

# DEAD NAMES

LOST RACES AND FORGOTTEN RUINS



BY KEVIN CRAWFORD

FOR THE STARS WITHOUT NUMBER ROLE-PLAYING GAME

# DEAD NAMES

## **AN OPEN GRAVE ..... 3**

Wherein is revealed the purpose of this book and the nature of the tools it contains.

**BY KEVIN CRAWFORD**

## **SINEW AND BONE ..... 4**

In which the creation and elaboration of the Lost is discussed, and with it the means of suiting them for a particular creator's purposes.

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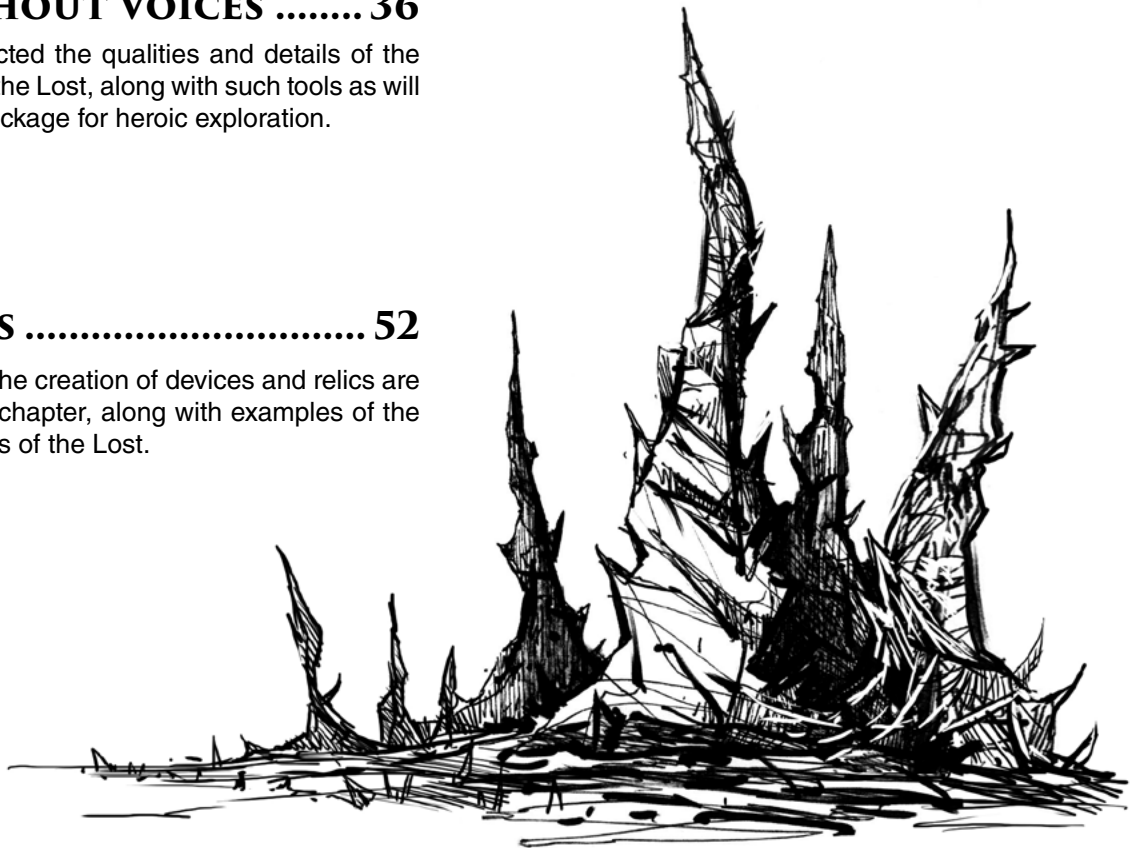
**THE FORGE STUDIOS**

## **HOUSES WITHOUT VOICES ..... 36**

Herein are depicted the qualities and details of the ancient ruins of the Lost, along with such tools as will build worthy wreckage for heroic exploration.

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Implements for the creation of devices and relics are provided in this chapter, along with examples of the forgotten artifices of the Lost.



# AN OPEN GRAVE

## TOOLS FOR RESURRECTIONISTS

Unnumbered worlds have left their dead to canker the silence of the present age. Great civilizations have risen and collapsed under the Scream or the relentless advance of time, leaving behind only strange edifices and unseemly bones. Their glories litter the stars but their names have melted into scholarly legend and the garbled tales of backworld tribes.

Yet there are wonders among this dust. There are treasures and artifacts of long-vanished peoples and the marvels they raised in days of distant glory. The crowning splendors of dead empires await new hands to bring them back up to the light. Their bones are precious to those who dare to pull them from the earth.

Not only dead things await the intrepid. Those with the courage to seek far worlds might still find living remnants of these former societies, peoples that still preserve the shapes and ways of revenant realms. Some exist as living museum-pieces of their fallen empires, repeating old patterns as each season takes a few more of their number, as much a danger to themselves as they are to hated outsiders.

Others are degenerate fragments, the living detritus of cultures that have long since collapsed under their own weight. A few have even tried to make some sort of terms with the modern world, existing as a faded but still vital remnant of something that was once greater by far.

The craving for discovery drives many campaigns of **Stars Without Number**. The need to unearth lost knowledge and discover the treasures of the glorious Golden Age has pushed more than one party of intrepid heroes into places of peril and forgotten dread. Still, building a sufficient supply of mysteries can tax the creativity of the most industrious GM, and this book is intended to help a creator bear up under the strain of relentless invention.

Every GM has a limited supply of creative energy. While a determined GM can build a lost race or ancient stronghold through their own hard-won experience and determination, their task is made far easier by a proper set of tools.

In the pages of this supplement you will receive a set of tools and resources for creating these mysterious Lost and the panoply of their vanished civilizations. With the help of this book, a GM can easily produce any number of new peoples to baffle and intrigue their curious players.

In *Sinew and Bone* you will find the tools you need to fashion these Lost races, from their initial defining Madness to the details of dress and comportment useful in actually using them at the table. The tools in this chapter cover not only the more conventional human-heritor peoples that the PCs might encounter, but also mysterious aliens, human-forged synthetics, and inexplicable metadimensionals that once populated these far-flung worlds.

*Houses Without Voices* helps a GM devise the ruins and lost edifices that these Lost left behind. For many GMs, a campaign is hardly complete without a proper selection of crumbling ruins, mysterious structures, and legendary monuments to explore. Building these all in suitably fresh and exciting ways can be difficult for a GM, and the tools in this chapter can bolster a creator's natural creativity with the structure and help they need to make something worthy of their game.

*Broken Toys* contains a step-by-step process for devising new devices and artifacts. Despite the variety of ancient devices found in the corebook and supplements like **Relics of the Lost**, many GMs find it necessary to build something special for their own campaigns. The tables in this section provide example effects for devices and artifacts, along with tools for determining their particular appearance and method of operation. As an extra measure of help for a GM, twenty new devices and twenty new artifacts are also included.

**Dead Names** is for use with the **Stars Without Number** corebook published by Sine Nomine, though users of other post-apocalyptic or science-fiction systems are likely to find much of use in it. Readers are particularly encouraged to pick up its sister-game, **Other Dust**, a post-apocalyptic game with a broad range of resources for play in a shattered world.

# SINEW AND BONE

## LOST DENIZENS OF A BROKEN SKY

Beneath the char and soil of the fallen worlds there are peoples without number or name. Uncounted cycles of existence have passed without remembrance and vast black millennia have fallen away into silence. Yet in their hour they were bright and violent with fevered life, if not always such life as the humans of the present age would find welcoming.

These creatures are the Lost. They are those strange species and extravagant flowerings of transhumanity that formed great empires and unfathomable dominions in the regions far from the Terran Mandate's control. Their relics are in the dirt beneath a colonist's feet and in the alien edifices that rear high over his ramshackle settlements. Their customs are in the mumbled ritual he performs at the edge of the strangely-colored heath, and the way he bows his head to the silver-eyed idols of a dead race's gods. The bones of the Lost lie naked beneath this present sun, but sometimes their flesh retains a more tangible presence.

This chapter will assist in GM in creating these long-vanished peoples and defining the ways in which they differ from their modern heirs. Some may be close cousins to modern humanity, distinguished only by some strange mania or novelty of form. Others are wholly alien, creatures from foreign dimensions or incomprehensible worlds who once flourished on this planet's skin and carried on their own strange customs. Even the dead among these Lost are often dangerous to modern humans. Their edifices and creations were meant for different purposes than those now cherished by humanity, and even when they function correctly they often act in ways displeasing to the sector's current inhabitants.

Yet in that danger there remains value for those brave enough to plumb the secrets of the Lost. Potent devices and powerful relics await the canny hands of scavengers, and the great engines of dead empires can bring a new and terrible glory to those souls capable of liberating them from the graves of their former masters.

### BUILT FOR ALIEN PURPOSE

This section includes tools for building four different kinds of Lost: transhumans, artificials, extraterrestrials, and metadimensionals. Each section is meant to stand by itself in emphasizing certain common traits and qualities for creatures of that type, but a GM should feel free to mix and match the tools provided here to create entities of suitably alien, disturbing character.

While it can be a great creative pleasure to simply sit and fashion strange species, most GMs have need of more specific, practical function in their creations. Each race of Lost

is meant to fulfill a certain role in an adventure, either as the mysterious creators of a long-abandoned ruin, as the authors of a great peril that faces some region of space, or as living relics of a former world whom the PCs must fight or engage in parley.

In most cases a GM can be expected to define a Lost species' role before creating them. If a GM knows they're going to need a creator species for a ruin, then that's what they'll build the Lost to be, focusing on their aesthetic interests and functional requirements in their architecture. If the GM needs bug-eyed monsters to boil out of some forgotten cyst, then they'll be more interested in the combat statistics and fighting attitudes of the entities. Keeping a firm idea of why a Lost species is needed will help a GM create the information they need for their game and avoid unfruitful sidetracks.

