TRAVELLER
SECRETS OF THE ANCIENTS

OTHERWORLD

God is cruel. God sent us into this world to suffer. When I defeat all of these trials by my strength and cunning, I shall find God and tear him down from his throne. God made us to suffer and, by suffering, to grow strong.
— Cant of the Hunters

Otherworld is the fifth adventure in the *Secrets of the Ancients* campaign. If you are a player, **stop reading now**. If you are a Referee, then you should first read **Section 0: Secrets of Secrets** to get an overview of the campaign. In **Section 4: Descent**, the characters discovered an Ancient starship hidden in the atmosphere of a gas giant. After finding their way to the bridge, the ship carried them into hyperspace…

Adventure Synopsis
The Ancient ship locates a portal and slips through it into a strange new world. After passing through a starport, the characters can explore the habitats accessible from the starport. Three habitats are inhabited by the descendants of old experiments of Grandfathers', and the characters' arrival on the abandoned planet means the teleporter network is temporarily reactivated, allowing the various habitats to interact.

The characters can explore the habitats. They soon learn that there is a transport hub on the far side of the habitats, and they have to find a way to cross through these dangerous areas and deal with the different inhabitants and experiments.

Eventually, the characters find a transportation hub, but the door is sealed. They need to negotiate with the last custodian robot for access – it initially mistakes them for experiments, but soon realises they are visitors from outside and lets them into the hub. There, the characters discover that they are inside a small pocket universe containing three entire star systems.

The robot transports them to the core world, for an audience with Grandfather himself. Grandfather is an ancient Droyne; he meets with the characters, but he does not have much time to chat – he is busy building a superweapon. The ship that wiped out the *Alahir* was one of his sons. It is another Ancient, who went down a very different development path to Grandfather. It is currently trying to break through the same portal the travellers came through…

THE POCKET UNIVERSE
The universe in which we all live is formed from a sort of fabric, usually flat in the spaces between the stars, but bunched up and wrinkled by mass and gravity near planets and suns.

Sometimes, it is possible to pinch off a part of the universe, physically separating the underlying fabric from the rest of the universe. Such a place is a pocket universe; complete unto itself, independent of our own universe, isolated from us.

Grandfather lives in such a place. His pocket universe, which he created more than 300,000 years ago, is large by most standards, reaching almost 3 parsecs across, and containing three separate star systems.

Its Creation: Grandfather created his pocket universe by expending a great deal of energy (both personal and fusion) to rip the fabric of space and close it off from the rest of the universe.

Earlier projects in the creation of pocket universes for the production of teleportation networks and starships had given Grandfather the expertise he needed for this task. His experimental work had show him techniques and methods that allowed him to produce the pocket universe. The techniques are long and difficult, and require extensive manipulation of

gravity in order to rip the fabric of space. Experience had shown Grandfather that creation of small pocket universes took several years of work; the pocket universe he finally made took almost one hundred years to produce, not including time for improvements to the worlds within it.

Grandfather's creation was the largest pocket universe he had ever attempted, and it exceeded his previous pocket universes by a factor of more than 100,000; earlier pocket universes were hardly larger than a star system, while this one was several parsecs across.

Pocket Astrography

This pocket universe contains three star systems arranged in a triangular configuration. Each system is about one parsec from the others.

The boundary of the pocket universe is about one parsec beyond the systems, giving it a total diameter of slightly more than three parsecs.

A Closed System: The pocket universe is a closed universe; it folds back onto itself. Reaching the edge of the pocket universe is impossible; a course is bent back onto itself and the travellers' ship just seems to come back into the pocket universe from the other direction.

Because of this closed system effect, light is also constantly returning to the three star systems. Wherever someone looks, the light from the three stars is returning. As a result, space is not black, but glows with the light of 300,000 years of starglow. Because this light is returning from every direction, there are no distinct star images in the sky, only a glow. The skyglow is enough to cut the black of space, but not quite bright enough to read by. As time passes, this light will grow brighter and brighter and as the stars grow dimmer and die, space will become an even light source from all directions.

Physical Laws: The laws of physics, chemistry and all the sciences continue in force in this pocket universe. Whatever could or does happen in our own universe also happens for the same reasons in the pocket universe.

The Three Systems

The pocket universe has three systems, each of which Grandfather chose for a specific reason.

Grandfather's System: Early in his life, Grandfather selected a star systems as a base for his activities, and this system became the core of his pocket universe. Of the several planets within the system, the main one is physically nearly identical to the Droyne homeworld and has been seeded with animals and plants from there.

Other worlds in the system serve as industrial complexes, research laboratories, sources of minerals and rarities, and storehouses.

The Droyne System: One star system has been reserved for the Droyne. The faction which stood by Grandfather during the Final War was taken along and given an entire star system for their own use.

They are restricted to that system, and Grandfather does not allow them jump drives. On their own, they have adopted an easy-going pastoral life devoted to comfort and the pursuit of happiness – which, for them, involves the continuity of their community, the raising of food, and the production of materials to meet their needs and little else.

Grandfather has kept this group of Droyne in his pocket universe as a hedge against the future. They are conditioned to respect and revere him. They obey his orders without question. And, at some time in the future, should Grandfather need Droyne for breeding purposes, experimentation, colonisation or even as soldiers, he has a supply available.

The Abandoned System: The third system is a graveyard of old experiments, outdated equipment and other junk. Anything Grandfather has previously experimented with but is no longer interested in gets dumped here.

Access to the Pocket Universe

When Grandfather created the pocket universe, he established several portals to allow access between it and our universe. Some allowed transport of equipment and resources to his new home, others allowed him to travel between the universes on his various projects.

In the first 250,000 years after the creation of the pocket universe, Grandfather made infrequent trips out. He visited many former Droyne worlds ravaged or destroyed by the Final War. Where destruction of their technological base was not complete, he finished the job. He also struck at the works and power bases of the few surviving Sons.

Eventually, voyages out of the pocket universe became too dangerous. The younger races were expanding and would soon discover the portals scattered across the Regina system. Worse, the other surviving Sons were drawing ever closer to discovering Grandfather's refuge – hiding in a pocket universe was only ever a stopgap measure. Over time, he closed down almost all the portals leading to his pocket universe, until only one was left – the portal the Ancient ship just activated.

The Enemy At The Gates

The renegade Son who encountered the characters at Komesh, SEVEN, traced their jump trajectory to Grandfather's portal. He lacks the code keys to activate the portal, but Grandfather's security systems are hundreds of thousands of years old and can be overwhelmed. In a short time, the Ancient will break through into Grandfather's pocket universe and the War between Grandfather and his offspring will continue.

The player characters may not be aware of it, but they have a time limit in this scenario. The Ancient breaks through the portal approximately 168 hours (seven days) after the characters arrive. The Referee can adjust this time limit as needed – the purpose is to keep pressure on the players, not to wipe them out because of a poor dice roll.

As SEVEN besieges the exit portal, it causes visible effects within the pocket universe. The exit portal is in orbit of the mainworld of the abandoned system. SEVEN's attacks cause the portal to glow brightly with Cherenkov radiation; it flares like a sudden blue star above the abandoned planet.

If the players tarry too long in one of the sections of this adventure, then SEVEN breaks through. The hostile Ancient has little interest in the player characters or the abandoned experiments on this world, so it jumps almost immediately for Grandfather's world in the next system over.

Shortly afterwards, the Droyne custodian (see page 15) tracks down the characters, no matter where they are, and paralyses them with a high-gravity field. It then brings them to the Interstellar Transit Hub. You can also use this *deus ex machina* to save the characters if they get into trouble they cannot handle but only do this if there is no other way for the characters to continue this campaign.

