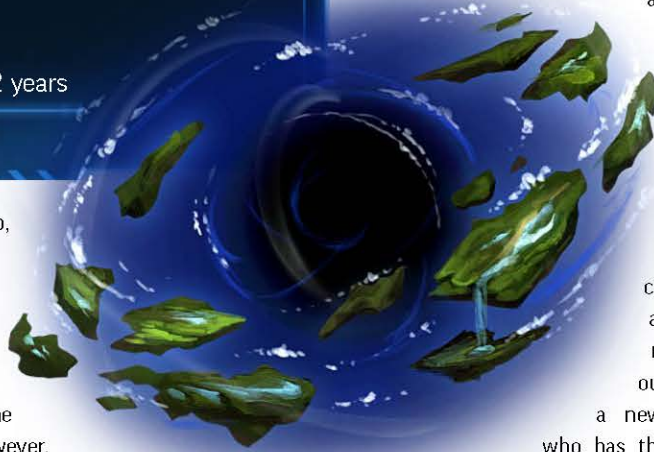
The following are some points of interest on or near Orry's floating land masses.

The Dead Sector

While the smallest of Orry's floating islands are bare chunks of rock a few meters long, there are several slightly larger ones that hold enough landmass and receive enough rainfall to sustain some patches of grass and a few copses of trees. In stark contrast to such areas, a series of three finger-shaped islands, each approximately 1 mile across, are known as the Dead Sector to the phentomite locals. The trees here are ancient and petrified and the grasses remain short and brown, no matter the weather. Bridgers consider it unlucky to cross through the Dead Sector, which many believe is haunted or cursed; however, every few years it is the only viable path between Akmines and Modrunia. Unknown to the phentomites, the Dead Sector holds the remains of an underground botany laboratory from Orry's past, split into three parts. The chemicals that have seeped out of these ruins have poisoned the land, but the facility holds a few scientific wonders for those who brave its dangers.

Harmony-One

The Pact Worlds recently made first contact with Orry—unsurprisingly, AbadarCorp is one of a handful of organizations



looking to establish friendly relations with the phentomites, perhaps spurred by rumors of technomagical artifacts hidden underground on the blasted planet. AbadarCorp claims its motivations are peaceful and business related. The company has placed a space station called Harmony-One in far orbit around Orry, and it has become the first stop for visitors who want to explore the surface or meet the locals. Director **Junvio Manderra** (LN male human envoy) keeps Harmony-One running smoothly, though not all the residents are pleased that a group of space goblins (*Alien Archive 54*) has set up a shop in the promenade, even if they have all the proper paperwork.

Niyriki

This idyllic city on Pluetana is home to many artists and artisans. Perched on the banks of Lake Eclipse, Orry's largest freshwater lake, Niyriki enjoys lots of warm, sunny weather, thanks to Pluetana's equatorial orbit. Whether due to the climate or the proximity to a sparkling lake, the talented citizens of Niyriki produce beautiful, uplifting works of art, from paintings to plays and from symphonies to statues. These pieces carry high value across Orry and provide the city with much of its income. However, city officials are worried about the growing influence of a recent disruptive art movement that almost entirely depicts varying scenes of a terrible, formless beast sleeping at the bottom of the lake.

Qabu

A handful of squat, stone-walled factories surround the city of Qabu on Uthis. Qabu is responsible for much of Orry's industry, as it is located near several quarries and mines, and readily available stone and ore are relatively scarce throughout most of the other island-countries. Many local phentomites move to Qabu to get jobs in its factories, which produce everything from carts to firearms. City manager **Chargga Vis** (LG female phentomite^{AA2}) strives to ensure that employers treat the city's workers fairly, though lately she has butted heads with the head of Richent Munitions, **Doel Richent** (N male phentomite^{AA2}), who regularly skirts the minimum-wage laws.

Spires Cathedral

An unnamed island less than a mile in diameter floats in close proximity to Yabarea. The only structure of note on this tiny island is a large, abandoned marble-and-stone cathedral sporting half a dozen spires. Several openings that perhaps once held gorgeous stained-glass windows now stand empty, and no other trace of the faith to which the church was devoted can be found. Local phentomites can offer no clues to Spires Cathedral's history, and scholars from the Pact Worlds are divided as to which religion might have inspired the construction of the edifice. Some believe that the cathedral may not even have been a monument to a religion at all, but some vestige of a lost philosophy that silently influences phentomite culture even today.

Zisfahani

Orry's largest city is located on Dreyx. Due to the unusual gravitational forces from the anomaly at the planet's center,

flying a starship around the floating islands is very dangerous. Pact World diplomats, working with Orry's governmental heads, have designated a new spaceport outside of Zisfahani where off-world vessels must land by order of law. From there, visitors can travel along terrestrial routes to other parts of Orry, but Zisfahani is often their first point of contact with phentomite culture. Because of this, Zisfahani has undergone unprecedented growth over the past few years, which makes some traditionalists quite uneasy, as they worry about the influence of outside cultures on the phentomites' ancient and storied ways.



PHENTOMITE BRIDGEER

PABAQ

University Planet

Diameter: ×1-1/2

Mass: ×2-1/4

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 30 hours; **Year:** 675 Days

The planet Pabaq drifts slowly around its bright-yellow sun in an annual cycle that's nearly twice as long as Absalom Station's. The planet's land surface is covered in greenery, from muggy rain forests and treacherous marshlands to tropical coastlines where 300-foot-tall trees stretch into the sky.

Pabaq's landmasses consist of six major continents featuring distinct biomes. The westernmost continent of Zhast has the largest population of saltwater-dwelling gengen osharu. The desert continent of Demwiq is largely unexplored (due to osharus' aversion to dry heat) and is considered a land filled with mystery and potential. The northern and southern ice caps Nalfant and Avar are sparsely populated, but remote research compounds dot the frigid landscape. Rawara contains rolling plains and treacherous taigas, and is home to Pabaq's tallest mountain range, the Rivali Peaks. Jenikar is a landlocked, verdant continent of mostly rain forests and swamps; it's the most heavily populated continent and the location of the capital city of Jhavom.

The planet's only sapient species, sluglike osharus (*Alien Archive 2 92*) are notoriously cautious, due to their weak physical constitution. Despite their pervasive timidity, however, they're so adamant in their shared objective to gather as much knowledge about the universe as possible that they've conquered their fears and managed to tame the unforgiving wilds, establishing thousands of university-like settlements across the planet. Most of their major cities are protected by armies of mobile AI-controlled drones. Though these automatons are programmed to kill if a situation becomes dire, they tend to employ pacifistic defenses, such as tranquilizing dangerous beasts and transferring them back to the wilderness far away from any settlement. Likewise, vast systems of both computerized and staffed air-defense units protect major osharu settlements from airborne attacks, whether of avian monsters searching for slimy treats or outright invasions from other sapient species.

Most osharu settlements are found near Pabaq's aquatic areas, on the banks of freshwater rivers and lakes, though the ocean-dwelling gengens are more at home on the coasts of the planet's saltwater oceans. The wilderness outside of the highly protected cities is another story. With long, unforgiving summers and winters, frequent storms, and dangerous fauna, osharus rarely travel outside of their settlements without a specific

purpose. Most notoriously, the jungles of Jenikar are stalked by vicious and cunning ganatra, mammalian predators whose ability to camouflage their scales and fur makes them nearly impossible to see coming before it's too late. Thankfully, they rarely hunt outside of their fiercely defended jungle territories.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are several notable locations across Pabaq.

Dig Site J-49b

The most talked about natural mystery discovered on Pabaq in recent years, this enigmatic archaeological find lies at the heart of Demwiq's desert landscape. When a massive sandstorm revealed part of a wide metal surface with a half-mile-wide glass viewport in the center, osharu scholars set aside their dislike of the dry climate and established this

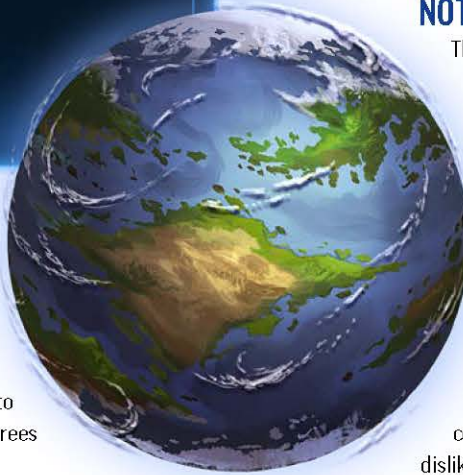
dig site, located several hundred miles from Oasis, the nearest settlement. The first thing the scholars noticed through the glass was a gargantuan humanoid skeleton in a tattered flight suit, strapped into some kind of crash couch. Considering the long-dead creature much too large to have thrived within Pabaq's levels of oxygen, the archaeologists believe a titanic spacecraft or escape pod of extraterrestrial origin lies beneath the desert sands. Recently, the dig site's leader, Headteacher Jom Yare (female osharu^{AA2} mystic), mounted an expedition to breach the glass, but the mission was cut short when a rumble of infrasound began plaguing the area. Headteacher Yare and her team have been unable to find the origin of this maddening hum, and some of her fellow scholars have fled to Oasis in fear while others have disappeared into the desert.

Fortune Reef

The largest coastal settlement on Pabaq, this glistening glass city hugs the clear saltwater oceans off the coast of Zhast, stretching along the iridescent black-sand coast for over 5 miles. Fortune Reef is home to most of Pabaq's population of saltwater osharus, gengens, who share inland osharus' aversion to dry heat but lack their intolerance of salt. Gengen osharus can swim freely in the placid oceans, and they've even established an underwater marine-biology compound nearby.

Jhavom

Jhavom is the capital of Pabaq, the largest and oldest osharu university-city. Founded even before the Gap, this massive bubble-city in the landlocked rainforest continent of Jenikar has a fascinating mix of architecture both ancient and modern, with millennia-old brick-and-stone buildings juxtaposed with gleaming, crystalline skyscrapers. Being the largest osharu settlement, Jhavom is also the most diverse in terms of its educational departments. There is nary a field of study that doesn't have its own facilities in this metropolis. It's also home to the planet's largest temple of Yaraesa, the Glory in Knowledge



Museum, which functions as both a center of worship and storage for records and artifacts from many of the osharus' most important discoveries on Pabaq.

At Jhavom's center is the Hall of Records, a 180-story skyscraper that houses digital copies all information collected by the osharus, from censuses to school records to scientific discoveries. Near the top of this structure, the Grand Council—the highest position of power held by six elected osharus—are permanently wired into a complex network of computers that feeds data directly into their brains. These osharus are essentially in a virtual-reality coma, and many believe they are blessed by Yaraesa to be able to handle this unimaginable influx of information.

Laharoun

The river Laharoun runs from the Rivali Peaks in Rawara, then flows southward through Jenikar, and eventually empties out into the ocean off the southwestern coast of Demwiq. The fresh waters of Laharoun not only make it possible to maintain the desert settlement of Oasis, but are also a source of great fluxes in magical energy and a hotbed of potential research. Every year during the spring season on Pabaq, there is a powerful surge in the river's innate magical emanations that cause bizarre mutations in the local flora and fauna. Osharus studying the phenomenon have many hypotheses, but none have yet been proven. Many believe that the cause of this instability lies within the river's source in the Rivali Peaks, but expeditions that have made the treacherous trek into the mountains report that the headwaters seem somehow to evade detection.

The Mire

Though it is rare, some osharus reject their highly communal and collaborative society, eschewing the species' dedication to furthering knowledge for the benefit of others. Some of these

misanthropic osharus, feeling out of place in the close-knit communities of the university-settlements across Pabaq, have traveled off into the wilderness, eking out a rough existence elsewhere. Communal living and collaboration are ingrained into their nature, however, and even these dejected osharus have created family-like communities of rugged survivalists in the wilderness. The largest of these settlements is known as the Mire. A community of over 1,000 osharus, this bustling town is home to monster hunters, merchants, farmers, and the like. The Mire is built along the descending walls of a humongous crevice deep in Jenikar's rain forests, safe from most of the predators found above.

In recent years, the Mire has been plagued by attacks from a mythical monster known only as the Behemoth. Though accounts of this stealthy, destructive hunter have been hard to corroborate, it has been most commonly described as a mutant ganatra, five times the size of a normal specimen, with a mouth for a head and far too many limbs. Hunters of the Mire have put out a call for help from monster hunters across the galaxy to take down this growing threat.

Oasis

Located on the banks of the Laharoun at the western edge of Demwiq, Oasis is considered the gateway city to that vast desert continent. The few osharus who wish to explore Demwiq's dunes begin here, readying their supplies and otherwise preparing themselves for an unpleasant journey into the dry heat. As such, most of Oasis's permanent residents work as outfitters for these brave (though some would say foolish) osharus. Using a sophisticated array of fans and humidifiers, the enclosed park at the center of town—known as the Grove—provides a bog-like environment where osharus can relax comfortably. The Grove also contains a small monument to those osharus who entered the desert never to return.



JHAVOM

PAKAHANO

Hub of Illusion-Fueled
Tourism

Diameter: ×1

Mass: ×1

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

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

Pakahano is a volcanically active world, featuring the fertile Tarpak mega-ocean and its hundreds of tropical islands, a large continental landmass known as the Lavalands, and two small moons called Limnay and Toquale. The planet's primary inhabitants are two divergent species of plantlike peoples: menei, the peaceful floral illusionists who live on the Lavalands' stable coasts and on the Tarpak's larger islands; and tammans, the more tempestuous treelike folk who roam the Tarpak in advanced seafaring fleets, exploring and colonizing wild, unsettled areas according to their capricious whims. Despite Pakahano's odd geological features and unique inhabitants, this lush world is perhaps best known as the source of a psychoactive crystal called pokanates.

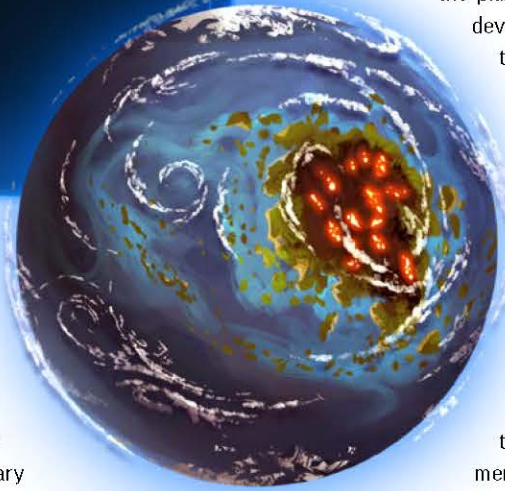
In small quantities, pokanates thrum with psychic waves that reflect the holder's surface-level thoughts and desires, allowing emotionally resonate users to pleasingly amplify or soothe their moods. In large quantities, pokanates are far more powerful. The crystals can support huge, psychically fueled illusory cities, impose dreamlike states on entire populaces, and fuel massive industrial enterprises centered on anticipating workers' needs before they're ever vocalized. Depending on the powers behind their use, pokanates can be entirely benign and supportive or incredible exploitative—and the results of both motivations exist in abundance on Pakahano.

Menei use pokanates for a variety of purposes, while tammans largely use them to power their peaceful expansionism. In recent decades, however, offworlders—especially AbadarCorp—have flocked to Pakahano to seek the fortune and adventure that they believe pokanates promise. As a result, this jewel of a world has become a destination for tourists, scientists, and corporations alike. Thanks to the ingenuity—and some might say greed—of opportunistic offworlders, an abundance of new spas, resorts, festivals, and research stations have cropped up in recent years.

Along with pockets of wealth and population growth, these developments have prompted some political conflicts between non-natives, menei, and tammans—the latter two of whom are experiencing significant disruptions to their lifestyle due to the planet's new flurry of activity. Making matters more

complicated is the fact that the planet's population as a whole has no concept of centralized government, as disputes are traditionally negotiated until compromises were reached.

Perhaps even more worrying, however, is that fact that rampant pokanate use seems to be warming the planet's climate. This has caused more devastating cyclones to rage across the Tarpak, disrupting the tammans' seafaring as well as endangering menei's coastal cities, and has also prompted another challenge to the fragile political balance. A tertiary population of avian people called keenags once lived only in the hottest habitable reaches of the Lavalands. However, the warmer weather has prompted them to claim islands and coastlines that have traditionally belonged to menei. Keenags have also developed a voracious appetite for pokanates and often steal large quantities from the illusionists, throwing themselves further into conflict with menei, who have relied on mining and selling pokanates to offworlders now for generations.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following locations are of interest to those native to Pakahano and visitors alike.

City of Veils

One of Pakahano's main tourist attractions, the City of Veils is a sprawling metropolis-resort with all manner of magic and technology on display. The entire city is essentially a theme park for urban industrialists, offering layers upon layers of pokanates-fueled illusions to visitors who wish to build their own virtual cities exactly as their hearts desire. A subsidiary of AbadarCorp, the city's parent company, Urbomancy Inc., manages the park and caters to the whims of its ultrarich clientele. Urbomancy offers a variety of packages to customers, including the Quaint Villa, the Bustling Industrialist, and the Urban Chic, depending on the nature of the city clients wish to "build." Customers are free to create as temporary or as permanent of an illusory city as they like, complete with equally illusory staff members and residents. What's more, they're free to charge other tourists for entry to the facilities they create—with Urbomancy taking a healthy share of any profits, of course.

For 3 days every month, all of City of Veils shuts down and customers are asked to vacate the premises while Urbomancy's technicians attune the pokanates that fuel the resort, update complimentary firmware, and perform other general maintenance tasks required to make this massive enterprise run. Although some customers find this maintenance time annoying, others on the planet welcome the chance to take a fascinating behind-the-scenes tour that reveals exactly how this operation works.

Deep Vents

Deep in the Tarpak ocean are a huge number of hydrothermal vents that discharge superheated water through fissures in the ocean floor. Incredibly diverse and full of ocean life, these vents are the birthplace of enormous blind sharks that keenags consider wonderful delicacies. Unfortunately, the sharks find keenags equally delectable, and many are the ill-fated keenag expeditions to the Deep Vents. There are also huge sponges and giant anemones, as lovely as they are poisonous.

In close proximity to the Deep Vents are the ruins of a strange underwater city that predates the Gap. These ruins are full of intact domes, tiled mosaics, and bizarre automatons that still guard the grounds, fending off intruders and explorers. Frescoes that adorn the ruins depict incredible technologies that seemingly lie inside, as well as a plantlike species clearly unrelated to either menei or tammans. Some say that these mysterious people still live underwater in the ruins, reveling in technology that might change the face of Pakahano. Of late, a raft of smaller planetside corporations have been seeking adventurers to plumb the depths of the Deep Vents to find answers—and potentially share in enormous profits.

Hano

The largest city in the Lavalands, Hano is a lush settlement filled with greenhouses and sparkling towers made of volcanic glass. This cosmopolitan city is full of menei and tammans alike, who take pride in Hano's diversity and welcome newcomers into Hano University—provided they can pass the school's strict entrance exam. Competition for entrance in the

university is fierce, in part because it is the only universe on the planet that engages in cutting-edge research and teaches about the mysterious inner workings of pokanates, about which discoveries are being made almost daily.

In addition to the university, Hano is also home to abundant geothermal energy and rich mineral deposits. The city's tammans have used these resources to build factories that manufacture everything from UPBs to flame-resistant equipment to starship parts. Another major industry in Hano is lavaracer construction—vehicles designed to allow travelers to ride safely on the Lavalands' numerous active lava flows.

The Jungle of Elders

Nestled deep within the interior of the Lavalands, the Jungle of Elders is a primeval habitat where xenobiologists believe keenags originated. Pockets of these avian people still live in obscurity here, but they are far from alone, as all manner of hot-blooded magical creatures and sentient plants call this place home. Even more fascinating, Pakahano legend tells of ancient times when the jungle's trees themselves were sentient, slumbering until intruders dared to venture here to threaten the native inhabitants. These legends describe massive slaughters of such explorers from on- and offworld alike, and they attribute this vengeful arboreal army to the jungle's still practically untouched state. Some zealots believe that the trees could be awakened again and set against the raft of industrialists who have settled on Pakahano. The most rabid of these cultists live here in cabals, where they perform strange rituals to try to bring their bloody visions to life.

WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

HANO

PHOLSKAR

Planet of the Giants

Diameter: ×1

Mass: ×1

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal; see text

Day: 4 days; **Year:** 6 years

An unforgiving and inhospitable planet, Pholskar is home to several species of giants that are uniquely suited to thrive on its volatile surface. It is far more geologically active than many inhabited worlds, leading to a high frequency of volcanic eruptions, pyroclastic flows, and earthquakes, as well as a rapidly shifting geography. The constant release of toxic gases from beneath the planet's surface has created a mildly caustic atmosphere that many humanoids find irritating, though not actively harmful—however, in a few locales, the environment is acidic enough to swiftly kill creatures and destroys objects within it (see *Corrosive Atmospheres* on page 395 of the *Core Rulebook*). The resident giants have little to worry about in more stable locales, especially given their incredible fortitude, but even they must turn to protective measures in areas where the atmosphere is extremely hostile.

The more environmentally stable regions of the planet's surface are inhabited by stone giants, who are the most common species of giant on Pholskar. On the plains of Rodhir, nomadic stone giant clans herd great, shaggy beasts called upondos and maintain simple, agrarian lifestyles. More advanced cities in these stable regions, such as Anduwar (see below), provide offworld access and rich trade opportunities.

The more extreme environments of Pholskar that nonetheless aren't entirely caustic might seem too inhospitable for life at first glance, but many species of giants thrive in these conditions. In volatile Crucible (see below), where rivers of magma flow and volcanic ash fills the air, fire and slag giants (*Starfinder Adventure Path #17: Solar Strike* 59) mine the mineral-rich landscape in massive mining rigs, for an example.

While the various species of giant live disparate lives across Pholskar, the Cloud Imperium watches over all from roaming sky cities. Ostensibly, these cloud giants are the hegemonic rulers of Pholskar and their mobile sky cities act as regional government centers. However, their claims of sovereignty are more ambition than reality. They tend to exert authority over territories that are easily managed, and rule over those who have little ability to resist. In fact, there are many remote clans of giants who live their whole lives having no idea they

are ruled by anyone but themselves, though the Imperium considers them citizens.

Three moons orbit Pholskar: Thremyr's Eye, Minderhal's Eye, and Fandarra's Eye. Each is populated with enigmatic moon giants in sublunar bases that permeate their structures, making the moons more akin to space stations than natural bodies. The giants of Pholskar know nothing of the moon giants' inscrutable designs, but many suspect that some power in the heart of these lunar bodies guides their purpose.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following locations are of interest to those who live on and travel to Pholskar.

Agrishall

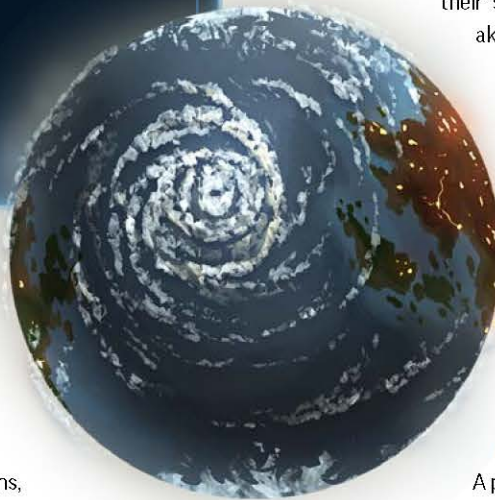
A perpetual storm rages over the Mnevied Ocean, and in its eye floats Agrishall, the great sky city. Home to the storm giants, Agrishall is a wonder of hybrid technology that may be the most advanced achievement of giantkind. It is the only sky city capable of generating the signature artificial tempest surrounding it. While the storm giants were once allied with the Cloud Imperium, they now exist in autonomous isolation after a bitter war that divided their societies, and Agrishall's citizens have largely withdrawn from public political life. Rumors suggest that storm giants may be the only planetary population in contact with the mysterious moon giants. Supporting this is the fact that on rare occasions, observers have seen the storm overhead abate to allow mysterious ships to enter and leave the city.

Anduwar

The largest stable settlement on Pholskar, Anduwar also has the most diverse population. Giants of all kinds travel to Anduwar to establish trade with offworlders or to leave Pholskar and seek their fortunes elsewhere. There are no laws against offworlders taking up permanent residence in surface cities such as Anduwar, but few non-giant species feel comfortable living permanently in a place where everything is designed for giant-sized inhabitants. Additionally, though the area around Anduwar is geologically stable by Pholskar's standards, violent earthquakes are a common threat for the city's inhabitants and structures. Still, Anduwar thrives, thanks in no small part to the city's strict law enforcement, overseen by the Cloud Imperium.

Crucible

Tectonic movement is prominent across much of Pholskar's surface, but in Crucible it is constant, violent, and pervasive. This expanse of scorched landmass is rife with active volcanoes and split by molten rivers of lava, and is too hot for most individuals to live comfortably. However, the fire giants and slag giants who call this hellish landscape home have no problem with



WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
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STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

Crucible's overheated environment. They roam the blackened plains in huge armored mining rigs, collecting the rich minerals found therein, including an incredibly valuable metal called hivillium that constantly bleeds onto the surface from below. Harvested hivillium is then poured into great molds of specially treated ceramic and nanocarbon fibers to create suits of armor known as terramold plate (page 152).

Elysium

The largest sky city of the Cloud Imperium, Elysium roams the skies as a relative paradise compared to the harsh environment below. This domed city's environment is controlled to be far more conducive to comfortable living, and most offworlders do business through Elysium. This makes cloud giants the self-declared ambassadors for giantkind. Though only cloud giants are allowed permanent residence on Elysium, there is a large population of merchants, diplomats, scientists, and researchers staying on this floating city from across the galaxy on limited visas.

The Iris

An enormous ever-burning crater mars the surface of Minderhal's Eye, near the center of the moon as viewed from Pholskar's surface. Legends passed down over generations tell of an ancient conflict in which sun giants (*Starfinder Adventure Path #17: Solar Strike* 59) unleashed a weapon of great fury and destruction against an incursion of their hated enemies, shadow giants (*Starfinder Adventure Path #12: Heart of Night* 56), wiping both from the moon entirely. What keeps the seemingly mundane fire burning to this day is an unsolved mystery.

Talgradur

This fallen sky city is a casualty of the conflict between cloud giants and storm giants from centuries past, and it lies buried beneath the waves of the Ithillian Sea. As if it weren't hard enough to access, the cloud giants have declared it a restricted area and allow no one to enter the sunken city for any reason. The Cloud Imperium enforces this moratorium strictly, and its hired guards patrol the boundaries of the ruins in high-tech submersibles on regular routes. Despite the legal and physical dangers of approaching Talgradur, however, a few brave scavengers still regularly make undersea treks in hopes of recovering some bit of technology or rare artifact. Most who make this trip never emerge—whether due to conflicts with the Imperium's guards or encounters with other dangers of the depths—and those who do rarely speak of what they saw in the forbidden depths.

The Terraforge

The only permanent settlement in Crucible is Terraforge. The sprawling facility is an industrial center powered by geothermal reactors, where fire giant armorers forge great weapons of war from raw materials harvested across Crucible. The heavy, durable materials used here make excellent armor and starship hull plating, and giant-forged machinery is in high demand both on and off Pholskar. While traders are welcome, most areas of the Terraforge are heavily restricted, patrolled by the elite security forces known as Forge Guardians, a contingent of largely ex-military fire and slag giants. Security is tightest around Terraforge's research and development centers, where the giants' scientists and technomancers use all manner of strange technology mixed with more than a little magic to develop cutting-edge prototypes. The Terraforge produces a large surplus of materials that the fire giants stockpile, leading some to fear that they may be arming for some unknown future conflict. The fire giants make no effort to allay such fears—they simply build.