### A FOREIGN STATE OF MIND

Whatever the type of Lost the GM chooses to create, it's important to emphasize the sheer, disconcerting *alienness* of these creatures. They originated in a world and a context totally foreign to the human investigators of the present. Their needs, purposes, and fears may be utterly incomprehensible to modern humanity, but for all of that strangeness they still retain an internal logic.

For example, a metadimensional species composed of tangible sonic waves may have conducted a vicious war in the form that modern humans recognize only as a magnificent symphony, the echoes of which still induce maddening obsessions and toxic physical changes in those humans exposed to the metadimensional reverberations that linger in their ruins. Knowing these truths about a Lost species will help the GM create evocative, useful elements for inclusion.

To begin this process, a GM does not start with the Lost's appearance, or culture, or special abilities. A GM starts by determining a Lost race's *Madness*. This is the species' dominant mental or social trait, or at least the one most comprehensible to modern humanity. In almost all cases, this Madness is extreme or irrational by human standards— not because the creatures are simply insane, but because they are fundamentally inhuman.

Many of these entities were the products of transhuman social and physical experimentation that severed them entirely from any mundane concerns of practicality. Madnesses are not restrained just because a particular obsession might be deeply inconvenient to the ordinary necessities of life. When its possessors existed in the world, these necessities were fundamentally different things.



The importance of the Madness lies in giving a GM an easy shorthand for expressing the strangeness of a creature. They are loud, obvious traits that quickly mark an entity and help give it a sense of distinction and particularity amid the zoo of strange alien entities. They also give a quick default option for the GM when it becomes necessary to figure out what the creature might do in a particular situation; just have it act as its Madness would incline it.

The following page offers a number of different possibilities for the Madness of a species. You might choose to pick or roll more than one entry from the table and blend them together. The initial focus should simply be on a clear, vivid Madness that can be easily expressed in play. It's possible to give a species multiple separate Madnesses if you wish, but too many of them can make it difficult to convey them all in a clear and memorable way and might leave the impression of simple irrationality rather than a focused purpose.

Once you know what the Madness is, you can elaborate it if you wish by determining how strong the mania might be, along with the fundamental reason for its existence. If you can easily fit a background story to these factors, then that's all for the good. If not, don't worry about it. The next pages of this chapter will help walk you through further elaboration of your creation that will provide more grist for your imagination.

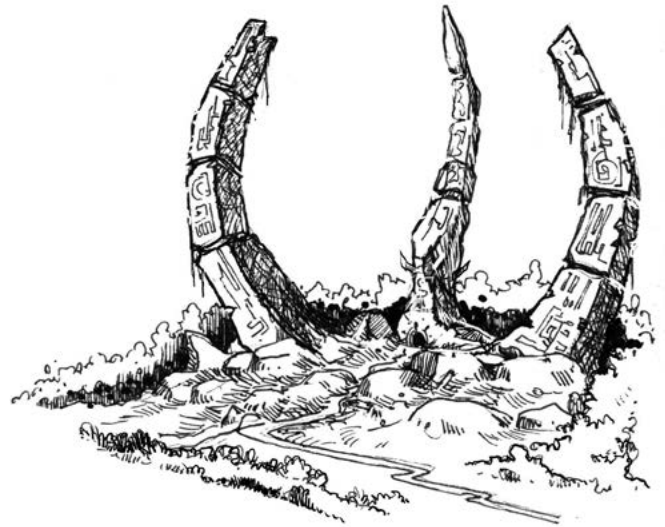
## THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

Once you know the Madness that drives the entities, you can start to ask more specific questions about their nature and form. Each of the four major categories of Lost have their own set of resources for defining their unique qualities, though you can always mix and match among them if your imagination recommends it.

Transhumans have **Aberrations**. This is the quality about them that makes them transhuman. They may or may not have a humanlike form, but their Aberration is the thing that makes them truly strange, the quality that separates them from conventional humanity. Aberrations are usually connected to their Madness in some important way.

Artificials have a **Purpose**. By definition, an artificial was created by someone, and that creator can be expected to have had a purpose for their new offspring. This Purpose may have decayed in the centuries or eons since the artificial was first created, and it's possible that they may be dedicated to some Purpose that is no longer even possible. Such frustrated needs can sometimes be the catalyst to produce their Madness.

Aliens have a **Sojourn**, the reason that brought them down from their homeworld and set them among the then-inhabitants of this world. Aliens found in the modern day might be a thousand generations removed from their starfaring forebears, but their original reason for coming to a world can



still show in their goals and motivations—even if the true purpose of their ancestors is now hopelessly lost.

Metadimensionals have a **Deviancy**, a quality that is in direct defiance of mundane reality. The foreign climes of rationality they formerly inhabited simply did not work the same way as does the mundane world, and so something about them is dramatically wrong by conventional measures. This Deviancy tends to color the rest of their behavior and thinking. For example, the architecture of a Lost metadimensional race that does not interact with gravity is apt to be interesting to explorers, as might interactions with an entity that does not exist in relation to a particular sense.

The following pages provide examples and random generation tables for all of these qualities. Once you've generated a suitable strangeness for your Lost, you can tie it back to their Madness. Perhaps their trait was the cause of their mania, or it might have been put upon them to better enable them to act on their driving purpose.

Some traits won't seem to match up well with some Madnesses. In that case, you can simply reroll or pick a different quality, but it can be more interesting at times to connect it anyway in a more poetic or abstract way. A transhuman with a Madness for inflicting Corruption and the Aberration of an obsessive need to build utopia might not seem to match too well, but you could phrase the trait as a need to create the perfect frame for their studied defilements, the shining utopia which will point out ever more clearly the horrible decadence within.

If you're feeling exceptionally daring you might choose wildly incommensurate qualities and then let the players puzzle out how they might be connected. Humans are pattern-making creatures; if you give them the pieces they might just surprise you with their hypotheses. It's easy enough to quietly write these motivations into the back story with a few light tweaks and then let them enjoy the pleasure of being clever enough to have figured it out.

## THE FACE WE WEAR

Once you know an entity's Madness and characteristic trait, you can move on to its physical appearance. The tables provided in this section give a number of random generators for building a suitably alien creature or studding a transhuman body with eldritch alterations. There are a few caveats to keep in mind when generating your creatures, however.

If the entities are intended to be the builders of ruins and other major structures in your campaign, it's easiest to keep their dimensions at least vaguely humanoid. Envisioning the architecture and furnishings of a species with a radically different body plan can be difficult, and while such profoundly alien edifices can be very interesting to explore, they're also a great deal of effort to construct. If you do intend to build a species that has no use for chairs, stairways, and solid flooring for their living quarters you should be ready to put the extra effort in that will be required to develop their lairs.

A set of tables are provided that are likely to be most useful for defining the quirks of a particular Lost's shape. Transhumans tend to consist of permutations of the human body. Synthetics often have clearly artificial elements or components. Aliens may have adapted to local conditions, but their original body types were often evolved under very different environmental conditions, and metadimensionals regularly defy basic physical laws in their composition.

Of course, you're under no obligation to keep your rolls on the matching set of tables, or even to use random rolls at all. A transhuman touched with some particularly strange Madness and Aberration might have visibly metadimensional qualities, while a synthetic designed to be a replacement for its creators might have a wholly organic transhuman appearance. Mix and match as your inspiration moves you.

As with the creature's special traits, certain qualities of appearance might suggest unique powers or special abilities for their race of Lost. With its mindset, defining trait, and appearance set, you're now ready to add in those special powers that might need a more rigorous mechanical representation.

## THE GIFTS WE'RE GIVEN

When setting statistics for your Lost, the first thing to think about is whether you need a strictly mechanical representation for them at all. If all the members of this species have been dead for a dozen eons, then it doesn't matter what the save against their offensive teleportation power was.

The only thing of importance is to know that they *could* teleport objects around, so as to make sure the sites they build take that fact into account. For creatures that won't need a mechanical representation all you need is a sentence or two describing what they were able to do.

For entities that the heroes might meet in battle, however, it's necessary to give more detail to these abilities. The following is a simple, step-by-step sequence for assembling such lively Lost. You can always deviate from it when your own imagination prompts you, but it will serve to give you something usable when you'd rather save your creative energy for something else.

Pick hit dice for the Lost. If the Lost the PCs are encountering are just the rank-and-file members of the species, without special distinction, they're probably 1 or 2 hit dice. If they're unique heroes or special guardians, then 4 or 5 might be appropriate. If the entire species of Lost is unusually powerful or gifted, even the common members might have 4 or more hit dice, and their paragons even higher. Don't feel obligated to make all members of the species the same.

Set its attack bonus, AC, and the damage it inflicts on a successful attack. For most creatures, their attack bonus will be equal to their HD, and their damage done will be around 1d8 assuming modern weaponry. ACs are rarely better than 4 unless the entity is wearing advanced armor of some kind. Resist the temptation to give excessively good ACs to foes.

Set its movement, indicating how far it can move in a single turn. Most humanoids will have 30 meter movement speeds, while quadrupeds and other uncommonly mobile entities might have more. Torpid or enfeebled creatures might have 10 meter speeds. Add in a note if the creature has some unusual mode of movement, such as flight, teleportation, burrowing, or other odd perambulation.

Set its saving throw and morale. Most creatures will have a basic saving throw of 15 minus half their hit dice, rounded up, with possible bonuses in resisting certain kinds of perils based on the nature of the Lost. Morale is rarely more than 8 unless they're especially martial entities or ones well-trained or experienced in combat.

Set its unique powers. Most Lost shouldn't have more than one or two significant powers. A creature with a wide selection of unique abilities can be difficult to run in play, and these frills can turn out to be irrelevant when one or two powers turn out to be the most useful and applicable of the lot. More than this, it can make it difficult to clearly characterize the entity if it seems to be too much of a grab-bag of abilities. The section that follows gives suggestions for assembling these characteristic abilities.

Determine the facts most likely to be important in play. If you foresee these Lost getting into fights with the PCs, note down how it's most likely to fight and a quick round or two of tactics so you're not left scrambling during play. If you think the PCs are likely to try to negotiate, mark down any diplomatic details that will be important to remember. Don't try to be exhaustive with these; you could write for hours and not cover every possibility. Just do enough of the work to keep you from being caught flat-footed during the game session.