1. Disembarkation

The ship carries you through the portal. There is a moment of sickening discontinuity, like transitioning from jumpspace to realspace, but much more intense. You know, in the pit of your stomach, that you are somewhere else. An external viewscreen shows you are approaching a planet. You can make out a main sequence G-class star in the distance, but there are no other stars – just a softly glowing milky void in every direction.

The Ancient ship drops into the atmosphere. You glimpse structures on the planet below, huge domes and monolithic shapes that must be bigger that mountains if you can make them out from this altitude. There is a shudder, and a spherical object detaches from the ship and flies past. It is followed by another, and another. The ship is breaking up!

The ship is modular in design; the various pods are detaching and flying to their prearranged landing points. Admittedly, those landing zones were determined hundreds of thousands of years ago, before the ship was attached, but the machines of the Ancients are nothing if not bloody-minded. The main deck of the Ancient ship, together with whichever capsules the characters are in, continues on its original course until it comes to land at a building that bears a remarkable resemblance to a starport.

If the *Star Hunter* is still functional, then a trio of buzzing spherical drones fly up from the starport and attach to the hull of the scout ship. They lift it out of the Ancient vessel and carry it over the horizon towards the ship graveyard outside the starport (see below). The characters may be able to retrieve their ship in **Section 7: The Death of Grandfather.**

The characters land at the abandoned starport – the first visitors in 50,000 years.

2. The Abandoned Starport

Form follows function. Different races have different conceptions of beauty, of technology, of architecture and aesthetics and efficiency, but there are certain traits common to all docks. The Ancient starport is made from a dark grey substance that yields slightly to the touch, but cannot be marked or cut by any weapon the characters can bring to bear, apart from a disintegrator pistol or the Ancient repair tool from the starship. There is one central structure, consisting of a tall tower overlooking a sprawling set of domes. Around this structure is a graveyard of ships and ship parts.

The Wrecked Ships

The graveyard stretches in all directions for many kilometers. Most of the ships are Ancient in design, and look like larger or smaller versions of the ship encountered at Komesh – huge wedges or cylinders, frames designed to support modular globes. Others are dedicated warships or couriers; these ships are even more geometric, lacking apertures or visible exterior markings. A close examination shows the ship hulls are decorated with symbols visible only to creatures who can see ultraviolet light; the symbols are reminiscent of Droyne script. The ships are all non-functional, gutted hulks. Useful components, and in some cases, parts of the hull have been stripped. There are no useful relics here, no salvage to be stolen, just the tombs of starfaring giants.

If the characters explore the graveyard, they find signs of battle damage on some of the ships. The really dangerous battle damage was repaired or erased millennia ago, so the characters are not in danger of being devoured by hostile nanoswarms, getting dropped into pocket voids or having

their existence dissolved by reality-bleaching weapons, but there are burn marks and scars. Some of the hulls are dangerously radioactive. The blast patterns are similar to the damage inflicted on the character's ship if they were hit in orbit of Komesh.

In the shadow of the titanic Ancient ships are other vessels, some of which are much more familiar. There are smaller ships of conventional design – traders dating back to the First Imperium, a Solomani scout ship, an Aslan hauler, a Zhodani courier and so on. Other ships are less familiar, but are obviously of a much more modern vintage that the Ancient ships. They were all built in the last 5,000 years. Examining these ruined ships shows they have been stripped of any components that might decay over time, but they are otherwise intact. Unlike the Ancient hulks, these ships have been mothballed.

Disassembly Robots

The characters are not alone in the starship graveyard. When pieces of their ships landed, disassembly robots were automatically activated for the first time in thousands of years. The robots' purpose is to disable any ships that land unless ordered not to do so. If the *Star Hunter* is still intact, then the robots intend to disable her too.

The robots resemble three-meter-long metal insects flitting back and forth on anti-gravity suspensors. They have long multi-purpose proboscises used to dissect and disassemble starships. Where necessary, the robots can detach parts of themselves and transform into smaller metallic crawlers or worms to get inside ships, or combine into larger robots to attack large components. The drones move with frightening speed and single-minded intensity, chittering to each other in bursts of informationally-dense noise.

Removed components are placed inside the robot's skeletal thorax for storage; they will later be processed or stored in Habitat 4 (see page 12).

They are programmed to ignore living beings under most circumstances. If the characters get too close to an active swarm, the robots attempt to drive them away by blocking their path and blasting them with painful sound or light bursts. If the characters persist, the robots fight back.

Disassembly Robot
STR 12   DEX 10 Hull 4 Structure 2
INT 7 EDU 7
Traits: Armour 7, Wings, Cutting Tools, Sonic Burst
Weapons: Cutter (Melee (small blade) +3, 1d6+4 damage)
                   Sonic Burst inflicts no damage, but gives a -2DM to all actions made near the robot by those without ear protection.

Exploring The Starport

The starport was designed to contain and funnel large numbers of people to the transit system underground. The port consists of a series of huge waiting rooms connected by airlocks, all leading towards the central chamber. The lights in each chamber automatically activate when a character enters. The huge doors can be opened or closed with a touch, but only one door in a chamber can be opened at a time – all the Travellers have to enter a chamber and close the door behind them before the door at the far end of the chamber will open.

Each room is bare apart from hatches located some 10 metres up the sheer walls. If the characters find a way to climb up to the hatches, they discover they are locked.

To reach the central chamber, the characters need to pass through three airlocks. Each airlock has a specific function that triggers when used.

Airlock 1: Bio-scanner that determines the biological needs of the organisms, and adjusts the atmosphere in the next room to compensate. This chamber is harmless unless there are several species among the player characters, in which case the system is confused and interprets one of the characters as being a mutant. That character is scanned by a high-power laser beam that illuminates every cell in his body in sequence; this is a disturbing experience, but not actively harmful.

Airlock 2: The second airlock scans for equipment. Any cybernetics, weapons or other gear are detected and displayed as spinning holograms above the characters' heads. Any weapons are then disabled. Electronics are fused, firing pins are melted, and edged weapons are blasted full of microscopic holes making them soft as chalk. Electronic and firing pin damage can be repaired with a Hard (-4) Mechanic check taking 1-6 hours. Alternatively, the Ilimdaki can repair any equipment up to TL10 with the resources they have on hand.

Airlock 3: The third airlock is designed to ensure the visitors are dispatched to the right holding area via the transit system. It scans the characters, comparing their genetic code, equipment and cultural signifiers to the database. Of course, seeing as the player characters are not part of an Ancient-seeded culture that was current 300,000 years ago, they do not appear in the database. A hologram flashes up, displaying seven habitats. All the habitats flash red as none of them are deemed suitable for the characters, and the airlock doors refuse to open. The player characters can use a disintegrator pistol or Ancient repair tool to force the doors open.

If they do not have such a device, they are stuck in the airlock for several minutes with no way to open the door. After a short time, one of the Disassembly Robots arrives on the far side and opens the door to 'process' the characters. They can dodge past it and enter the transit system.

The Teleporter

At the centre of the starport is a circular chamber, and in the middle of the chamber is a huge semi-circle of silver light rotating slowly around the vertical axis. This is a large-scale teleportation portal. When the characters enter the room, the teleporter is offline but it automatically activates as soon as they approach.

3. THE TRANSIT SYSTEM

The transit system on this part of the planet consists of a teleport network similar to the one on the ship. Again, each teleporter is assigned a binary code which can be entered into a control panel.

Currently, the teleporter is set to teleport to zone 0. The two final codes are locked out – the only way to access the Custodian is by going Cross-Country and the characters cannot return to the spaceport once they leave it.