FIRE GIANT

PRELURIA

Orbital Rings of Infinite Worlds

Diameter: ×100

Mass: ×100

Gravity: Varies

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 12 hours; **Year:** 25 years

Preluria is a massive, poisonous green gas giant where aloof, psychic gas oozes have formed an inscrutable society; they are uninterested in outside life and hostile to any who disturb them. But this strange ecology is hardly the most interesting or politically relevant detail about Preluria: that designation goes to the teeming settlements found on its wide orbital rings. These rings consist of millions of ice and mineral bodies of highly varying sizes that house innumerable hidden smugglers' bases; mercenary training facilities; and retreats for wealthy, influential, xenobiologically curious, or misanthropic individuals from across the galaxy.

Preluria's rings boast no centralized government and no real inter-body organizations, even just among the 23 bodies big enough to provide natural gravity and normal atmospheres of varying intensities. From these bodies, the strongest factions of the rings wage war against one another, yet no war here lasts long. Among the most prominent of these factions is the Vorlath Mercenaries, who accept security contracts for the highest bidders, practically irrespective of the details, but the group's members also maintain their own ambitions of wealth and power. The Xystrian Brotherhood, on the other hand, is a group of self-proclaimed pacifists who practice a strange brand of asceticism while covertly sabotaging their enemies. The Prelurian Patrol, the only group that resembles law enforcement among the rings, attempts with varying levels of success—and blatantly self-serving motives—to eliminate the system's intergalactic criminal elements. The Freugan Salvage Company is an order of ambitious and scrappy capitalists who claim, mine, and sometimes refine any valuable scrap, minerals, or natural resources found on any of the rings' component bodies. The Reivolan Institute conducts questionable experiments and research into theoretical and sometimes volatile topics; most scientists whose work has been prohibited on other worlds know they can find lab space at the institute—for the right price.

The factions are all rivals, and some even loathe each other, but a web of interdependence and trade binds them together. The Freugan Salvage Company might despise the pirates who raid their holdings, yet the company still hires the Crimson Crew—the notorious pirate collective whose headquarters is tucked into Preluria's rings—when there's smuggling that needs doing. The Vorlath might have rebelled against the Reivolan Institute, but that does not prevent the Vorlath from accepting the

Institute's lucrative mercenary contracts. The Prelurian Patrol might strongly suspect the Xystrian Brotherhood of repeated sabotage, and yet it still imports Xystrian produce and uses the Brotherhood in turn as its eyes and ears on the disk. Within

Preluria's rings, everyone remembers that the enemy you have today might be the ally you need tomorrow.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following points of interest are notable to Pact Worlds travelers who dare tread among Preluria's rings.

Compensatorium Collective

This facility is located on an airless, rocky body made of heavy metal alloys tucked among dozens of smaller, icy ring particles. The collective houses malfunctioning, hacked, or virus-laden artificial intelligences manufactured by all

manner of corporations throughout the galaxy, and it is reputed to be funded by the Android Abolitionist Front. At the collective, each artificial intelligence is housed in a unique vessel, from humanoid-like bodies to computers ranging from the size of a microchip to a room-encompassing server. Regardless of its physical form, each artificial intelligence receives its own quarantined space where technicians work with it individually, employing a combination of technical support, troubleshooting, and talk-based counseling to soothe the AI's woes. The artificial intelligences can slowly build up enough trust with the facility's managers, known only as the Keepers, to be reintegrated into the society they originated from, though some AIs would rather construct entrapped fortresses and defenses for themselves to keep others out. Sometimes clever artificial intelligences simulate rehabilitation in order to escape and wreak havoc elsewhere in Preluria. Although their origins and motives are clandestine, the Keepers do allow outsiders to visit the artificial intelligences in the facility—and more than one adventuring group has tried to extract key information from artificial intelligences that might be their mission's only hope.

Lookout

The Prelurian Patrol was able to claim Lookout, a bitterly cold tundra moon, because no other faction among Preluria's rings seemed to want it. A self-appointed vigilante group dedicated to rooting out criminal activity and lawlessness, the patrol suffered from poor funding and lackluster recruitment until it came up with the idea of streaming its members' missions to the intergalactic infosphere. The group's first sponsor, the Freugan Salvage Company, offered the members of the patrol sponsorship in return for ousting claim jumpers and providing a storage facility for their stranger finds beneath Lookout's layers of frozen ice. Since the launch of their show, "Spacecop: Preluria!", the patrol has become a target for every outlaw seeking to make a name for himself in the Prelurian rings. Now, the patrol fights crime with the help of a fan club, an equipment budget, and even

tourism income. A breakout infosphere hit, the show has an audience that grows with each new episode.

Pikora 317

A remote planetoid tucked within the widest of Preluria's rings, Pikora 317 is rich in natural starmetal deposits. Though the planetoid is naturally uninhabited, for 50 years it has hosted several sprawling mines that belong to the Freugan Salvage Company. Hundreds of workers—both newcomers from all over the galaxy and the descendants of the earliest Freugan miners—call the planetoid's massive residential complex home. Mostly humans live and work here, though many dwarves, gnomes, ysoki, and other species are employed there as well. It's a hard life, but one that pays regularly and lets workers live simply and peacefully. The Freugan executives who run the operation—including Executive Officer **Rita Holdare** (LN female human operative)—keep a tight rein on costs, though to maintain their self-styled benefactor status toward employees, they often spontaneously offer employees perks such as credit in the company stores.

Reivolus 1-5

The Reivolan Institute claims five of Preluria's largest and most ecologically diverse moons. They are worlds filled with jungles, oceans, wetlands, and other ecospheres, all of which teem with life. On these moons, the Reivolan Institute conducts its lucrative lines of research, favoring experiments on humanoid subjects most of all. Opening its doors to the poor and displaced, the Institute offers sanctuary, housing, and employment for the desperate as well as the dangerous—provided they agree to serve as test subjects. Sometimes the results of these tests are extremely lucrative. Other times they backfire, such as when experimentations on one group of refugees led the aggrieved parties to create the Vorlath Mercenaries.

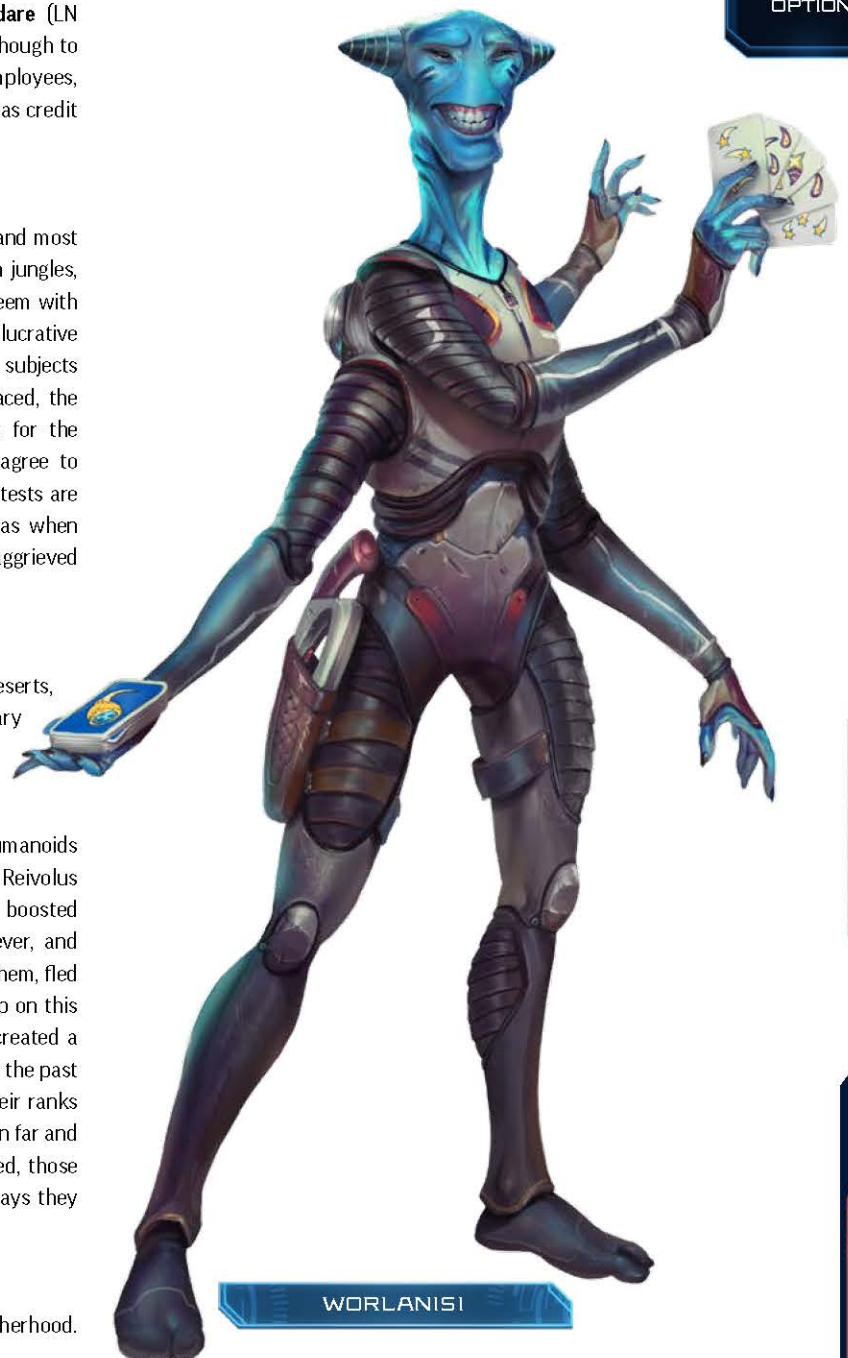
Vault of Vorlath

This planetoid is a world filled with multi-colored deserts, caverns, cliffs, and temperate savannas. It's the primary home of the one of the most successful and expensive military units in Near Space, the Vorlath Mercenaries. Most of members of this mercenary company are four-limbed worlanisi, a small, blue-skinned species of humanoids that long ago sought shelter in a testing facility on Reivolus 4. The experiment they were enrolled in genetically boosted their self-confidence, aggression, and cunning, however, and they quickly rebelled against the scientists who used them, fled the smoldering remains of the facility, and set up shop on this nearby planetoid. Preluria's precarious politics have created a constant demand for the mercenaries' work, and so for the past 10 years, they've been recruiting other species into their ranks to help fill the demand for their services. They're known far and wide for their motto: "Pay up or get out." As is implied, those who incur the mercenaries' wrath end up paying in ways they never dreamed.

Xys

This verdant planetoid is home to the Xystrian Brotherhood.

This order of ascetics and self-proclaimed pacifists maintains a serene lifestyle that centers around farming, meditation, and responsible commerce, selling their produce to hungry populations around Preluria's rings. To offworlders, the brotherhood offers retreats for the wealthy, spa days, and a quiet place to contemplate lovely Preluria hanging in the sky. But although some Xystrians are sincere, the Xystrian Brotherhood is a front for a ring of spies and saboteurs who travel Preluria's moons and beyond to wreak havoc and undermine the political climate on other moons. Those who are native to Preluria's rings know not to fully trust a member of the Brotherhood—and "as peaceful as a Xystrian" is a curse spoken in dark corners among intelligence communities and others in the know.



WORLANISI

RIVEN SHROUD

Solar-Powered Starship

Graveyard

Diameter: ×2

Mass: ×2

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: None

Day: –; Year: –

At first glance, the Dyson sphere technostructure known as Riven Shroud appears to be some ill-fated corporate or governmental experiment. Burning brightly at the structure's center is a low-grade star that serves as its power source. Scaffolded around this sun is a lacy grid of continent-wide modules of strange architecture interspersed with vast solar sails that harness and redirect the star's enormous energy output. Even from space, though, Riven Shroud's damaged nature is apparent. An enormous rent mars the surface of the sphere, and for thousands of miles, the structure is left open and vulnerable to the surrounding vacuum of space.

Scholars and scientists are at a loss to explain who or what originally built Riven Shroud and for what purpose. Most xenobiologists believe that a long-gone sapient species created the structure. Leading theories as to why include to house a colony, to serve as a haven for creatures escaping a dying world, and to house offworld and potentially illicit research. Regardless, the fact that Riven Shroud's architecture matches no known species' style—and that it seems geared toward creatures that seemingly had no need for doors, windows, or other physical portals or passageways—supports the theory that its progenitors are long extinct.

There is no central government on Riven Shroud and only a handful of notable settlements, but the structure is not otherwise entirely abandoned. The out-of-the-way sphere has become a destination—if a dangerous one—for a diverse host of individuals. They include those who wish to avoid the attention of major planetary and system-wide law enforcement, scavengers who hope to strike it rich mining slowly melting precious ore near the structure's sun, and scientists whose work is private or who are fascinated with Riven Shroud's power source and see further practical application for the strange technology that harnesses it.

Riven Shroud's life-support systems are only partially functional. Near the sphere's rent, such systems are entirely obliterated, leaving miners, scavengers, adventurers, and others who dare venture here to contend with the dangers of vacuum and fragile infrastructure. Further from the rent, the sphere's systems function with varying reliability, offering

erratic protection from vacuum but adding the danger of unpredictably malfunctioning infrastructure. In the reaches of Riven Shroud farthest from the rent, life support is entirely functional; walking and breathing in its corridors might seem just like strolling through Absalom Station—were it not for these areas' eerie semi-abandoned and dilapidated nature.

All manner of motley species call Riven Shroud home, from outlaws, rogues, and misanthropic humans to disillusioned or studious androids to less common species. Three of these rare species are peoples who call themselves aatevaks, qotrauas, and xixintts. All humanoids whose physiologies have partially adapted to living in the vacuum of space, they are similar to sarcesians (*Alien Archive* 98) in that they can go a period of time without breathing or suffering the environmental effects of deep space. These three species claim Riven Shroud as their homeland as well as a descent from the structure's creators, who they refer to as simply the Parents. However, given the fact that these species don't seem to possess any innate abilities to teleport through solid objects—abilities the Shroud's creators must have had, given the sphere's construction—their claims strike most experts as rather dubious.

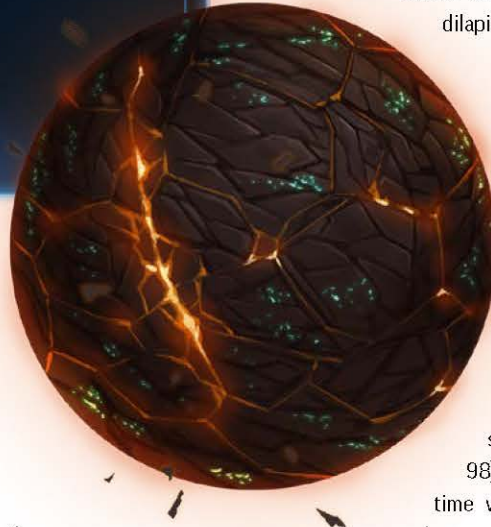
NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Life on Riven Shroud is dangerous, given that even its extant life-support systems often malfunction. Settlements are self-contained and self-sufficient by nature, as inhabitants are too focused on their own survival to worry much about creating a central government or reaching out to their neighbors. There are untold numbers of small enclaves of exiles, scavengers, and outlaws, all wishing to avoid the long arm of the intergalactic law.

However, there are also some places of note on this sphere. What follows are some of Riven Shroud's most significant features and locations.

Central Quarry

Located near Riven Shroud's sun and open to the harsh environmental effects of the vacuum of space, Central Quarry is a gold-rush town where rich prospectors and those who work for them gamble their lives in hopes of achieving great fortunes. The settlement is structured around the edges of a massive stretch of semi-molten architecture, wreckage gradually being drawn toward the sun. Here, numerous starmetals and other valuable substances, including plutonium, uranium, platinum, and gold, undulate in slurry-like veins throughout the architecture's corridors, creating an environment similar to a mine, for those brave enough to try to harvest the riches. Mining operations are outrageously



expensive, and a number of competing corporations regularly hire miners—and adventurers to protect them—assuming that they'll write off any losses and cash in mightily on any gains.

Most of Central Quarry is made up of this unconventional mine, though the settlement around its edges is home at once to powerful corporate executives and managers, seasoned miners, and top-notch security personnel. Leadership of the facility is a joint effort among the six largest corporations present here. The current leader, Primex **Senara-46** (CN female android mechanic) does her best to represent the interest of her parent corporation, Absalom Station-based Starmetals Extrusions, and the interests of all residents in the settlement. Most recently, reports of attacks from strange creatures known only as "void beasts" have been reported in the quarry's corridors. The primex has sought offworld help to quell these attacks before the population at large begins to question her leadership.

Field of the Lost

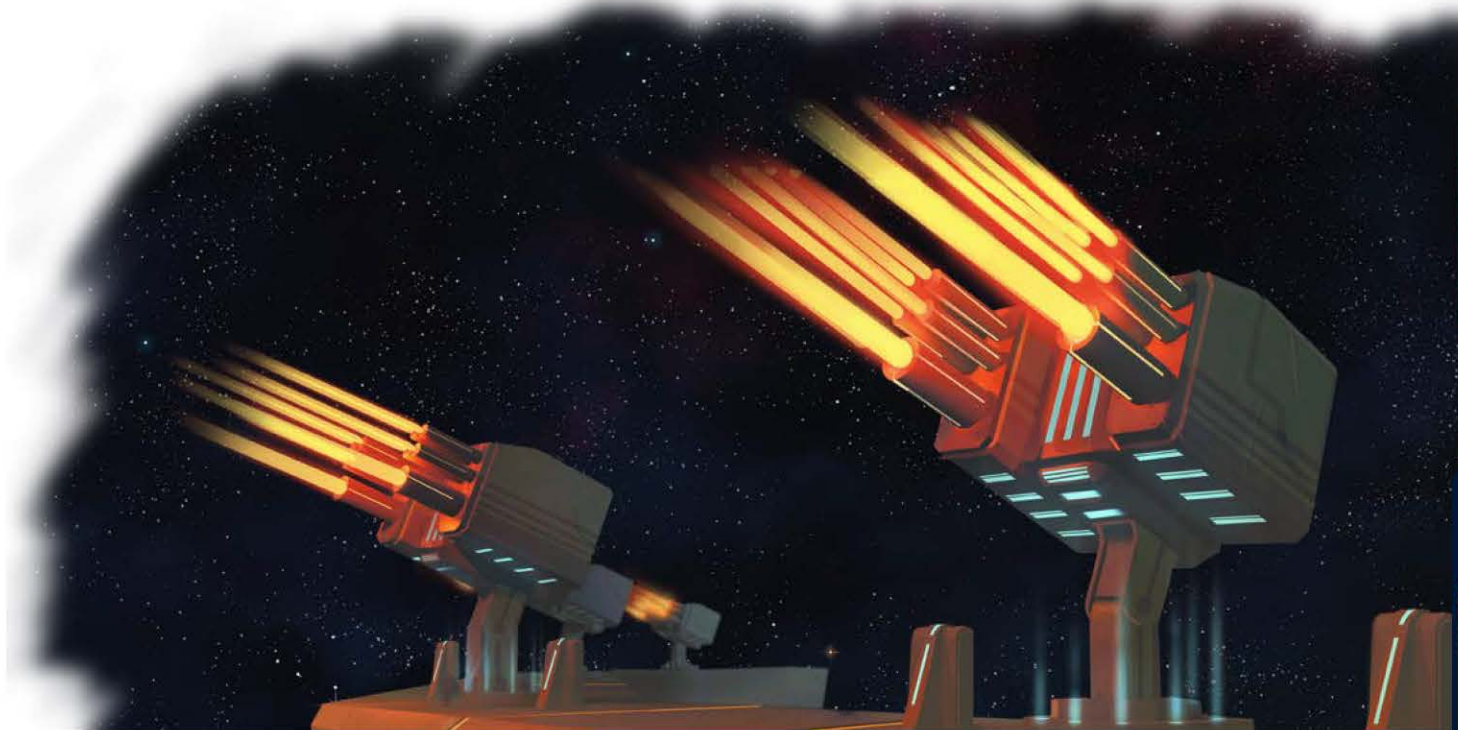
The space surrounding Riven Shroud is always perilous, but there is a particular stretch near the polar opposite of the sphere's rent where it is supernaturally so. Known as the Field of the Lost, this area is home to dozens of destroyed or deactivated ships of all origins. Many bear the same strange architecture as Riven Shroud itself, leading scholars to believe that ships carrying supplies or more colonists were destroyed in whatever event devastated the sphere so long ago. The ships in this field periodically give off strange electronic signatures, leading some to believe that undead crews haunt their halls. Even stranger, Riven Shroud's defense systems regularly spontaneously activate on the field's outskirts, slowly adding to this starship graveyard and causing some to question whether the sphere itself draws power from these vessels.

Plutropea

The largest settlement of aatevaks, qotrauas, and xixinnts, Plutropea is an insular community that styles itself as a utopia removed from all expectations of the outside galaxy. The humanoids who live here study the inner workings of Riven Shroud and the strange runes and technology etched into its structure, structuring a quasi-religion around the world's many mysteries. For some, this is an effort to understand their own ancestral past, as they believe themselves descendants of the Parents who created the sphere—though there is some tension between such seekers, as all three ancestries claim this distinction. For others, it's an attempt to ascend to the higher state of consciousness that they believe was required to build and operate Riven Shroud. Regardless of their motivations, these humanoids spend their days in prayer or meditation and pouring through the reams of data from their research. Elder **Taakorvac** (N male aatevak) leads both the ritualistic research that takes place here as well as the population's individual spiritual journeys, though he relies on a council of like-minded helpers to arrange for the numerous supply drops and trading parties needed to keep the colony alive and well.

Sail Dunes

Layers upon layers of crumpled solar sails form an undulating sea of reflective fabric that slowly shifts as energy from the sun makes its way through the many tears and gaps in the fields. These "dunes" are alive with sail scarabs, void-adapted beetles that scuttle across the sails in great waves, sometimes to chase energy as it escapes the Riven Shroud, other times seemingly according to some unknown schedule. When harvested in great numbers, the scarabs can be ground into a biofuel that generates a rich supply of energy—but this potential boon comes with many risks for those who would try to strike it rich.



SZANDITE COLLECTIVE

Ancient Network of Peaceful Collaborators

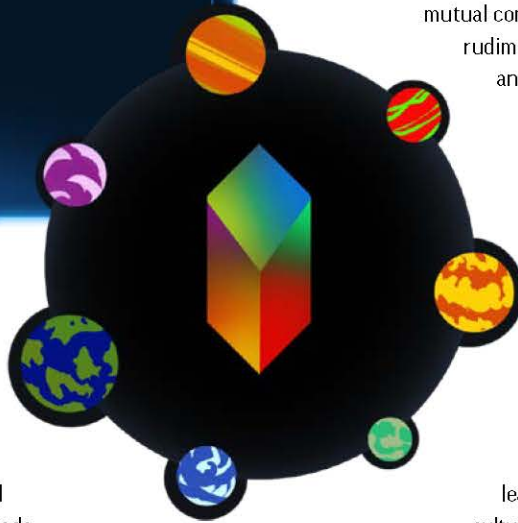
Diameter: Varies**Mass:** Varies**Gravity:** ×1**Atmosphere:** Normal**Day:** Varies; **Year:** Varies

The seven disparate worlds of the Szandite Collective are found in four different but adjacent solar systems, which are located deep in a remote corner of Near Space. Despite the distance separating these planets and their inhabitants, a political alliance formed among them hundreds of years before the Gap, long before any of the worlds had mastered interstellar spaceflight. While such a situation seems impossible, a strange phenomenon brought these planets' populations together and has defined their societies ever since.

Thousands of years ago, regular meteor showers would pepper each of these seven worlds over the course of several months. The cause of the phenomenon is unknown, and it is unclear why only these planets experienced these meteor showers, which skipped a number of other planets in each world's respective system. Regardless, the most significant of these showers dropped dozens of enormous, mysterious crystals onto each planet. Ranging in length, width, and height from a few feet to nearly a mile, these crystals radiated magic and were formed from colorful combinations of minerals found nowhere else in the planets' solar systems.

As the meteor showers became common occurrences, the many varied species that called each planet home began to conduct research into the strange crystals, whose crash landings resulted in everything from minor craters in the wilderness to significant property damage in populated areas. Independently on all seven worlds, the populations conducted mining operations, ocean dives, perilous mountain ascents, and urban recovery efforts to excavate the mysterious crystals.

One by one, each planet's population discovered that the crystals provided a means of magically communicating with strange aliens on faraway worlds they never knew existed. Each crystal acted as a conduit, allowing the speech and mental images of the individuals touching the crystal to flow into all other crystals on the other planets. Receiving messages was as simple as touching a crystal and concentrating. What's more, each crystal contained records of all communication that passed through it. Accessing these records required only touching a crystal and opening one's mind.



Once it became clear to the inhabitants of each world that the crystals served as communication devices, the planets meticulously gathered and cataloged their crystals. Several more decades passed, and through collaborative efforts that involved much translation, coordination, and mutual compromise, each of the planets made rudimentary contact with the others and determined their approximate relative locations. Eventually, they settled on a name for the crystals that brought their civilizations together: szandite, an amalgamation of several of the planets' native names for the crystals and a symbol of their populations' friendship.

Shortly thereafter, the planets formally formed the Szandite Collective, a governmental organization that facilitated mutual learning and an official military and cultural alliance that bound the planets.

The Collective's mission is to work via the crystals to foster learning, the exchange of ideas, and scientific and technological advancement for all. That the planets all lacked the means for interplanetary war and had largely peaceful civilizations only strengthened their bond.

Although the crystals' information regarding the Gap is missing or unreliable, once the Gap ended, the Collective planets had a distinct advantage: they had already been advancing their societies and technologies via a massive network of shared information for hundreds of years before the Gap. Their combined knowledge and massive population of experts enabled rapid and synchronous advances in societal and governmental systems, practically eliminating armed conflict on each of their home worlds. When the Szandite Collective developed starships, they used them for research and exploration. In fact, the Collective's singular focus since they took to the stars has been to find clues to the mystery of the crystals and their planets' connection.

As such, these peoples have largely avoided contact—and, as a result, conflict—with other peoples of Near Space. Their practical isolationism has become less feasible as they have expanded their search for knowledge and realized that their lack of military power leaves them vulnerable to other spacefaring species. Thus, in recent years, the Collective has generously doled out technology and information to non-Collective species as a means of securing allies, whether for protection or assistance in their research.

Szandite crystals are the one piece of technology that the Collective absolutely refuses to bargain with. Their usefulness as communication devices lessened with the advent of modern interplanetary communication technology, but the communication records in the crystals as well as the strange material itself may contain answers to the Collective's questions, so the Collective meticulously tracks every ounce of the material and guards it at all costs.

Although the Collective has consisted of seven planets for all of its post-Gap history, long ago, it once numbered eight. A small branch of the Szandite Collective dedicates itself to locating Krethiskar, a former member of the Collective that fell out of communication shortly before the Collective achieved interstellar travel. With only an approximate idea of where the planet existed in relation to the rest of the Collective home worlds, progress on this endeavor has remained painfully slow. While some Collective groups pursue the planet by physically searching Near Space, others carefully study the communication logs stored within the szandite crystals in search of hidden patterns.

In the past few years, the researchers made a disturbing discovery—an encrypted plea for help embedded in messages originating from Krethiskar, all dating to the very beginning of the Collective's existence. Knowing neither the reason for these messages nor the cause of their sudden cessation has the entire Collective on edge.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

There are many inhabited planets and locales across the four solar systems that house member planets of the Szandite Collective. Most Pact Worlds travelers designate destinations of interest by their surrounding solar system, as noted in the entries below.