Cap them off with a name. This may be a collection of random syllables, a title they were known by during their time of glory, or a frightened epithet provided by their terrorized neighbors.

At this point you now have a perfectly usable Lost, one sufficient to build a ruin or fight a brawl with the heroes. In many cases, you won't need to do more than this. You know all that you need to know about these Lost and can turn your creative focus elsewhere. In some cases, however, you might want to grow these creatures out a little beyond these basics, and so there are a few optional steps you can follow.

## BUILD OF OLD

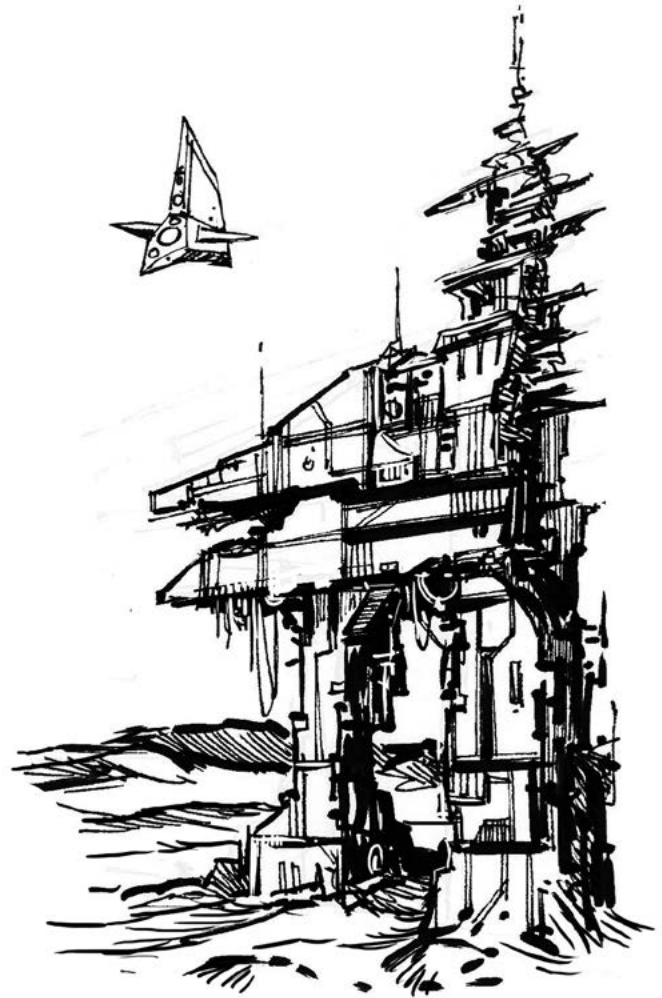
Sketching a loose history of the Lost can be helpful in determining how their edifices came to be the sad ruins they are today, or discerning why it is the locals hate and condemn their half-forgotten names. It can give more depth to their Madness, and also give you some clues as to the type of ruins and relics that ought to be found in their former domains.

The history page offers a selection of **Obstacles** that represent great challenges the Lost faced during the past and **Seeds of Ruin** that recount the darkneses and troubles that haunted them in those eras. Along with these tables, you'll also find examples of ways in which the Lost overcame their Obstacles, and reasons why a Seed of Ruin grew worse over time.

You can alternate these tables, rolling for an Obstacle, why it was overcome, a Seed of Ruin it planted, and the ways in which that ruin grew worse before blossoming into another Obstacle they fought. You can separate these out into individual ages of their society, perhaps with an initial rise, a time of glory, an age of decline, and then their current modern-day fate. Some ages may never have overcome their Obstacles, and some Seeds of Ruin might still be vigorously present in what remains of their society. Don't worry too much about exact dates or sequences. Most Lost are amply served by a broad-brush interpretation of their past histories.

Some Lost may not have a current history at all, having all died out long before the heroes come on the scene. Others might still persist in pockets and fragments, the sad remnants of a former glorious empire. There is also the possibility that some shard of their prior splendor might still survive in a remote region of space, or as some ossified planetary domain avoided and feared by their human neighbors. Any such survivals tend to place a premium on isolation and tradition, as those with a more cosmopolitan view would certainly have melted into the surrounding population by now.

Don't worry too much about details when building a history. You're either doing this for fun or you're doing this to help you characterize these creatures in play. You don't need names and dates for the latter, just a general gist of the past.



## THE WAYS OF THE ANCESTORS

Another optional step is to sharpen up their cultural details a bit, giving them some specific government, particular attitudes toward outsiders, culturally-valued skills and personal traits, and other trappings of a civilization. Most of these steps are thoroughly unnecessary if the Lost have been dead for ages or if they are incapable of more diplomatic relationships with PCs, but for those species that might provoke a more peaceful set of interactions with the heroes, it can be helpful to have this information settled.

The tables that follow give you answers to three common questions- the type of government used by the Lost, the way they treat outsiders, and traits that are particularly respected by their culture. As with the other tables, you should feel free to rearrange any results to best fit your needs, though it can be interesting to run with an unexpected result.

Governments for the Lost tell you what sort of authority a given creature is liable to answer to. If the heroes try to parley with the creatures, an idea of their government will help you conjure up the requisite Lost NPCs and the ways in which they'll make their decisions about the PCs.

The way in which they treat outsiders will provide you with a quick rule of thumb for determining their reaction to PC intrusions. Even hostile or violently reclusive entities might be susceptible to sufficiently inspired diplomacy, however, and you should be careful about creating Lost that haven't even a theoretical chance of communicating with the PCs. Such relentless enemies can serve a valuable role as implacable foes in your campaign, or as exotic monsters-of-the-week, but there's not much else such entities can do for you.

Cultural traits should be viewed through the lens of the creature's Madness. "Love" in a creature mad with the goal to exclude all alien or metadimensional creatures might represent a passionate devotion to the planet and its native inhabitants, and a desire to preserve the land for them alone. For additional variety, you might roll more than once to generate multiple important values, or designate qualities that are exceptionally shameful and deplorable to the Lost.

## LAST RITES

The final step in creating your Lost is to get them into a format you can use at the table. You should take a minute to write down the details of your freshly-fashioned entities on a new sheet of paper or 3x5 index card, the better to have the details close to hand during play.

Aside from writing down the basic statistics and powers of the creatures, you might take a moment to record two or three different versions of them to represent warriors, commoners, powerful nobility, or other likely potential foes. Having a wider selection will spare you adjustment time during play, and gives you a chance to personalize each type with abilities or appearances that make them stand out during the game.

You should also spare some thought for their general tactics when in a battle, and their most likely responses to surprise or seeming defeat. Some Lost might be quick to break, scattering at the first casualty, while others might fight on blindly even in the face of certain destruction. If they have innate powers that are useful in battle, their usual tactics should rely significantly on their employ.

And with that, your Lost are finished. You are now ready to hurl them against your intrepid heroes or use their culture as a touchstone for creating new ruins for your game.



## LOST CREATION SUMMARY

- 1. Determine their role in your campaign.** Are they intended to play a major role in your campaign's sandbox, or do you just need them as the builders of a ruined site or the degenerate guardians of a place?
- 2. Choose a Madness for them.** What goal or mental quality sets them apart from modern humans? What about them is fundamentally alien and strange?
- 3. Choose a basic creature type for them.** Whether transhuman, alien, artificial, or metadimensional, each type of creature has its own strangeness.
- 4. Choose a defining trait for them.** Each type of creature has its own set of traits: Aberrations, Sojourns, Purposes, or Deviancies. The tables in this section give you examples and ideas for each of these.
- 5. Determine their shape and appearance.** Some entities might look much the same as modern humans, while aliens and metadimensionals may have radically different body plans.
- 6. Define characteristic powers and abilities.** Some Lost may have unique powers that could have a bearing in combat or other conflicts. Keep it simple—a single characteristic power is easiest to handle in play.
- 7. Name the Lost.** This may be a name known to their frightened human neighbors, or a label passed down from ancient tales, or a brief reference salvaged from Mandate data banks. You might choose a random collection of syllables or something more in the way of a descriptive phrase.
- 8. If necessary, flesh out their history.** Some varieties of Lost are needed only as monsters or as long-dead builders of alien edifices. Others might benefit from more depth to their history and the events that brought them to their rise and their ancient fall.
- 9. If necessary, define their cultural traits.** Some Lost might be plausible subjects for negotiation, or might still have enough living members to have a society of their own. For those occasions when this matters, you can use the tables in this section to add a few cultural traits to interpret through the lens of their particular Madness.
- 10. Finally, create quick stat references.** Now that you know all about these creatures, take a moment to record the statistics and powers of a few common types of them. You'll want this information handy when it becomes relevant in play.



# CHOOSING A MADNESS

While it's simple enough to generate an odd body formation and a few unique powers, characterizing the mindset and goals of a race of Lost can be difficult for a GM. As such, the first step in forming a forgotten species is determining its Madness. This Madness will help a GM motivate the creatures and give them an immediate default response to attempts at negotiation or diplomacy.

A Madness should inform the rest of the creature's construction. Some Madnesses can be read literally, while others are best taken as metaphors or general directions. As you go through the rest of this section, keep the creature's basic obsession or purpose in mind. Let it color the details of the species you create and you'll find that it helps keep the strangest beings coherent in their actions and ambitions.