Habitats	Binary Code	Description
0	000	The Ilimdaki
1	001	The Maker
2	010	The Hunters
3	011	The Hungry Swamp
4	100	Graveyard
5	101	Deathzone
6	110	The Custodian
-	111	Back to the spaceport

The Habitats

The teleporter leads to seven different habitats. These are zones on the planet's surface assigned to one experiment or another. Natural barriers of various kinds, such as rivers, thick forests or treacherous mountains divide most of the habitats from each other. Habitat 6 is contained in an environmentally-controlled dome.

Beyond Habitat 6 is another dome, the Interstellar Transit Hub. This Hub is the characters' best way off the planet.
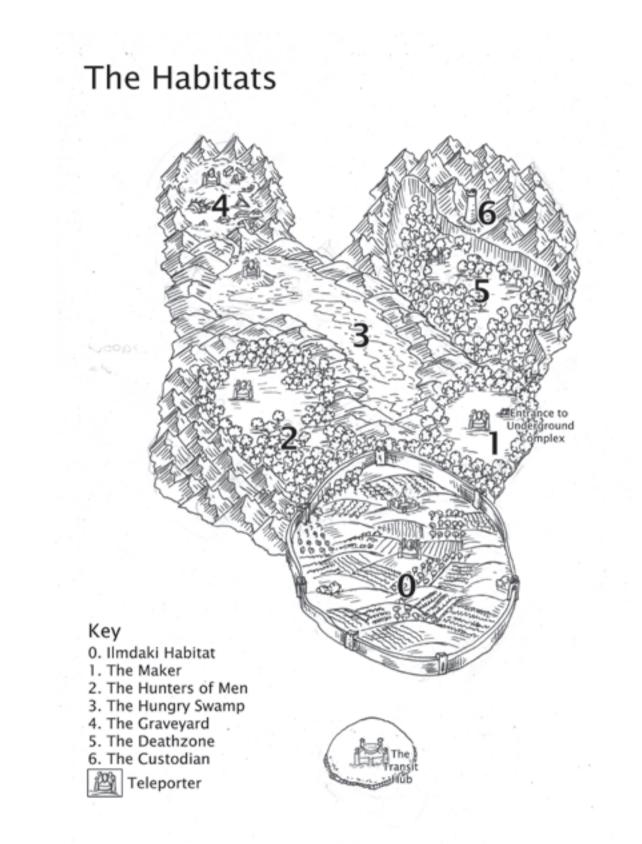
Unless otherwise noted, the habitat environment is earthlike and temperate, with fertile green fields, forests and rolling hills. Characters who have visited the Darrian Confederation notice the resemblance between the habitats and the Orchards of Darrian; the habitats are not quite so idyllic, but are certainly engineered environments made to be as pleasant and self-sustaining as possible. The planets and animals are mostly descendants of Earth flora and fauna.

1. **The Ilimdaki:** A new subrace of Humaniti created by Grandfather; they have an inherited, instinctive understanding of technology but are incapable of innovating.

2. **The Maker:** A cloning facility for producing new batches of experimental subjects.

3. **The Hunters:** A new subrace of Vargr, more feral and dangerous.

4. **The Hungry Swamp:** A living weapons system made to erase failed experiments.

5. **Graveyard:** A wasteland of junked experiments and spare parts.

6. **Deathzone:** A forest of incredibly hostile creatures.

7. **The Custodian:** The Droyne robot assigned to oversee these habitats.

Travelling Between Habitats

The characters can travel between different habitats either via the teleporters, or by travelling cross-country. Moving between habitats requires a Difficult (-2) Navigation roll taking 1-6 hours to avoid running into trouble. If this check is failed, then the characters waste another 2d6 hours backtracking, fighting through difficult terrain or sheltering from harsh weather.

Remember to keep the pressure of time on the players. If they squander half a way wandering from habitat to habitat, then they see the portal to the real universe glowing a threatening blue in the milky night sky.

The Habitats

Key
0. Ilmdaki Habitat
1. The Maker
2. The Hunters of Men
3. The Hungry Swamp
4. The Graveyard
5. The Deathzone
6. The Custodian

Teleporter

Teleporters

There is a teleporter in the centre of each of the seven habitats. These seven teleporters are identical to the one in the centre of the starport – a huge rotating portal. A small citadel surrounds each teleporter; thousands of years ago, Grandfather's servants used these citadels to monitor the ongoing experiments. These days, Grandfather's attention is elsewhere and the citadels are abandoned.

To ensure that the various experiments do not use the teleporters without permission, the teleporter system shuts down when the starport or Interstellar Transit Hub is not in use. When the Ancient ship arrived at the starport, it activated the teleporter network for the first time in millennia. The network will shut down again if no-one uses the teleporters within a four-hour period.

The characters are not the only ones who use the teleporters. Soon after the characters start exploring the habitats, the hostile Hunters discover the reactivated network and use it to bypass the Ilimdaki's defenses. A host of vicious killers teleports into the middle of the Ilimdaki habitat and attack.

4. THE ILIMDAKI HABITAT

Via Teleporter: The Teleport Citadel is located on a hilltop in the middle of farmlands south of Yas. From the citadel, the characters can see well-kept farmlands and small villages all around, and even spot human figures toiling in the fields. The Ilimdaki have very limited curiosity – they obviously see the characters arriving, but ignore them unless spoken to first.

Via Cross-Country: If the characters approach the Walls from the far side, they will be shot at by Ilimdaki soldiers (+1DM to hit, 3d6-3 damage). The characters can freely enter the Ilimdaki habitat by any other route.

The Referee is advised to review the Library Data entry on the Ilimdaki before running this section of the adventure.

Aarshur

One of the first Inheritors that the characters meet is **Aarshur**, a young farmer and soldier. He wears a well-made leather jack and has a rifle slung across his back. The rifle is exceptionally well-balanced and accurate. He hesitantly greets the characters if they make contact with him, and asks if they are in need of food. If they accept his offer, he brings them to the nearest village; if they refuse, he assumes that their interaction is at an end and returns to his work until the characters question him again.

Aarshur, like all Ilimdaki, is technologically adept. If given the opportunity to examine the characters' equipment, he can quickly identify an item's purpose and principle of operation. Play up the incongruity of this primitive farmer instinctively knowing how, say, a laser pistol or hand computer works. From Aarshur's perspective, the characters are incomprehensibly or wilfully foolish. Not being able to tell what a device does is like not knowing when you are hungry or that fire burns.

If the characters ask to be taken to a leader, Aarshur accompanies them to the city of Yas, a journey of one hour by steam-car. During the journey, the characters see the great Wall protecting the habitat from external attack. Once the characters arrive in Yas, they are taken to meet Queen Nalu and her vizier, Irkur.

Aarshur/Generic Ilimdaki
STR 7   DEX 7   END 7   INT 3   EDU 11   SOC 5
Animals (farming) 1, Survival 1, Persuade 0, Melee (brawl) 0, Gun Combat (slug rifles) 1
Leather jack (1), Antique Rifle (3d6-3)

Playing Aarshur:
- Be blandly pleasant, innocent and helpful.
- Treat the characters as if they are interesting, but obviously deficient in many ways. Most Ilimdaki do

not consider imagination to be a desirable trait. Change is not something one strives for.

- Examine any technological devices you can get your hands on, but never in an enthusiastic or interested way. Play it as an unconscious nervous tic.

The Queen of Rifles

Queen Nalu greets the characters and asks where they came from. Were they sent by the Maker? Historical records say that when the Ilimdaki were born, 500 years ago, they came here by means of the teleporter. Ilkur also questions them, assuming that they are fresh clones created by the Maker machine.