Elaz System

With the largest sun of the four systems that house Collective planets, the Elaz system includes three member planets. The most populous is Zulphan, upon which the spider-like atraxids are the most populous and culturally dominant species. The planet Lazel includes a surface pitted across almost its entire surface with massive, deep cave complexes, and the subterranean and sightless monstrous humanoids who call themselves ords are the dominant civilization there. Finally, this system holds the tiny, waterlogged planet of Czelle, where the semi-aquatic humanoids known as binnaquids command the dominant civilization.

Jonid's Star System

Two Collective member planets reside in this star system, which is remarkable in that each planet that orbits it boasts exactly seven moons. The largest member planet is Rodnarth, a swampy world with treacherous weather events, where the multi-brained, ooze-like fonqugons are the dominant civilization. The second member planet is Dorjo, a hot desert planet home to the silent, dwarf-like humanoids known as hardors.

The barren planet Vatricax is another of the planets that underwent szandite meteor showers. However, it shows no signs of intelligent life, making it unique among the mineral's known destinations. The Collective

constantly debates whether its member planets should harvest the world's szandite crystals, or leave them be—but the startling discovery of dormant alien life beneath the surface has spurred new debates regarding Vatricax's fate.

Oukrux Major System

This star system, which is full of lifeless and rather inhospitable gas giants, contains one terrestrial planet that is a Collective member. It's called Xofirth, and it is home to the stoic mece-naics—mollusk-like psychic aberrations who live for exactly 101 years. Whether this is a matter of encoded biology or some divine creature's mystical intervention is unclear even to the hardy mece-naics.

Oukrux Minor System

This system of a dozen terrestrial planets includes only one Collective member: Kuxor, a planet that rotates so slowly its day-night cycle lasts for 11 Pact World years. Perhaps more curiously, the dominant species on the planet—the boisterous two-headed humanoid phasorqs—alternate between wakefulness and hibernation along the planet's rhythm. Each day on the planet, half of the population is awake and frenetic in its energy while the other half sleeps. Every time a new day dawns, the other half of the phasorq population awakens.



TABRID MINOR

Rapidly Industrializing Copaxi
Home World

Diameter: ×1

Mass: ×1

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 24 hours; **Year:** 182 days

Highly industrialized settlements blanket Tabrid Minor's four large landmasses. When Pact Worlds explorers first encountered the heavily developed planet, their readings indicated nearly depleted resources, sharply declining biodiversity, erratic weather systems, and inexplicably floating citadels. They soon learned that the coral-like copi are the heart of both Tabrid Minor's success and subsequent troubles.

Copi once covered much of the planet's surface, drawing upon the nearby orange star's energy while also attuning to the gravitational forces of the universe. From these evolved the intelligent copaxis, humanoid colonies of specialized polyps that comprise every feature of these creatures' bodies, from rough "skin" to internal organs. This specialization translates to copaxi society, with wealth concentrated in a few individuals who control the planet's regional governments, closely regulate technological developments, and maintain strict control of the planet's culture and history. In fact, few know that copaxis once enjoyed lavish, peaceful lives in magically buoyant cities. Their magic stemmed from their mystical bond with copi and its supernatural gravitational affinities, which they cultivated to keep their new citadels aloft, power their homes, and feed their people. Their civilization prospered for many centuries, seemingly even during the Gap.

However, the Signal changed copaxi society forever in 3 AG. Inspired by the Triune-granted technology, copaxi innovators discovered a way to refine copi into a semi-organic alloy suitable for building Drift engines, starship hulls, and machines. Technological innovators increasingly pushed back against magical traditionalists, who attempted to quash these threats to the status quo. At last, the conflict exploded into armed warfare that ultimately shattered the aristocracy and copaxis' reliance on magic. The new government harvested the dense copi that powered the flying cities and abandoned the slowly sinking wonders. The copaxi settled the fertile surface of Tabrid Minor and, rather than using the Signal to take to the stars, used their newfound knowledge to industrialize. For 3 centuries they harvested and refined copi, not only devastating the keystone species but also diminishing their own mystical connection to the planet and its magic. Undeterred, the copaxis turned to robots to expedite their mining operations and construction



projects, only to eradicate most of robots when their machines began to develop sentience.

Copaxis are slowly realizing that their rapid industrialization has inflicted catastrophic and possibly irreversible damage to the planet's ecosystems and weather patterns, and tensions between the common people and the wealthy elites are rising with each passing year. In the past few decades, using capital and resources from an anonymous corporate sponsor, a coalition of regional governments began pursuing space travel. They hoped to save their people by identifying new resources or even new worlds to colonize, but exploration has only increased Tabrid Minor's vulnerability to nearby threats like the Veskarium and the Swarm. The planetary government has applied for Pact Worlds protectorate status, though the petition remains pending.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are noteworthy locations on Tabrid Minor.

Gadrathar Fortress

This long-abandoned, shattered citadel floats several miles above the planet's southern pole, slowly rotating on all axes. The ruins once housed copaxis' most powerful order of mystics and solarrians, the Gadrath, who roamed the planet and preserved its magical lore. The regional governments officially prohibit exploration of the fortress—and most copaxis consider the place taboo—but daring scavengers occasionally raid Gadrathar's precarious halls. A reclusive group of sapient, magically adept robots protects the fortress; these former slaves refer to themselves as the Gadrath and regard copaxis as unworthy of their own ancient arts.

Sabraxid Space Port

Tabrid Minor's single small moon, Sabraxid, which is devoid of natural copi and thus free of the planet's gravitational anomalies, serves as the planet's largest space port. The port sprang up shortly after copaxis first made contact with spacefaring aliens and is as much the product of these outsiders' efforts as copaxis'. Cultural trends change more rapidly on Sabraxid than on Tabrid Minor. The moon has become a haven for those copaxis who would escape their rigid and stratified society, but it's not a safe haven. Bands of mindless undead copaxis roam the moon's surface—these former soldiers were casualties of ancient solarrians' gravity manipulation, hurled into space by the planet's revolution and swept up by the moon's gravity. Now, they pose an ongoing threat to the port's activities, though some instead see the undead as a priceless window into Tabrid Minor's scoured past.

Tabantria

As one of the most intact and upright of Tabrid Minor's floating cities, Tabantria is the subject of ongoing archaeological research by a joint team of copaxis and Starfinder Society agents. The once-prestigious metropolis boasted an academy of magic, a bustling transport hub, beautiful gardens, a thriving market, and extravagant residences, though little survives beyond war-scarred, dilapidated stone buildings. The Yihil regional government has restricted investigation by all but approved research teams, not that the mandate stops thrill-seekers and treasure-hunters from trying to sneak in. Explorers have to compete with not only these looters, but also undead soldiers from the revolution, gravitational anomalies from the copi-depleted city, and destabilized rituals. Crisscrossing tunnels once supported thriving copi colonies, yet now these are home only to dangerous beasts like the avian tcheltolis whose reflective feathers blind predators, the heavily armored corchaazes whose distant copi ancestry enables them to capture prey with supernatural bursts of gravity, and long-abandoned robotic servitors left over from the copaxis' earliest industrial endeavors.

Among the most exciting discoveries in Tabantria is its arena, built for an ancient game called parabolas. Played with spheres of graviton-attuned copi, heavy metal cubes, and magical rods that became immovable anchors in space, the game challenged the magically adept copaxis of old to touch the spheres to the cubes. Thanks to their gravitational influence, the spheres would hurtle about the arena and deflect players and cubes alike, requiring considerable finesse to win in the fast-moving and chaotic playing field.

Volnti

Even as Tabrid Minor's government woos the Pact Worlds, vesk emissaries have exerted ongoing diplomatic pressure to persuade copaxis to accept the Veskarium's protection. Located in the sparsely populated town of Volnti along the subarctic Inthir Peninsula, a vesk embassy has nearly doubled the municipality's population over the past 3 years thanks to the Veskarium's ongoing shipments of food, construction materials, and contractors. Increasingly, Volnti's officials have pushed for Tabrid Minor to abandon the Pact Worlds' onerous application process and accept the

Veskarium's freely offered assistance. However, Pact Worlds agents have identified new military installations appearing near Volnti, as though the Veskarium intends to use the planet as a jumping-off point for future conquests.

Yihil

Tabrid Minor's planetary government cedes considerable autonomy to its regional administrations. Yihil is far from the largest or most powerful, but thanks to Tabantria's presence, Yihil has attained considerable prestige and influence. The region is a massive network of industrialized urban centers connected by sprawling slums, and growing economic and ecological instability contributes to rising unease and resentment among its inhabitants. The government has imposed quarantines, curfews, media restrictions, and other crude measures to keep the populace under control, fearful that serious unrest could threaten the planet's bid for protectorate status.

Furious at the planetary government's desire to build figurative life boats rather than fix the dying planet, a group called the Fallen Hand preach that copaxis should destroy their starships and cut themselves off from the rest of the galaxy, forcing them to repair their ecosystem and rebuild their ancestral magic. However, they have few converts. For centuries, the government has manipulated historical records, convincing most citizens that the old sky cities' residents were punished by divine intervention for over-reliance on magic, necessitating their "safer" technological existence. Even so, the Fallen Hand is slowly gaining support as the populace grows embittered.

Zone 78

Officially, this oceanic expanse several miles off the coast of Yihil is unremarkable. But a secretive military science program has studied this area and steered traffic away for decades, studying the severe weather events, gravitational anomalies, and other perils that are so common there. Centered on a sizable landmass scientists believe may be a fallen sky city, the area's supernatural influence is growing slowly, reestablishing destroyed copi colonies and mutating familiar life-forms into dangerously unpredictable beasts. Expeditions deep into Zone 78 have disappeared in the chaotic hurricanes and gravity swells, which can hurl boulders and starships with equal ease. Researchers are increasingly nervous that Zone 78 represents the planet reclaiming what copaxis have usurped, potentially signaling the end of copaxi life on Tabrid Minor.



COPAXI

ULTHEL

Deceptively Welcoming Gas Giant

Diameter: ×10

Mass: ×100

Gravity: ×1/2

Atmosphere: Special

Day: 50 days; **Year:** 20 years

The gentle giant Ulthel shines like a pink pearl against the black void of space, its gently drifting gases swirling lazily over its surface in ever-changing textures. From an offworld explorer's viewpoint, the planet might seem beautiful but probably lifeless, as it boasts no solid ground, and its dominant gases are a cocktail mix of hydrogen, helium, and methane that is normally toxic to most intelligent life. However, a species of jellyfish-like creatures—and only these creatures—call the planet home. They are known as ulthelim, and they serve as a strange cautionary tale to any who dare to venture close to the planet.

Despite the toxic nature of the planet's depths, Ulthel's upper atmosphere is comfortably breathable by most intergalactic standards. In the early days following the Gap, this made the planet attractive to governments and corporations who sought to harness and refine Ulthel's nearly infinite natural gases. Exploratory and colonial contingents from varying offworld locations began to set off for the gas giant, but one by one, these groups disappeared. A few seemingly blinked out of existence upon hovering just above the planet's toxic layers. Others set up research posts or refining stations deeper within the gases, operating without a hitch until, seemingly at random, they ceased all communication with their parent organizations. In these early days, all explorers reported that the planet—and previous visitors' structures—were uninhabited.

As the years stretched on, visitors to Ulthel, all eventually as ill-fated as their predecessors, began to report enormous schools of what looked like pink jellyfish with no tentacles migrating in clouds within the gases that make up the planet. The visitors called them ulthelim, and they considered the creatures non-sentient local fauna. Soon, though, all visitors began reporting hearing mental pleas from these jellyfish. In a single cacophonous voice, the choruses begged the visitors to partake of the planet's wisdom, to merge with the clouds of ulthelim, and to become one with the planet. In all instances, ulthelim referred to themselves and the planet as a single entity. These were always the last reports visitors logged before they themselves disappeared without a trace.

In the current day, most governments and corporations have stopped all operations concerning Ulthel. Although it's

not clear what mysteries the planet holds, most scientists speculate that the planet's ulthelim are actually made up of the transformed bodies of the off-world explorers who have dared to enter the planet's atmosphere. Logs of the previous expeditions to the planet confirm this theory, as the number of ulthelim sightings reported correlates to the number of scientists, researchers, colonists, and others who have attempted to conduct business near the gas giant's perilous depths.

It's not clear exactly how long it takes for a visitor to Ulthel to transform into an ulthelim, though reports have ranged from a few weeks to a few months. Most believe that the physical and mental transition is gradual, with visitors' bodies slowly becoming more shapeless, gelatinous, and pink—while their minds simultaneously become more in tune with the practically transcendent nature of the ulthelim's collective consciousness.

To some, visiting the planet is a surefire death sentence. But to others, the transformative nature of the ulthelim represents a blueprint of utopia. To still others, the gas giant holds a potential gold mine of riches and scientific secrets that's worth braving any risk. Many individuals thus find reasons to brave this strange world.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Ulthel has no solid surface to speak of, but there are numerous points of interest in and around the planet for those who are brave enough to visit. The following are points of interest on Ulthel.

The Ascendancy

Orbiting Ulthel just outside its atmosphere is a sparse, sterile-looking space station called the Ascendancy. A cooperative collective of the same name operates this facility, whose residents are made up of interspecies philosophers from across the galaxy. A woman called **Most Serene Obanka** (NG female osharu^{AA2}) has led the collective for a decade, and its members dedicate their days to researching everything about the jellyfish-like creatures, from their physiology to their strange psychic powers to the daily life that the Ascendancy believes is a cosmic reward.

Beyond their research above the planet, the Ascendancy regularly sends expeditions of members down to study the ulthelim in person. Few have ever reported back with their findings, and most believe the missing have been absorbed into the ulthelim's numbers. Regardless, the Ascendancy sometimes sends outsiders along with expeditions, as long as they pay a handsome sum and are willing to undertake the group's arcane initiation rituals. Though their methods, beliefs, and theories are strange to most outsiders, the philosophers of the Ascendancy know the most by far about the ulthelim



and the planet's gaseous geography, and they are always eager to guide adventurers who need to brave Ulthel's depths.

Geyser Point

In the thinnest reaches of Ulthel's atmosphere is a massive greenhouse constructed of the galaxy's sturdiest transparent steel and titanium alloys. Although records about Geyser Point's origins are lost, the structure has floated for hundreds of years directly above the planet's most active gas geysers, which shoot superheated, mineral-rich slurries into the greenhouse's miles-long foundations. There, technology of a strange nature transforms the slurries into fertilizer that supports the bizarre alien plant life for which the greenhouse is known. Despite the dangers of Ulthel's atmosphere just below, Geyser Point is a small settlement of mostly ghorans (*Alien Archive 2 56*) and other plantlike species who live mostly in harmony with the innumerable rare trees, herbs, shrubs, flowers, and other flora that grows in ubiquity here, some of it poisonous. The greenhouse is also a landing point for adventurers, corporate representatives, and scientists, who often come here seeking natural ingredients they can find nowhere else in the galaxy. Keeper **Trevis Flawn** (N male ghoran^{AA2}) is the appointed leader of this egalitarian society, where all plants' lives are considered equally valuable. Any who wish to learn from the greenhouse or sample its wares must work with the keeper and adhere to its laws or face imprisonment—and likely a painful death—in the terrifying foundations below.

Project Omega

In distant orbit around Ulthel, far from the upper boundary of its

atmosphere, is the research satellite that houses Project Omega. A decades-long study and joint effort of the Consciousness Collective, LLC, and the Rowtox Corp., Project Omega is, on paper, an advanced scientific effort to refine precious gas samples from Ulthel's depths into a highly potent energy source that would be invaluable to most civilizations, especially those in the Pact Worlds. In truth, however, the project also has a top-secret ulterior objective. While its scientists do indeed study the molecular structures of the gas giant's makeup, they also discreetly pay adventurers huge sums of credits to harvest samples of ulthelim and bring them to the satellite's labs. Their goal is to tap into ulthelim's collective consciousness and distill their harmonized thoughts into powerful and addictive drugs. Of course, creating and distributing such drugs would be highly illegal on many worlds. Project leader **Dr. Holton-8** (NE male android) is one of only a few on board the satellite who know the project's real goals. He keeps the truth under tight wraps, even as he solicits adventurers from across the galaxy to undertake risky expeditions to the planet's depths.

Querulous We

Reports of a phenomenon near Ulthel's southern pole that's unusual even for this strange world have begun to make their way to more populated areas of the planet's vicinity. In this area, the typical pleas of the ulthelim to join their unity have been replaced with fretful, almost whining pleadings for help and release. Most disturbingly, these ulthelim refer to themselves plurally as "we," seemingly breaking with the world's apparent singular mind and leading some to think that previously lost souls may yet be returned.

WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

ULTHELINI

VARTURAN

Bustling Waterways of Peace

Diameter: ×1

Mass: ×1

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 1 day; **Year:** 1-1/4 years

The countless waterways of Varturan are home to numerous water-dwelling creatures, both sentient and not. The massive oceans, lakes, and rivers of the planet constantly ebb and flow in concert with the orbit of the planet's two moons, Arrtinos and Rydnan. Their powerful gravitational pulls cause constant and dramatic shifts in the planet's tides, with water rising hundreds of feet in some places. These major shifts occur at regular intervals of about 6 hours and have created extremely waterlogged environments that flourish with the aid of the tidal rhythm.

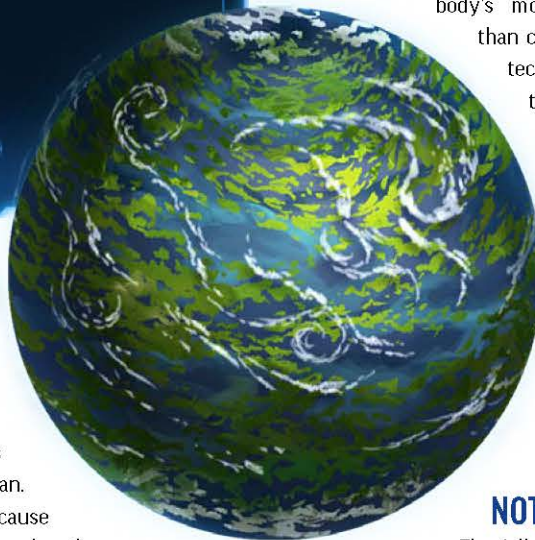
The planet is home to large swamps, seas of quicksand, aquatic forests, and countless unique niches and localized ecosystems in the depths of Varturan's seas and lakes. Even the pockets of land scattered around the planet are intrinsically connected to the world's waters. The lands that rise high enough or are large enough to avoid total submersion beneath Varturan's tides are still subject to the planet's constant light rains.

It's no surprise that Varturan's inhabitants are well-adapted to life in and around water. Some live within the planet's seas, including grejonn, a crustacean people with toad-like heads who construct massive palaces of stone and coral under the waves and occasionally interact with the surface. Others live on land and use their natural abilities to live off the bounty of Varturan's oceans, such as otter-like brenneris (*Alien Archive 3 B*), whose floating domiciles rise and fall with the tides but are generally anchored in place.

Regardless of their home, Varturan's sentient species live in harmony with the wildlife and one another, thanks in part to a worldwide federation formed in 14 AG. At that time, scientists of one of Varturan's nation-states discovered a very serious decay in Arrtinos's orbit. They determined that it would collide with Rydnan within a few decades, wreaking incalculable damage to their home world's ecosystem. With this knowledge in hand, the nation-state reached out to their neighbors in hopes of finding a solution to the impending apocalypse. While initial attempts failed, the various political entities of the planet eventually formed the Coalition of Conservation, a united research effort to correct Arrtinos's orbit. With a combination of technology and magic, the

Coalition's efforts proved successful in 27 AG. The Coalition has remained in place since then, transitioning into the planet's acting governing body less than a decade later.

Today, the Coalition's members consider maintaining the environmental balance of Varturan one of the body's most important functions. Rather than continuing to advance their various technologies on the planet proper, the Coalition built a pair of moon bases to serve as technological hubs staffed by all of Varturan's sentient species. While the world's nation-states retain a modicum of autonomy and can generally act as they see fit, the Coalition is empowered to intercede in cases of major conflict. Fortunately, no such incidents have occurred in Varturan's recorded history.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are several notable locations on Varturan and in its orbit.

Butryan Reef

This massive reef is actually the exterior of a nomadic colony of large creatures that seem to be made of living sand and wear coral-like shells. Known as hailliks, these beings are among the planet's oldest species—some scientists believe they predate the Gap. The hailliks make constant, slow pilgrimages across Varturan's ocean floors, and these travels appear to be without rhyme or reason. Grejonn biologists studying the hailliks posit that the creatures are unaware of the existence of other beings, though records note that attempting to harm a haillik results in a blast of devastating magical force energy. A few Varturan excursion companies offer brief journeys alongside the reef, though at a safe distance, of course.

Gruddonar

A popular seaside destination at the edge of the Ogarroz Ocean, the city consists of hundreds of buildings at the tops of tall stilts and connected by swaying rope bridges. These stilts allow the city to survive the rise and fall of Varturan's tides undamaged, but they require constant maintenance. The city's main draw is its music scene, where talented brenneris perform unique compositions using enchanted instruments that vibrate at mystical frequencies. Many visitors to Gruddonar believe these songs have magical and even healing properties, and as such, the settlement has a thriving tourist economy.

Jobuwa Chasms

The constant erosion brought upon by the ever-changing tides has created a number of cave networks throughout Varturan. The largest of these networks is the Jobuwa Chasms, which spans a wide area beneath Varturan's largest continent. This network is home to notable creatures that have developed

specialized adaptations for life among its tunnels, such as creatures with mystifying bioluminescent patterns and creatures capable of tunneling through the ground at blinding speeds. Notable among these species are murzzilats, winged creatures that have learned to both fly and swim through the various tunnels.

Moon Bases

The twin bases on Arrtinos and Rydnan serve as the center of Varturan's industry and technological development. Here, scientists continue to explore improvements in starship design and other technologies. Rydnan Base primarily serves as a spaceport, while Arrtinos Base acts more as a research station. Each of the bases also functions as a command center for large magical engines and propulsion systems built into the moons to maintain their proper orbits. The most recent development to emerge from Arrtinos is a line of specialized technomagical implants that collect moisture in the air and combine it with salination packets to allow certain species to travel beyond Varturan without the need of water-filled space suits.

Oksarion

A towering structure perched on one of the planet's rare spots of dry land, the Oksarion serves as the Coalition headquarters, where the several dozen members of the organization meet and discuss the pressing matters of the day. Most of these summits consist of diplomacy and mundane bureaucracy, but the Coalition is prepared to react to impending, large-scale natural disasters or other volatile situations. In addition to conference

rooms and research libraries, the Oksarion has a courtroom in which the Coalition can charge and try outside species that upset the planet's natural ecosystems. Were there ever a great need, such as a cataclysmic threat, the Oksarion also has the capability to house many of the planet's inhabitants and transform into a vessel capable of taking them deep beneath the ocean or into the reaches of space.

Panotar Fields

These massive wetlands are home to enormous mangroves that thrive in Varturan's waters. The other plants of the Panotar Fields have also evolved to grow off of these mangroves and stretch downward to stay hydrated as the tide recedes. A number of large insects also make their home among these wetlands, and most notable are the lilt runners, vehicle-sized creatures who use their thin legs to stride across the surface of the wetland's waters. Local brenneris have been able to domesticate these tall bugs and ride them through the wetlands at high speeds.

Rindowak Tide Pools

While the planet's denizens have mostly adapted to the intricacies of Varturan's ecosystems, there are still parts of the planet that are dangerous for all. These include the Tildavin Forest, the Watrunoz Springs, and, most notably, the tide pools of the Rindowak Sea. Each of these massive tide pools has become a haven for dangerous beasts, as the isolated nature of each pool has led to rapid evolution where the pools' various creatures fight to survive. Each ebb and flow of the tide has the potential to bring new challengers to the ecosystem, and some pools have developed deadly and highly territorial creatures.

WELCOME TO
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NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

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OPTIONS



STARSHIPS

3



STARSHIP OPTIONS

Many Near Space starships make use of the options presented in this section.

EXPANSION BAYS

The following options are available for ships with open expansion bays.

Amenities

In luxury cruise liners, residential starships, and other Huge or larger starships with large crews, some expansion bays are devoted to businesses that serve the population. An amenity might be a high-end restaurant or spa, a night club or theater, or a shopping center. If using downtime rules (*Character Operations Manual* 150), an amenity can provide a +1 bonus to all skill checks for one downtime activity, selected when the amenity is installed.

Conference and Meeting Rooms

Installed with top-notch telecommunication equipment (including integral system-wide comm units), this high-end office space is often featured in starships used to transport government officials or top business leaders. Starships with this expansion bay can even host sizable conferences.

Industry

As functioning factories or industrial centers, some starships allow a specific Profession skill to be used to make money during voyages (or, at a GM's discretion, a set of linked Professions), though money earned is not collected until the starship makes port at a major settlement. For example, mining starships often feature a refinery, since miners can efficiently purify the metals or other mined substances onboard before transporting the refined product. Starships with industry bays can go directly to a construction or market area on another planet to sell goods without needing to return to a home planet first.

Park

Parks are common on starships designed to spend years between ports and include native plant life from one or more planets with compatible biomes. Parks are lighted, irrigated, and ventilated to replicate terrestrial conditions. Many crew members stationed on starships for long periods avoid cabin fever by spending time in a park expansion bay. Parks typically include a hydroponic system for plants as well as benches, walkways, and sometimes games or playgrounds if families are on board. Abilities that require a natural or wild environment (such as a trailblazer weapon's ability to ignore natural cover) function within a park.

Vault

Some crews need a secure vault to store valuables. Breaking into a vault generally requires two skill checks (determined by the GM, though Computers and Engineering are common) with a DC equal to $10 + 1/2 \times$ the ship's tier. Failing either check by 5 or more sets off alarms, alerting the whole ship.

EXPANSION BAY	PCU	COST (IN BP)
Amenities	4	2
Conference and meeting rooms	1	1
Industry	40	10
Park	1	2
Vault	3	2

SECURITY

The following new security option is available.

Cloaking

Cloaking technology is not widely available in Near Space, but scientists have developed several systems that enable starships to avoid detection by other starships. Activating a cloaking device takes one action by an engineer while the starship is neither in motion nor engaged in combat. The ship vanishes from view, and based on the cloaking device's level, another ship must have sensors of a minimum level to detect it.

Cloaking technology is named for the maximum quality of sensors that can't detect the cloaked ship. Cut-rate cloaking technology fools only cut-rate sensors; budget cloaking technology fools only cut-rate and budget sensors, and so on. Sensors capable of detecting a cloaked starship can do so only when the cloaked starship has entered the sensor's first range increment. Engaging a Drift engine or thrusters or beginning starship combat (*Core Rulebook* 316) immediately negates the cloaking ability, whereupon the ship reappears and can be detected normally.

CLOAKING DEVICE	PCU	COST (IN BP)
Cut-rate	15	10
Budget	25	15
Basic	40	25
Advanced	75	40

SENSORS

With the advent of cloaking devices, researchers have developed ultramodern sensors to detect starships using all but the most high-end of stealth technology. (See the description of cloaking devices above for details on how they interact with ultra sensors.)

SENSORS	RANGE	MODIFIER	COST (IN BP)
Ultra short-range	Short	+6	6
Ultra medium-range	Medium	+6	12
Ultra long-range	Long	+6	20

STARSHIP WEAPONS

The new weapons presented in Table 3-1: Starship Weapons (page 115) are more common in Near Space than in the Pact Worlds, though they can be encountered anywhere. They follow the rules for starship weapons (*Core Rulebook* 303) unless noted otherwise.