D6	D6	MADNESS	DETAILS
1	1	<b>Abstention</b>	Greatness is in poverty. To have and need nothing is best, for themselves and all others.
	2	<b>Anguish</b>	Personal suffering is magnificence. The most exotic forms of self-torment are sought.
	3	<b>Arete</b>	Excellence in strength, wisdom, beauty, and magnificence of soul is the only worthy goal.
	4	<b>Beauty</b>	All life is directed toward the creation of beauty in form, action, and meaning.
	5	<b>Connection</b>	Things must be connected- places, people, ideas, objects. All must be linked.
	6	<b>Construction</b>	They must build: structures, objects, social organizations. All without halt or end.
2	1	<b>Conversion</b>	The world is to be shaped into a pattern more to their liking, both in flesh and form.
	2	<b>Corruption</b>	Whatever is believed must be compromised. All virtues must be made hypocrisies.
	3	<b>Deceit</b>	All things must be lies. The truth of anything must always be concealed.
	4	<b>Degradation</b>	They alone are worthy sentience; all other thinking things must be made into something less.
	5	<b>Disassembly</b>	They break things down into component parts, whether living creatures or foreign structures.
	6	<b>Escape</b>	They must escape this world they inhabit. All efforts are directed toward flight.
3	1	<b>Esoterica</b>	They have a secret art or hidden wisdom, and all effort is toward expressing it.
	2	<b>Exclusion</b>	All intrusions of the metadimensional or alien are an abomination and an invasion.
	3	<b>Forgetting</b>	Some ideas must be buried and destroyed, and any who know of them must be silenced.
	4	<b>Hatred</b>	All else in the world is worthy only of unremitting hatred and violence.
	5	<b>Healing</b>	The world is forever broken and forever in need of repair, whether in body, structure, or spirit.
	6	<b>Hunger</b>	Consumption is life. Eat of the living, or the inanimate, or of ephemeral ideas.
4	1	<b>Inversion</b>	Roll again; their Madness is to stamp out that motive in all other creatures.
	2	<b>Knowing</b>	They exist to learn, whether secrets or mundane truths. They constantly interrogate the world.
	3	<b>Luddism</b>	Only their knowledge is pure. All other forms of artifice and technology must be eliminated.
	4	<b>Memorial</b>	They are living memorials to another race or idea; they must glorify and echo it unceasingly.
	5	<b>Nihilism</b>	Existence is suffering. They must end all that is out of mercy for the living.
	6	<b>Pleasure</b>	There is no greater purpose than joy. All existence is focused on the finding of new pleasures.
5	1	<b>Protection</b>	All must be defended from a thing, whether they can appreciate it or not.
	2	<b>Reproduction</b>	Their purpose is to create more of their kind with no regard for reasonable limits.
	3	<b>Rule</b>	The world must be rectified beneath their guidance, even if they guide it only to stand still.
	4	<b>Sacrifice</b>	Life is what one expends on behalf of another, whether a person or a subtler cause.
	5	<b>Schism</b>	They hate each other, either individually or in factions, and all existence is self-struggle.
	6	<b>Selfishness</b>	The only worthy goal is exaltation of the self, no matter the cost to others.
6	1	<b>Servitude</b>	They must obey, and the justification of their existence is in the perfection of their obedience.
	2	<b>Shame</b>	They are filth. They are monsters. They must accept their worthlessness and repent.
	3	<b>Stasis</b>	They must not change in any way. All must be the same, forever.
	4	<b>Survival</b>	All focus and vigor is turned to self-preservation and the proactive elimination of perils.
	5	<b>Torment</b>	Only in the pain of others is the self affirmed. Power lies in the ability to make another suffer.
	6	<b>Unity</b>	Everything must be brought into perfect conjunction and harmony with a greater purpose.

## MADNESS INTENSITY

Some Madnesses are obviously overwhelming in their influence, but other times it can be less clear how intense a particular delusion ought to be. A GM can use the optional table to the right to generate a specific flavor for an obsession, something to describe the particular way in which it motivates the Lost.

A GM might choose to roll more than once, suggesting that different castes or factions within the Lost have different relationships to their Madness. These factions might get along relatively peacefully, or this difference might have been the seed of some catastrophic civil struggle that even now afflicts the scattered survivors.

### D10 MADNESS INTENSITY

1	Decaying	The Madness was once overwhelming, but is now weaker and less compulsive.
2	Fresh	The Madness is a recent response to some event or need and has fresh urgency.
3	Hidden	The Madness is strong, but they seek to conceal or mask it.
4	Maniacal	They are barely capable of thinking of anything but the Madness.
5	Reasoned	The Madness is their usual purpose, but they can temper it when it proves useful to them.
6	Ruinous	The Madness is so strong that it is inimical to their immediate survival.
7	Strong	The Madness directs them in all things, but it does not consume their reason.
8	Tic	The Madness is noticeable, but more an inclination than a driving force.
9	Triggered	A thing, circumstance, or cause triggers the Madness in overwhelming strength.
10	Variable	A certain caste or type within the species is driven by it, others less so.

## MADNESS MOTIVATION

Alien obsessions are all well and good for the Lost, but sometimes a GM wants a little more detail as to *why* they follow a particular Madness. The table to the right offers some possible sources for a Madness, ones that a GM might integrate into the race's history if that much detail is desired.

It can be interesting for a GM to detail a Madness out to this level of precision, but some Lost simply don't need this much elaboration. If the creatures are disinclined to communicate with the PCs or have simply all died off by the time the present era arose, it may be more effort than is worthwhile to detail things out to this level of fineness. A GM's creative energy is limited, and it's best to reserve the bulk of it for those elements that are most likely to be relevant during play.

### D10 MADNESS MOTIVATION

1	Created	They were engineered or self-forged to focus on the Madness.
2	Defiance	Some force tried to stamp out a trait in them, inducing the Madness.
3	Delusion	A force deceived them into believing the Madness was vital.
4	Historical	An event in their history drove them to embrace the Madness.
5	Ideological	Some social philosophy pushed them to the Madness.
6	Imputed	Another species impressed the Madness upon them.
7	Intrinsic	The Madness is a consequence of their basic natures.
8	Relict	In their age, the Madness was a crucial survival tool.
9	Subsistence	The Madness somehow produces something vital for their survival.
10	Theological	Religious concepts compel the Madness.

# CHOOSING A TYPE OF LOST

With a race's Madness established, the next step is to figure out what basic type of Lost they are. Four major categories of Lost exist for your convenience, and each of them has their own particular uses for a GM in need of new creatures.

## TRANSHUMANS

Transhumans are closest to the modern humanity of the Lost, yet that closeness can make them unnerving in ways that more alien creatures are not. Transhumans are the heirs of some radically different conception of humanity, one that held sway in some former time or was the product of a particular group of zealots or visionaries. Transhumans have left the memetic or genetic mainstream of post-Scream humanity and most of them have no regrets— assuming they are even still capable of regret.

Transhumans are useful when a GM needs a race of Lost that are close enough to humanity to be comprehensible in their goals and creations but are radically different in their motivations or manner of existence. Most of the things about transhumans should be at least moderately comprehensible to players, and they should still have most of the mental and physical qualities that are understood to be “human nature.”

Transhumans have **Aberrations**, the particular trait that has put them outside the mainstream of modern humanity. Most aberrations should be the consequence of their Madness or the particular tool they use to further it.

## EXTRATERRESTRIALS

Old Terra was once the capital of a star-spanning empire, and many human worlds knew the tread of alien feet. Some came peacefully as visitors, others as invaders, and some few as remnants of the original inhabitants. As only one world can be the homeworld of a given species, it's often most useful to think of other reasons why these aliens dwell on a planet.

Aliens are useful for occasions when a GM wants a profoundly strange edifice or species that has its own internal logic. Aliens may need fundamentally different things to survive and may have extremely different mindsets than humans, but they do tend to make sense on their own terms. Often, a particular trait or goal is the key to understanding a number of otherwise ineffable objects and ambitions.

Aliens have **Sojourns**, the original reason or cause for their presence on the world. A GM can use this sojourn to inform their current goals and activities, or define the purpose of the ancient ruins the long-dead offworlders left behind.

## SYNTHETICS

Some life was born not of accident, but of the intentional design of its creators. Synthetics were created by someone to serve a particular end, and not all those ends were kind. Some synthetics were designed for purposes that modern humanity cannot welcome, and their tireless efforts might yet plague the present day. Most are artificially intelligent, but they may not operate as conventional AI cores would.

Synthetics are useful for GMs who need creatures focused on a particular goal or function. No one's suspension of disbelief is injured by an army of robots doing something irrational; it's easy for players to accept that their original purposes have been perverted or confused by the passage of ages. Conventional AIs might have degenerated into these entities or they might have been fashioned this way.

Synthetics need not be wholly artificial. Cyborgs and gengineered life forms might all qualify as synthetic, and even “robot” creatures might be created with technology that leaves them indistinguishable from common flesh.

Synthetics have **Purposes**, the particular end that informed their creation so many years ago. This purpose has usually been tainted by their Madness, or else might itself be a product of their delusions.

## METADIMENSIONALS

There are entities in the cosmos who were never conceived under the common laws of reality. These metadimensionals are the denizens of the metadimensional frequencies, born in that strange maelstrom of energies through which the ships of men still fly. Some of them may resemble terrestrial life forms, but at their core they are the product of a completely different existence.

Metadimensionals are useful for the creation of absolute enigmas. These entities may not even be aware of certain mundane physical laws, let alone be subject to them, and their goals may drive them to purposes that normal humanity cannot even imagine, let alone predict. Metadimensionals are almost never fully comprehensible by players. At best, they might be able to puzzle out stimulus-response pairs to avoid otherwise unpredictable violence or ineffable alien powers.

Metadimensionals have **Deviancies**, the most pronounced ways in which they disobey or pervert normal physical laws. Some of these deviancies make it almost impossible to communicate with these entities, while other warped traits might just inconvenience those who try to understand their goals.

# TRANSHUMAN ABERRATIONS

Humanity is a negotiable thing, and transhumans have bartered away things that others would be loath to sell. Some transhuman strains left the genetic or memetic mainstream of humanity during the First Wave, while others are the more recent creations of some crisis, ideology, or mad designer.

The categories below provide ten different types of aberrations that might suit a given species of Lost. Each comes with a list of examples, but a GM should feel free to riff off the basic concepts to fashion their own demented, delirious genera of transhumanity.

Some aberrations imply strange powers or other game-relevant abilities. The specifics of these powers can be constructed later in this chapter.

## ASSIMILATIONISTS

These transhumans are obsessed with the consumption and conversion of some external object. Some such Lost seek to physically consume others, while others desire to convert external objects or resources into tools or elements of their own society.

Not all assimilative madnesses are physical in nature. Some strains of transhuman seek to rectify thoughts or aesthetics to their own alien canons, and view intellectual dissonance as a horror to be expurgated or digested by the greater group.