Ambitious and unscrupulous characters can easily convince the Ilimdaki to serve them. Having 50,000 easy dominated technological geniuses at your beck and call is a wonderful feeling. Queen Nalu even encourages this sort of behaviour – the Ilimdaki need external drives if they are develop, and she can see the characters have vastly more imagination than any of her subjects. This puts the characters into direct conflict with her advisor, Irkur, who is threatened by the arrival of the characters.

Queen Nalu
STR 6   DEX 7   END 7   INT 4   EDU 12   SOC 15
Carouse 2, Deception 1, Diplomat 2, Leadership 2, Persuade 1.

Playing Nalu:
- Be manipulative in an obvious way. She is trying, but she does not understand subtlety.
- She cares for her people, and will do anything to protect them against the Hunters.
- Impress upon the characters that her approval is vital if they are to be trusted by the Ilimdaki.

Irkur
STR 9   DEX 6   END 9   INT 4   EDU 12   SOC 14
Carouse 3, Deception 2, Diplomat 3, Leadership 1, Persuade 2, Steward 2

Playing Irkur:
- Remember: tradition is good! Change is bad! The Maker made this land to nurture the Ilimdaki – everything is perfect in the habitat.
- These imaginative outsiders are much more like Hunters than ordinary people. The safest thing to do is banish them beyond the Wall.

Dealing with the Ilimdaki

Gathering Information: The Ilimdaki rarely leave their homelands, but have a vague idea of the contents of the other habitats. They are also aware of the existence of the Interstellar Transit Hub, but have no idea where it is.

If the Ilimdaki ever reached the Graveyard (Habitat 4), they could repair many of the discarded Ancient weapons.

Improving Technology: The characters can easily increase the TL of the Ilimdaki to TL5 or 6 in 1d6 days; further progress requires the construction of a more complex industrial base. The Ilimdaki can do it, but the characters have to direct them every step of the way.

War Preparations: If the characters lead the defense against the Hunters, the Ilimdaki can be ordered to produce several useful new technologies with their genetic memory, such as

- **Field telephones:** Wired telephone communications strung along the war can give the characters early warning of Hunter attacks.

- **Observation balloons:** Spot Hunters, snipe from the air, or sail across the sky to avoid Hunters and dangerous terrain.

- **Landmines, electric fences:** More tools for holding off Hunters.

- **Poison gas:** Eliminating the Hunter problem once and for all.

Arrival of the Hunters

The Hunters arrive via the teleporter network at a suitable dramatic juncture. Unless the characters rally the Ilimdaki and lead the defence of Yas, the city is swiftly overrun by packs of savage Hunters. Any technologies that the characters have introduced to Ilimdaki culture are rapidly reverse-engineered and captured by the Hunters.

If the characters get involved in the war, the easiest way to resolve battles is with the Tactics (military) skill. Give the characters a +1 DM if they have working high-tech weapons, and another +1 DM if the Ilimdaki are using superior technology. The difficulty of the check depends on the weight of numbers.

Ilimdaki/Hunter Ratio	
100:1	Easy (-4)
25:1	Routine (-2)
10:1	Average (+0)
5:1	Difficult (-2)
2:1	Hard (-4)
1:1	Very Hard (-6)
1:2 or worse	Impossible (-8)

5. The Maker

Via Teleporter: The teleporter brings the characters to an open meadow. The grass is short enough to suggest it was recently mowed, and smooth enough to be used for lawn bowls. A short distance away from the teleporter citadel is another structure, the entrance to an underground complex.

Via Cross-Country: As above, but the characters encounter the metal insects while still in the surrounding woodland.

Shortly after the characters arrive in this habitat, buzzing insects swarm around them. These insects resemble small mosquitoes; a close examination of an insect shows it is a tiny metal robot, not a natural creature. If the characters are not wearing full-body protective gear like vacc suits, the insects land on exposed skin and take blood samples. After taking a sample, the insects fly into the underground structure.

The Cloning Machine

The underground structure is one half of a reset system for Grandfather's experiments. Several of the habitats contain old experiments with creating new forms of servants. Grandfather sought to breed a perfect laboratory assistant. In his trials, he experimented on Humaniti (giving rise to subspecies like the Florani), the Vargr, his own Droyne, various other modified and wholly synthetic species, and- disastrously – clones of himself before turning to robots. The structure is a huge cloning machine, capable of producing fresh batches of the various populations. Whenever the primal Vargr in Habitat 2 wipe out the humans in Habitats 0, the Cloning Machine can produce replacements.

The metal insects encountered outside are the machine's sensor network. They take genetic samples and carry them into the cloning banks.

Inside, the machine consists of a labyrinth of narrow vaulted corridors, lined with artificial wombs. These amniotic chambers can fast-grow a clone from a genetic sample to an infant within ten hours, cramming a month of growth into every hour using variations on slow drugs. By adjusting the controls at each womb, it is possible to grow a clone to any desired age, from infancy to maturity to senility.

If the characters were bitten by the insects outside, then their genetic material was added to the banks. Whenever the machine produces a new batch of clones (say, if the Hunters of Men wipe out the Ilimdaki), then copies of the Player Characters will also be created. If a Player Character is killed during this section of the adventure, then the player may wish to play a clone.

The Priest

The Ilimdaki have come to worship the cloning machine as a deity. Their genetic inability to innovate means their 'religion' is a poorly developed one. They have appointed a priest to watch over the machine and placate it with offerings.

If the characters explore the Cloning Machine, they encounter the priest deep in the cloning chambers. He is an aged, white-haired human, dressed in grey robes. He introduces himself as Shedin, the high priest of the Maker. Unlike the unscrupulous Irkur, Shedin genuinely believes that there is a beneficial and kindly presence behind the cloning machine.

For an Ilimdaki, Shedin is inquisitive and imaginative. He can tell the characters about neighbouring habitats, including the contents of Habitat 3.

Shedin
STR 5   **DEX** 4   **END** 4   **INT** 5   **EDU** 12   **SOC** 10
Carouse 1, Deception 1, Persuade 2, Survival 1

Playing Shedin:
- These strangers are doubtless agents of the Maker – ask them for religious revelation.
- Have a sense of childlike wonder about the universe.

6. The Hunters of Men

The Hunter territory is a war-torn wilderness. It looks superficially similar to the bucolic countryside of the Ilimdaki habitat, albeit with more small forests and wild grasslands than farms, but there are hidden dangers here. The Hunters have seeded their habitat with thousands of cunning traps; as soon as the characters arrive, the Hunters catch their scent and will kill them if they can.

Via Teleporter: Arriving via teleporter means the characters run straight into a Hunter attack. As soon as the teleport network reactivated, the Hunters worked out what it was and how to use it. There are dozens of Hunters in the woods around the teleporter. Some are waiting for victims to come through the portal; others are observing their rivals or planning their next move.

Via Cross-Country: If the characters approach from Habitats 0, they run into Hunters in the woods almost immediately – the Hunters keep a close watch on the Wall, looking for weaknesses. Other cross-country routes are unguarded.

Hunter Encounters

The Hunters are unrelentingly hostile at first, unless the characters have an overwhelming technological advantage. Roll 2d6 when travelling through Hunter territory for a random encounter.

Roll	Encounter
2 or less	Hunter household
3-4	Stalked
5-7	Trap
8-9	Sniper
10-11	Hunter pack
12 or more	Hunter host

DMs: -2 if the characters are heavily armed, accompanied by many guards, or otherwise obviously dangerous .
+2 if the characters are lightly armed, few in number, wounded or lost.

Hunter household: The characters find a fortified Hunter homestead, consisting of a small house or lair surrounded by defensive embankments and traps. The owner has fled the household, but is watching the characters from nearby.

Stalked: The characters are followed by a Hunter; the Hunter does not attack immediately, but waits for an opportunity to do so.