TABLE 3-1: STARSHIP WEAPONS

LIGHT WEAPONS	RANGE	SPEED (IN HEXES)	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
DIRECT-FIRE WEAPONS						
Light ramming prow	–	–	3d4	1	6	Ramming
Minor ramming prow	–	–	2d4	1	4	Ramming
Missile blocker	Short	–	1d10	10	8	Jamming
Scrambler	Medium	–	2d8	15	12	Suspending (+5)
Tracer	Long	–	None	5	8	Bugging
TRACKING WEAPONS						
Slow burn missile launcher	Long	8	4d6	10	4	Limited fire 5, smoldering (2d6)
HEAVY WEAPONS						
HEAVY WEAPONS	RANGE	SPEED (IN HEXES)	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
DIRECT-FIRE WEAPONS						
Heavy ramming prow	–	–	5d4	1	8	Ramming
Pulsed gyrolaser	Short	–	3d8	25	20	Broad arc
Superscrambler	Medium	–	4d8	30	28	Suspending (+10)
Torpedo blocker	Short	–	3d10	30	26	Jamming
TRACKING WEAPONS						
Slow burn heavy missile launcher	Long	8	8d8	15	10	Limited fire 5, smoldering (4d8)
Gravity twister launcher	Long	16	8d10	15	11	Gravity tether, limited fire 5
CAPITAL WEAPONS						
CAPITAL WEAPONS	RANGE	SPEED (IN HEXES)	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
DIRECT-FIRE WEAPONS						
Massive ramming prow	–	–	2d4×10	5	20	Ramming

SPECIAL PROPERTIES

Several of the new starship weapons presented in this chapter have new special properties, defined below.

Bugging

Bugging weapons are primarily designed to attach a tracking device to a starship on a successful hit, and thus don't typically deal damage. The tracking device allows the starship that made the attack to trace the bugged starship even when it engages a cloaking device. The tracking device stops functioning once the bugged vessel enters the Drift. Otherwise, personnel must remove the device from the exterior of the starship and deactivate it (requiring a successful Engineering check with a DC equal to 10 + 1-1/2 × the tier of the attacking ship) in order to prevent being tracked. A bugged ship automatically knows it has been bugged.

Gravity Tether

Weapons with this property (typically tracking weapons) leave a trail of gravitons. A starship that successfully hits a target with a gravity tether weapon increases its speed by 2 on the following round, but only so long as each hex the attacking starship enters decreases its distance to the target struck with a gravity tether weapon.

Jamming

When a weapon with this special property successfully hits a ship in an arc containing a weapon that has the limited fire special property, that weapon jams and cannot be fired on the next round. If a ship hit by a weapon with the jamming property has multiple weapons with the limited fire special property, this affects only one such weapon that is not already jammed, selected at random.

Ramming

A complex system of maneuvering microthrusters and targeting systems allows a ship to ram enemy ships—a maneuver that is extremely difficult without such modifications.

If a ship with a ramming weapon ends its movement adjacent to an enemy ship in its forward arc, it can attempt to ram that ship; the target must have already moved during this helm phase. The pilot immediately attempts a gunnery check against the enemy ship's AC. If successful, the attack deals the listed damage. If the attacking starship is no more than one size category smaller than the enemy ship, the successful attack also pushes the target ship 1 hex in the direction the attacking ship is facing. If this would push the ship into an occupied hex, the ship doesn't move but instead takes additional damage equal to the attacking starship's tier. If the pilot's gunnery check fails, the attacking ship takes damage equal to the ramming weapon's minimum damage.

Smoldering

Weapons with this property contain chemical agents that burn for longer than normal. At the end of the next round after a successful hit by a smoldering weapon, the arc takes additional damage as indicated by the value shown in parentheses. Typical smoldering damage is half the damage done on the initial attack.

Suspending

When a weapon with this special property successfully hits a starship, the DC to restore shields to the arc struck by the weapon increases by the value shown in parentheses for 1 round. This applies to the science officer balance action, the engineer divert action, or any other action that would restore shield points.

GIDERON AUTHORITY SHIPS

**NAGINATA-CLASS ATTACK VESSEL**

While the Gideron Authority values a distributed offensive, they coordinate attacks when necessary. Crews of Naginata-Class Attack Vessels are highly trained in syncing with nearby ships to manage the most effective maneuvers possible.

The Gideron Authority's thirst for intergalactic expansion, however focused and driven it is by discipline and strength through unity, still must be backed by a strong fleet of ships. With this push for a strong space presence, they have encountered the scarcest resource of all: time. Ships take time to build, and the bigger the ship, the longer it takes.

The Gideron fleet therefore reflects preferences similar to those of the Authority's ground troop-based combat: numerous smaller ships rather than one big capital ship, and overwhelming attack strength over defense. Strength in numbers, strength in the offensive. This makes the Gideron Authority fleet a force to be reckoned with, even though it's a relatively new player on the galactic battlefield. The Authority's enemies can expect their larger vessels to be rammed and then overrun by swarms of smaller ships. All this in turn makes way for boarding vessels, and a great many ships have fallen after being conquered from the inside by precise and brutal troop strikes.

The navy life is a harsh one, and enlisted personnel are expected to give their life for the Authority without question. But the crews of ships that perform well can count on reaching the status of hero quickly and gaining the attendant rewards that come with such a reputation.

SWORD-CLASS ATTACK VESSEL**TIER 2**

Medium explorer

Speed 8; **Maneuverability** good (turn 1); **Drift** 1**AC** 14; **TL** 12**HP** 55; **DT** —; **CT** 11**Shields** basic 40 (forward 10, port 10, starboard 10, aft 10)**Attack (Forward)** minor ramming prow* (2d4)**Attack (Port)** light laser cannon (2d4; 5 hexes)**Attack (Starboard)** light laser cannon (2d4; 5 hexes)**Attack (Turret)** coilgun (4d4; 20 hexes)**Power Core** Arcus Heavy (130 PCU); **Drift Engine** SignalBasic; **Systems** basic medium-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 1 mononode computer, mk 2 armor; **Expansion Bays** cargo holds (2), medical bay, recreation suite (gym)**Modifiers** +1 to any one check per round, +2 Computers (sensors only), +1 Piloting; **Complement** 6 (minimum 1; maximum 6)**CREW****Captain** Computers +7 (2 ranks), Diplomacy +7 (2 ranks), Engineering +7 (2 ranks), gunnery +6 (2nd level), Intimidate +12 (2 ranks), Piloting +7 (2 ranks)**Engineer** Engineering +7 (2 ranks)**Gunners (2)** gunnery +6**Pilot** Piloting +7 (2 ranks)**Science Officer** Computers +7 (2 ranks)

* For more information, see the ramming prow on page 115.

SLEDGE-CLASS BOARDING VESSEL**TIER 6**

Large destroyer

Speed 8; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2); **Drift** 1**AC** 19; **TL** 19**HP** 170; **DT** —; **CT** 34

SWORD-CLASS ATTACK VESSEL

The sleek and streamlined Sword Class Attack Vessel is designed as much for intimidation as it is for combat prowess—and it excels in both.

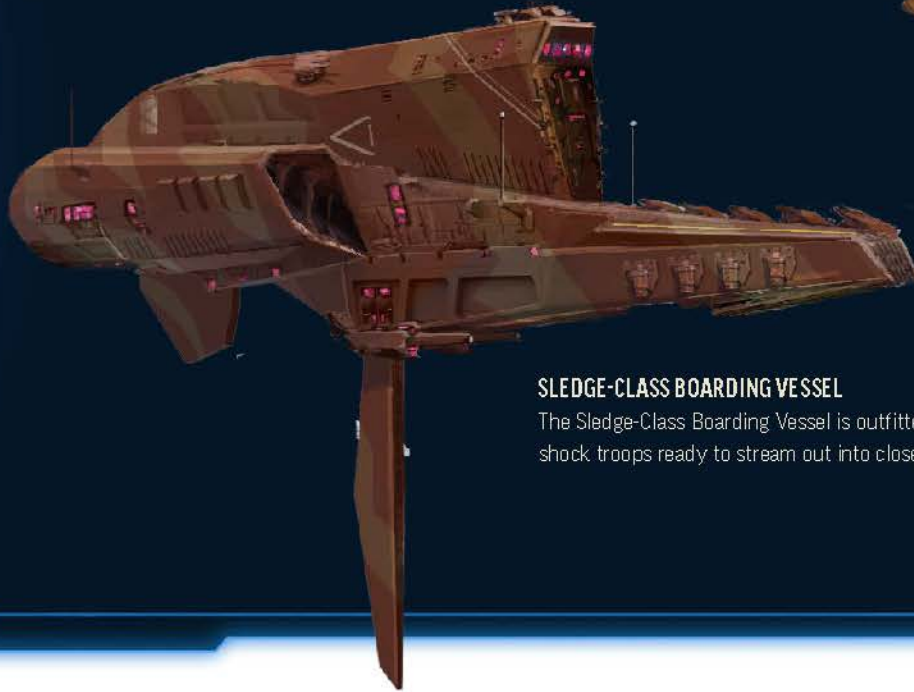
WELCOME TO
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**SLEDGE-CLASS BOARDING VESSEL**

The Sledge-Class Boarding Vessel is outfitted to hold numerous shock troops ready to stream out into close-quarters battle.

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

Attack (Forward) minor ramming prow* (2d4)

Attack (Port) light particle beam (3d6; 10 hexes)

Attack (Starboard) light particle beam (3d6; 10 hexes)

Attack (Turret) chain cannon (6d4; 5 hexes)

Power Core Arcus Maximum (200 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** basic medium-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 2 duonode computer, mk 4 armor, mk 4 defenses; **Expansion Bays** cargo hold (4, modified to hold troops at the ready)

Modifiers +2 to any two checks per round, +2 Computers (sensors only); **Complement** 6 (minimum 6; maximum 20)

CREW

Captain Bluff +13 (6 ranks), Computers +13 (6 ranks), Diplomacy +13 (6 ranks), Engineering +13 (6 ranks), gunnery +11 (6th level), Intimidate +18 (6 ranks), Piloting +13 (6 ranks)

Engineer Engineering +13 (6 ranks)

Gunners (2) gunnery +11 (6th level)

Pilot Piloting +18 (6 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +13 (6 ranks)

* For more information, see the ramming prow on page 115.

NAGINATA-CLASS ATTACK VESSEL TIER 14

Gargantuan battleship

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2); **Drift** 1

AC 26; **TL** 25

HP 400; **DT** 10; **CT** 80

Shields heavy 240 (forward 60, port 60, starboard 60, aft 60)

Attack (Forward) heavy laser cannon (4d8; 10 hexes), super plasma cannon (3d6x10; 10 hexes)

Attack (Port) heavy laser array (6d4; 5 hexes)

Attack (Starboard) heavy laser array (6d4; 5 hexes)

Attack (Aft) chain cannon (6d4; 5 hexes)

Attack (Turret) 2 heavy torpedo launchers (5d8; 20 hexes)

Power Core Gateway Heavy (400 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** basic medium-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 3 duonode computer, mk 6 armor, mk 6 defenses, security (biometric locks); **Expansion Bays** cargo holds (2), hangar bays (2), shuttle bays (2)

Modifiers +3 to any two checks per round, +2 Computers (sensors only), +1 Piloting; **Complement** 200 (minimum 100; maximum 300)

CREW

Captain Diplomacy +25 (14 ranks), gunnery +20 (14th level), Intimidate +30 (14 ranks), Piloting +25 (14 ranks)

Engineers (3 officers, 30 crew each) Engineering +25 (14 ranks)

Gunners (5 officers, 20 crew each) gunnery +20 (14th level)

Pilots (1 officer, 4 crew) Piloting +30 (14 ranks)

Science Officers (1 officer, 3 crew) Computers +25 (14 ranks)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Command Presence When a Naginata-Class Attack Vessel is within 5 hexes of at least two other Gideron Authority starships, those starships can use the Naginata-Class Attack Vessel's Piloting check for the helm phase.

SZANDITE COLLECTIVE SHIPS

**SC FARSEER**

Farseers are the front lines of the Szandite Collective's exploratory efforts, equipped with extremely fine-tuned, advanced sensor arrays—and laboratories to examine their findings.

By the time Triune revealed Drift engine technology via the Signal, the Szandite Collective had been collaborating for centuries. They designed their starships to accommodate myriad alien physiologies, knowing they would spend years together among the stars. The starships' engine rooms and control interfaces are the epitome of adaptive design. Szandite Collective ships vary in appearance, but almost all of them approximate collections of various geometric shapes—such as cubes, prisms, pyramids, and polyhedrons—that make them immediately recognizable.

The Collective recognizes that its aversion to armed conflict and relative lack of experience with advanced weapons has the potential to leave its starships vulnerable during expeditions, so they emphasize defense systems, scanners, and shields in their ships' designs. Otherwise, their vessels are specifically designed to further their goals of discovery, exploration, and research. The Collective sends Farseers to gather and report information, even equipping them with extensive mobile laboratories to conduct remote research operations as necessary. Heavily shielded Vaultships study and transport artifacts, including massive chunks of szandite crystal that fill entire cargo holds. Metropolis ships carry and protect other starships and their crews between the Collective home worlds, and some of these massive ships are especially equipped to make diplomatic or exploratory journeys to other populated systems.

A peculiar aspect of Szandite Collective ships is their modular nature. The Collective designed technology that allowed their ships to be taken apart, combined, separated,

or rebuilt over a period of several days or weeks, allowing them to adapt the configuration and function of their ships and fleets as needed without needing a space station or dock to do so.

SC FARSEER**TIER 3**

Medium explorer

Speed 8; **Maneuverability** good (turn 1); **Drift** 1

AC 15; **TL** 17

HP 55; **DT** —; **CT** 11

Shields medium 90 (forward 23, port 22, starboard 22, aft 23)

Attack (Forward) light laser cannon (2d4; 5 hexes)

Attack (Port) light laser cannon (2d4; 5 hexes)

Attack (Starboard) light laser cannon (2d4; 5 hexes)

Attack (Turret) coilgun (4d4; 20 hexes)

Power Core Pulse Green (150 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic;

Systems advanced long-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 2 armor, mk 2 mononode computer, mk 4 defenses; **Expansion Bays** cargo hold, science lab (life), science lab (physical), sealed environment chamber

Modifiers +2 to any one check per round, +4 Computers (sensors only), +1 Piloting; **Complement** 6 (minimum 1, maximum 6)

CREW

Captain Computers +8 (3 ranks), Diplomacy +8 (3 ranks), gunnery +7 (3rd level), Piloting +9 (3 ranks)

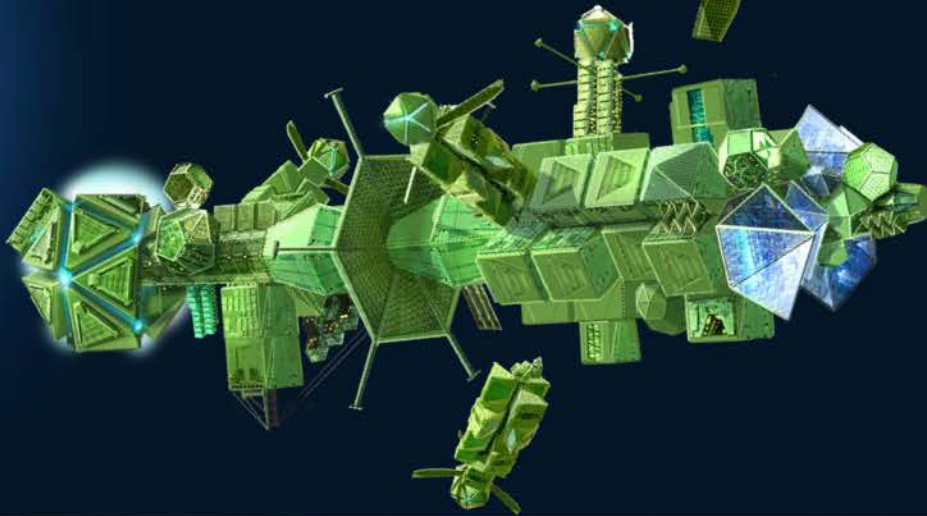
Engineer Engineering +8 (3 ranks)

Pilot gunnery +7 (3rd level), Piloting +9 (3 ranks)

Science Officers (1 officer, 2 crew) Computers +13 (3 ranks)

SC VAULTSHIP

Vaultships protect the Szandite Collective's invaluable findings with thick plates of armor and extensive shielding, though these hulks are also often accompanied by support ships.

**SC METROPOLIS**

This enormous carrier operates with a relatively few but highly specialized and talented personnel, and it can offer safe harbor to more vulnerable ships.

SC VAULTSHIP**TIER 7**

Large heavy freighter

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2); **Drift** 2

AC 11; **TL** 19

HP 140; **DT** —; **CT** 28

Shields heavy 320 (forward 80, port 80, starboard 80, aft 80)

Attack (Forward) mining laser^{PW} (2d6; 5 hexes)

Power Core Nova Heavy (200 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal

Booster; **Systems** advanced short-range sensors, anti-hacking systems mk 1, computer countermeasures (alarm), crew quarters (common), mk 2 armor, mk 2 trinode computer, mk 10 defenses; **Expansion Bays** arcane laboratory, cargo holds (3), guest quarters (common), science lab (general), sealed environment chamber, tech workshop

Modifiers +2 to any three checks per round, +4 Computers (sensors only), +1 Piloting; **Complement** 18 (minimum 6, maximum 20)

CREW

Captain Diplomacy +14, Engineering +14 (7 ranks), Piloting +14 (7 ranks)

Engineers (2 officers, 3 crew each) Engineering +14 (7 ranks)

Pilot gunnery +12 (7th level), Piloting +14 (7 ranks)

Science Officers (2 officers, 3 crew each) Computers +19 (7 ranks)

SC METROPOLIS**TIER 13**

Gargantuan carrier

Speed 8; **Maneuverability** poor (turn 3); **Drift** 1

AC 24; **TL** 29

HP 330; **DT** 10; **CT** 66

Shields heavy 480 (forward 120, port 120, starboard 120, aft 120)

Attack (Forward) superlaser (2d4×10; 20 hexes)

Attack (Turret) light EMP cannon (special; 5 hexes)

Power Core Gateway Ultra (500 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** advanced medium-range sensors, crew quarters (good), mk 4 duonode computer, mk 5 armor, mk 11 defenses; **Expansion Bays** hangar bay, medical bay, recreation suite (HAC), science lab (general), sealed environment chamber, shuttle bay

Modifiers +4 to any two checks per round, +4 Computers (sensors only), -1 Piloting; **Complement** 111 (minimum 75, maximum 200)

CREW

Captain Computers +23 (13 ranks), Diplomacy +23 (13 ranks), Engineering +23 (13 ranks), gunnery +19 (13th level), Intimidate +23 (13 ranks), Piloting +23 (13 ranks)

Engineers (4 officers, 14 crew each) Engineering +23 (13 ranks)

Gunners (1 officer, 2 crew) gunnery +19

Pilots (1 officer, 10 crew) Piloting +23 (13 ranks)

Science Officers (6 officers, 5 crew each) Computers +28 (13 ranks)

SPECIAL ABILITY

Modular Harbor A Szandite Collective ship adjacent to this ship can link with it in a specific arc. The linked ship can't move or fire its weapons, and damage that would be dealt to the linked ship is dealt to the metropolis's shields in that quadrant first.

VESKARIUM SHIPS

**MERCILESSBLADE**

The *Merciless Blade* is an enormous city-ship, carrying tens of thousands of souls at any given time. As a vesk ship, it is more than capable of defending itself—even unleashing havoc—but it is also constantly swarming with other vesk craft.

Several Veskarium starship designers have tried to match the success of the BMC Mauler, the Veskarium's signature fighter. The Norikama Syndicate's failed attempts almost bankrupted them, but not before they designed the Reliant. This small, modular starship is a versatile support craft that the Veskarium deploys in a variety of uses.

The Blood Mountain Clans' original Predator design was meant to address some of the Mauler's perceived weaknesses, but it was considered too flashy and expensive for regular use. Nevertheless, the Predator remains a powerful and innovative starship, and the military does issue the vessel to ace pilots who can handle its complex controls.

The Veskarium's largest starship is a mobile fortress named the *Merciless Blade*. The product of several Veskarium manufacturers cooperating on both design and construction, the *Merciless Blade* is more like a Drift-capable city in space than a typical starship, and it's perfect for long-range force projection far outside the Veskarium's borders. This Supercolossal base ship serves as home to 85,000 military troops, scientists, engineers, and analysts, and its hangar bays typically carry 100 BMC Maulers and up to 30 Norikama Reliants or BMC Predators. In addition, a small armada of support vessels surrounds the ship at all times.

NORIKAMA RELIANT**TIER 4**

Small light freighter

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** good (turn 1); **Drift** 2

AC 19; **TL** 19

HP 50; **DT** —; **CT** 10

Shields light 50 (forward 15, port 10, starboard 10, aft 15)

Attack (Forward) linked gyrolasers (2d8; 5 hexes)

Attack (Port) tactical nuclear missile launcher (5d8; 20 hexes)

Attack (Starboard) tactical nuclear missile launcher (5d8; 20 hexes)

Power Core Pulse Green (150 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Booster; **Systems** advanced long-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 3 duonode computer, mk 4 armor, mk 4 defenses; **Expansion Bays** cargo holds (3)*

Modifiers +3 to any two checks per round, +4 Computers (sensors only), +2 Piloting; **Complement** 5 (minimum 1, maximum 6)

CREW

Captain Computers +10 (4 ranks), Engineering +10 (4 ranks), gunnery +9 (4th level), Intimidate +10 (4 ranks), Piloting +12 (4 ranks)

Engineer Engineering +15 (4 ranks)

Gunner gunnery +9 (4th level)

Pilot Piloting +12 (4 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +10 (4 ranks)

* 6 Build Points are available for customizing the expansion bays in this versatile ship.

BMC PREDATOR**TIER 9**

Small shuttle

Speed 10; **Maneuverability** perfect (turn 0); **Drift** 5

AC 26; **TL** 24

HP 45; **DT** —; **CT** 9

NORIKAMA RELIANT

Reliants earn their name by having a wide range of potential loadouts that make them reliably useful in many different situations. An easily swappable set of bays in the ship's stern is the cornerstone of its flexibility.

**BMC PREDATOR**

Vesk pilots must earn themselves access to the BMC Predator, a more powerful version of the BMC Mauler (*Core Rulebook* 315).

WELCOME TO
NEAR SPACETHE
VESKARIUMWORLDS OF
NEAR SPACE

STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

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

Attack (Forward) linked light plasma cannons (4d12; 5 hexes)

Attack (Turret) flak thrower (3d4; 5 hexes)

Power Core Pulse Orange (250 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Ultra;

Systems advanced short-range sensors, crew quarters (good), mk 2 trinode computer, mk 5 defenses, mk 6 armor, security (advanced cloaking device, anti-hacking systems, computer countermeasures [shock grid rank 1], self-destruct system); **Expansion Bays** brig, life boat, tech workshop

Modifiers +2 to any three checks per round, +4 Computers (sensors only), +2 Piloting; **Complement** 1 (minimum 1, maximum 4)

CREW

Pilot Computers +17 (9 ranks), Engineering +17 (9 ranks), gunnery +15 (9th level), Piloting +24 (9 ranks)

MERCILESS BLADE**TIER 19**

Supercolossal base ship (*Starfinder Starship Operations Manual*)

Speed 4; **Maneuverability** clumsy (turn 1); **Drift** 1

AC 25; **TL** 33

HP 750; **DT** 15; **CT** 150

Shields superior 600 (forward 150, port 150, starboard 150, aft 150)

Attack (Forward) gravity gun (6d6; 10 hexes), heavy laser net (5d6; 5 hexes), linked heavy laser array (12d4; 5 hexes)

Attack (Port) heavy laser net (5d6; 5 hexes), linked heavy laser array (12d4; 5 hexes)

Attack (Starboard) heavy laser net (5d6; 5 hexes), linked heavy laser array (12d4; 5 hexes)

Attack (Turret) nuclear mega-missile launcher (4d8x10; 20 hexes), persistent particle beam cannon (3d4x10; 20 hexes)

Power Core Titan Ultra^{SOM} (1,200 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** advanced long-range sensors, crew quarters (good; 10% luxury), mk 4 armor, mk 10 mononode computer with 5 network nodes^{SOM}, mk 12 defenses, security (anti-hacking systems [4], biometric locks);

Expansion Bays arcane laboratory, cargo holds (35), Drift booster^{SOM}, hangar bays (5), life boats, medical bay, recreation suite (gym, HAC), recycling system^{SOM}, science lab, sealed environment chamber, synthesis bay, tactical sensor tank^{SOM}, tech workshop

Modifiers +10 to any six checks per round, +4 Computers (sensors only), -1 Piloting; **Complement** 85,000 (minimum 150, maximum 100,000)

CREW

Captain Computers +32 (19 ranks), Diplomacy +32 (19 ranks), gunnery +28 (19th level), Intimidate +32 (19 ranks), Piloting +32 (19 ranks)

Engineers (2 officers, 6,840 crew each) Engineering +37 (19 ranks)

Gunners (4 officers, 10,410 crew each) gunnery +28 (19th level)

Pilots (1 officer, 299 crew) Piloting +32 (19 ranks)

Science Officers (3 officers, 9,790 crew each) Computers +32 (19 ranks)

VESKARIUM SHIPS

CONQUEROR OF WORLDS

This vast killing machine is a paragon of Vesk military might and control. It takes a crew of thousands of dedicated personnel to maintain and operate.

VINDICAS SHIPS

Vindicas has manufactured starships for the Veskarium since the vesk first gained Drift technology. Their facilities constantly produce Enforcers, Punishers, and Tyrants, which form the backbone of Veskarium military might. The designs focus on thick armor and overwhelming firepower while completely neglecting basic comforts and updated technology. Vesk generals claim that the utilitarian designs keep troops focused and disciplined in the dead of space.

The Vindicas Punisher is designed for both pursuit and capture of valuable assets, both prisoners and resources. It carries a squad of vesk commandos, ready to board enemy vessels and extract their targets. Its larger sibling, the Vindicas Enforcer, also houses a squad of commandos, ready for deployment in semipermanent occupations of conquered colonies and space stations.

The most well-known Vindicas vessel is the *Conqueror of Worlds*. This masterpiece of destruction is the flagship of the Veskarium, and the last thing many science officers see on their sensors, just before facing Pharasma. When the Veskarium has decided to bring a planet under its control and that planet resists, it brings in this massive weapon to lay waste to any defenses the planet can muster. The ship can hold its targets in place with a tractor beam while its spinal-mounted ultra-x-laser cannon warms up; then the cannon can rip an entire line of starships to shreds. When engaging opposing fleets, the ship rarely needs to fire the weapon twice before the target acquiesces to virtually any demand the Veskarium makes.

VINDICAS PUNISHER

TIER 7

Large destroyer

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

AC 22; **TL** 21

HP 170; **DT** —; **CT** 34

Shields medium 140 (forward 35, port 35, starboard 35, aft 35)

Attack (Forward) heavy laser array (6d4; 5 hexes), heavy laser cannon (4d8; 10 hexes)

Attack (Turret) coilgun (4d4; 20 hexes)

Power Core Pulse Orange (250 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Booster;

Systems basic computer, budget short-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 6 armor, mk 6 defenses; **Expansion**

Bays brig, cargo hold, guest quarters (2, common)

Complement 6 (minimum 6, maximum 20)

CREW

Captain Engineering +14 (7 ranks), gunnery +12 (7th level), Intimidate +14 (7 ranks), Piloting +14 (7 ranks)

Engineer Engineering +14 (7 ranks)

Gunners (2) gunnery +12 (7th level)

Pilot Piloting +19 (7 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +14 (7 ranks)

VINDICAS ENFORCER

TIER 12

Huge cruiser

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

AC 28; **TL** 27

HP 255; **DT** 5; **CT** 51

WELCOME TO
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STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS**VINDICAS ENFORCER**

Enforcers are more than well-equipped for starship combat, but one of their primary functions is to deliver squads of specialized troops to Vesk-controlled territories.