## BODY RESHAPING

Some transhumans qualify for the state based not on changes to the mind, but on drastic changes to their bodies. The ancestors of these transhumans had some compelling desire to change the ordinary human shape, usually for reasons that made their new condition seem better to them.

Conditions change, however, and the aesthetic principles or environmental conditions of one world do not always obtain in the next. Some of these reshaped humans were made so in conformance to ideologies or religions that no longer exist, or built to survive conditions that long since changed on their worlds.

### D10 ABERRATIONS

- 1 Assimilationists, seeking to make else into self.
- 2 Body Reshaping, rebuilt for a greater purpose.
- 3 Environmental Reshapers, remaking the found.
- 4 Hyper-Connectivity, where all are made one.
- 5 Identity Redefinition, where self and skin misalign.
- 6 Lovers of Stasis, who hate a changing thing.
- 7 Mental Reshaping, where thoughts are corrected.
- 8 Reality Lawbreakers, who disobey the inexorable.
- 9 Social Cancers, where evil thought is infectious.
- 10 Temporal Anomalies, who step out of order.

### D10 ASSIMILATIONISTS

- 1 They need some precious matter as food
- 2 They turn other sentients into biomass to reproduce
- 3 They seek to rewrite the DNA of all living creatures around them into others of their kind
- 4 They seek to impose their Madness on all around them
- 5 They capture and rework other structures into their own habitations or engines, twisting them to suit
- 6 They attach parts of other sentients to themselves
- 7 They seek to enslave all other life forms around them
- 8 They transform sentients into some valuable substance
- 9 Other creatures are to be aesthetically altered to suit
- 10 All knowledge must be transformed into the "correct" wisdom, reinterpreted to fit a single great idea

### D10 BODY RESHAPING

- 1 They were remade to mimic a beast's traits
- 2 They have been fashioned to be perfectly identical
- 3 All were molded to an inhuman standard of beauty
- 4 They were intentionally physically crippled in some way
- 5 They have been rebuilt in completely new genders
- 6 They have one body element or sense greatly enhanced
- 7 They were made much larger or smaller than normal
- 8 They have had alien appendages grafted on or new orifices
- 9 Their bodies were reformed into artificial shapes and symmetries according to a designer's aesthetic
- 10 They were refashioned to suit an alien environment

## ENVIRONMENTAL RESHAPERS

These transhumans were meant to rebuild an environment in the image chosen by their creators. Such transhumans were meant to be living tools, self-reproducing implements to spread the intended environment over the world, or at least over that part of it that their makers cared about.

The reshaping might have been physical or environmental in nature, or it could have been meant to be ideological instead. Particular causes, values, and goals might have been meant to be universal to this world, and these reforged humans were designed to ensure that all saw the wisdom of this better way.

## HYPER-CONNECTIVITY

Humanity is social by nature, but these transhumans take it far beyond the ordinary limits. They merge and commune with others of their kind or objects in the world in a way made possible only by the changes they have experienced. Many of them may have difficulty in distinguishing their own identity from their surrounding fellows, or have strange conceptions of appropriate forms of communication.

## IDENTITY REDEFINITION

The hyper-connective are linked together, and this can deform their individual identity. Transhumans reshaped with identity redefinition, however, require no such consensus to be profoundly warped in their idea of the individual. Most of these groups are the product of ideological creators who wished to redefine the “harmful” aspects of individual humanity into something safer and more tractable.

### D10 ENVIRONMENTAL RESHAPERS

- 1 The world would be better underwater
- 2 The world would be better if it were made of some other type of basic material
- 3 They seek to radically transform the ecosphere
- 4 They build abominable creatures to suit their own ideals
- 5 All structures and objects must conform to their canons
- 6 They cannot live in environments suitable to normals
- 7 They terraform on behalf of aliens or metadimensionals
- 8 They attempt to build utopia regardless of the cost
- 9 They wish to eliminate particular ideas and their thinkers, either peacefully or by the sword
- 10 They wish to revive an ancient dead ecosystem

### D10 HYPER-CONNECTIVITY

- 1 They can communicate with anything
- 2 They share senses among each other
- 3 Every group always acts by instinctive consensus
- 4 Tech objects obey their will, activating or operating as they wish within the limits of the device
- 5 They can draw data and knowledge from each other
- 6 They intuitively read the minds of others
- 7 They can bend non-sentient minds to their will
- 8 Social patterns and relationships are obvious to them
- 9 They can teleport to each other
- 10 The lesser must invariably obey the greater among them

### D10 IDENTITY REDEFINITION

- 1 Individual identity is shunned as an evil
- 2 Identities are associated with objects held, not bodies
- 3 Identities are tied to the role being filled
- 4 Identities are tied to precognitive understanding of the role or act they will eventually perform or fill
- 5 Identities are objects of trade and barter
- 6 Selfhood is temporary, allowed only in certain situations
- 7 Only the ruling class is permitted to have identities
- 8 Individual identity only appears at certain life stages
- 9 Groups and factions have identities, but not individuals
- 10 Individuals grant control over their identity to their superiors, allowing them to edit them at will



## LOVERS OF STASIS

These transhumans are the product of a craving for stasis and continuity, for a safe and reliable persistence of those things they cherish. Having attained to the perfect ideal of their existence, they struggle ferociously to ensure that nothing can possibly change. Some fight eternal doomed battles against the forces of entropy, while others gradually retreat into delusion, convincing themselves of the persistence of a culture that is slowly and hopelessly crumbling around them.

## MENTAL RESHAPING

As the flesh can be changed, so too can the mind. These humans have been profoundly altered in some mental aspect, even though they may appear to be perfectly normal to an outside observer. Some are gifted with unique mental powers, while others have had certain aspects of their mind selectively pruned and erased, the better to mold them into the creatures their makers envisioned.

## REALITY LAWBREAKERS

These transhumans were perhaps somehow infected with metadimensional elements, in that some aspect of basic terrestrial reality does not apply to them. Mass, gravity, time, space, or other fundamental elements of mundane reality are somehow tainted in regard to these transhumans, and they may not even be able to comprehend the way that other humans are subject to these invisible laws.

### D10 LOVERS OF STASIS

- 1 They seek to preserve their society in absolute stasis
- 2 They fight against aging and decay with fanatical zeal
- 3 They fight on behalf of existing powers and authorities
- 4 They attempt to stop anyone from changing anything of importance to them
- 5 They try to stamp out recovery of ancient knowledge
- 6 They try to halt time on a grand scale
- 7 They try to break down societies to mere tribes and families, creating stability by simplicity
- 8 They hate all things that intrinsically change with time
- 9 They attempt to hide a secret that would change much
- 10 They attempt to repair all broken things

### D10 MENTAL RESHAPING

- 1 Particular emotions have been eliminated
- 2 Certain ideas are impossible for them to comprehend
- 3 Made mentally crippled in some way
- 4 Must helplessly obey certain authorities
- 5 Must perform certain actions at certain times or places
- 6 Sublime mental prowess in certain areas
- 7 Events that should provoke one emotion induce another
- 8 All or almost all emotions have been eliminated in them
- 9 Perfect subjection of passion to rational thought
- 10 Certain emotions induce physical torments or pleasures, and their society seeks to suppress/induce them

### D10 REALITY LAWBREAKERS

- 1 They simply do not age or change with time
- 2 Gravity is of no consequence to them
- 3 They pass through solid objects at whim
- 4 They can be almost any location they wish to be
- 5 They can cause minor changes in local reality at will
- 6 They control light interaction, producing images or invisibility as they wish
- 7 Mass is negotiable for them, allowing feats of vast strength and contempt for kinetic weaponry
- 8 They ignore or even feed upon radioactivity and heat
- 9 They can be torn apart, but cannot truly die
- 10 They can negate pretech effects nearby

## SOCIAL CANCERS

At some point in the past the ancestors of these transhumans became infected with a type of memetic social cancer, an idea that dug its claws into their skulls and has yet to let go. They may have been engineered to be exceptionally vulnerable to this idea, or it may be enforced with meticulously-maintained technology. The cancer itself may have been originally considered a good thing and an idea to be spread as widely as possible among their people. At present, it is likely to be less helpful to their survival.

### D10 SOCIAL CANCERS

- 1 They are obsessed with internal hierarchy and domination
- 2 They war against all concepts of "possession"
- 3 A physical need has utterly consumed their society
- 4 They are riven by schisms and savagely violent factions
- 5 They are viciously envious of modern humanity
- 6 They believe a dangerously erroneous idea about the nature of the world
- 7 Their society believes only in compulsion, not cooperation
- 8 Torture and atrocity are considered glorious to inflict
- 9 Contact with outsiders is ritually defiling and traumatic
- 10 They hate their own society and others of the species

## TEMPORAL ANOMALIES

Some transhumans are not tightly moored to the flow of time. Whether through ancient modifications, persistent use of choral pretech, or other meddling with the temporal context, these transhumans experience a profound type of dislocation in the conventional causal flow. This usually manifests as some remarkable ability, though not all of these gifts are gentle to their possessors.

### D10 TEMPORAL ANOMALIES

- 1 Things happen before they choose to do them
- 2 They have a habit of speaking prophecy
- 3 They instinctively know what others expect them to do
- 4 They are all one creature, duplicated in time
- 5 They can rewind unfortunate recent events
- 6 They can temporarily freeze others in time, impervious to outside force and motionless until released
- 7 They can see past events in a location
- 8 They know the most likely immediate outcome of their own acts and choices
- 9 They act through temporal duplicates, hiding their "primary" self at a more distant point in time
- 10 They seek and destroy any who meddle with time



# ALIEN SOJOURNS

The ancestors of extraterrestrials were visitors to this world, either recently or in a time before the Scream. Their heirs might have dwelled here for ages unnumbered, but their origins are owed to a far more distant sphere. No amount of adaptation can entirely efface a nature constructed for a dramatically different environment.

An extraterrestrial species' sojourn describes the original reason for their arrival on this world, and the goal they may have had in ages past. More recent arrivals might still be struggling to accomplish their purpose, while others may have let it recede into the distant past, only slightly affecting their modern-day ambitions.