Trap: A random character runs into a trap. If any character has a Recon skill of 2+, or if the players stated they are taking precautions, then an Average (+0) Recon roll lets the characters detect the trap. Otherwise, roll 1d6 on the trap table.

Sniper: A lone Hunter in the trees fires on the characters. The Hunter keeps sniping at the characters; if they pursue, he tries to lead them into a trap.

Hunter Pack: The characters are attacked by 1d6+2 Hunters.

Hunter Host: The characters are attacked by 3d6+3 Hunters.

Typical Hunter

STR 9   **DEX** 9   **END** 9   **INT** 15   **EDU** 3   **SOC** 7
Athletics (Co-ordinaton) 1, Melee (bite) 2, Gun Combat (slug rifle) 2, Mechanic 3, Recon 4, Stealth 3, Survival 4
Jack (1), Antique Rifle (3d6-3)

First Among Hunters

If the characters try negotiating with a Hunter, the first one they encounter is First Among Hunters (all Hunters have similarly grandiose names, when they bother with naming themselves at all). She is a typical Hunter – a genius-level intellect coupled with savage instincts and overwhelming paranoia. First Among Hunters applies her intelligence to winning the confidence and trust of the characters. She learns their language by osmosis, then plays on their curiosity and their fears by offering to guide them through Hunter territory. She will betray the characters if it benefits her, but she has no loyalty to the other Hunters either.

The Hunters know about all the other Habitats, but have never been able to reach the Graveyard (Habitat 4) or get past the Custodian in Habitat 6.

Trap

Roll	Trap
1	Pit Trap. The character must make a Difficult (-2) Dexterity check or fall, suffering 3d6 damage.
2	Swinging log. Roll 2d6; the log hits on an 8+ and inflicts 3d6 damage.
3	Snare. Roll 2d6; the snare hits on a 5+ and suspends the character 5 metres in the air. The character is stuck until rescued.
4	Poison darts. Roll 2d6, subtracting the character's Armour from the roll. On an 8+, the character is poisoned and must make an Average (+0) Endurance check. If he fails, he falls unconscious and takes 2d6 Dexterity damage.
5	Landmine. Roll 2d6; the mine is triggered on an 8+ and inflicts 4d6 damage to the character and 2d6 to other characters.
6	Explosive tripwire. The character must make a Difficult (-2) Dexterity check or all the characters suffer 4d6 damage.

Playing First Among Hunters:

- Look at the players as though they are potential meals.
- In conversation, interrupt and skip ahead as much as possible.
- Ask insightful questions; it is permissible to use out-of-character knowledge for the Hunter if it helps reinforce the sense of her intelligence and sensitivity.

7. THE HUNGRY SWAMP

Via Teleporter: The teleporter citadel is located on a small island in the swamp.

Via Cross-Country: The characters have to cross the jagged hills surrounding the swamp. The journey is arduous but not especially dangerous. Characters with Survival or Space Science (planetology) recognise that this is an artificial environment; the hills were deliberately constructed to contain the swamp.

Life's Reset Button

The Hungry Swamp is a fetid, yellow-tinged mire stretching for as far as the characters can see. The maroon-coloured mud stinks of acid. The fog that hangs above the swamp burns the characters' skin and eyes. If the characters analyse the swamp mud with Life Science (biology), they discover its composition is alarmingly similar to the contents of stomach acid.

Parts of the swamp are more acidic than others. At the upper edges of the swamp, a character finds the mud painful to the touch, but not damaging. Deeper in the swamp, the mud deals 1 damage per round of contact; immersion in the water inflicts 1d6 damage per round.

Lurking in the depths of the swamp are a breed of nameless creatures. These amphibious squid-like monsters did not evolve naturally. They were engineered by Grandfather aeons ago. They are designed as living weapons. When activated, they rise up and squirm into a target habitat, killing everything and dragging the remains back to the swamp. The swamp is their digestive system. The corpses are dissolved by the acidic mud, and the creatures absorb the nutrients.

The creatures are made to be thorough above all else. The squid-creatures are four metres long and strong enough to rip through steel plate, but are surprisingly gentle. Their dextrous tentacles are tipped with thousands of extensible cilia, allowing them to manipulate objects less than a centimetre wide, and the wide saucer-shaped eyespots that dot each tentacle and their central mass.

Travelling through the Swamp

The squid are normally quiescent, but the activation of the teleportation network put them into a standby mode. For a giant amphibious carnivorous squid, 'standby' translates to 'floating just under the surface of the acidic swamp, and attacking anyone nearby'. Characters travelling through the swamp may be ambushed by the squid.

If any character has a Recon skill of 2+, or if the players stated they are taking precautions, then an Difficult (-2) Recon roll lets the characters spot the squid lurking under the stagnant acid. Otherwise, the squid surprises the characters.

Controlling the Swamp

A short distance away from the teleport citadel is another structure, used to control the swamp and its denizens. The structure resembles a pumping station, or perhaps a fossilised

Type	Habitat	Str	Dex	End	Int	Ins	Pack
Swamp Squid							
Filter (Omnivore)	Marsh Walker	25	15	25	5	7	3
Recon 4, Stealth 2, Survival 3							
Armour 8. Tentacle (3d6). Number Encountered: 1-3							

octopus. If the characters explore the structure, they find an Ancient control console. Extensive experimentation or unfortunate accident lets the characters trigger the controls.

Activating the Control System: Computers + Intelligence, Hard (-4), 10-60 minutes
Understanding the Control System: Computers + Education, Very Hard (-6), 1-6 months

The console controls two major functions – it alters the level of the swamp and commands the squid creatures. If the characters activate the control system, roll on the table below to determine what they achieve.

8. GRAVEYARD

Via Teleporter: The teleporter citadel is on a rise overlooking the graveyard. Stepping through the teleporter immediately attracts the attention of the scavenger drones.

Via Cross-Country: A track leads out of the acidic swamp up to the graveyard. It is obvious that something huge once crawled out of the swamp and dragged itself up the hillside – this track was made by the squid host in centuries past, when they dragged salvage from a previous iteration of the Hunter civilisation up to be recycled.

Ancient Experiments

The Graveyard is a recycling facility for Grandfather's abandoned experiments. Potentially dangerous or troublesome experiments are dumped here, to be demolished by recycling robots. The Graveyard is a desert of bleached-white sand. Strange machines and relics poke like the bones of dinosaurs out of the dunes. There is no sign of life, no movement, nothing but the shifting sands. The ground crunches with each footstep, as the sand is dotted with microcircuits and discarded parts.

Exploring the graveyard, the characters come across several semi-functional Ancient artefacts:

Cloning Facility: This is a cloning facility similar to the Maker machine encountered in Habitat 1, but it has been partially demolished. In several places, the walls have broken open and hives of dying metal insects spill out onto the sands. If the characters tamper with the device, it produces non-viable fast-grown clones of the Player Characters.

Artificial Intelligence: Grandfather built many artificial intelligences of varying complexity, not all of which performed according to their original specifications. This nameless, insane AI is contained in a pyramidal structure. The AI is a free-floating sphere of dense computronium, which communicates through radio transmissions. The AI monitors the characters' radio messages, if any, and attempts to contact them by sending them messages. Initially, it broadcasts messages in old Vilani and Oynprith, but switches to Galanglic once it parses that language.

The AI is insane, babbling about random topics from its memory banks. It describes events during the Final Wars, the threat of the Sons and how Grandfather discarded it. It is bitter and resentful towards Grandfather, claiming he inevitably discards all his creations and he will never achieve his goal, but will destroy the universe in making the attempt.

Gravity Field: This is a field of scattered aluminium bars, coloured a variety of shades. The gravity in this field is strangely warped. In places, there is no gravity; in others, the gravity force exceeds 30gs. Changes in gravity are visible as atmospheric distortions.