**VINDICAS PUNISHER**

Punishers are fast and relatively sleek, allowing them to chase down high-value targets no matter where their prey flies.

Shields medium 140 (forward 35, port 35, starboard 35, aft 35)
Attack (Forward) antimatter mega-missile launcher (4d10×10; 20 hexes)

Attack (Port) light plasma cannon (2d12; 5 hexes)

Attack (Starboard) light plasma cannon (2d12; 5 hexes)

Attack (Turret) x-laser cannon (8d6; 20 hexes)

Power Core Gateway Ultra (500 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Booster; **Systems** basic computer, budget long-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 8 armor, mk 8 defenses; **Expansion Bays** cargo bay (2), guest quarters (2, common), shuttle bay

Complement 80 (minimum 20, maximum 100)

CREW

Captain Diplomacy +22 (12 ranks), gunnery +17 (12th level), Intimidate +27 (12 ranks), Piloting +22 (12 ranks)

Engineers (1 officer, 16 crew) Engineering +22 (12 ranks)

Gunners (2 officers, 20 crew each) gunnery +17 (12th level)

Pilots (1 officer, 4 crew) Piloting +22 (12 ranks)

Science Officers (1 officer, 14 crew) Computers +22 (12 ranks)

CONQUEROR OF WORLDS**TIER 20**

Supercolossal ultranought (*Starfinder Starship Operations Manual*)

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** clumsy (turn 6); **Drift** 1

AC 35; **TL** 32

HP 1,050; **DT** 15; **CT** 210

Shields superior 600 (forward 150, port 150, starboard 150, aft 150)

Attack (Forward) gravity gun (6d6; 10 hexes), ultra x-laser cannon (6d8×10; 20 hexes)

Attack (Port) antimatter mega-missile launcher (4d10×10; 20 hexes)

Attack (Starboard) antimatter mega-missile launcher (4d10×10; 20 hexes)

Attack (Turret) persistent particle beam cannon (2d10×10; 20 hexes)

Power Core Titan Heavy^{50M} (950 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** advanced short-range sensors, crew quarters (common; 10% good, 1% luxury), hangar bay, mk 4 mononode computer, network node^{50M}, mk 13 armor, mk 13 defenses, security (anti-hacking systems [4], biometric locks); **Expansion Bays** cargo holds (35), recreation suite (gym), sealed environment chamber, tech workshop

Modifiers +4 to any two checks per round, +4 Computers (sensors only), -2 Piloting; **Complement** 5,000 (minimum 250, maximum 5,000)

CREW

Captain Diplomacy +34 (20 ranks), Engineering +34 (20 ranks), gunnery +29 (20th level), Intimidate +34 (20 ranks), Piloting +34 (20 ranks)

Engineers (2 officers, 850 crew each) Engineering +34 (20 ranks)

Gunners (2 officers, 1,500 crew each) gunnery +29 (20th level)

Pilots (1 officer, 195 crew) Piloting +39 (20 ranks)

Science Officers (1 officer, 98 crew) Computers +34 (20 ranks)



PLAYER OPTIONS

4



RACE OPTIONS

Near Space is indefinably vast. It is not a physical region of space, but rather all those locations that happen to be close enough to a sufficient number of Drift beacons to make travel to those locations faster than trips to less-beacon-heavy areas of space. But this means that exactly what is and isn't part of Near Space is an ever-changing question.

What qualifies a species as a Near Space race is just as fluid as Near Space itself. Vesk originate in the Veskarium but can be found in the Pact Worlds, the reaches of the Vast, and possibly beyond. Their history is no less storied than that of Lost Golarion, which spawned Absalom Station and the Azlanti Star Empire, making it entirely possible that there are populations of vesk who left their home system before or during the Gap and have populated separate conclaves for eons. Such groups would share a considerable amount of culture and background with citizens of the Veskarium, but they ultimately would have evolved many traditions of their own in response to the pressures of their environment.

Even when considering a race largely restricted to a single world, any habitable planet is vast enough to produce numerous different ecologies, histories, societies, and traditions. The members of a race most commonly encountered off their home world may primarily come from a single region and society, but different groups exist in even the most homogeneous of settlements. This near-infinite diversity is clearly beyond the scope of any game manual, but the following entries give examples of some of the most common variations and alternate abilities.

READING THE RACE ENTRIES

All of the race entries in this section are supplemental materials that expand on the primary entry for each race (these entries are generally found in the *Starfinder Core Rulebook* and *Alien Archive* volumes). The information added here is in addition to those original entries, rather than replacing them, providing the most common variants of ability score adjustments, alternate racial traits, and thematic feats and class features. Except where noted below, all of these races follow the normal rules for races in *Starfinder*.

Alternate Ability Score Adjustments

No race is monolithic in its tendencies, and this is just as true for ability scores as for any other element that is subject to influence from culture, environment, training, or even intentional alterations, whether magical or technological. The majority of members of a race are likely to have the standard ability score adjustments (which are listed again in each corresponding section for ease of reference), but there are generally at least a few subpopulations of each race that have different adjustments, which are briefly described and defined. A character need not come from one of these subpopulations to have these ability adjustments; they are simply examples

of groups within that race that commonly have those variant ability scores.

You decide what ability score adjustments to use when you make a character; once chosen, they can't be changed without significant magic (and GM approval), though characters can make significant modifications using the ability score increases gained every 5 character levels and through personal upgrades.

Alternate Racial Traits

While most members of the races presented in the *Core Rulebook* have the standard racial traits detailed in their descriptions, specific individuals are sometimes have unique abilities, represented by alternate racial traits. While each entry presents various examples of why a character might have different traits, these are only suggestions. If your character concept calls for your ghoran operative to have magical talent rather than past-life knowledge as a result of a sliver of a spell gem getting embedded in the seed they sprouted from, great!

You decide at 1st level whether your character gains any alternate racial traits, and once you make this choice, you cannot change it. You can select as many alternate racial traits as you want, but you cannot take two alternate racial traits that replace the same standard racial trait. Taking alternate racial traits doesn't change anything else about your character—a skittermander with the curious alternate racial trait (page 134) is still a skittermander for all purposes and prerequisites. However, that character no longer has the hyper trait and thus does not qualify for any ability that requires it (such as the Hyper Speed feat introduced in the Skittermander section on page 134).

Racial Class Features and Feats

Feats and class features generally represent specific talents or knacks that can be trained or learned. It naturally follows that in some societies, different knacks or talents are more commonly taught and considered important. Each race entry presents a number of such choices that are more common within the population of that race in Near Space than they are elsewhere. These feats and class features are not exclusive to the races they are listed with—there's nothing preventing someone from a star system on the other side of the galaxy from hearing about and learning such abilities. However, many of these do have prerequisites that tie into one or more racial traits, and a character must meet an option's prerequisites to take that option.

DAMAIS

Damais are embattled survivors from the decimated planet Daimalko who are known for their ingenuity, their zest for life, and even their recklessness even in the face of impossible odds. Damais are adaptable, if a bit impetuous, and their motivations for striving ever toward the stars are as variable as the night sky.

ALTERNATE ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

The majority of damais have the ability adjustments found on page 33 of *Alien Archive 2*, as these adjustments represent overall trends for damais across the galaxy. However, some damais deviate from these generalities, whether from a unique upbringing or due to an individual's idiosyncrasies. One such group of damais is represented below. They have the listed ability score adjustments, instead of the standard adjustments of +2 Charisma, +2 Dexterity, -2 Wisdom.

Cerebral

Though many damais rely on strong personality to pursue their fortunes, some find themselves naturally more capable in soaking up knowledge, and they apply it to practical use in their daily lives. Damai legend claims that these cerebral, frail members of their species, once far more numerous, were responsible for the magnificent advancements in science, technology, and magic that far predated Daimalko's Awakening. A cerebral damai's ability adjustments are +4 Intelligence, -2 Constitution.

ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

While most damais have the standard racial traits detailed on page 33 of *Alien Archive 2*, specific individuals sometimes have unique abilities, represented by the following alternate racial traits. Damais with the empathic imprint trait are most likely to become Guardians, as described on page 74 of this book and page 464 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*.

Brazen Bravado

Many damais rely on their incredible force of personality and in-the-moment ingenuity to get themselves out of scrapes, rather than on the survival skills common among their fellows. Damais with this racial trait gain a +2 racial bonus to Bluff and Sense Motive checks. In addition, when they aid another creature using one of these skills, the aid another bonus they provide increases to +3.

This replaces survivor.

Empathic Imprint

Some damais are born with an innate connection to the feelings and moods of those around them, and they can focus this empathy to glean insights that others normally could not. Once per day, a damai with this racial trait can cast *mindlink* as a spell-like ability. The caster level for this effect equals the damai's level.

This replaces survivor.

CLASS OPTIONS

The following new paradigm shifts reflect techniques that damai witchwarpers (*Character Operations Manual* 60) have honed through generations of reckless encounters with danger, whether it's the difficulty of surviving underground or the horrors that threaten their planet. Non-damai characters can select these options if they meet any listed prerequisites.



Enshrouding Gloom (Su)

As a standard action, you can target a creature within 100 feet and plunge it into darkness. This creates an area of magical darkness that affects only the targeted creature and occupies its space. This darkness does not affect the creature's visibility to other creatures, nor its ability to attempt Stealth checks to hide. The darkness overcomes all nonmagical light and is itself overcome by any magical light source. At 8th level, each time the creature takes an action that lets it move while the darkness persists, it must succeed at a Reflex saving throw or the area of darkness moves with it. Once the creature has failed a saving throw and the darkness has moved with it, the darkness remains stationary for the remaining duration of this effect.

Phantom Colossus (Su)

As a reaction, when a hostile creature within 100 feet would take any action to move 10 or more feet toward you or an ally, you can force it to witness an alternate reality in which a massive horror covered in tongues, teeth, and armored plates is bearing down toward it. The target creature must succeed at a Will saving throw or it instead loses its action immediately as it is shocked into stillness, and it cannot voluntarily take any additional movement until the beginning of its next turn. Once an attacker has been affected by this paradigm shift, it can't be targeted by it again for 24 hours. This is a fear effect.

You must be 8th level or higher to choose this paradigm shift.

WELCOME TO
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STARSHIPS

PLAYER
OPTIONS

EMBRI

The hierarchical and cautious embri toil in their planet's rigid bureaucracy-academies and factory-forges. Trained to keep their emotions carefully in check behind masks they wear at all times, these mollusk-people are skilled at recognizing—and reporting—those who demonstrate radical thinking or dangerous free will.

ALTERNATE ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

Embri spawn upon strict schedules set by their bureaucrats and social engineers, who carefully regulate a new embri's traits. The following embri groups, each engineered for a specific purpose, have unique ability score adjustments, instead of the standard adjustments of +2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma.

Emissary

Trained for diplomatic service offworld from the moment of their spawning, embri emissaries are raised in isolated ambassador-creches to instill social loyalty and guard their thoughts against the dangerously individualistic societies they will encounter in their careers. An embri emissary's ability adjustments are +2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma, -2 Strength.

Preceptor

The devils who secretly manipulate embri sometimes steal young embri to indoctrinate them in the subterranean tunnels occupied by devils and their servants. At adulthood, these embri preceptors return to the surface with positions of authority and clear directions about how to modify embri culture to be even closer to the diabolic blueprint. An embri preceptor's ability adjustments are +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Constitution.

ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

Despite the control that embri leaders attempt to place over all aspects of life, some embri display adaptations or mutations that set them apart. In a society where deviance of any kind is suspect, such embri often must conceal their differences or live their lives on the run. The following alternate racial traits represent some of these changes.

Bio-Observant (Ex)

Embri who learn to watch for physiological cues rather than emotional ones can excel at identifying maladies in others. Such embri gain a +2 racial bonus to Medicine checks.

This replaces wary.

Fleshbound Mask (Ex)

Some embri's flesh grows up and around their masks. For such embri, being unmasked exposes raw nerves and inflicts constant painful distraction. While such an embri has its mask removed, it has a -2 penalty to ability checks and skill checks and must roll all Reflex saving throws twice and take the lower result.

This replaces masked emotions.

CLASS OPTIONS

The following envoy expertise talents represent well-honed embri interpersonal skills. Embri and non-embri characters can select these options if they have the fleshbound mask or masked emotions trait.

Likely to Be Right Here (Ex; Sense Motive)

You can use subtle cues to anticipate the location of a creature. While you are aware of a creature's presence (*Core Rulebook* 260), you can use your Sense Motive bonus to attempt Perception checks to search for that creature. Alternatively, you can forgo your expertise die to use your Sense Motive bonus to attempt Perception checks to search an area.

Stone-Faced Liar (Ex; Bluff)

You deliver lies in a monotone as naturally as any other routine communication. When you attempt a Bluff check to lie, you can forgo your expertise die to make the DC of your Bluff check equal to 10 + the target's total Sense Motive bonus, even if the target is suspicious of you. At 9th level, you can instead spend 1 Resolve Point to use the above DC, add your expertise die instead of forgoing it, and ignore the modifier the DC would have if the target is unfriendly to you.



GHORANS

A species once thought doomed to extinction, ghorans still struggle with a life cycle that often places great stress both on their overall population and on individuals.

ALTERNATE ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

Ghorans have begun to see varying phenotypes among their kind. These alternate ghorans have the listed ability scores and size, rather than a ghoran's normal +2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence, and +2 to Strength or Dexterity (for Medium oaklings and Small saplings, respectively).

Willower

Willower ghorans reproduce from a ghorus seed and grow into a tall frame. Though the Gap consumed many of the details of their birth, the first of these ghorans sprouted from the first kinwoods. Willowers are Medium plants and have an ability score adjustment of +2 Intelligence.

ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

The kinwoods have long shepherded Ghorus Prime's ecology, influencing the genetic development of its numerous plant species. This includes the ghorans themselves, who exhibit a range of physiological traits.

Magical Talent

Some ghorans inherit magical aptitude from their ancestors. Ghorans with this trait gain a +2 racial bonus to Mysticism checks, and they can use *detect magic* and *psychokinetic hand* at will as spell-like abilities.

This replaces past-life knowledge.

Psychosynthesis

Instead of light, some ghorans' outer layers are sensitive to thoughts and emotions. Ghorans with this trait gain limited telepathy with a range of 30 feet. Additionally, they can avoid starvation by spending at least 8 total hours a day within 120 feet of a creature that doesn't have the unliving trait and that has an Intelligence and Wisdom score of at least 10.

This replaces photosynthesis.

CLASS OPTION

Non-ghoran characters can select the following new mechanic trick if they meet any prerequisites.

2ND-LEVEL

Natural Computer (Ex)

With 1 minute of work, you can use your custom rig to create a basic computer interface on a natural unworked surface, such as on the ground, a tree, or a rock face. The interface requires a power source and uses 1 charge per hour.

If you are a plant creature, this instead takes a standard action and does not require a power source. The interface is attuned to unmodified material of the type on which it is placed. You know the general direction and distance of attuned materials, and you can use the interface to surveil its surroundings at distance of up to 50 feet × your mechanic level. The surveillance square has ordinary vision but can see only out to 30 feet.

SPELL

Ghorans developed the following spell.

VERDANT CODE

School conjuration

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets one computer system or module

Duration 1 hour/level or until triggered, then 1 minute/level, see text

Saving Throw Will negates (object), Reflex partial, see text; **Spell Resistance** yes (object), see text

You turn data into plant matter that either instantly explodes outward or lurks within a device.

Instant Growth: You immediately incite growth from the targeted device. A creature can negate the effect on an object it holds with a successful Will save or with spell resistance.

For both this and the dormant growth effect (see below), the plant matter explodes from the targeted device, filling all squares within a 20-foot-radius spread. Each creature in the area must attempt a Reflex save. On a failure, it takes 5d6 slashing damage and is entangled; on a successful save, it takes half damage, isn't entangled, and is shunted to the nearest empty space available. A square of plant matter has hardness 8 and 15 Hit Points. The growth also covers the device, preventing non-remote access until the plant matter is destroyed or disintegrates at the end of the spell's duration.

Dormant Growth: You implant verdant code into an computer system or module you have root access to. The next time the device is accessed, plant matter explodes from the device (see above). A device can hold only one instance of verdant code at a time, and new instances erase the previous instance. If this spell's duration ends before the implanted code is accessed, the code vanishes. This code can be made permanent, as *implant data*.



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HOBGOBLINS

Hobgoblins' post-Gap culture abandons much tradition in favor of pure pragmatism and a rigorous, often brutal meritocracy. There are always hobgoblins willing to try a new idea or technique to see if it gives them an edge.

ALTERNATE ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

Though most hobgoblins match the ability score adjustments presented in *Starfinder Alien Archive 2*, they are also very adaptive, which has allowed them to settle worlds less habitable for other species. As a result, hobgoblins who successfully adapt to these different, harsh conditions develop divergent qualities. Such hobgoblins have ability score adjustments as listed below, instead of the standard adjustment of +2 Dexterity.

Hardworlder

Many hobgoblins have settled on higher-gravity worlds, sometimes in an intentional effort to strengthen their offspring through hardship. A hardworlder hobgoblin's ability score adjustment is +2 Strength.



Warhob

Rather than claim a home world or settle in any one permanent location, some hobgoblins form permanent roving military bands, filling various battle roles from birth to old age and moving from one war to the next. In this harsh life, only the tough survive. Some hire out as mercenaries, while others are essentially pirate raiders, creating nothing of their own. A warhob hobgoblin's ability score adjustment is +2 Constitution.

ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

As hobgoblins continue to expand and adapt, taking any steps necessary to ensure success and survival, an increasing percentage of hobgoblin populations includes outliers with uncommon abilities.

Armor Training

Hobgoblins have a close relationship with their kanabo kin and learn from them whenever they can. When wearing armor, hobgoblins gain a +1 racial bonus to AC.

This replaces battle hardened.

Science of War

Hobgoblin engineers are valued for their skill in building the engines of war. Hobgoblins with this racial trait gain a +2 racial bonus to Engineering checks.

This replaces sneaky.

Third Eye

With the ban on magic lifted, some Hobgoblin clans have attempted magical experimentation to augment themselves to the extreme. Hobgoblins with this racial trait gain a small, third eye on their forehead, gain low-light vision, and can use *supercharge weapon* once per day as a spell-like ability.

This replaces darkvision.

FEATS

These feats are most common among roving hobgoblin war bands, but non-hobgoblin characters are free to select these options if they meet the prerequisites.

Blood of the Spider

Something in your ancestry has strengthened your innate magic and given it an arachnid twist.

Prerequisites: Racial trait that grants a spell-like ability.

Benefit: You can use *spider climb* once per day as a spell-like ability, using your character level as the caster level.

Defensive Striker (Combat)

You were born to fight your enemies, and nobody does it better.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, base attack bonus +1, armor training trait.

Benefit: While wearing light or heavy armor, you don't take a -2 penalty to AC when you use the Cleave feat or the Lunge feat or when you charge.

IJTIKRIS

The squid-like ijtikris of Vesk-2 (*Alien Archive 3 54*) are a diverse species with individuals influenced by environmental factors in a wide multitude of ways, from water quality to mineral content to temperature, among others. The vesk conquest of Vesk-2 has also provided the ijtikris access to magical or scientific techniques that can alter the ijtikri body in various ways. Though ijtikris rarely discuss their differences in terms of variants of a common genetic baseline, many ijtikris do discuss how their growth and development were influenced by "rare" or "strange" waters.

ALTERNATE ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

Most ijtikris have the racial ability adjustments detailed in *Alien Archive 3*, but some exceptions are noted below. These have the listed ability score adjustments, rather than the standard adjustments of +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Intelligence.

Battleborn

A few ijtikris develop a physical might and a talent for combat thought to be part of their people's genetic past. This genetic adaptation has come to the fore again as the ijtikris respond to threats. A battleborn ijtikri's ability score adjustments are +2 Strength, +2 Constitution, and -2 Intelligence.

ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

Ijtikris are highly varied in physiology. Their life cycle also allows for their bodies to take advantage of natural metamorphic capabilities without the usual drawbacks.

Amphibious

Some ijtikris never grow out of their juvenile stage's water adaptations, which on Vesk-2 is seen as a fine alternative to being fully adapted to land. Such an ijtikri has the amphibious trait and the aquatic subtype, as well as a swim speed of 40 feet. The ijtikri also has a better sense of their body in three-dimensional space, and when they are off-kilter, they don't take the normal penalties to attacks and don't gain the flat-footed condition.

This replaces ijtikri movement.

Mineral Signature

Ijtikris take up a signature from the environment they developed in, causing differing structural manifestations and coloration. Those not raised on Vesk-2 can be bathed in admixtures that mimic their home world's environment. Otherwise they might develop unique traits based on the local environment. The following are a few alternative

mineral signatures, each of which alters the mineral signature racial trait.

Colorless: An ijtikri raised in an area that lacks as much environmental input as might occur on Vesk-2 develops pale, translucent skin and a bone-colored mantle. Such an ijtikri gains a racial bonus to the Sense Motive skill and *life bubble* as a spell-like ability.

Emerald: Ijtikris with an emerald signature have an intuitive sense of the workings of living things. They gain a racial bonus to the Life Science skill and *command* as a spell-like ability.

Gold: The gold signature is much more rare, and ijtikris often see it as a blessing of the sun. They gain a racial bonus to the Medicine skill and *remove condition* as a spell-like ability.

FEATS

Ijtikris are highly adaptable. They have a variety of abilities that distinguish them as individuals, among them access to the following feats. Members of other races can select these feats if they meet any prerequisites.

Fighting Balance

You know how to fight while off-balance or prone.

Benefit: As a move action, you can crawl 10 feet. While you are prone, you take only a -2 penalty to melee attack rolls and no penalty to AC against melee attacks.

Improved Spell-Like Ability

You have focused on honing your innate magical talents.

Prerequisites: At least one spell-like ability that is a level-0 or 1st-level spell, character level 4th.

Benefit: Choose one spell-like ability you have that is a 0- or 1st-level spell. Once this choice is made, it cannot be changed. You can use a chosen 0-level spell two additional times per day or the chosen 1st-level spell one additional time per day.

Special: You can select this feat more than once. Each time you can either choose the same spell-like ability or pick a different one.

Steady Footing

You use your multiple legs to your advantage.

Prerequisites: More than two legs or similar limbs.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to KAC against the bull rush, reposition, and trip combat maneuvers. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against effects that would knock you prone.



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OSHARUS

Osharus are a wildly diverse species, with shapes, sizes, and appearances having seemingly nothing to do with genetics. These scholarly monks most commonly dedicate their lives to study within many of their vast university-cities on Pabaq. But as diverse as osharus are in appearance, so too are their methods of gaining knowledge about the world and universe around them.

ALTERNATE ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

The majority of osharus have the ability adjustments found in their entry in *Alien Archive 2*, as these adjustments represent the osharus' pervasive dedication to religious worship as well as education. However, there are still many variations within the osharu species, due to environment, physiology, upbringing, or field of study. Some of these variations are described below. Osharus with these variations have the listed ability score adjustments, instead of the standard adjustments of +2 Wisdom, +2 Intelligence, -2 Constitution.

Deepmarsh

The Deepmarsh osharus, similar to those of the Mire, have forsaken the bustling university-cities in order to live solitary lives out in the wilderness. Unlike Mire dwellers, though, Deepmarsh osharus have also forsaken community, education, and religion entirely. They are often solitary or live in families of two to four companions. A Deepmarsh osharu's ability adjustments are +2 Constitution, +2 Strength, -2 Charisma.

Gengen

Gengen osharus have acclimated to swimming, and they are robust and strong. A gengen osharu's ability adjustments are +2 Strength, +2 Intelligence, -2 Dexterity.

Mire Dweller

The swamp-dwelling osharus of the Mire are a hardy and resourceful folk. Spending much of their lives roughing it in the wilds, these osharus are surprisingly deft combatants, as well as being skillful farmers, hunters, and thieves. A Mire dweller osharu's ability adjustments are +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Intelligence.

ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

As a species that has evolved to live in numerous different environments of their world, some osharus have developed different physiological or mental aptitudes, resulting in having alternate racial traits.

Monster Hunter

The osharus of the Mire are adept hunters, forgoing scholarly studies to become more resourceful in the wilds of Jenikar. Osharus with this racial trait gain a +2 racial bonus to Survival checks to follow tracks and a +1 racial bonus to Survival checks to handle animals.

This replaces pious scientist.

Saltwater Affinity

Unlike inland osharus, saltwater osharus are deft swimmers and no longer carry the species' general weakness to salt, but they also no longer produce defensive slime. Osharus with this racial trait gain a swim speed of 40 feet.

This replaces slime and susceptible to salt and alters osharu movement.

FEATS

The following feats are most common among osharus, but non-osharu characters can select these options if they meet the prerequisites.

Apt Mentor

Headteachers are prestigious scholars who have become revered experts in their fields after decades of dedication. Like these famous osharu scholars, you pride yourself in exuding not only confidence but warmth, which helps you mentor others in their fields.

Prerequisites: Life Science or Physical Science 5 ranks.

Benefit: Three times per day, you can automatically succeed at an attempt to aid another on an Intelligence- or Wisdom-based check. Additionally, each time you succeed at a Diplomacy check to gather information, you can learn one additional piece of information.

Poison Rejection

You've mastered a method of using your bodily fluids to negate poison and venom.

Prerequisites: Racial trait with "poison" or "slime" in the name.

Benefit: When you are affected by a poison or venom, if you succeed at your first saving throw against the poison, you are immediately allowed a second at the same DC. If you succeed at both saves, you end the poison with no further effects.



PAHTRAS

Pahtras strongly value their individuality and seek to distinguish themselves by excelling in unique roles or environments compared to their kin. With new worlds and solar systems opened to them due to the Veskarium's alliance with the Pact Worlds, many pahtras are lured to a life in the stars, where they can develop truly unique talents and customs.

ALTERNATE ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

While pahtras' reputation as swift and charismatic warriors is well earned, exceptions have always been common in pahtra culture. These pahtras are often assigned to specific social roles based on their perceived potential, though younger pahtras are beginning to resist this practice. The following pahtras have these listed ability score adjustments instead of the standard adjustments of +2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Strength.

Hunter-Killer

Pahtras raised on planets with standard gravity often develop the powerful musculature of born predators and are sometimes nicknamed hunter-killers due to their lethal efficiency. A hunter-killer pahtra's ability adjustment is +2 Strength.

Krreyvash

The pahtra rebels known as the Krreyvash have turned to extreme methods in their fight against the Veskarium. The Krreyvash subject themselves to experimental bio-engineering that grants them exceptional strength and reflexes but ravages their bodies. A Krreyvash pahtra's ability adjustments are +2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution.

Wise One

Certain pahtras show unusual insight or physical features that signify them as likely to receive wisdom from supernatural forces, according to pahtra tradition. These wise ones are given rigorous training regimes by elders and other wise ones in order to become strong in both body and mind. A wise one pahtra's ability adjustments are +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Strength.

ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

While most pahtras have the standard pahtra racial traits detailed in *Alien Archive 2*, specific individuals dedicate their lives into developing uncommon abilities, represented by the following alternate racial traits.