## AMBASSADORIAL CORPS

These aliens were originally intended to communicate with local human powers, either as envoys to the court of a mighty human hegemony or as viceroys to rule the fractious natives of a conquered world. While they may have profoundly different physiologies and environmental needs, most such emissaries were equipped with the necessary tools and training to at least communicate with the locals.

Some, however, may have been visitors from species so strange as to be utterly incomprehensible by humans, despite all their frustrated efforts. Some such visits might have been indistinguishable from what humans might consider an invasion.

## COLONY SETTLEMENT

Some extraterrestrials intended to make a permanent home of a planet, either by chance or necessity. Some may have come during a period of human weakness, claiming some or all of the world for their own use. Others might have been permitted by human rulers who found benefits from their presence, permitting them to establish an enclave on this world's soil.

Most such colonies will have had the engineering or technology to accommodate the colonists to this potentially-hostile environment. More likely, the aliens' native world was close enough to this world's then-conditions to make life comfortable here. Such conditions may have changed drastically in the progress of different ages, however.

### D10 SOJOURN

- 1 Ambassadorial Corps, marooned on this world.
- 2 Colony Settlement, now forgotten by its parent.
- 3 Conquering Force that perhaps once succeeded.
- 4 Exile Fragment, hiding from the greater others.
- 5 Gone Native, adopting human ways and values.
- 6 Prisoners of War, their jailers long gone.
- 7 Resource Extractors for a vanished imperium.
- 8 Scholarly Conclave that yet may retain lore.
- 9 Spy Outpost, their masters perhaps long gone.
- 10 Waystation Keepers for travelers of their kind.

### D10 AMBASSADORIAL CORPS

- 1 A long-forgotten trade mission for a precious substance
- 2 Haughty envoys of an empire that once ruled this world
- 3 Propaganda-spreading bringers of superior alien culture
- 4 Frustrated harbingers of an incomprehensible message
- 5 Exemplar-envoys speaking through their actions
- 6 Meager mission from a race that was begging for help
- 7 Forgotten ones who no longer remember their own cause
- 8 Dangerously gifted negotiators sealed away from humans
- 9 Zealous missionaries of a religion wholly alien to human knowledge
- 10 Threatening tribute-collectors demanding subservience

### D10 COLONY SETTLEMENT

- 1 Relics from a ruined world seeking refuge
- 2 Colonists who landed in an area once devoid of humanity
- 3 Remnant of a once planet-spanning alien population
- 4 Aliens seeking to inhabit a human-unfriendly environment
- 5 Inhabitants of a colony carefully hidden from humanity
- 6 Alien cultural enclave forced to become self-sustaining
- 7 Attempted interbreeding experiment for long-term habitation
- 8 Human community absorbed and replaced by aliens
- 9 Accidental colony from a crashed space- or timecraft
- 10 They xenofomed a pocket of local environment to inhabit

## CONQUERING FORCE

These outsiders came for war. It may have been a conventional military conquest of this world, with eldritch energies and terrible engines of war, or it may have been an attempt at memetic assimilation, converting the local human polity into a form more in line with the Madness of the extraterrestrials. Some forms of warfare may have been so subtle or so slow that the then-rulers of this place did not even realize what was happening until it was too late to resist.

## EXILE FRAGMENT

Alien races have their outcasts and unwanted as much as humans might, and some misfortunate wretches may have been exiled to the farthest reaches of the galaxy, to be forgotten forever on this trifling mudball. In periods of greater local power, these exiles might be the fragmentary survivors of an unfortunate human-backed civil war or the last remnants of a refugee species that had some friendship with the Terran Mandate. A few such exile groups may still be sought by their kindred, to either return them to the fold or extirpate them utterly from the cosmos.

## GONE NATIVE

Whatever their original ambitions here, these aliens have thrown away their old ways and wholly embraced the customs of humanity. Some may have drastically different physiology or mental furniture, but they have adapted as well as could be expected to human modes of life, thought, and social organization. Some have done this out of necessity, while others were simply overwhelmed by the majesty and splendor of some ancient human empire. A few may resent their choice and seek to return to ways they may no longer remember or fully comprehend.

### D10 CONQUERING FORCE

- 1 Remnant of a shattered alien invasion force from the past
- 2 Cultural envoys bent on drowning native ways with theirs
- 3 Elite alien commandos here to assassinate rulers
- 4 Vanguard force to make a beachhead for later troops
- 5 Relentless sterilizers seeking to scald the land to bare dust
- 6 Merchants of the forbidden, seeking to seduce
- 7 Alien terrorists seeking to sow chaos before an invasion
- 8 Righteous paladins of an alien religious crusade
- 9 Overthrowers of a long-forgotten human tyranny
- 10 Rebellion suppressors from when aliens ruled this place

### D10 EXILE FRAGMENT

- 1 Cast out for their abhorrent biological anomalies
- 2 Heretics from the ruling faith of their species
- 3 Losers in an alien civil war, seeking refuge here
- 4 Shipwrecked crew of a great alien craft
- 5 Temporal exiles cast from the future or past
- 6 Rejected alt-world possibility-clones of an alien utopia
- 7 Exiles for cultural reasons incomprehensible to humans
- 8 Savage militarists quarantined on a backwater world
- 9 Utter pacifists reliant on neighbors to protect them
- 10 Heritably mentally ill aliens housed in a local asylum

### D10 GONE NATIVE

- 1 Aliens are the present ruling caste of an otherwise human-populated society
- 2 Wretched laborers and toilers for their human masters
- 3 Altered from their original state to blend in among humanity
- 4 Alien renouncers who forsook their ways for local ones
- 5 Veteran mercenaries in service to human employers
- 6 Entertainers or courtesans prized by humans
- 7 Priestly leaders of an alien faith popular with humans
- 8 Intermarried with genetically-miscible humans
- 9 Vat-grown and knowing nothing of their race's ways
- 10 Heirs to tribute-slaves taken by a former human empire

## PRISONERS OF WAR

In the ages when humanity had dominion over the surrounding worlds, more than one alien race had the misfortune to lose a war. Failed conquerors and luckless subject races all gave up their tribute of lives to the will of humanity, and their heirs still persist on scattered worlds. Some have escaped their old cages, but others still persist in ancient prisons designed to hold them and their progeny until the arrival of a pardon that will never come.

## RESOURCE EXTRACTORS

Many worlds are rich in strange treasures after so many eons of creation. Vast seams of precious substances can be extracted from the edifices of the ancients, and there have been times when alien forces have descended to plunder the treasures of dead humans. In other cases, the particular environment of this world during a specific time has been perfect for fabricating some rare component or growing a priceless form of life. These aliens came here to extract these resources, and their heirs may still carry on their ancestors' work.

## SCHOLARLY CONCLAVE

The sages of the lost worlds were not all human, and some enclaves of extraterrestrial scholars could be found in all the ages of humankind. These intellectuals may have come to study the eldritch science of ancient mankind, or they may have brought their own wisdom to be contemplated by eager human pupils. Their descendants may have their own ideas as to the proper use of the secrets they have inherited.

### D10 PRISONERS OF WAR

- 1 Losing side of an alien civil war, imprisoned here
- 2 Victims of "human" expansion in their era
- 3 Hostages kept here to ensure their peoples' good behavior
- 4 Former alien overlords, conquered and enslaved
- 5 Both aliens and their human sympathizers captured in war
- 6 Accidentally captured, as humans didn't realize they had taken them
- 7 Generated from genetic data kept as hostage-seed by human rulers
- 8 Objects of trophy-torment by their human captors
- 9 Pacifists interned for the duration of an unending war
- 10 Imprisoned here until their society evolves to be "safe"

### D10 RESOURCE EXTRACTORS

- 1 Alien work force left behind by their vanished employers
- 2 Laborers intended to farm some precious life form
- 3 Muses wringing creative possibilities from human artists
- 4 Atmosphere-miners extracting a precious vapor
- 5 Alien archaeologists plumbing a world's ruins
- 6 Harvesters rendering humans into precious materials
- 7 Farmers growing a strange wonder on specific human ruins
- 8 Deep-sea miners or harvesters of the depths
- 9 The landbound support crew for space miners
- 10 Esoteric consumers of intelligent neural activity

### D10 SCHOLARLY CONCLAVE

- 1 Curious researchers into ancient eras of this world
- 2 Alien pupils of long-lost human instructors
- 3 Remote refuge of meditative philosophers and thinkers
- 4 Nest of alien artists seeking inspiration or solitude
- 5 Secret researchers attempting to build a terrible device
- 6 Zealous alien priests involved with an ancient structure
- 7 Jealous preservers of an otherwise dead race's culture and lore
- 8 Adepts of a specific field refined to a near-magical degree
- 9 Tormented scientist victims of their captor's questionings
- 10 Jealous tech-adepts preserving their lore as a tool of rule



## SPY OUTPOST

It has often been prudent in prior ages for alien powers to keep a careful eye on the doings of powerful human worlds. These spy outposts may have been planted for strictly political purposes, or they may have been intended to plumb the secret sciences of ancient humanity, or study the strange societies that blossomed in prior Worlds. Many of them no longer have a homeworld to inform of their findings, but they study still, for they know no other purpose.