Telepathic Pillar: This is an unmarked pillar of white metal. Characters who come within 10 metres of the pillar feel a sense of mounting euphoria, coupled with a buzzing noise in

Roll	Effect
1	**Raising the swamp:** The swamp level rises, engulfing any high ground and small islands. The teleport citadel is flooded. The underground structure seals itself, trapping the characters inside until they lower to swamp waters again.
2	**Lowering the swamp:** The acidic waters drain away. The characters can now easily cross the swamp without being ambushed
3	**Deactivate squid:** The squid return to slumber.
4	**Squid target the Ilimdaki:** A host of squid squirm out of the swamp and attack Habitat 0. The Ilimdaki weapons are useless against the creatures, so the habitat is swiftly overrun.
5	**Squid target the Hunters:** A host of squid attack the Hunters. The Hunters are better able to evade the squid, but they still get wiped out in a matter of hours.
6	**Indiscriminate squid:** The squid attack everyone, including the player characters.

their ears and tooth pain. Characters who come within three metres of the pillar are overwhelmed by joy, and must make a Hard (-4) Intelligence test to drag themselves away. This test can be repeated after 1-6 hours, when the character's growing thirst distracts him from the wonders of the pillar.

Dimensional Fold: This is a block of green matter, marked with extremely complex geometrical features. It is surrounded by a three-meter-radius circle of perfectly smooth sand. Any character who crosses the circle's edge appears on the far side, as do any objects thrown into the circle. Effectively, only energy can cross through the circle, but any matter is teleported to the far side. Experimenting with the circle is hazardous – if you try partially inserting a long rod or other object partially in and partially out of the circle, the fold ends up disintegrating part of the offending item.

Null Zone: The null zone is a scattering of small black discs on the desert floor. These discs cannot be moved by the characters. The null zone covers the area around the discs. Those within the zone are drained of energy. Electronic devices and batteries are drained first, at the rate of one item per round. Once all powered items are drained, the zone starts sapping the character's physical strength. Characters in the null zone lose 1d6 Endurance per round. Once Endurance hits 0, the field drains Strength and finally Intelligence. Once Intelligence hits 0, the character dies.

Salvaging Equipment

There are no intact Ancient machines here, but some of the devices can be repaired with sufficient knowledge. None of the player characters are capable of this, but the Ilimdaki can do so if the characters bring some of the technosavants here.

The Ilimdaki can assemble items of up to TL14 from the spare parts here – anything from power armour to flying tanks to weapons (nothing larger than 30 dtons). Assume it takes 1d6 hours to find the needed spare parts. Add one hour to the time required for each subsequent item. Adding more Ilimdaki workers does not decrease the time it takes to find spare parts, but lets the Ilimdaki assemble more devices at once.

Scavenger Drones

The scavenger drones are the counterparts of the disassembly robots encountered at the starport. They resemble huge metallic dung beetles. Instead of mandibles, the drones have an array of drills, saws, lasers, plasma cutters and other tools. They bore into the discarded machinery, pushing their wedge-shaped heads into the wreckage and pulling it apart.

The rear thorax of the drone contains specialised tools for different tasks, as well as a factory for making swarms of smaller copies of the drones for dealing with small objects.

Scavenger Drone
STR 20   DEX 7 Hull 8 Structure 4
INT 10 EDU 10
Traits: Armour 25, Cutting Tools
Weapons: Cutter (Melee (large blade) +4, 3d6+12 damage)

8. Deathzone

Via Teleporter: The teleporter citadel is overgrown. The characters appear in the middle of thorny vines and underbrush, and have to cut their way free.

Via Cross-Country: The Deathzone is at the bottom of a deep depression, so the approach to the habitat involves climbing down steep cliffs. The air grows noticeably thicker as the characters descend, with a much higher partial pressure of oxygen. Characters with Space Science (planetology) can tell this is not a natural phenomenon.

Welcome to the Jungle

This Habitat contains a selection of extremely dangerous plants and animal species. Millennia ago, Grandfather toyed with using natural selection to test his genetically engineered creations. Prospective species were dumped into this incredibly testing environment. If they survived, that genetic line was deemed worth continuing. The original deathzone was destroyed during the Final Wars, but samples were transplanted to this hellish garden.

To ensure the creatures of the Deathzone did not overwhelm the other Habitats, Grandfather engineered a dependence on a high level of oxygen. Both plants and animals in the Deathzone perish if removed from the high-oxygen area. Machines hidden in the jungle pump out extra oxygen to maintain the correct environment.

The Hunters know the terrain of the Deathzone moderately well, but have never managed to get past the Spitting Hedge. The Ilimdaki never dared enter the Deathzone.

Travelling through the Deathzone

Characters moving through the Deathzone will almost certainly be attacked. Roll on the Deathzone encounter table, adding a +1DM for each previous encounter. A successful Difficult (-2) Recon test allows the characters to reroll the

encounter, but they are bound by the effects of the second roll.

Deathzone Encounters

2d6	Encounter
2-3	Hunters
4-5	Howlers
6	Ant swarm
7-8	Spitter
9	Oxygen Generator
10-11	Avian flock
12	Acid fog
13	1d3 Spitters
14	Tender Robot
15+	Spitting Hedge

DMs: +1 for each previous encounter
+1 if the characters have Navigate 2+
+1 if the characters have Survival 2+
+4 if the characters arrived via the teleporter

Hunters: The characters encounter 1d6+2 Hunters.

Howlers: Howlers are six-armed primates created to be as aggressive and dangerous as possible. They attack other living creatures on sight. In addition to their considerable physical strength, howlers have offensive psionic powers. They have a group consciousness, and their Psionic Strength is equal to 2x the number of howlers in the pack. Howler packs consist of 2d6+4 individuals.

Ant swarm: The carnivorous ants of the Deathzone devour everything in their path. Flesh, wood, leaves, bones – anything organic gets consumed by the marching swarm, suffering 2d6 damage per round. Sealed armour provides complete protection against the swarm attacks.

Spitter: Spitters are plants that shoot globs of acidic, poisonous sap at their prey. A spitter consists of a large network of root fibres surrounding a single spitter-stalk. The plants hunt by sensing vibrations through the root network, and then launching globs of poison with incredible accuracy. The acid burns through any tough hide or armour to deliver the lethal payload of neurotoxin.

If a character is hit by a spitter attack, roll 2d6. If this roll is greater than the Protection offered by the character's armour, then the character must make a Difficult (-2) Endurance check or lose 1d6 Dexterity. A character reduced to 0 Dexterity is paralysed and will be consumed. If a character has no armour, he also suffers 2d6 damage.

Howler

Type	Habitat	Str	Dex	End	Int	Ins	Pack
Howlers							
Killer (carnivore)	Forest Walker	9	12	5	2	8	8
Athletics (all) 2, Melee (brawl) 2, Recon 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Telepathy 4							
Claw 1d6+2, Psionic blast – as per Psionic Assault (page 154 of *Traveller* core rulebook)							

Spitter

Type	Habitat	Str	Dex	End	Int	Ins	Pack
Spitter							
Trapper (carnivore)	Forest	5	0	12	0	7	3
Acid Spit (as per shotgun) +6.							

Avian

Type	Habitat	Str	Dex	End	Int	Ins	Pack
Avian							
Pouncer (Parasite)	Aerial Flyer	1	10	1	2	7	12
Recon 2, Athletics (Flying) 3, Survival 1, Melee (pierce) 3							
Embed (2d6). Number Encountered: 4d6							

Oxygen Generator: The characters happen upon one of the oxygen generators maintaining the environment. It looks like a collection of wide-mouthed pipes, made of a white stone and covered in bluish moss and mould.