Blindsense

Some pahtras rely less on their vision, instead detecting their environment via whiskers that are sensitive to air currents and vibrations. A pahtra with this alternate racial trait has blindsense (vibration) with a range of 30 feet and low-light vision.

This replaces pahtra senses.

Natural Weapons

Pahtras can develop especially deadly claws that rake and rend with startling effectiveness. A pahtra with this alternate racial trait has natural weapons that function like those of vesk (*Core Rulebook* 52), except the pahtra's natural weapons deal slashing damage.

This replaces talented.

Parasite Sense

Some pahtras are sensitive to odors that indicate the presence of invasive bodies. A pahtra with this alternate racial trait gains a +2 bonus to checks to detect, treat, or remove diseases and parasites that infest another creature. As a full action, the pahtra can try to determine if an adjacent creature it can smell is diseased with a DC 30 Perception check. The DC of this check is reduced by 5 for each step along the disease track the creature is.

This replaces nimble.



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SKITTERMANDERS

The typical skittermander (*Alien Archive* 106) reflects an individual raised under, but largely indifferent to, the vesk occupation. They are excitable and curious, as well as industrious and respectful of the social mores of those around them. With the Veskarium in charge of their home world, some struggle to understand what skittermander society should be—ideally with the presence of, but not leadership by, others.

ALTERNATE ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

Most skittermanders have the ability adjustments found in the *Alien Archive*, as these adjustments represent overall tendencies when skittermanders are left to develop among their own kind. Given their tendency to migrate, however, variations do exist. These skittermanders might have the following ability score adjustments, instead of the standard adjustments of +2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence.

Assimilated

Many skittermanders exhibit greater impulse control and discipline, with markedly less of the freewheeling charm, empathy, and enthusiasm that typically marks their species. Sometimes, such skittermanders develop depression and depersonalization problems as they age. An assimilated skittermander's ability modifiers are +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, -2 Wisdom.

Bookish

Skittermanders generally receive little formal education; they do not rear their young, and the Veskarium has little motivation to provide a well-rounded education. Some bookish skittermanders experience formal tutoring and study away from the Veskarium, however, though this increased education often comes at the expense of developing their natural communication skills. A bookish skittermander's ability score modifier is +2 Dexterity.

ALTERNATE RACIAL ABILITIES

Skittermanders develop a wide variety of social and physical quirks that can place them outside the average suite of abilities presented in the *Alien Archive*.

Curious

Some skittermanders develop an intense interest in a narrow field and pursue this fascination, slowing the development of their physical coordination. Skittermanders with this racial

trait gain a +2 racial bonus to Perception checks and to checks for one Profession skill of their choice.

This replaces hyper.

Guardian

Most skittermanders are self-sacrificing, and some put themselves directly in harm's way to protect others. These skittermanders can enter or occupy the space of a single Small, Medium, or Large creature without imposing the normal penalties on either themselves or the creature sharing their space. They take a -2 penalty to AC while sharing their space but provide the creature whose space they share with a +1 shield^{oem} bonus to AC against ranged attacks.

This replaces grappler.

Scatter

Some skittermanders never master coordinating all six arms for manual manipulation, preferring to instead use their extra limbs for mobility. These extra maneuvering limbs allow a skittermander to wield only two hands' worth of weapons or equipment, but they also grant a land speed of 35 feet and a +2 racial bonus to Acrobatics and Athletics checks.

This replaces six-armed.

Skitterpunk

Some skittermanders have grown skeptical of the vesk and refined their collaboration instinct, developing a keen eye toward power dynamics and injustice. These skittermanders gain a +2 racial bonus to Sense Motive checks, which increases to +5 when engaging with vesk and citizens of the Veskarium.

This replaces grappler.

FEATS

The following feats are special abilities skittermanders might develop. Any character who meets their prerequisites can take them.

Hyper Speed

You can't hold still, making you difficult to hit.

Prerequisite: Hyper racial ability.

Benefit: When you use your hyper racial ability, you gain concealment (20% miss chance) until the start of your next turn.

Unionist

You have survived terrible ordeals and exploitation, and you now naturally come together to help protect others against more powerful opponents.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: You gain a +2 insight bonus to attack rolls made as part of the covering fire and harrying fire actions. When you have two or more allies within 60 feet, this attack bonus increases to +5.



VESK

The Veskarium has existed since long before the Gap. The vesk empire began as a regional power, and then a planetary one, before going on to conquer a system, and it remains a sobering example of one culture's dominance over those around it. While some of those who have fought the vesk see them as a monolithic, warlike race, vesk are in truth just as varied and nuanced as any other interplanetary society.

ALTERNATE ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

Those vesk driven to leave the Veskarium and try to earn their fortunes in dangerous ventures mostly come from a vesk-majority culture, driven to succeed in high-risk, high-reward situations, as presented in the *Core Rulebook*. However, there are numerous other origins for vesk, ranging from those who come from societies and environments outside the Veskarium to those who are the results of mystical and technological genetic programs designed to engineer supernaturally gifted vesk. These variant vesk have the ability score adjustments listed below, instead of the standard adjustments of +2 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence.

Cave

Some vesk settled deep underground, adapting to the darkness and treacherous terrain. They are typically pale in color and usually have the cave senses alternate racial trait. A cave vesk's ability adjustments are +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma.

Lambent

Vesk rule over many conquered planets, but every planet has different needs. In some places, power is determined not only by doshkos and lasers, but also by words and influence. Lambent vesk are skilled at influencing and controlling others. A lambent vesk's ability adjustments are +2 Strength, +2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence.

ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

Not all vesk share the same talents or even agree with their culture's general outlook. The following alternate racial traits represent some differences.

Brawny

Many vesk take pride in being as physically fit as possible. They gain a +2 racial bonus to Athletics and Acrobatics checks.
This replaces fearless.

Cave Senses

Vesk who grew up underground in twisted caverns have more sensitive hearing. They have low-light vision and gain blindsight (sound) 60 feet, but they take a -4 penalty to sight-based Perception checks beyond 60 feet and take a -2 penalty on ranged attack rolls against targets beyond 60 feet in bright light.
This replaces low-light vision.

Forceful Mind

Some vesk fight via means other than weapons. Once per day, when an opponent succeeds at a saving throw against a spell cast by a vesk with this trait, that vesk can force the opponent to reroll the saving throw with a -2 penalty.

This replaces natural weapons.

Frilled

Some vesk have particularly elaborate bone spikes on their heads, giving them an especially fearsome appearance. These vesk gain a +2 racial bonus to Intimidate checks.

This replaces armor savant.

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CHARACTER THEMES

Most starfaring heroes started out leading an entirely different life, developing a background that likely continues to shape their experiences, goals, and choices even as the scope of their adventures broadens. The themes presented here represent some of a character's most influential experiences and can help inspire a compelling story for your own one-in-a-billion character.



BUREAUCRAT

You bring your no-nonsense ability to cut through red tape to bear in surprising ways. See page 137 for more information.



GIANTBLOOD

You can trace your ancestry to giants, allowing you to accomplish feats of great strength. See page 138 for more information.



PRISONER

You are an escapee or parolee who uses your hard-won experience to great effect in the wider galaxy. See page 139 for more information.



QUARTERMASTER

You are always prepared to provision yourself and your allies with what's needed to succeed. See page 140 for more information.



STORMRUNNER

You are undaunted by storms, having thrown yourself into them time and again. See page 141 for more information.

NEW THEMES

The following section adds five new themes—bureaucrat, giantblood, prisoner, quartermaster, and stormrunner—that a player can choose from when creating a character. These follow the guidelines presented in Step 3 of character creation on page 14 of the *Core Rulebook*. These themes can be taken by characters of any race or class. They represent both a character's background and a major focus of the character's development moving forward.

OTHER THEMES

Other themes that work well for characters from the militaristic Veskarium and broader Near Space include ace pilot, bounty hunter, mercenary, outlaw, and spacefarer (*Core Rulebook*); gladiator, space pirate, and xenoarchaeologist (*Starfinder Pact Worlds*); athlete, guard, law officer, and sensate (*Starfinder Character Operations Manual*); colonist (*Starfinder Adventure Path #5*); and battle medic and career trooper (*Starfinder Adventure Path #19*). Of course, characters with any theme can come from all over Near Space as well.

THEMES AND CLASSES

Any theme can work with any class; below are example pairings for the new themes that might inspire your next character design.

Bureaucrat: Bureaucrats might have experience securing funding, greasing wheels, and finding alternatives, making them good fits for the biohacker^{COM}, envoy, and witchwarper^{COM}.

Giantblood: Giantbloods make a big impression, have deep connections, and can carry a lot of weight, making them good envoys, mystics, solarians, soldiers, and vanguards^{COM}.

Prisoner: Prisoners might brew concoctions from anything at hand, operate clandestinely, and use limited resources to build needed tools, making for good biohackers^{COM}, mechanics, and operatives.

Quartermaster: Quartermasters have extensive experience with all kinds of equipment and a close relationship with various technological items, making them suited as mechanics and technomancers.

Stormrunner: Stormrunners might be mystically connected to weather, tough as nails, or just incredibly hardy, making them good fits as mystics, solarians, soldiers, and vanguards^{COM}.

BUREAUCRAT +1 Int, Wis, or Cha

You're a civil servant, facilitating the day-to-day operations of a governmental agency and leaping systemic hurdles to accomplish your goals. Whether you're a minor dignitary in the Pact Worlds, the Veskarium, or beyond, you operate within institutional boundaries to effect change, navigating the proper channels to find solutions and dealing with opposing bureaucrats who block your way. You're now an adventurer, and the skills you've developed as a bureaucrat continue to serve you well in encounters with organizations across the galaxy.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

As a bureaucrat working for a governmental agency, you have become knowledgeable regarding your agency's field. Choose one of the following skills that most closely relates to your governmental agency: Culture, Life Science, Mysticism, Physical Science, or a Profession skill (other Intelligence-, Wisdom-, or Charisma-based skills might apply at the GM's discretion). Reduce the DC of checks with your chosen skill to recall knowledge on topics related to your governmental agency and its specific field of expertise by 5. The chosen skill is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to checks with that skill. In addition, you gain a +1 ability adjustment to the chosen skill's key ability score at character creation.

STRAIGHT TO THE SOURCE [6TH]

You find a common—though not necessarily intentional—thread wherever you go in the wide galaxy: the convoluted inefficiencies of governmental organizations. You have learned to expertly navigate such labyrinthine bureaucracies, bypassing their most common runarounds and pitfalls. Once per day when you gather information in a settlement or other region with a notable governmental organization, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the check and reduce the time taken by half (to a minimum of 1 hour).

EXPERT IN THE FIELD [12TH]

You leverage your knowledge of your agency's field to enhance your interactions with other professionals. When you spend 10 minutes with a creature that knows about your agency or is related to your agency's field of expertise, you can pepper jargon and insider knowledge into your interaction, such as name- or title-dropping. On your

next attempted Diplomacy check to change such a creature's attitude or Intimidate check to bully such a creature, you gain a +4 circumstance bonus.

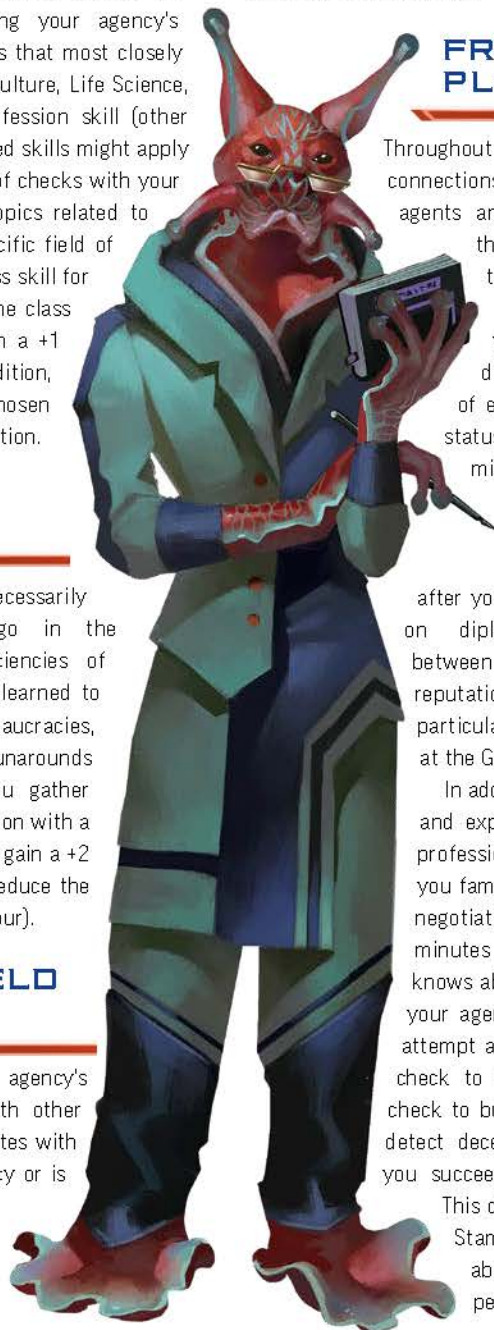
FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES [18TH]

Throughout your career, you have developed connections with all sorts of governmental agents and agencies, and you can use these ties to further your influence throughout the galaxy.

When in a region with either your governmental agency or a different one with a related field of expertise, you can leverage your status to gain an appointment with a minor governmental functionary. You can usually schedule an appointment to take place sometime 1d4 to 2d6 days after you make your request, depending on diplomatic relations, familiarity between the two agencies, your personal reputation in the region, and any particular NPC's attitude toward you (all at the GM's discretion).

In addition, your expertise in your field and experience in dealing with various professionals navigating it have made you famously difficult to outmaneuver in negotiations. After you spend at least 10 minutes interacting with a creature that knows about your agency or is related to your agency's field of expertise, you can attempt a Bluff check to lie, a Diplomacy check to change attitude, an Intimidate check to bully, or a Sense Motive check to detect deception against that creature. If you succeed, you regain 1 Resolve Point.

This doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points. You can use this ability twice per day, but only once per creature.

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GIANTBLOOD +1 Str

Giants' blood flows through your veins, and you feel a fascination and kinship with these towering beings. You may stand a little taller than most of your kind, and you are capable of great feats of endurance. Like many giantbloods, you likely bear some physical attributes of the specific giants you are descended from. You've learned to tap into giants' great strength and fortitude to perform feats most people of your kind would find difficult, if not impossible.



THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You have great respect for giants and know much about their varied societies, cultural traditions, and famous figures. When you attempt a Culture or Life Science check to identify or recall knowledge about giants, their abilities, or the names of famous giants, reduce the DC by 5. Culture is a class skill for you. If it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Culture checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Constitution at character creation.

OVERSIZED EQUIPMENT [6TH]

You can use larger pieces of equipment that others of your kind may find bulky and unwieldy. Treat your Strength score as 2 higher for the purposes of wielding weapons and wearing armor. You can use weapons designed for creatures one size category larger than you with a -2 penalty rather than the standard -4 penalty.

HURL DEBRIS [12TH]

You can exert yourself in a burst of tremendous strength. As a standard action, you can use two free hands to hurl a single piece of debris as a ranged attack with a thrown weapon that targets KAC. Debris is otherwise treated as an improvised weapon (*Core Rulebook* 169) that deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage per bulk and has a range increment equal to 5 × your Strength modifier. Debris can be any object with a minimum bulk of 3 and a maximum bulk equal to your Strength modifier + 2, but that object must be unattended or readily torn from the environment (at the GM's discretion). Picking up such debris is a move action. You can't use this ability while encumbered or overburdened.

SIZE ADVANTAGE [18TH]

You delight in towering over others as giants do, and you thrive on feeling large and imposing. You gain a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks against creatures at least one size category smaller than you. In addition, twice per day, after you succeed at an Intimidate check against a significant enemy that is at least one size category smaller than you, you can spend 10 minutes reliving the memory of your success to regain 1 Resolve Point. This doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points.

PRISONER

+1 Wis

You have been incarcerated and have either escaped or been released, perhaps conditionally. You might have run afoul of the law or been unjustly locked up for a crime you didn't commit. Either way, you have learned quite a bit during your time as an inmate. You figured out how to navigate gangs, guards, and sometimes dangerous and deceitful individuals. Now that you're free of incarceration, you rely on the tools you learned and the conditioning you acquired to survive in the outside world.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You've spent time around criminals who got caught or people who were incarcerated unjustly, and you've experienced firsthand the effects of the criminal justice system on individuals. Reduce the DC of Culture checks to recall knowledge about criminal elements, incidents of corruption, and penal institutions by 5. Perception is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Perception checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Wisdom at character creation.

CONCEAL CONTRABAND [6TH]

While incarcerated, you honed your skill at concealing contraband from the guards and other prisoners. You gain a +2 bonus to Sleight of Hand checks to hide an object on your body, and the +4 bonus to Perception a person would normally receive from observing you or searching your body is reduced by 2. In addition, you can retrieve a hidden object as a move action rather than a standard action.

ANYTHING'S A WEAPON [12TH]

While imprisoned, you had limited resources to defend yourself with, and often had to make do with what you had at hand at the time. When using a nonweapon object as an improvised weapon (*Core Rulebook* 169), you don't treat it as archaic, and if you would take a -4 penalty to attacks with that weapon because it is improvised, that penalty is reduced by 2.

PRISONER'S PREDICAMENT [18TH]

Few things rouse you to action more than seeing others imprisoned—or being restrained yourself. Twice per day when you spend 10 minutes talking to a sapient creature that's confined to a cell or in restraints (such as manacles) against its will, you regain 1 Resolve Point; you can do this only once per such creature. In addition, once per day, if you spend 10 minutes in a cell or restraints against your will, you regain 2 Resolve Points. You can gain no more than 2 Resolve Points each day with this ability, and it doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points.

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QUARTERMASTER +1 Int

While many think of front-line soldiers and officers as the core of a fighting force, you know that no military can function without access to supplies. You are the backbone of your army, providing your allies with resources crucial to their survival and amenities to provide material comforts in times of conflict. Perhaps you are a member of the Veskarium military who contributes to war efforts, but regardless of your specific affiliation, your allies know they can rely on you to get them exactly what they need.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

Through intensive instruction and training, you've developed knowledge of the field of military logistics, which has translated to your career as a quartermaster. The DC of skill checks to identify military-related technological items or to recall knowledge related to the movement, maintenance, and transport of military personnel and supplies is reduced by 5. At character creation, you gain a free skill rank in Profession (quartermaster), which is an Intelligence-based skill and is a class skill for you; this does not allow your skill ranks in Profession (quartermaster) to exceed your character level.

In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Intelligence at character creation.

CARGO CARRIER [6TH]

Your profession requires you to carry all manner of gear, and you have learned to distribute the weight of the supplies you carry across your body, allowing you to carry it more efficiently. You can treat two items you're carrying, neither of which is armor or weaponry, as having one less bulk than normal (to a minimum of light bulk).

FIELD CRAFTER [12TH]

You have learned to efficiently create clothing, shelter, and other amenities useful for your troops in the field, maintaining health and morale even in difficult times. You can use Profession (quartermaster) to craft the items listed below, even without access to a workshop. Treat your number of ranks in the Profession (quartermaster) skill as if it were 5 higher for the purpose of determining crafting time for these items.

Food and Drink: Intoxicant (minor), field ration, meal (poor or common).

Personal Items: Backpack (consumer or industrial), bonding epoxy, clothing (environmental, everyday, or travel), gear clamp, hygiene kit, tent (mass produced).

Technological Items: Cable line (titanium alloy or adamantite alloy), detonator, lock (simple, average, or good), portable light (beacon, flashlight, lantern, or spotlight), restraint (binders or manacles).

MASTER OF QUARTERS [18TH]

You take great satisfaction in providing for your allies—and for yourself—while undertaking challenging adventures in potentially hazardous circumstances. Twice per day, after you or an ally succeeds at a significant task in a way that crucially relied upon supplies you crafted using your field crafter ability (at the GM's discretion), you can spend 10 minutes cataloging and organizing your remaining supplies to regain 1 Resolve Point. This does not count as resting to regain Stamina Points.



STORMRUNNER **+1 Dex**

The tumultuous atmosphere of Vesk-5 or another storm-ridden world has trained you to navigate difficult or even forbidden airspaces with grace. You've learned to recognize the order in the apparent randomness of a storm. Your knowledge of weather patterns, ability to make split-second decisions, and near-instantaneous reaction time give you the ability to move just a bit faster than the lightning on your tail. Wherever you picked up this skill, you know how to read a situation and never take your surroundings for granted.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

The life of a stormrunner is about beating the odds in high-risk situations. Reduce the DC of Survival checks to endure severe weather, orienteer, and predict weather when in rainy, snowy, stormy, or windy conditions by 5. Survival is a class skill for you, or if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you gain a +1 bonus to Survival checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Dexterity at character creation.

EYE OF THE STORM [6TH]

When in stormy conditions, you're able to gather greater information about your surroundings. Your visibility range in a storm (but not a powerful storm; *Core Rulebook* 399) is reduced by only half, and you take a -4 penalty to Perception checks instead of a -8 penalty. When you succeed at a Survival check to endure severe weather, you can move up to your full overland speed and still receive the +2 bonus to Fortitude saves against severe weather. You suffer the forced movement and take damage from a failed Acrobatics check to fly in dangerous wind conditions only if you fail the check by 10 or more, instead of by 5 or more.

UNDAUNTED [12TH]

Some consider stormrunners brave; others believe them to be reckless. Whether you have a steadfast mindset or have abandoned your self-preservation instinct, your many dangerous excursions have left you unperturbed by insurmountable odds and bullying tactics. The DC of Intimidate checks to bully or demoralize you is increased by 5. In addition, once per day as a reaction when you are affected by a fear effect, you can delay the onset of that effect for 1 round.

LIGHTNING REACTIONS [18TH]

You move faster than lightning, surprising your foes with your readiness for action. Twice per day, after a combat in which you acted in a surprise round, acted first (for tactical combat), or rolled the highest Piloting check in the first helm phase (for starship combat), you can spend 10 minutes mentally reviewing your actions and preparing for the next surprise to regain 1 Resolve Point. This does not count as resting to regain Stamina Points.

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ARCHETYPES

Starfinder offers great flexibility in character creation through the selection of race, theme, and class. Archetypes help you fulfill specific concepts by swapping out base class features for specialized mechanics, allowing you to further establish your character's niche. The archetypes in this section follow the rules presented on pages 126-127 of the *Core Rulebook*.



ASSASSIN

You practice a deadly and clandestine craft, bringing a swift end to your selected targets. See page 143 for more information.



BATTLE LEADER

You capitalize on your allies' success in battle, encouraging them when they succeed to achieve even greater results. See page 144 for more information.



COMMANDO

You condition yourself to thrive in a wide variety of dangerous and hostile environments and to better withstand punishment. See page 145 for more information.



DOSHKO SPECIALIST

You elevate the use of the iconic vesk melee weapon to an art form, mastering its intricacies in stages. See page 146 for more information.



MEDIATOR

You guide others to the peaceful resolution of conflict as a beacon guides a starship onto a landing pad. See page 147 for more information.

CLASSES AND ARCHETYPES

The following classes fit especially well with the listed archetypes, though any class can swap in features from any of these archetypes.

Biohacker^{COM}: Biohackers might serve as battle leaders, pairing their restoratives with cheerful shouts, or as mediators who facilitate communication between others.

Envoy: Envoys make natural mediators and battle leaders, while those traveling with hardy teams in difficult environments might benefit from the commando's resilience.

Mechanic: Exocortex mechanics might become doshko specialists or commandos, while drone mechanics might shout encouragement as battle leaders.

Mystic: Mystics serve a range of roles depending on their connection, but the mediator and battle leader archetypes might fit a number of these enigmatic spellcasters.

Operative: Assassin is the most fitting choice for operatives, and they can also make excellent commandos.

Solarian: Solarians can easily adopt a number of archetypes, from assassin to battle leader to commando—and even doshko specialist, if they take a particular interest in the vesk weapon, especially those whose solar weapon manifestation takes its form.

Soldier: Soldiers fit well with each of these archetypes, though a mediator soldier might be the type to speak softly and carry a large laser cannon.

Technomancer: Technomancers make effective battle leaders and even commandos in certain environs. They also serve as mediators in tense situations, especially between large corporations and influential individuals in high-tech industries, where subject knowledge expertise is almost as important as communication skills.

Vanguard^{COM}: Vanguards make excellent battle leaders, commandos, and doshko specialists, as they are ideal for fighting on the front lines, while channeling the entropy around them to enact their will.

Witchwarper^{COM}: Charismatic witchwarpers can, depending on their temperament, make suitable battle leaders, mediators, or commandos, the latter helping them weather the punishing characteristics of alternate realities they manifest in their own.

OTHER ARCHETYPES

Other archetypes fit characters from Near Space well, including divine champion and star knight from *Pact Worlds*, and espionage specialist, fixer, free trader, medic, powered armor jockey, and starwright from the *Character Operations Manual*.

ASSASSIN

Throughout the galaxy, shadowy figures move unseen, expertly eliminating targets before disappearing back into anonymity. Assassins originate from many different home worlds and cultures, and while no single tradition defines these gifted killers, several secretive societies train accomplished warriors into finely honed tools of discreet murder. Others learn the deadly craft on their own or from a mentor, refining their skills through decades of mercenary work. Some see assassins as supernatural beings—avatars of death that employ reality-bending magic to eliminate their targets. Others maintain that assassins gain their edge via superior technology. In truth, assassins make use of all manner of tactics, and some even use technomagical methods. Many organizations court assassins with exorbitant salaries and promises of immunity.

While many of the galaxy's denizens are capable of committing murderous acts, assassins regard death as a painter does a palette. A skilled assassin can observe a target and determine the precise moment to strike, dealing irreparable damage to the target's vital organs and ending their life with a single lethal blow. Many assassins also employ magic capable of tampering with the memories of potential witnesses, while others deploy technology that obscures their presence from modern surveillance.

Assassins value anonymity and discretion above all else; leaving a fragment of security footage behind or allowing their identity to be discovered can cost an assassin their job, if not their life. Many operatives and soldiers seek training as an assassin, but anyone with a talent for stealth and the willingness to kill can become an assassin. Though murder is part of the job description, not all assassins have evil alignments. Some individuals with this specialized training use their talents to serve a higher cause, but many are hardened criminals or jaded veterans with too much blood on their hands. Rumor has it that some law enforcement agencies in the galaxy employ small units of assassins responsible for tracking and taking down high-risk criminal targets.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The assassin archetype grants alternate class features at 6th, 12th, and 18th levels.

Opportunistic Cloaking (Ex) 6th Level

You know how to manipulate your environment and take advantage of gaps in others' perception to become undetectable even in plain sight. Once per day, you can attempt a Stealth check to hide as though you had succeeded at the create a diversion task of the Bluff skill against up to six creatures you're observing. This ability functions only in crowded areas or in dim light or darkness (*Core Rulebook* 261); the GM might determine you can use this ability in similar circumstances.

Lethal Strike (Ex) 12th Level

As a standard action, you can study the weaknesses of a single enemy that you're observing. Once per day, on a round after you

spend 2 consecutive rounds studying the same enemy this way, you can either take a full action to move up to your speed and make a single attack with a melee weapon, or take a full action to attack with a sniper weapon (using the sniper weapon's sniper range if applicable), against the studied enemy. This lethal strike attack deals damage as normal, and the target must also succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC = 10 + half your character level + your key ability modifier) or take 1d6 additional damage per your character level. If the target fails the save, it must also attempt a second Fortitude saving throw with the same DC. If it fails this second save, it dies instantly; this is a death effect.