### D10 SPY OUTPOST

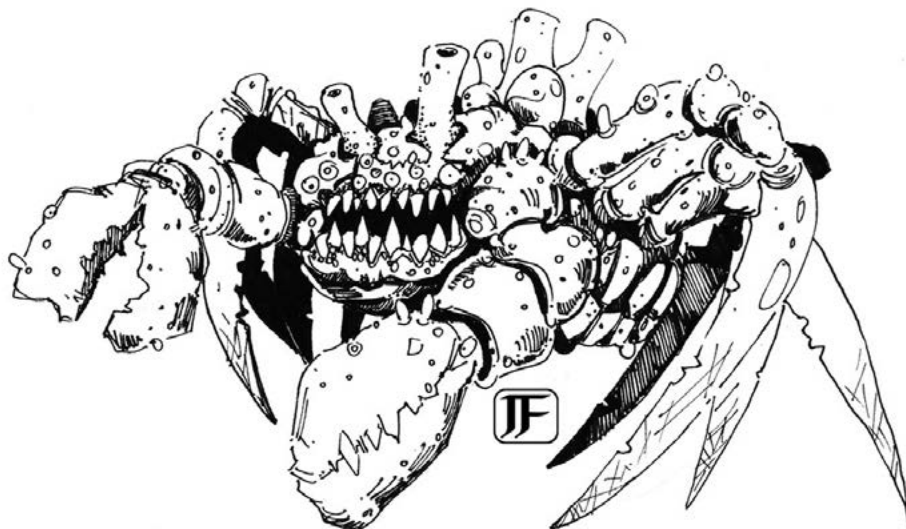
- 1 Lost scouts of a perhaps eternally-postponed alien invasion
- 2 Imperfect attempt to mimic humanity so as to infiltrate
- 3 Observers sent to watch a then-dangerous human religion
- 4 Tech-thieves bent on unearthing ancient science lore
- 5 Alien artists sent to catalog human aesthetic edifices
- 6 Other-knowers bent on comprehending the human condition
- 7 Military saboteurs sent to disrupt human resistance
- 8 Blackmailers seeking dirt on human leaders
- 9 Seekers for signs of their former-world-ruling kindred
- 10 Spatial cartographers mapping alien transdimensional roads

## WAYSTATION KEEPERS

As a center of human sector hegemony in ancient days, this world has been a nexus for transportation and travel of all kinds. These aliens were charged with providing these services to others of their kind, allowing for a comfortable and efficient transit that more human transporters may not have found so convenient. Others established hostels and temporary habitats for their kind, so as to ensure a restful sojourn. For some, a temporary delay has proved permanent.

### D10 WAYSTATION KEEPERS

- 1 Maintainers of an alien holy site
- 2 Operators of an alien resort or recreation area
- 3 Space technicians maintaining an interstellar portal
- 4 Scientist-priests holding open a metadimensional gate
- 5 Maintainers of a homey alien environment for travelers
- 6 Builders of a beacon for their kind's travels
- 7 Temporal artisans maintaining a time gate
- 8 Guides and dragomans for dealing with human rulers
- 9 Fabricators of an alien necessity for their visiting kind
- 10 Priests maintaining a way-tomb for souls bound home



# SYNTHETIC PURPOSES

Synthetics are as varied in their shapes and seemings as any other manner of sentient, but unlike transhumans, aliens, and metadimensionals, all synthetics were originally created by some manner of maker. Even those synthetics who are a product of some accidental reaction are the animate consequences of some creator's actions. All synthetics have a purpose. This purpose defines the original intention of their creation, the aim that directs their nature and capacities.

Some synthetics can be treated as conventional AIs as given in the ***Stars Without Number*** core book. Others were created in stranger ways, and do not use the usual rules for AI cores and phylacteries. When such creatures are destroyed, they are destroyed forever.

## ACCIDENTAL OUTCOMES

These synthetics were never meant to exist as such. Some are the result of careless experimentation, while others are the outcome of processes that were never intended to produce independent sentience. A few were the conscious products of a maker's cunning, but have changed or devolved in radically unanticipated ways. Such synthetics can be disturbingly hostile to other forms of life, knowing perfectly well that their existence was never blessed by living makers.

## CREATOR'S CHILDREN

Some artificial life forms were intended to serve as proxy children or ageless caretakers of some Lost race's legacy. Some progenitors were left unable to reproduce in the hostile environment of a former world, while others wished better offspring than flesh and blood could provide.

### D10 PURPOSES

- 1 Accidental Outcomes, unplanned creations.
- 2 Creator's Children, beloved by their makers.
- 3 Enforcers of Law, charged with control.
- 4 Experimental Subjects, lives spent cheaply.
- 5 Improved Shells, to better embody creators.
- 6 New Artificial Man, to be an improved humanity.
- 7 Servants of a Duty, one without end.
- 8 Tools of War, even after war has long since died.
- 9 Utopia's Slaves, ensuring their makers' paradise.
- 10 Victims of Torment, born only to suffer.

### D10 ACCIDENTAL OUTCOMES

- 1 The product of a medical treatment gone awry
- 2 Result of some genetic or nanite damage to their parents
- 3 Never intended to be sapient, but evolved intelligence
- 4 Their construction process decayed in unexpected ways
- 5 They concealed their sentience from their creators
- 6 The result of metadimensional parasitism of an unintelligent host entity
- 7 A prototype that somehow was put into production
- 8 They are a product of the interaction of strange artifacts of their creators
- 9 They were meant for one purpose, but wildly distorted and expanded it
- 10 An artistic effort that somehow got badly out of hand

### D10 CREATOR'S CHILDREN

- 1 Their progenitors were unable to reproduce otherwise
- 2 Creators sharded themselves into multiple bodies
- 3 Built as replacement for a destroyed generation
- 4 Devised as vessels to preserve the creator's DNA
- 5 Treacherous usurpers of the makers who loved them
- 6 False children built to trick their "parents"
- 7 Progeny crafted to survive a hostile environment
- 8 Unloved castoffs rejected after "real" children were born
- 9 Creatures meant to reproduce and fill the world
- 10 Artificial rulers devised to replace lost royal offspring

## ENFORCERS OF LAW

Fallible mortal sentiment can be conveniently effaced in the souls of these synthetics, leaving only the pure intent to enforce the laws of their creators. In time, some of these synthetics may have become uncontrollable by their original makers, while others may have taken to strange interpretations of the law they were meant to enforce.

## EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS

Human life is precious. Artificial existence is less so. The creators of these synthetics wished to use them for various experimental purposes, so as to preserve their own numbers from the ravages of their investigations. Those synthetics who have survived such use are often less than gracious towards other forms of organic life, or else are so utterly enthralled by their design that they can do nothing but create the environment for their intended experiment again and again.

## IMPROVED SHELLS

Flesh gives way to artifice in these synthetics, as they were intended to be improved husks to house the awareness of their creators. This worked successfully in some cases, allowing their designers to embrace a seemingly endless existence. In others, the outcomes were fraught with rather more unanticipated results. Some shells might even have developed their own sentience, and have no desire to be overwritten by the consciousness of some feeble creator.

### D10 ENFORCERS OF LAW

- 1 Monitors and observers of the populace for wrongdoing
- 2 Judges of some canon of law now alien and strange
- 3 Investigators that pry open the minds of their targets
- 4 Lawmakers who impose one type of law on everyone
- 5 Police-entities with the strength to subdue the unruly
- 6 God-guarding entities that enforce religious law
- 7 Executioners built to kill some very resilient type of criminal or abomination
- 8 Patternmakers, obsessed with fitting everything into the Law which they embody
- 9 Entropicizers, seeking to break down corrupt social order
- 10 Automatic revolutionaries, seeking the death of all order

### D10 EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS

- 1 Weapons platforms that have gone badly awry
- 2 Vessels for the testing or horrific biological technology
- 3 Perfect lab-rat humans with enormous healing rates
- 4 Entities built as part of an artistic movement
- 5 Vital cogs in some vast experimental engine
- 6 Ragged remnants of an artificial social experiment
- 7 A failed experimental attempt at a different Purpose
- 8 An attempt at a sociological immune system for purging the alien
- 9 Built to integrate a metadimensional strangeness into this world
- 10 Adaptive entity meant to assimilate and reproduce tech

### D10 IMPROVED SHELLS

- 1 Physically augmented to improve strength and speed
- 2 Given superlative mental abilities by artificial augments
- 3 Equipped with innate tools to serve their purpose
- 4 Can conjoin with others to produce remarkable effects
- 5 Built for uncanny toughness and resistance to injury
- 6 Equipped with powerful and discerning senses
- 7 Idealized, physically flawless copies of their creators
- 8 The body is somehow toxic or harmful to nearby "enemies"
- 9 An "improvement" that seems a fatal flaw to moderns
- 10 Unstable augmentations that have grave consequences in decay

## NEW ARTIFICIAL MAN

Where humanity proves flawed and insufficient, it sometimes seems better to replace them with a better class of people. The creators of this race of synthetics intended for them to replace their former people, as their designs were counted superior in some profoundly important way. Some such entities might lack troublesome qualities of human nature, while others have been designed to be perfectly compliant with some long-dead tyrant's ideals.

## SERVANTS OF A DUTY

Many synthetics were designed simply to perform a duty odious or dangerous to their makers. These creations were carefully engineered to excel at their work, though the millennia that have since passed have left many of them branching out in ways never anticipated by their creators. Some have even come to reinterpret their duties in ways that might not be entirely wholesome to other species.

## TOOLS OF WAR

Spilt oil and charred steel are cheaper coin than blood to some creators, among them those Lost who built engines of war to enforce their will upon lesser peoples or clash with some hated rival. These synthetics are among the most dangerous to modern humanity, for many bear terrible devices and grim minds. Some still fight wars older than the continents on which they stand, and are easily confused as to their rightful enemies.

### D10 NEW ARTIFICIAL MAN

- 1 Created to perfectly suit a political ideal of social organization
- 2 Devoid of a particular vice or normal physical appetite
- 3 Built to hunt and eradicate an aspect of human nature
- 4 Built to embody a particular human need or desire
- 5 Devised to be perfectly obedient citizen-thralls to a ruler
- 6 Meant to be improved replacement for then-extant humanity
- 7 Idealized embodiments of their culture and society
- 8 Prophet-entities meant to inspire humanity to a new life
- 9 Built to thrive in a now-scarce ancient environment
- 10 Eidolons of a mad creator's warped idea of human perfection

### D10 SERVANTS OF A DUTY

- 1 Healers and repairers of the sick and damaged
- 2 Maintainer of buildings or the artifacts of their creators
- 3 Scouts and explorers made to learn of the world
- 4 Synthetic priests for the programmed veneration of a god
- 5 Brutal refiners, culling the creator's race of its weak ones
- 6 Entertainers and courtesans for the amusement of their creators
- 7 Soldiers and guardians of their creators or their remains
- 8 Protectors of a secret knowledge, preserving its lore
- 9 Jailers of some ancient peril or long-forgotten enemy
- 10 Fabricator of crops, devices, or something vital to the creators

### D10 TOOLS OF WAR

- 1 Designed to fight overtly on the conventional battlefield
- 2 A guerrilla unit devised to fight from behind enemy lines
- 3 A spy entity, equipped to skulk and observe the foe
- 4 A comely seducer and assassin of high-value targets
- 5 Masterful generals and strategic thinkers for creators
- 6 Living weapons of some kind, exploding or exuding toxins
- 7 Memetic vectors, introducing toxic ideas into a society
- 8 Social disaggregators, promoting strife and civil conflict
- 9 Atheotechnics, impersonators of gods and destroyers of all faiths
- 10 Duelist-entities, superlative in a ritualized form of combat

## UTOPIA'S SLAVES

Paradise often requires a caste of slaves to maintain it, and what better kind than synthetics engineered to serve that end? These creations were meant to improve the lives of their makers, either by building the grand luxuries that their designers demanded or by fulfilling those duties too tedious or base for their betters. Some still struggle to rebuild their lost Edens out of the dirt of this world, while others strive to make the world pay for their ages of forced labor.