Avian Flock: The avians of the Deathzone are parasites the size of hummingbirds. They attack by diving into the flesh of a target and burrowing into fat and muscle. The avians are capable of bursts of tremendous speed, which they use to drive themselves beak-first into their prey. The creatures are conical in shape. Their wings are similar to those of insects, consisting of a thin membrane over a light frame; the wings break off when the avian embeds itself in a host.

An individual avian is little threat to a character, but a whole flock is a different matter. Each attack by the flock represents an avian trying to embed itself. If an attack inflicts damage, then the character has a squirming conical parasite-bird stuck in his flesh; characters take one point of damage per round per successful attack until the parasites are removed with an average (+0) Medic check taking 1-6 rounds.

Acid fog: The acidic fog is secreted by a relative of the spitter. Fog patches stretch for up to a kilometre at a time. The plants migrate slowly through the forest, killing everything

in their path on their long circuitous migrations. An acid fog patch inflicts 1 damage per round; armour is degraded at the rate of 1 point/10 rounds. On average, it takes 2d6 x 10 rounds to pass through a fog patch. Only armour providing full coverage provides any protection against the fog.

Tender Robot: The deathzone is maintained by automated robot guardians. These vehicles crawl through the woods, repairing damaged oxygen generators and keeping the ecosystem balanced. The robots ignore the player characters.

The Spitting Hedge: The spitting hedge is the final obstacle in the Deathzone. As the name suggests, it is a long row of overgrown spitters. The spitting hedge works just like a regular spitter, but is much larger. Its armour-piercing acid attack rolls 3d6 instead of 2d6.

Getting past the Deathzone

There are several ways for the characters to get past the hazards of the deathzone.

The simplest way is just to cross the zone on foot. If the characters have good armour, or obtain armour from the Ilimdaki, they can ignore many of the zone's dangers, and a few blasts with a PGMP can stop even the most powerful alien threat.

Another route is to bypass the deathzone by flying over it. The Ilimdaki can construct balloons; if the characters can get to the Graveyard, then the Ilimdaki can construct air/rafts or other flying machines. Characters in a flyer will still be attacked by avian flocks.

If the characters experiment with the oxygen generators, they can easily increase the oxygen content of the atmosphere in the Deathzone. If the oxygen percentage is bumped up a few points, the characters can set the whole forest on fire.

9. The Custodian

On the far side of the Deathzone is a tower of white stone. The only visible entrance is via a ledge some five metres above ground level. As they approach the tower a Droyne emerges and glides down towards them. This is the Custodian. It is not actually a Droyne – it is a robot that looks identical to a living Droyne. The robot is more intelligent than any of the characters, and has a wealth of defensive systems and weapons, the most notable of which is a gravity-projection field that can immobilise a character and block any projectile weapon, including plasma or fusion bursts.

Attacking the Custodian is pointless. It can easily defend itself against any attack the characters can deploy, and there are hundreds more Custodians on the planet. If they somehow destroy this Custodian, more arrive via teleporter after a few minutes.

Initially, the Custodian assumes the characters are escaped Ilimdaki and questions them as to how they left their Habitat. If the characters do not convince the robot they are from outside the pocket universe, it disintegrates them and they wake up as clones in the Maker machine. If they show they are not Ilimdaki, the Custodian paralyses them with its gravity projector and carries them off to the transit hub.

The Transit Hub

The transit hub looks like a larger version of the teleport citadel, but without the spinning portal in the centre. Instead, there is a bowl-shaped depression surrounded by a gauzy haze. This haze parts when the characters approach. On close examination, the haze consists of thousands of tiny metallic objects suspended in an anti-gravity field.

The characters are placed by the Custodian inside the hub, and the machine is activated. The haze turns silver and then flashes with a colour not seen in our universe. The characters lose consciousness for a moment – perhaps they are in hyperspace for hours, or only an instant, but they are unaware of the transition as they are flung bodily through jumpspace... to Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER'S REALM

The characters materialise on a space station orbiting a silver world. The planet below is covered from pole to pole in metal, a globe-spanning city-machine 300,000 years in the making. This station, by contrast, is obviously still under construction. Huge robots carry components into position. Metal flows like liquid to bind sections together. A swarm of activity surrounds the characters as the titanic structure is assembled. The technologies involved here are aeons beyond the comprehension of the characters – they could no more fathom the workings of this station than a Neanderthal could understand a starship – but some intuitive sense tells them this is a weapon.

A trio of robots, identical to the Custodian, arrive and surround the characters. The robots speak in unison and with perfect Galanglic: '*Welcome. Your arrival is unanticipated but welcome. You will accompany us.*' The robots project a force field, lifting the characters into the air and carrying them across the surface of the station.

Up ahead, the characters see that the swarm of activity appears to be centred around a particular point. There is a swirl of robots coming and going, of energy flows and transmissions, and at the locus of all this is a small figure. He floats three metres off the ground, in a green sphere of energy, directing the machinery according to his grand design.

All the characters feel the urge to prostrate themselves before this *presence*. Characters who are steeped in the culture of a religion may perceive the figure as God; other characters feel overwhelming of awe and terror. Even at this range, the figure's psychic weight is far beyond anything the characters have ever experienced before.

The characters get close enough to see that the figure is another Droyne; a living Droyne, this time, not a robot duplicate.

He is Yaskoydray.

He cocks his head curiously as the characters arrive. His ancient eyes gleam with anticipation. '*I am Grandfather*' he says. '*You are in grave danger.*' He telepathically transmits an image of SEVEN breaking through the dimensional portal into the pocket universe.

'*You must understand.*' The telepathic contact with Grandfather intensifies...

LIBRARY DATA
HUMANITI SUBSPECIES: ILIMDAKI

They call themselves the Inheritors of the Stars. Grandfather wanted servants who had the technical skills to obey his commands and aid in his research, but who would not interfere with his experiments. These humans were one of his earliest experiments in producing suitable servants. They are gifted with genetic memory; each Inheritor is born with an encyclopaedic knowledge of physics, chemistry, engineering and other sciences. They are superlative craftsmen and builders.

However, they are nearly incapable of innovation or imagination. Unless pushed by circumstances or outside instructions, they just repeat the most basic activities needed to keep themselves alive. Their civilisation has been wiped out by the Hunters thousands of times and each time they replaced by clones created in Habitat 1. Grandfather is aware of this repeated slaughter, but sees it as an experiment in evolutionary genetics – can the Inheritors overcome their inbuilt restrictions and put their wealth of technical knowledge to use.

This habitat is the most heavily populated in the area. Over 50,000 humans live here, mostly in the farmlands surrounding their capital city, Yas. Their government is a charismatic dictatorship, dominated by the most imaginative and determined individuals. Taking power among the Ilimdaki is as simple as claiming it. Their Technology Level is approximately TL3; they are capable of understanding concepts and technologies up to TL16, but lack the industrial base or the impetus to develop beyond this.

Ilimdaki Rules
- Ilimdaki have Very Notable Education (+4) and Very Weak (-4) Intelligence
- Most Ilimdaki have Social Standing 6 in their culture, with the exception of a small few such as the Queen or the priests.
- Ilimdaki are born with Engineering (all) 5, Mechanic 5, Physical Science (all) 5, Space Science (all) 5 and Life Science (all) 5.

Ilimdaki Culture
Left to their own devices, the Ilimdaki adopt a baseline subsistence culture. They build extraordinary well-made and energy-efficient houses out of cut stone, and start farming. They can stay in this state, generation after generation, without developing any further culture or technology indefinitely. In previous iterations the Hunters wiped the Inheritors out with ease.