In addition, whenever you kill a creature using your lethal strike, you can attempt a Stealth check opposed by Perception checks to notice by those in the vicinity; if successful, you prevent those nearby from identifying you as the attacker. If you succeed by 5 or more, bystanders might not even immediately notice that the target is dead (at the GM's discretion).

Exploitative Strike (Ex) 18th Level

When you use lethal strike, you can force your target to roll its initial save twice and take the worse result. Alternatively, when a target that you studied on your previous turn is within your reach and an ally's attack results in a critical hit against it, you can activate lethal strike as a reaction.



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BATTLE LEADER

Followers of a tradition that originated in the Veskarium among devout followers of Damoritosh, battle leaders are known for celebrating victories as they happen, yelling out to their allies when an enemy suffers a critical or lethal blow and inspiring further glorious actions. This tradition has since spread throughout other star systems, and many species, from calculating Eoxians in the Pact Worlds to bellicose hobgoblins from the Gideron Authority can be counted among their numbers.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The battle leader archetype has alternate class features at 2nd and 12th levels, and an optional alternate class feature that can be selected at any of 4th, 6th, 9th, and 18th levels.

Victory Cry (Ex) 2nd Level

You have learned how to capitalize on your allies' successes in battle, inspiring them to further incredible feats. You learn one victory cry, chosen from those listed below. As a reaction when you or an ally scores a critical hit against a significant enemy with an attack or drops a significant enemy to 0 Hit Points, you can issue a victory cry, choosing one victory cry you know and providing its benefits to all allies within 60 feet of you (but not yourself).

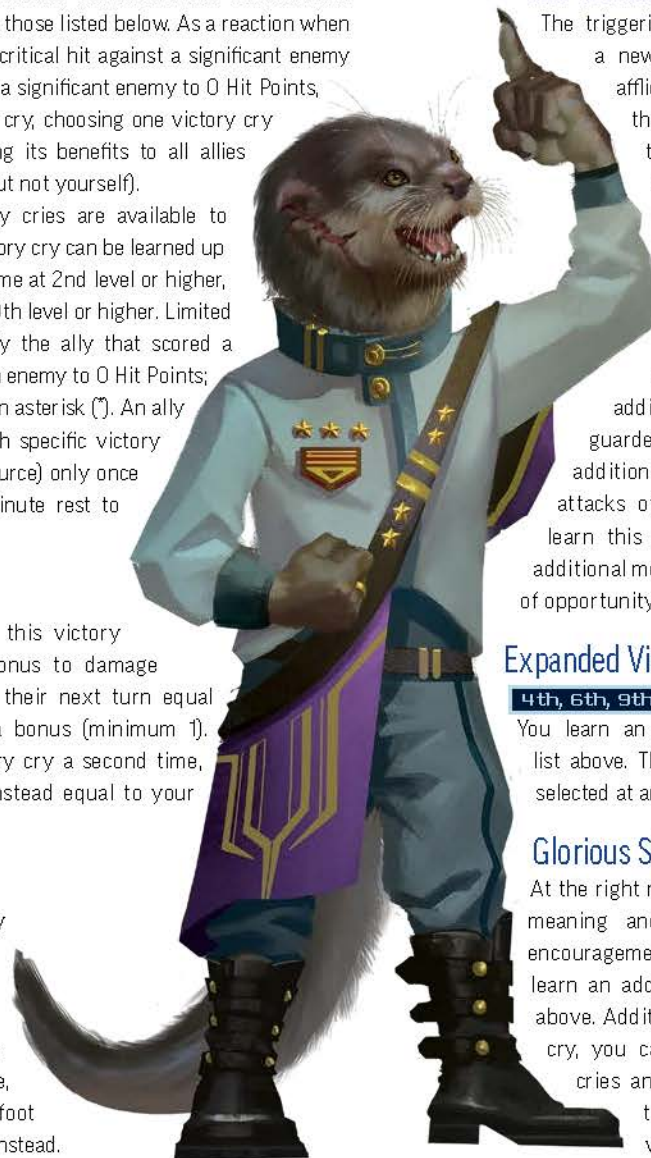
The following victory cries are available to battle leaders. Each victory cry can be learned up to two times: the first time at 2nd level or higher, and the second time at 9th level or higher. Limited victory cries affect only the ally that scored a critical hit or reduced an enemy to 0 Hit Points; these are labeled with an asterisk (*). An ally can be affected by each specific victory cry (regardless of its source) only once until they take a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points.

Got 'Em!

Each ally affected by this victory cry gains a morale bonus to damage rolls until the end of their next turn equal to half your Charisma bonus (minimum 1). If you learn this victory cry a second time, the morale bonus is instead equal to your Charisma bonus.

Keep Moving!

All creatures affected by this victory cry gain a +10-foot morale bonus to their speed for one round. If you learn this victory cry a second time, this becomes a +20-foot morale bonus to speed instead.



Listen Up!

Each creature affected by this victory cry chooses either saving throws or skill checks, and each such creature can choose differently. Until the end of their next turn, each such creature gains a +1 morale bonus to the selected option. If you learn this victory cry a second time, each affected creature can choose both options.

Regroup!*

The triggering ally regains Stamina Points equal to your class level plus your Charisma bonus. If you learn this victory cry a second time, this becomes Stamina Points equal to twice your class level plus your Charisma bonus.

Stay Alert!*

The triggering ally gains a +1 morale bonus to AC for 1 round. If you learn this victory cry a second time, this instead becomes a +1 morale bonus to AC and a +1 morale bonus to saving throws for 1 round.

Take a Breather!*

The triggering ally can immediately attempt a new saving throw against a single affliction that is affecting them. Failing this saving throw does not worsen the affliction. If you learn this victory cry a second time, the ally also gains a +4 morale bonus to this saving throw.

Tread Carefully!

Each creature affected by this victory cry can move an additional 5 feet when taking a guarded step on their next turn; this additional 5 feet of movement provokes attacks of opportunity as normal. If you learn this victory cry a second time, the additional movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Expanded Victory (Ex; Optional)

4th, 6th, 9th, and 18th Levels

You learn an additional victory cry from the list above. This alternate class feature can be selected at any, all, or none of these levels.

Glorious Shout (Ex) 12th Level

At the right moments, your voice carries more meaning and inflection, imparting further encouragement to empower your allies. You learn an additional victory cry from the list above. Additionally, when you issue a victory cry, you can choose two different victory cries and provide both of their benefits to the creatures affected by each victory cry.

COMMANDO

Commandos are elite specialists, trained to endure dangerous environments and hostile situations. They are known for building a resistance against specific threats, ranging from interrogation to weather. Above all else, a commando is tough and adaptable, sent into dangerous environments either as an individual or as part of a small troop to complete important missions or escort high-value individuals.

Organizations known to train commandos are widely varying, with soldier and vanguard commandos recruited by the Veskarium military, the Skyfire Legion of the Pact Worlds, and the Gideron Authority, where they play an important role in hostile environments and combat encounters. On Ghorus Prime, specialized commando mystics act as guides and operators for wilderness lodges that manage plant-creature populations in dangerous environments. The Speakers of Embroi are known for employing envoy commandos known for showing little fear, while squads regularly escort the Guardians of Daimalko. In both the Gideron Authority and the Marixah Republic, mystic and technomancer commandos lead investigations of unknown ruins in dangerous frontiers, resulting in technological advancements; such groups include the hobgoblin-led Scarlet Horse Troop and the Diamond Spider Division from the colonies of Sansorgis. What little exploration that has occurred on the floating ruins of Tabrid Minor is conducted largely by well-prepared commando biohackers and adaptable commando solarians.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The commando archetype grants alternate class features at 4th, 6th, and 12th levels, and an alternate class feature that can be selected at 9th level, 18th level, both, or neither.

Commando Conditioning (Ex) 4th Level

You have learned how to steel yourself against a specific type of hostile environment. Choose one conditioning style from those listed below. You gain a +2 insight bonus to saving throws against the types of effects listed in any conditioning styles you have selected from this archetype. This is your conditioning bonus. If your conditioning bonus would apply multiple times to a single saving throw, instead increase your conditioning bonus by +1 for every time after the first that it would apply.

Conditioning Styles

The following conditioning styles are available to commandos. Each conditioning style can be taken only once.

- **Attention Division:** Your conditioning bonus applies against sense-dependent effects.
- **Caustic Training:** Your conditioning bonus applies against effects that would cause the entangled condition and effects that deal acid damage.
- **Combat Chance:** Your conditioning bonus applies against

critical hit effects and effects that would force you to roll multiple times and take the worst result.

- **Counter-Interrogation:** Your conditioning bonus applies against charm and pain effects.
- **Extreme Cold:** Your conditioning bonus applies against cold dangers and effects that deal cold damage.
- **Extreme Heat:** Your conditioning bonus applies against heat dangers and effects that deal fire damage.
- **Gamma Protocols:** Your conditioning bonus applies against radiation and transmutation spells.
- **Hardened Demeanor:** Your conditioning bonus applies against compulsion effects and fear effects.
- **Mental Fortress:** Your conditioning bonus applies against mind-affecting effects.
- **Storm Training:** Your conditioning bonus applies against effects that deal electricity or sonic damage.
- **Temple Body:** Your conditioning bonus applies against diseases (other than addiction) and poisons.

Exceptional Endurance (Ex) 6th Level

Your field training makes you exceptionally tough. Choose an additional conditioning style. In addition, you add your class level to your total Stamina Points.

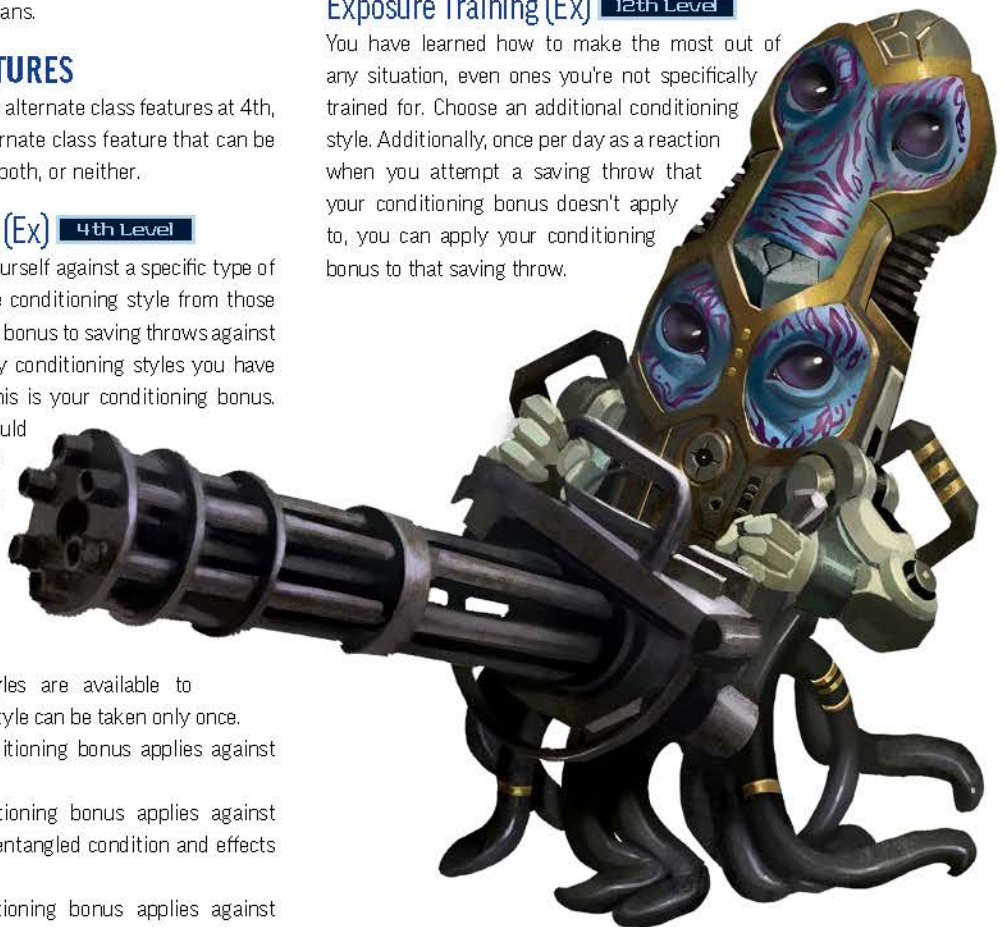
Further Conditioning (Ex; Optional)

9th AND 18th Levels

Optionally, you can choose an additional conditioning style.

Exposure Training (Ex) 12th Level

You have learned how to make the most out of any situation, even ones you're not specifically trained for. Choose an additional conditioning style. Additionally, once per day as a reaction when you attempt a saving throw that your conditioning bonus doesn't apply to, you can apply your conditioning bonus to that saving throw.



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DOSHKO SPECIALIST

A doshko is as much a symbol as it is a weapon. The traditional vesk melee weapon, a doshko requires strength to wield and delivers devastating blows in the right hands. The weapon imparts a clear willingness to engage in bloody conflict, which is why fearsome groups like the church of Damoritosh intentionally rely on doshko iconography. Doshko specialists are martial artists who study the history and traditions of the doshko not only to improve their ability to vanquish foes in melee, but to learn lessons of honor and fury that the weapon's legacy can teach.

Nearly everyone familiar with an arms dealer's wares knows that doshkos come with anywhere from one to four axe-like blades made of steel or energy, though the three-bladed version is the most common. Few other than vesk martial historians—including doshko specialists—understand that each blade has a specific meaning. Doshko specialists call the weapons' blades their "teeth," and each tooth, from the tip down to the haft, must be earned, one at a time, by learning a specific truth about the weapon. Although anyone might purchase a doshko with a variable number of blades, doshko specialists prefer to limit themselves to doshkos with only the number of blades they have earned. Intense rivalries ignite when doshko specialists find themselves on opposite sides of a confrontation.

Most doshko specialists are solarians, soldiers, or vanguards. Such soldiers often have the blitz fighting style, while vanguards might have the cascade or momentum aspects. Many doshko specialists are vesk, although vesk usually appreciate those of other species who strive to embrace the power and legacy of their traditional weapon.

PREREQUISITES

You must be proficient with advanced melee weapons, such as from the proficiency granted by a class, a class feature, or the Advanced Melee Weapons Proficiency feat. This proficiency imparts a prospective doshko specialist the honor of bearing a doshko with a single blade, which they call the Tooth of Eager Spirit.

If you are a solarian using a solar weapon and choose a doshko for its general design, you can apply the effects of this archetype to your solar weapon as though it were a doshko, as long as it remains as that design.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The doshko specialist archetype grants additional class features at 2nd, 6th, 12th, and 18th levels. Effects that apply to a doshko you are holding end as soon as you aren't holding it.

Tooth That Seeks Honor (Ex) 2nd Level

The second doshko tooth resists dishonor. Your training empowers you to recover from missed blows by extending your reach or changing tactics. When you miss an opponent with a melee attack with your doshko, you can grant that doshko the disarm, reach, sunder (*Armory* 30), or trip weapon special property until the start of your next turn. If you miss again before the start of your next turn, you can grant the doshko an additional special property from the list. You can grant a doshko only two special properties at a time with this ability.

Tooth That Bites Steel (Ex) 6th Level

The third tooth strives to prove the doshko a superior weapon. You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls when performing disarm, sunder, or trip combat maneuvers with a doshko. If your attack roll is a natural 20, you also apply the doshko's critical hit effect (if any) to the target.

Tooth That Reaps the Unworthy (Ex) 12th Level

The fourth tooth tears flesh. A doshko you hold that does not have the wound or severe wound critical hit effect gains the effects of the wounding weapon fusion (*Core Rulebook* 195). When you score a critical hit with a doshko with the wound or severe wound critical hit effect, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to choose the next-highest result from the Wounding Weapons table (*Core Rulebook* 183) after rolling. When you score a critical hit with a doshko with the severe wound critical hit effect, you also increase the DC to save against it by 2.

Tooth That Commands Terror (Su) 18th Level

You have earned the right to bear the celebrated five-bladed doshko. Any doshko you hold manifests five blades, magically sprouting additional blades of steel or energy as needed. While you hold a doshko, you gain a +4 circumstance bonus to saves against fear effects and you gain the frightful presence universal creature rule (*Alien Archive* 154) with a range of 60 feet and a duration of 2d4 rounds. The DC for this effect is 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Strength modifier.



MEDIATOR

With innumerable species populating the Pact Worlds, Near Space, and the worlds beyond, conflicts, disagreements, and misunderstandings inevitably arise between groups. To help mitigate any major consequences to such disputes, many take it upon themselves to act as peacemakers. These mediators are sometimes simply well-intentioned, skilled individuals who wish to put their talents to good use and help others around them. Other times, mediators receive specialized training to help deal with conflicts in formalized or professional settings. Regardless of their specific methods, most mediators learn to tap into an innate emotional and psychological understanding of others to help act as efficient arbitrators.

Most classes can make suitable mediators, but many tend to be envoys and mystics. Whatever their original training and skills, mediators can be quite helpful when navigating a range of difficult or tense situations, such as mediating peaceful diplomatic talks, facilitating corporate mergers, or negotiating surrender after a deadly battle. As for which species tend toward arbitration roles, mediator's empathic abilities can be difficult to develop intentionally, but a number of species such as brenneris (*Alien Archive 3 8*), damais (*Alien Archive 2 32*), and vlakas (*Alien Archive 2 134*) are often particularly emotionally attuned, making them natural mediators.

For more about Daimalko, the home planet of damais, see page 74. For more about Varturan, the home planet of brenneris, see page 110.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The mediator archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, 9th, and 12th levels.

Diplomatic Nuance (Ex) 2nd Level

You gain Culture and Diplomacy as class skills. For each of these skills that is already a class skill for you (or becomes a class skill) from a source other than this archetype, you learn to speak and read a new language. See page 41 of the *Core Rulebook* for a list of languages spoken in the Pact Worlds and beyond.

You can use your Diplomacy skill for Bluff checks to lie or pass a secret message and your Culture skill for Life Science checks to identify humanoid and monstrous humanoids. When you attempt a Diplomacy check to change a creature's attitude, the creature's attitude worsens only if you fail the check by 10 or more, rather than if you fail the check by 5 or more.

Expert Negotiator (Ex) 4th Level

You are highly skilled at convincing others and reaching amicable agreements. If a creature's initial

attitude toward you would be unfriendly, indifferent, or friendly, you instead treat its attitude as one category higher. When you fail a Diplomacy check to change the attitude of a hostile creature by 10 or less, you can attempt to change its attitude again. Whenever an ally uses aid another to assist you with a Diplomacy check to change a creature's attitude, if you succeed at that check, the targeted creature's attitude toward your ally also improves.

Speaker of Many Worlds (Sp) 9th Level

You can draw upon all known languages to make yourself understood in almost any situation. You gain the ability to cast *tongues* once per day as a spell-like ability. In addition, once per day as a full action, you can touch up to two willing creatures with an Intelligence modifier of at least -3 and grant them the ability to communicate with you and each other as though under the effect of *tongues*. This effect lasts for 1 hour or until you end it with a swift action. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Empathic Link (Su) 12th Level

You create a mental and emotional bond between yourself and other creatures.

As a full action, you can touch up to two willing or unconscious creatures to create an empathic link between yourself and each creature touched. This empathic link lasts for 1 hour or until you end it for all creatures with a swift action. While linked, you and the linked creatures gain the effects of *status* in relation to one another.

Linked creatures have an automatic emotional connection that allows them to better understand each other's feelings as well as provide a constant and passive psychological comfort and support. Whenever a linked creature fails a Will saving throw, a different linked creature can spend 1 Resolve Point as a reaction to allow the affected creature to reroll its failed saving throw. If the effect is an emotion or fear effect, the affected creature gains a +1 circumstance bonus to this reroll. The creature must use the second result, even if it's worse. An affected creature can reroll a given saving throw only once in this manner.

Finally, you and the linked creatures learn how to anticipate each other's needs and actions. Once per day at the beginning of combat, each linked creature can swap their initiative result with that of any other linked creature within 60 feet.

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WEAPONS AND FUSIONS

The following specialized weapons are more common in Near Space systems, such as the Veskarium, than in the Pact Worlds. Nevertheless, their utility and power make them prized in markets across the galaxy. The weapons in this section use the rules presented starting on page 168 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*.

WEAPON SPECIAL PROPERTIES

These new weapon special properties are used by some of the weapons listed below.

Reposition: When you attempt a reposition combat maneuver with this weapon, you gain a +2 bonus to your attack roll.

Teleportive: This weapon's fired ammunition teleports a short distance after being fired. You take only a -1 cumulative penalty when attacking outside the range of this weapon.

CRITICAL HIT EFFECTS

These new critical hit effects can be applied by some of the weapons listed below.

Enfeeble: The target must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw or take 1d4 Strength damage.

Nuisance: This weapon delivers targeted pops of sound and strobes of light. If you score a critical hit against a target with this weapon, the target is affected as though hit with harrying fire.

TABLE 4-1: ADVANCED MELEE WEAPONS

ONE-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	BULK	SPECIAL
UNCATEGORIZED						
Doshakari, tactical	6	4,300	1d6 P	Wound	L	Analog, disarm, operative
Doshakari, advanced	10	18,500	3d4 P	Wound	L	Analog, disarm, operative
Doshakari, ultrathin	13	51,500	5d4 P	Wound	L	Analog, disarm, operative
Doshakari, zero-edge	16	175,000	6d6 P	Wound	L	Analog, disarm, operative
Doshakari, molecular rift	19	575,000	9d6 P	Severe wound	L	Analog, disarm, operative
TWO-HANDED WEAPONS						
CRYO						
Frosthft doshko, chill	4	2,100	1d8 C	Enfeeble	1	Powered (capacity 20, usage 1), reach, unwieldy
Frosthft doshko, subzero	9	12,800	2d10 C	Enfeeble	1	Powered (capacity 20, usage 1), reach, unwieldy
Frosthft doshko, glacial	14	73,400	4d10 C	Enfeeble	1	Powered (capacity 20, usage 1), reach, unwieldy
Frosthft doshko, avalanche	20	804,400	8d12 C	Enfeeble	1	Powered (capacity 20, usage 1), reach, unwieldy
SHOCK						
Storm doshko, static	3	1,490	1d8 E	Staggered	1	Powered (capacity 20, usage 1)
Storm doshko, aurora	7	6,700	2d8 E	Staggered	1	Powered (capacity 20, usage 1)
Storm doshko, lightning	12	35,900	4d8 E	Staggered	1	Powered (capacity 20, usage 1)
Storm doshko, tempest	16	169,000	7d8 E	Staggered	1	Powered (capacity 20, usage 1)
UNCATEGORIZED						
Skitterstaff, rustic	1	220	1d6 B	—	1	Analog, reposition
Skitterstaff, provincial	4	1,880	1d8 B	Knockdown	1	Analog, reposition
Skitterstaff, agrarian	8	9,400	3d8 B	Knockdown	1	Analog, reposition
Skitterstaff, bucolic	12	36,900	5d8 B	Knockdown	1	Analog, reposition

TABLE 4-2: SMALL ARMS

ONE-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
FLAME									
Infernian, ifrit-class	3	1,400	1d6 F	50 ft.	Arc 1d4	4 flares	1	L	—
Infernian, salamander-class	7	6,500	2d4 F	50 ft.	Arc 1d6	10 flares	1	L	—
Infernian, hellhound-class	11	25,000	4d4 F	50 ft.	Arc 2d6	20 flares	1	L	—
Infernian, firedrake-class	15	109,500	6d4 F	50 ft.	Arc 3d6	20 flares	1	L	—
Infernian, phoenix-class	19	591,500	7d6 F	50 ft.	Arc 4d6	20 flares	1	L	—
PROJECTILE									
Skipshot pistol, tactical	1	105	1d4 P	60 ft.	Bleed 2	20 rounds	1	L	Teleportive

<i>Skipshot pistol, advanced</i>	6	3,750	2d4 P	60 ft.	Bleed 1d6	20 rounds	1	L	Teleportive
<i>Skipshot pistol, elite</i>	12	32,000	5d4 P	60 ft.	Bleed 3d6	20 rounds	1	L	Teleportive
<i>Skipshot pistol, paragon</i>	17	216,500	11d4 P	60 ft.	Bleed 5d6	20 rounds	1	L	Teleportive

TABLE 4-3: LONGARMS

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
SONIC									
Rackarack, pulse	1	205	1d6 So	60 ft.	Nuisance	20 charges	2	1	–
Rackarack, surge	6	4,400	2d6 So	60 ft.	Nuisance	20 charges	2	1	Boost 1d4
Rackarack, drum	13	46,100	5d6 So	60 ft.	Nuisance	20 charges	2	1	Boost 2d4
Rackarack, hammer	18	371,000	6d10 So	60 ft.	Nuisance	40 charges	2	1	Boost 4d4
UNCATEGORIZED									
Formian venomcaster, tactical	3	1,325	1d8 P	40 ft.	Injection DC +2	6 darts	1	1	Analog, injection, unwieldy
Formian venomcaster, advanced	9	12,750	3d8 P	60 ft.	Injection DC +2	12 darts	1	1	Analog, injection, unwieldy
Formian venomcaster, elite	14	70,600	7d8 P	80 ft.	Injection DC +2	12 darts	1	1	Analog, entangle, injection, unwieldy
Formian venomcaster, paragon	18	398,000	10d10 P	80 ft.	Injection DC +2	24 darts	1	1	Analog, entangle, injection, unwieldy

TABLE 4-4: HEAVY WEAPONS

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
PLASMA									
Desperation cannon, rage-bringer	4	2,250	1d12 E & F	100 ft.	Nuisance	40 charges	5	2	Bright, penetrating, unwieldy
Desperation cannon, doom-caller	10	18,500	3d12 E & F	100 ft.	Nuisance	100 charges	10	2	Bright, penetrating, unwieldy
Desperation cannon, sky-piercer	15	119,500	6d12 E & F	100 ft.	Nuisance	100 charges	10	2	Bright, penetrating, unwieldy
Desperation cannon, titan-killer	19	565,000	9d12 E & F	100 ft.	Nuisance	100 charges	20	2	Bright, penetrating, unwieldy

TABLE 4-5: SNIPER WEAPONS

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
PROJECTILE									
Kin-killer, tactical	5	3,010	1d10 P	80 ft.	Enfeeble	3 rounds	1	2	Sniper (250 ft.), unwieldy
Kin-killer, advanced	11	25,100	3d10 P	80 ft.	Enfeeble	6 rounds	1	2	Sniper (500 ft.), unwieldy
Kin-killer, elite	15	107,100	6d10 P	100 ft.	Enfeeble	6 rounds	1	2	Sniper (1,000 ft.), unwieldy
Kin-killer, paragon	20	825,000	11d10 P	120 ft.	Enfeeble	8 rounds	1	2	Sniper (1,500 ft.), unwieldy

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

Statistics for each of the following weapons can be found on its corresponding weapon table.

Desperation Cannon

Few damai are brave enough to confront the titanic colossi that roam the devastated world of Daimalko, but some have no choice. This plasma weapon not only delivers a powerful blast capable of penetrating a colossus's thick hide, but it delivers a blast of light and noise drawing the target's attention from others. Some desperation cannons are used in only one battle, unless they're later recovered from wreckage by scavengers.

Doshakari

This punch dagger resembles a miniature doshko extending from



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the knuckles, with one to four diamond-shaped blades. Doshkaris come in most of the same varieties as traditional steel doshkos, including the translucent molecular rift version.

Formian Venomcaster

The formians on the moons of Vesk-5 developed this weapon to fire an envenomed dart. More expensive versions encase a fired dart in a monofilament casing. When such a dart strikes a target, it not only delivers the poison but shatters to constrain the target within the monofilament web.

Frosthaft Doshko

This doshko has blades formed of deadly ice by condensers situated within the weapon. Few wielders of a frosthaft doshko consider their weapon appropriately sized unless it's at least as tall as they are. The extra leverage and freezing blades cause the weapon to hit with incredible force, numbing muscles and snapping bones.

Infernian

Produced in prison-factories on Embroi, this short pistol uses clips of magnesium flares to deliver shots of scorching fire. The fire from this weapon seems to dance briefly over the target, lunging out toward other creatures.

Kin-Killer

These firearms are modeled on large sniper rifles found in ruins on Vesk-2 and moons of Vesk-6. Most caches of these relics were trapped with subsonic signals that impart a murderous urge, giving them their gruesome name, though they're now produced safely in modern factories across the Veskarium.

Rackarack

Most often employed by overeager skittermanders and named from the concussive sound they make when fired, these weapons transform battery charges into sonic bursts and flashes of light and noise. A rackarack is an ostentatious weapon certain to draw attention, which is often just as their wielders prefer.

Skipshot Pistol

The maggedli of the Helfen-Thel system manufacture these firearms and imbue them with their magical expertise. Although the pistols use a clip of ordinary rounds, the pistol imbues teleportation magic into the ammunition as it's fired. A *skipshot pistol* is a hybrid item.

Skitterstaff

This long weapon originated as a skittermander farm implement. Resembling a long hoe with a triangular, hooked end, it is used by rural skittermanders to defend themselves from predators and dangerous strangers. Other races acknowledge the skitterstaff's utility as a weapon but are met with puzzled skittermanders' questions about where they plan to farm with it.



Storm Doshko

An internal generator maintains the blue blades of this ominously crackling doshko. The ozone-and-oil smell of an active storm doshko is unmistakable.

WEAPON FUSIONS

The following weapon fusions can be found in Near Space worlds and beyond; they follow the rules starting on page 191 of the *Core Rulebook*.

BURDENING

LEVEL 9

First commissioned by the wardens of the prison-planet Daegox 4 and now used in prisons throughout Near Space, the *burdening* weapon fusion often bears chains or manacles. When you score a critical hit using a weapon with the *burdening* fusion, the target gains the encumbered condition for 1d4 rounds. If the weapon already has a critical hit effect, when you score a critical hit, you can apply either the weapon's normal critical hit effect or the *burdening* effect.

MIND-READING

LEVEL 13

Developed by telepathic creatures such as the psychic gas oozes inhabiting Preluria, the *mind-reading* fusion reverberates with psychic feedback. When you score a critical hit using a weapon with the *mind-reading* fusion, you automatically read the surface thoughts of the creature struck. This is a mind-affecting ability. If the weapon already has a critical hit effect, when you score a critical hit, you can apply either the weapon's normal critical hit effect or the *mind-reading* effect.

NUMBING

LEVEL 5

Incorporating polar ice from particularly cold planets such as Vesk-7, this fusion causes the attached weapon to deliver a creeping numbness. Once per day, when a *numbing* weapon deals cold damage to an enemy, you can activate the fusion as a reaction to make a disarm attempt against that target with the same attack bonus as the weapon attack. The target must also succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC = 10 + half the weapon's item level + the ability score modifier you apply to attack rolls with the weapon) or feel a lack of sensation in its limbs, taking a -4 penalty to attack rolls, melee damage rolls, and Reflex saving throws for 1 round. The *numbing* weapon can be applied only to weapons that deal cold damage.

VALOROUS

LEVEL 3

Your weapon whispers bolstering words into your mind, allowing you to withstand even mighty terrors such as the colossi of Daimalko. The DC to demoralize you increases by 1 while you wield the weapon, and you gain a +1 morale bonus to your saving throws against fear effects.



SHIELDS

Many of the military forces in Near Space systems, including that of the Veskarium, issue their soldiers high-tech shields that afford a bit of extra protection on the battlefield. Shields are most prevalent in infantry troops assigned to larger-scale engagements, but most armament dealers have them available for purchase.

SHIELD DESCRIPTIONS

The following shields use the rules as presented on pages 124-125 of the *Character Operations Manual*.

Dousing Shield

A dousing shield looks similar to a standard riot shield, though it is more often used in situations where the wielder is in danger of catching fire. While you are wielding a dousing shield, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the attack roll of bull rush combat maneuvers. With a series of reservoirs containing flame-smothering chemicals, a dousing shield also functions as a fire extinguisher (*Core Rulebook* 218), except that it can end only your own burning condition and you can activate it as a move action. If you are Large or larger, you must activate the fire extinguisher feature of the shield over 2 consecutive rounds to end the burning condition (requiring the use of 2 charges). The 20 charges of a dousing shield's fire extinguisher can be replenished for 5 credits.

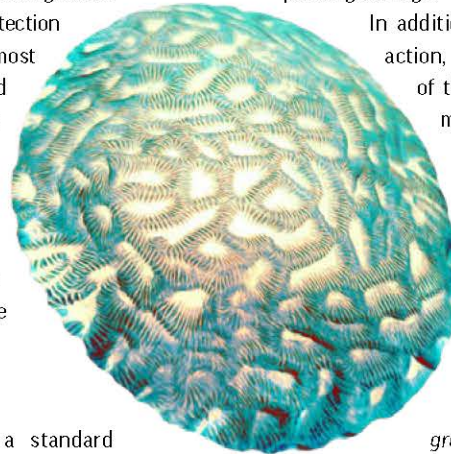
Gravity Shield

As they were invented by the copaxi of Tabrid Minor (page 106), most *gravity shields* appear to be crafted of large

pieces of coral. A *gravity shield* is a hybrid item that can mimic the gravity-manipulating powers of copixi. You can use a *gravity shield* to make a special unarmed attack that does not count as archaic and can deal your choice of either bludgeoning or piercing damage.

In addition, three times per day as a standard action, you can increase the relative gravity of the shield and attempt a disarm combat maneuver against an adjacent opponent.

If you are successful, the disarmed item sticks to your shield for 1 round before it falls to the ground, during which time you can use a swift action to retrieve the item with a free hand. The *basic* and *field gravity shields* grant a +1 circumstance bonus to the disarm attack roll and the *advanced* and *elite gravity shields* grant a +2 circumstance bonus to the disarm attack roll.



Irising Shield

Manufactured by Veskarium engineers for quick deployment, irising shields are cited by vesk soldiers to be life-saving implements of battle. An irising shield is made of flexible, lightweight material that can be compressed into a small, rectangular container worn on your forearm (usually attached to the outside of your armor). You wield an irising shield by deploying it from its container as a swift action, and it can be stored with another swift action. While you have an irising shield deployed, you can't switch it to another hand. A hand wielding an irising shield can hold another object, but it can't wield weapons or other shields. An irising shield is an object of light bulk when not deployed but increases to 1 bulk when deployed. You can use an irising shield to make a special unarmed attack that does not count as archaic.



TABLE 4-6: SHIELDS

SHIELD MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	SHIELD BONUS	MAX DEX	ARMOR CHECK		
					PENALTY	BULK	UPGRADES
Dousing shield, basic	2	900	+1/+1	+3	-2	2	1
Irising shield, basic	2	850	+0/+1	-	-	L (1)	0
Gravity shield, basic	4	2,100	+0/+2	+4	-1	1	1
Irising shield, field	6	4,350	+1/+1	-	-	L (1)	0
Dousing shield, field	7	6,800	+1/+2	+4	-2	2	2
Gravity shield, field	9	13,500	+1/+1	+4	-1	1	1
Irising shield, advanced	11	25,000	+1/+1	-	-	L (1)	1
Dousing shield, advanced	12	36,800	+1/+2	+4	-1	2	2
Gravity shield, advanced	14	73,000	+1/+2	+5	-1	1	2
Irising shield, elite	16	175,000	+1/+2	-	-	L (1)	2
Dousing shield, elite	17	256,000	+1/+3	+5	-1	2	2
Gravity shield, elite	19	570,000	+1/+3	+5	-1	1	2

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ARMOR

Several suits of armor are described below; these follow the rules presented on pages 196–198 of the *Core Rulebook*.

PEACEKEEPER'S AEGIS

The Veskarium's occupation forces often wear these suits of lightweight armor designed to create a visually homogenized police force to help maintain order in newly acquired territory. It is a symbol of both authority and allegiance to the Veskarium. Each suit is visually identical, and peacekeeping forces are prohibited from adding personalized decorations or adornment.

PLEXIGRASS BODYSUIT

The lush forests of Ghorus Prime are host to all manner of flora, and ghoran biochemists have learned to cultivate the natural defense mechanisms of many plants to their advantage. A plexigrass bodysuit consists of millions of densely woven blades of a bioengineered plant with incredibly tough fibers that have a tensile strength that rivals most alloys.



SKITTERSUIT

When the skittermanders of Vesk-3 realized that their new overlords intended to continue conquering neighboring planets, they decided to help by designing armor for vesk shock troops. However, their wild sense of aesthetics produced armor that few vesk military commanders would allow in their ranks. Luckily, the suits are very popular on the open market, so skittermanders continue to produce this armor for those with a bold sense of style.

TERRAMOLD PLATE

The giants of Pholskar harvest rivers of raw, molten hivillium; remove any impurities; and pour it directly into hundreds of specialized molds. The hardened plates are extracted and woven together to form suits of terramold plate. This armor is more restrictive than many armors in its class, but it can absorb and disperse impacts with incredible efficiency.

ARMOR UPGRADES

Several armor upgrades are described below; these follow the rules presented on pages 204–205 of the *Core Rulebook*.

AVERSION COATING

LEVEL 1

This small module secretes a terrible-tasting chemical compound. The aversion coating grants you gain a +2 bonus to AC against bite attacks. If you are subject to the swallow whole universal creature rule, the swallowing creature must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC = 15 + the armor's level) or become nauseated for 1d4 rounds. On a successful save, the creature is sickened for 1d6 rounds instead.

CLIMATE CONTROL UNIT

LEVEL 4

This upgrade is used primarily on long expeditions into hostile environments. You treat your armor as 3 levels higher for the purposes of determining the duration of its environmental protections and resisting radiation.

EMERGENCY DEFENSE SPHERE [HYBRID]

LEVEL 16
CAPACITY 3
USAGE 1/round

An *emergency defense sphere* system monitors your vital signs and automatically triggers a *resilient sphere* centered on you if you suffer from the dying, helpless, paralyzed, or stunned conditions. The sphere functions as the spell, except its diameter extends only to the space you occupy, and the sphere remains until the unit runs out of charges. If dispelled while there are charges remaining, the sphere reactivates at the beginning of your next turn if you still have any of the triggering conditions. The upgrade must be installed in a suit of armor for 24 hours before it functions, and when the upgrade is removed from the armor, no other upgrade can use its vacated slot for 24 hours.

GLIDER FOILS

LEVEL 7

As a swift action, you can deploy or undeploy these foils to increase your flight maneuverability from clumsy to average or from average to perfect. Additionally, you can deploy these gliders while falling to slow your descent to 60 feet per

TABLE 4-7: ARMOR UPGRADES

UPGRADE	LEVEL	PRICE	SLOTS	ARMOR TYPE	BULK
Aversion coating	1	200	1	Light, heavy	–
Omnidirectional camera	2	1,000	1	Any	L
Reactive polarization	3	1,600	1	Any	L
Remote-link module	4	1,750	1	Powered	1
Climate control unit	4	1,950	1	Light, heavy	L
Telepathic dampener	5	2,700	1	Any	L
Glider foils	7	6,000	2	Light	1
Mindlink servos, mk 1	8	9,500	2	Light, heavy	2
Mindlink servos, mk 2	14	71,000	2	Light, heavy	2
Emergency defense sphere	16	162,000	1	Any	L



TABLE 4-8: LIGHT ARMOR

ARMOR MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	EAC BONUS	KAC BONUS	MAXIMUM DEX BONUS	ARMOR CHECK PENALTY	SPEED ADJUSTMENT	UPGRADE SLOTS	BULK
Peacekeeper's aegis I	4	2,000	+4	+5	+4	-1	–	1	1
Plexigrass bodysuit I	5	2,700	+3	+4	+6	–	–	2	L
Peacekeeper's aegis II	8	8,100	+9	+10	+5	-1	–	3	1
Plexigrass bodysuit II	9	13,500	+9	+10	+8	–	–	3	L
Peacekeeper's aegis II	12	33,500	+14	+15	+6	-1	–	3	1
Plexigrass bodysuit III	13	51,000	+15	+16	+8	–	–	4	L

TABLE 4-9: HEAVY ARMOR

ARMOR MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	EAC BONUS	KAC BONUS	MAXIMUM DEX BONUS	ARMOR CHECK PENALTY	SPEED ADJUSTMENT	UPGRADE SLOTS	BULK
Terramold plate I	8	9,900	+13	+14	+2	-3	-10 ft.	3	3
Skittersuit I	9	13,200	+13	+15	+3	-2	-5 ft.	5	2
Terramold plate II	12	38,500	+17	+18	+3	-5	-10 ft.	4	4
Skittersuit II	13	52,000	+18	+20	+3	-3	-5 ft.	6	2
Terramold plate III	16	147,500	+22	+23	+3	-5	-10 ft.	4	4
Skittersuit III	17	240,000	+22	+24	+4	-3	-5 ft.	7	3

round and move horizontally at a rate of 5 feet for every 1 foot you fall. While the glider foils are deployed, your maximum Dexterity bonus to AC is reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 0). The glider foils have no power of their own and don't allow you to gain altitude.

MINDLINK SERVOS [HYBRID] LEVELS 8, 14

CAPACITY 5 **USAGE** 1/round

Mindlink servos allow you to move using purely mental actions. With the base model, you can move only up to a quarter your land speed in a straight line. You can't move over difficult terrain or simple obstacles, and you can't take a guarded step. With the more advanced *mk 2 mindlink servos*, you can move up to half your speed using purely mental actions, changing direction and moving over difficult terrain as normal.

OMNIDIRECTIONAL CAMERA LEVEL 2

CAPACITY 10 **USAGE** 1/round

This camera and holographic-display unit covers areas you can't normally see. Activating the camera is a move action, and while the camera is active, you gain the unflankable universal creature rule.

REACTIVE POLARIZATION LEVEL 3

CAPACITY 5 **USAGE** 1

You can activate this upgrade as a reaction to gain a +4 circumstance bonus to a saving throw against a visual effect that would cause you to become dazzled or blinded. If you fail that save against an effect that would cause you to become blinded, you become dazzled instead.

REMOTE-LINK MODULE LEVEL 4

CAPACITY 20 **USAGE** 1/hour

This upgrade comes with a control computer module that can be used to pilot a suit of linked powered armor while no creature is wearing it. You can pilot the suit of powered armor that has the upgrade, activating the upgrade as a move action to move the linked armor up to its land speed. You can instead take a full action to activate the linked armor and have it automatically follow the remote at a selected distance from 5 to 500 feet. The linked powered armor can otherwise take no actions or carry any objects or creatures. If the linked armor is ever more than 500 feet from the remote, it immediately stops in place and must be reactivated to be used again.

TELEPATHIC DAMPENER [MAGIC] LEVEL 5

You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saves against mind-affecting effects, but you can't use or receive telepathic communication.

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SPELLS

Many spells originated in Near Space, and their use has spread across the galaxy. A superscript "R" after a spell's name indicates that it requires an expenditure of Resolve Points to cast.



MYSTIC SPELL LIST

This section contains the following mystic spells.

1ST-LEVEL

Acidic Mist: Conjure a cloud of acid that deals 2d6 damage.

Defrex Hardiness: The target gains damage reduction and bristling retributive spines.

2ND-LEVEL

Dampening Field: Prevent creatures from detecting you using sounds or vibrations.

3RD-LEVEL

Daegoxian Spore Cloud: Summons a cloud of fungal spores that calm creatures.

Death Affinity: Transform a creature into an undead amalgam with some of an undead creature's abilities.

Polar Vortex: Summon a freezing tornado dealing 3d6 cold damage and 6d6 bludgeoning damage and making it more difficult for creatures to move.

4TH-LEVEL

Reanimate Technology: Reanimate a destroyed technological creature to serve you.

6TH-LEVEL

Summon Drift Beacons: Conjure Drift beacons to facilitate starship travel.



TECHNOMANCER SPELL LIST

This section contains the following technomancer spells.

1ST-LEVEL

Junk Shards: Summon and fling sharp pieces of junk at a target, dealing 3d6 piercing and slashing damage.

2ND-LEVEL

Dampening Field: Prevent creatures from detecting you using sounds or vibrations.

Personal Gravity: Treat gravity as 1 step higher or lower for yourself; protection from forced movement and conditions.

Supercharge Armor: Charge armor to increase its protective value for a short period of time.

3RD-LEVEL

Death Affinity: Transform a creature into an undead amalgam with some of an undead creature's abilities.

4TH-LEVEL

Junk Restraints: Transform junk into shackles or fetters.

Reanimate Technology: Reanimate a destroyed technological creature to serve you.

6TH-LEVEL

Summon Drift Beacons: Conjure Drift beacons to facilitate starship travel.



WITCHWARPER SPELL LIST

This section contains the following witchwarper spells.

1ST-LEVEL

Acidic Mist: Conjure a cloud of acid that deals 2d6 damage.

Junk Shards: Summon and fling sharp pieces of junk at a target, dealing 3d6 piercing and slashing damage.

2ND-LEVEL

Alter Enhancement: Swap an item with a different version from an alternate reality.

Dampening Field: Prevent creatures from detecting you using sounds or vibrations.

Personal Gravity: Treat gravity as 1 step higher or lower for yourself; protection from forced movement and conditions.

3RD-LEVEL

Planned Obsolescence: Transform a weapon or set of armor into an archaic facsimile.

Polar Vortex: Summon a freezing tornado dealing 3d6 cold damage and 6d6 bludgeoning damage and making it more difficult for creatures to move.

4TH-LEVEL

Modify Outcome^R: Attempt to replace an ally's failed action with a success from another reality.

6TH-LEVEL

Summon Drift Beacons: Conjure Drift beacons to facilitate starship travel.

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

ACIDIC MIST

School conjuration (acid)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Area 10-ft.-radius spread

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw Fortitude half; **Spell Resistance** no

You call forth the corrosive atmosphere of a gas giant to damage your opponents. A creature that starts its turn in the area takes 2d6 acid damage. The corrosive mist does not obscure vision.

ALTER ENHANCEMENT  WITCHWARPER 2**School** transmutation**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)**Targets** one weapon with at least one weapon fusion or one suit of armor with at least one armor upgrade**Duration** 1 round/level (D)**Saving Throw** Fortitude negates (object); **Spell Resistance** yes

You tap into the multiverse and find a reality with a forgotten object similar to the target of this spell, swapping that item with the target item. For the duration of the spell, you can select one weapon fusion or armor upgrade on the target item to replace with a weapon fusion or armor upgrade from the *Core Rulebook*. A fusion selected this way must be the same level of the original or lower. An upgrade selected this way must be the same type (hybrid, magical, or technological) as the original, be of the same level or lower, and occupy the same number of slots or fewer. At the end of the spell's duration, the original item returns as it was when swapped, including its number of remaining charges, if any.

DAEGOXIAN SPORE CLOUD  MYSTIC 3**School** conjuration (summoning)**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)**Area** 20-ft.-radius spread**Targets** all creatures in the cloud**Duration** 1 round/level (D)**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** no

You summon a concentrated cloud of Daegoxian spores, which renders living creatures docile and agreeable. Any creature that enters the cloud or begins its turn within the cloud must succeed at a Will save or be fascinated for 1d4 rounds. A creature that succeeds at this save is immune to the effects of *Daegoxian spore cloud* for 24 hours.

DAMPENING FIELD MYSTIC 2  TECHNOMANCER 2  WITCHWARPER 2**School** abjuration**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Range** touch**Targets** one creature**Duration** 1 minute/level**Saving Throw** Will (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

The target becomes encased in a field that dampens sounds and vibrations. For the duration of the spell, the target has total concealment against creatures whose only sense is blindsense (sound) or blindsense (vibration) and can attempt Stealth checks to hide from creatures whose only sense is blindsight (sound) or blindsight (vibration) with a +10 circumstance bonus to their checks. All sounds the target makes intentionally are muffled, increasing the DC of Perception checks to hear them by 5.

DEATH AFFINITY  MYSTIC 3  TECHNOMANCER 3**School** necromancy**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Range** touch**Targets** one willing living creature**Duration** 10 minutes/level**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

You infuse the target with necromantic energy, physically altering their form into an amalgam of life and undead.

For the duration of the spell, the target becomes immune to the following effects (unless such an effect specifies it works against undead creatures): bleed, death effects, disease, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, negative levels, nonlethal damage, and poison. This immunity does not apply to such effects currently affecting the creature. The creature also gains a +4 enhancement bonus to saving throws against the following effects: mind-affecting, paralysis, and stunning effects; ability damage; ability drain; and any effect that requires a Fortitude saving throw (unless the effect works on objects or is harmless).

For effects that target creatures by type, the target creature counts as both its own type and undead (whichever type allows an ability to affect them for abilities that affect only one type, and whichever is worse for abilities that affect both types).

When the spell ends, the above effects end and the target gains the exhausted condition.

DEFREX HARDINESS  MYSTIC 1**School** abjuration**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Range** touch**Targets** one creature**Duration** 1 minute/level**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

The target becomes infused with the resilience of a defrex and sprouts bristling spines. It gains DR/– equal to your caster level, and any creature adjacent to the target that hits it with a melee attack takes piercing damage equal to your caster level.

JUNK RESTRAINTS TECHNOMANCER 4

School transmutation

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets at least 1 bulk of inert electronic equipment; see text

Duration 1 round/2 levels (D)

Saving Throw Reflex negates; see text; **Spell Resistance** no

You turn a pile of technological junk into fetters and shackles that restrain a creature within range. You must target inert, nonworking electronic equipment of at least 1 bulk. Valid targets include a large broken computer system, nonworking or unconnected computer or robot parts, a destroyed robot or another such trashed mechanical system, or any related electronic components or combination of the above, as long as the junk is found in sufficient quantity.

While casting this spell, you use your magic and technological know-how to rearrange the junked parts and infuse them with energy powerful enough to restrain a Large or smaller creature. The junk flies toward the creature and attaches itself to the creature's limbs or otherwise ensnares it, causing it to gain the entangled condition for the duration of the spell or until it ends the condition by succeeding at an Acrobatics check to escape as a move action. The DC of this check is equal to 15 + 1-1/2 × your caster level.

If the targeted creature succeeds at a Reflex save, the junk lands adjacent to them harmlessly.

JUNK SHARD TECHNOMANCER 1 WITCHWARPER 1

School conjuration

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets one creature or object

Effect creates 1 bulk of inert electronic equipment

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** no

You summon sharp fragments of technological junk that fly toward your target and deal 3d6 piercing and slashing damage. The spell leaves behind 1 bulk of junked electronic equipment in the target creature's space that is suitable for targeting with spells such as *battle junkbot*, *handy junkbot*, *healing junkbot*, *junk armor^{pw}*, *junk restraints*, or *junksword^{pw}*. The junked electronics have no resale value and cannot be repaired into any functioning item. A creature trained in Engineering or Physical Science can reveal the useless nature of the junk by directly examining it.

MODIFY OUTCOME WITCHWARPER 4

School divination

Casting Time 1 reaction

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets one ally

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** no

You peer across the multiverse at the possible outcomes for this timeline, watching fate branch outward. When an ally within range fails an attack roll, skill check, saving throw, or ability check, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to attempt to shift their reality to one where they succeed instead. That ally can immediately reroll the failed check. A creature can't benefit from this spell again until they take a 10-minute rest to recover Stamina Points.

PERSONAL GRAVITY

 TECHNOMANCER 2  WITCHWARPER 2

School transmutation

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range personal

Duration 1 hour/level (D)

You alter gravity's effects on you. You treat gravity as if it were your choice of 1 step higher or lower (for example, if you were in an area of low gravity, you could choose either standard gravity or zero-g). You can suppress or resume this affect as a reaction or swift action. While under the effects of this spell, you can also reduce the distance of any forced movement that would affect you by 5 feet (minimum 0 feet), and you ignore penalties from the off-kilter condition.

PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE WITCHWARPER 3

School transmutation

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets one weapon or suit of armor

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw Fortitude negates (object); **Spell Resistance** yes

You transform a weapon or suit of armor into an antique version of itself, giving it the analog and archaic properties. Any technological or hybrid armor upgrades cease to function for the duration of the spell. Entirely magical enhancements, such as weapon fusions, continue to function normally. Weapons that normally deal energy damage deal bludgeoning and piercing damage instead, lose any critical hit effects, and target KAC. Other weapon special properties, such as boost and bright, might also cease to function for the duration of the spell, at the GM's discretion.

This spell has no effect on natural weapons and weapons entirely of magical or supernatural origins, such as a solarian's solar weapon.

POLAR VORTEX MYSTIC 2 WITCHWARPER 2

School evocation (cold)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area cylinder (20-ft. radius, 40 ft. high)

Duration 1 round plus 1 round/level

Saving Throw Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** no

You generate an arctic storm of harsh winds and battering hail and snow. Creatures that enter or start their turn in the area during the first round of the spell take 3d6 cold damage plus 6d6 bludgeoning damage and are affected by freezing, hurricane-strength winds (*Core Rulebook* 400). For the duration of the spell, creatures flying in the area must succeed at an

Acrobatics check to fly in dangerous wind conditions, and terrain within the spell's area is covered with ice and snow, causing it to become difficult terrain.

REANIMATE CONSTRUCT

MYSTIC 4 **TECH-NOMANCER 4**

School transmutation

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range touch

Targets one destroyed construct creature

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell turns a destroyed construct into a creature that obeys your spoken commands. As a standard action, you can instruct a reanimated construct to either follow you or attack any creature (or type of creature) within 100 feet. This spell otherwise functions like *animate dead*, and constructs you reanimate with this spell count against the total amount of undead you can control with that spell (and vice versa).

The reanimated construct is similar to a fully functional version of that creature with the following changes. It has only half of its original Hit Points; any technological gear functions without batteries but technological weapons that require a charge deal only half damage; and it does not regain any uses of consumable items or weapons, such as grenades, or daily-use abilities. The reanimated construct is treated as both magical and technological for all effects (whichever type allows an ability to affect them for abilities that affect only one type, and whichever is worse for abilities that affect both types).

The target construct must be mostly intact; creatures that have self-destructed, been disintegrated, been used as the target of a spell with "junk" in its name, and the like are not valid targets for this spell.

SUMMON DRIFT BEACONS

MYSTIC 6 **TECH-NOMANCER 6** **WITCH-WARPER 6**

School conjuration (summoning)

Casting Time 1 hour

Range system-wide

Duration 1 day/level

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

You conjure several Drift beacons into your current star system. The beacons appear orbiting the star or stars at various distances but are not in danger of colliding with any other celestial bodies. For the duration of the spell, the system takes 2d6 fewer days to reach for the purposes of Drift travel to that system, to a minimum of 1 day. This reduction is factored in before dividing the result by a Drift engine's rating, and a system can benefit from only one casting of this spell at a time. The beacons return to where they came from when the spell ends.

This spell has no effect if cast while not in a star system or while within the Drift, and it does not reduce the time it takes to travel to Absalom Station.

SUPERCHARGE ARMOR **TECH-NOMANCER 2**

School abjuration

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range touch

Target one suit of armor worn by a creature

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

You supercharge the target armor. The armor's hardness doubles; the armor sheds light in a 20-foot radius, increasing the light level 1 step to a maximum of normal light; and the creature wearing the armor gains temporary Hit Points equal to 5 + your caster level as long as it wears the armor.



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