The current iteration of Ilimdaki were decanted more than five hundred years ago. There are effectively only three notable events in their culture, other than natural disasters like earthquakes and diseases – their creation by the Maker (see Habitat 1), attacks by the Hunters and the ascension of the Queen of Rifles.

Two hundred years ago, a mutant Ilimdaki was born with more ambition and foresight than the rest. The Ilimdaki refer to her as the Queen of Rifles, as she convinced them to make weapons capable of killing Hunters. She brought Inheritor culture up to its current state, and commanded them to build their defences against the Hunters. The Queen of Rifles' descendants rule the Inheritors from the city of Yas. The Hunters continue to prowl around the borders, watching for a way in.

The Ilimdaki speak numerous languages, including old Vilani. Their names are drawn from that language.

They have no form of economy or trade; their agriculture produces enough food for all, and tools and other items are held in common. Sexual relations are equally lax; the Ilimdaki have little interest in sex save for reproduction, and their mating urge is directly related to food supplies and resources. When there are enough resources to support a larger population, fertile young female Ilimdaki seek out suitable mates. Otherwise, reproduction rates are kept at replacement levels. Currently, the Ilimdaki population is in balance with their resources; the land could support millions more if they applied their technological knowledge, but they have no impetus to do so.

There are no trades or specialists among them, nor are there teachers. Ilimdaki are born knowing almost everything they will ever know in a lifetime. Infant Ilimdaki can talk and walk as soon as their muscles and bones have developed enough strength; they do not need to learn to do so.

The Walls
The first Queen of Rifles ordered the construction of defensive ramparts to protect the Ilimdaki against the Hunters. These fortifications are still in place, perfectly maintained and secure as they were 200 years ago. The Walls are eight metres high on average, with a bastion every kilometre. There are gatling guns and rifle emplacements all along the walls. Vegetation has been cleared on either side of the wall, creating a 200 metre wide kill zone.

The Walls are not a perfect defence against the resourceful and vicious Hunters, but are proof against most attacks. Incursions are a rare event and the Ilimdaki have the advantage of both weight of numbers and superior technology.

Yas

The city of Yas is a study in contrasts. Every building is perfectly constructed and maintained, but was clearly built without any regard for symmetry or proper placement. Other than a single main thoroughfare running through the city, there are no streets or roads. The buildings were obviously built when they were needed wherever the builders happened to be standing at the time. The growth of the city can be traced like rings on a tree; first a cluster of workshops and factories, then living quarters and communal dining rooms, and then more workshops.

A Routine (+2) Social Science (archaeology)/Social Science (sophontology) or Craft (architecture) roll notes several unusual things about the city. Firstly, architecture styles and techniques have not changed since the city was first built – the oldest buildings are identical in construction technique and design to buildings still under construction. Secondly, the overall aesthetic is similar to that of the starport the characters arrived at. Hint that these could be the degenerate descendants of the race who built the starport.

At the centre of the city is the Palace, where the current 'ruler' of the Ilimdaki resides. Queen Nalu is a direct female-line descendant of the original Queen of Rifles, although she lacks her ancestor's innovative streak. Nonetheless, she takes her responsibilities seriously and as soon as she realises the Player Characters are outsiders with the capacity for original thought, she will do everything in her power to get them to aid the Ilimdaki.

Nalu is advised by the religious leaders of the Ilimdaki, who worship the Maker. Their genetic memory means the Ilimdaki know the Maker machine is a cloning facility, but they worship whatever force or intelligence built the cloning machine in the first place. Effectively, they indirectly worship Grandfather in a hesitating, confused fashion. The leader of the priestly caste is Irkur, an elderly priest who is next in line to be sent to tend to the Maker (see page 9). He clings to his current role with all his might; he is the most ambitious and conniving Ilimdaki of the current generation.

Roleplaying the Ilimdaki

The Ilimdaki are very frustrating to deal with, as they have the ability to solve almost any problem but lack the drive to do so. An Ilimdaki farmer knows enough about genetic engineering to boost his crop yield a hundred-fold, and knows enough about computer programming and industrial design to build robots to do all his work for him – but will never think of doing so unless prompted. Instead, he tills the same fields and harvests the same crops that his ancestors did.

No matter who they are, the Player Characters have more imagination and drive than any of the Inheritors. The Ilimdaki desperately need leadership and guidance; they are bred to be a slave race. The Referee should take care to portray the Ilimdaki as intelligent, but pathologically unmotivated and uninspired. Once given an idea, they are masters at putting it into operation but cannot have ideas themselves.

The Ilimdaki are still limited by the laws of physics. An Ilimdaki toddler has the technical know-how to build a plasma rifle but has no idea how to go about finding the raw materials. Even given all the necessary parts and equipment, the Ilimdaki would still take as long as any other expert to complete a task.

Vargr Subspecies: The Hunters of Men

Aeons ago, Grandfather's agents took wolves from Earth and engineered the Vargr race from their DNA. The creatures called Hunters are another form of Vargr; they are an experiment in enhanced intelligence and intuition. Hunters are gifted with incredible powers of reasoning and creativity. By human standards, every one is a super-genius, Da Vinci with fangs. A Hunter can learn a language just by listening to it for a few minutes, or work out how to use a technological device by experimentation in a fraction of the time it would take a human to do so. In terms of pure intellect, they are almost as intelligent as Grandfather himself was, back when he was just a mutant Droyne.

However, they have genetic blocks against co-operation. They loathe the presence of other sophonts, finding them intolerable. When new Hunters are born, they are abandoned by their mother as soon as they are weaned. Left alone, these cubs quickly develop their own language, their own understanding of science, their own tools... Theoretically, a lone Hunter could keep innovating, recreating the progress of hundreds of years of scientifici research in a single lifetime. As a whole, the Hunters are effectively TL2, but some Hunters have gone from having nothing to scratch-building nuclear reactors and gauss weapons.

There are approximately 5,000 Hunters living in their habitat.

Hunter Rules
- Hunters have Very Notable (+4) Intelligence, but are Feral, rolling only 1d6 for Education.
- Notable (+2) Strength, Dexterity and Endurance.
- Natural Weapon (bite).
- Uplifted.
- When learning new skills, Hunters gain a Level 0 skill in 1d6 rounds, a new Level 1 skill in 1d6 minutes, and a new Level 2 skill in 1d6 hours. Level 3 or higher skills are gained at the normal rate.

Hunter Culture

Hunters are solitary creatures. They are savagely territorial and have no compunction about murdering trespassers. Their warped intellects makes them extremely paranoid; the main restriction on Hunter progress is constant intercine warfare. They are smart enough to see the value of co-operation but cannot bring themselves to do so. At best, they can agree to short-term truces to mate or to work together on extremely important projects, like wiping out the Ilimdaki (the only thing Hunters dislike more than each other are non-Hunter sophonts).

The Hunter territories are dotted with small fortified households, each of which is utterly unlike its neighbours. Lone Hunters tend to take over abandoned households. Each household includes a laboratory, workroom, larder and an alarming number of deathtraps.

Roleplaying Hunters

Hunters are sociopathic geniuses. Every one of them is smarter than any Player Character and they enjoy playing with their prey. They especially despise the Ilimdaki; the Hunters know the humans have all the advantages they need to defeat them, but lack the will to carry such a project through to completion.

Play a Hunter as a cross between a werewolf, Batman and a genius serial killer. Take every opportunity to demonstrate the Hunter's intellectual superiority to the characters but also their lack of a common culture. A Hunter might lurk out of sight, eavesdropping on the characters until it intuited the syntax of their language. It might then question a character about his weapons and even though the Hunter had never seen a laser before, it would quickly grasp the weapon's principles and capabilities. Then, and only then, would the Hunter attack, using its superior speed and agility to get into Personal range.