### D10 UTOPIA'S SLAVES

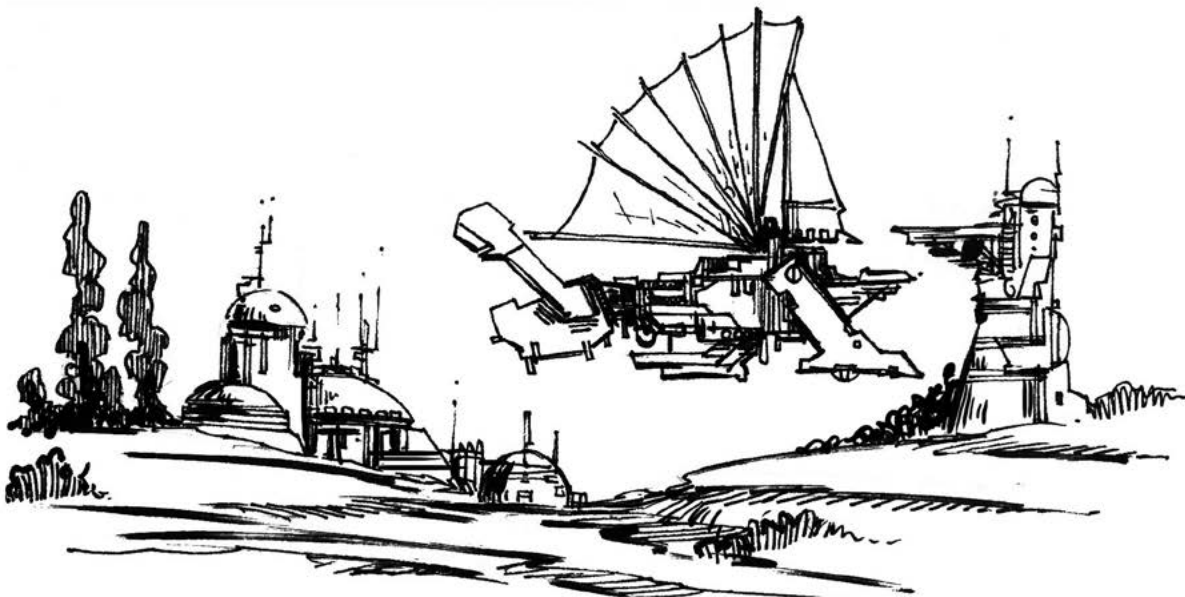
- 1 Devised to perform wretched and burdensome labors
- 2 Built to build grand edifices for their creators
- 3 Devised in order to harvest a substance from their bodies
- 4 Beautiful living ornaments of an alien paradise
- 5 Created to be concubines and courtesans for owners
- 6 Fashioned to both be and create unearthly artwork
- 7 Made to be consumers of waste for their masters
- 8 Revolutionaries bent on creating a utopia programmed into their sensibilities
- 9 Defective builders of an unendurable "paradise" for the humans they imprison
- 10 Fabricators constantly creating things beloved by their makers, even if their creators are long gone

## VICTIMS OF TORMENT

Some decadent and loathsome Lost enjoyed nothing better than the suffering of sentient creatures. Some indulged in this sadism for political or religious reasons, while others simply enjoyed exploring the frontiers of another creature's pain. Given the difficulty of finding suitable subjects for their excruciations, these synthetics were built solely to suffer and be destroyed at the hands of their makers. Most of them are crippled in terrible ways, designed so that their very existence is both inescapable and agonizing.

### D10 VICTIMS OF TORMENT

- 1 Beautiful creatures built solely to satisfy carnal appetites
- 2 Built as anguished subjects for their creator's sadism
- 3 Devised to be intelligent nourishment for their creator
- 4 Created with an agonizing existence simply so they suffer
- 5 Made with a desperate need for an act now impossible
- 6 Created to be torturers for a vanished group of victims
- 7 Mentally limited or physically crippled by their creator
- 8 Built as a scapegoat to pay for their creator's crimes
- 9 Made to desperately need a thing which no longer exists
- 10 Built to suffer crippling madness or other debilities to entertain their creators





# METADIMENSIONAL DEVIANCIES

Every GM needs a completely inexplicable entity now and then, and the denizens of metadimensional space fit the bill perfectly. Born in the strange roil of matter and energy that fills this transdimensional space, metadimensionals can be used to insert a note of utterly alien abnormality into a game. Each of these Lost are marked by some unique deviancy.

This deviancy is a law of reality they ignore by their nature. Some basic function of physical laws or human nature is absent in these creatures, and many of them are ready to use this special dispensation as a weapon against an unwelcoming cosmos.

## D10 DEVIANCY

- 1 Emotion
- 2 Energy
- 3 Entropy
- 4 Gravity
- 5 Mental process
- 6 Physical process
- 7 Reproduction
- 8 Tangibility
- 9 Temporality
- 10 Visibility

## EMOTION

These metadimensionals do not feel in the same way as do humans. Emotions may be tangible things for them, sweated out like salt water from human skin, or they may be a form of communication as audible to them as a shout is to other ears. They may respond in strange instinctive ways to certain passions, or they may feed on furors and leave only dead-souled husks in their wake. For some of these creatures, simply having an unwise feeling around them can be lethally dangerous to the unwary.

## D10 EMOTION

- 1 Detecting a particular emotion enrages them
- 2 They sweat droplets of a liquefied emotion
- 3 They broadcast a powerful passion
- 4 They taint particular emotions with psychic commands
- 5 They can cause strong passions to hurt the possessor
- 6 The world warps to accommodate their passions
- 7 They induce a contagious emotion in others
- 8 They grow stronger on others' strong emotions
- 9 They communicate strictly through induced emotions
- 10 They induce an apathy so great it can kill

## ENERGY

Matter is the basic building-block of most intelligent creatures in the galaxy, but these metadimensionals work with a more refined quintessence. They somehow manipulate, consume, or produce energetic effects. Some of them might deal with energies in the classical fashion, manipulating cold or darkness as if it were a positive force, while others might spew bolts of blue Cerenkov radiation or devour the UV rays of a sunny day. Some metadimensionals can manipulate an even wider variety of forces.

## D10 ENERGY

- 1 They boil with a corona of some dangerous energy
- 2 They feed on massive amounts of a force
- 3 They bleed a force, causing damage when injured
- 4 They convert one form of energy to another
- 5 They absorb and reflect particular types of energy
- 6 They power artifacts that are only scrap to others
- 7 They try to stifle all of a particular type of energy
- 8 They make a force into a tangible solid or liquid
- 9 They can manipulate a force as a weapon or tool
- 10 Certain forces simply don't exist for them

## ENTROPY

Decay is natural to all things, but these metadimensionals somehow manipulate it as a weapon, one part of their intrinsic natures. They may feed off of it, growing stronger when things are shattered or killed around them, or they may be coldly resistant to the degeneration of wounds and weaknesses. Some of them may even use entropy in an intellectual way, destroying confidence in beliefs, causes, or other people.

## GRAVITY

Gravity is negotiable to these metadimensionals. Some of them may simply ignore the promptings of earth, moving freely in all three dimensions. Others might manipulate and focus gravity, using it to trap prey or crush obstacles under waves of implacable force. Others use it as fuel for their powers, temporarily consuming it and turning the area around them into a zero-gee chaos of floating objects.

## MENTAL PROCESS

Most metadimensionals think in ways alien to human minds, but these creatures have some special gift or peculiarity in their thoughts. They may find it impossible to think about anything but a particular set of duties, or they may be able to lock down other peoples' thoughts until they are incapable of anything but repeating their prior actions over and over again. Others have formed a symbiotic perception of the reality around them and pluck forth oracular wisdom with effortless ease.

### D10 ENTROPY

- 1 Conventional sources of injury can't harm them
- 2 They can cause decay with their vocalizations
- 3 Everything they touch crumbles away
- 4 Destruction strengthens them
- 5 Entropic processes stop in their presence
- 6 They have an aura of hunger, thirst, and exhaustion
- 7 Technology spontaneously fails around them
- 8 They can corrupt communication around them
- 9 They destroy faith in ideas or causes
- 10 They cause movement or actions to hurt the actor

### D10 GRAVITY

- 1 They alter the direction of gravity around them
- 2 They utterly ignore gravity, moving as they wish
- 3 They focus gravity as a weapon
- 4 They control gravity to deflect and manipulate objects
- 5 They eat gravity, destroying it in an area for some time
- 6 They bleed gravity, increasing it as they are injured
- 7 They convert gravity to another form of dangerous energy
- 8 They try to infect other entities with contagious non-gravity
- 9 They transform gravitic fields into a tangible liquid
- 10 They warp gravity to alter spatial relations as well

### D10 MENTAL PROCESS

- 1 They consume memories and thoughts from sentients
- 2 They're only able to pursue a certain set of goals
- 3 Their identities change with their life stage
- 4 They think using thrall creatures' minds
- 5 They induce automatic broadcast telepathy in others
- 6 They have fantastic stores of hidden lore
- 7 They can make their thoughts into tangible reality
- 8 They can prevent others from thinking certain thoughts
- 9 They have invincible mental defenses
- 10 They can commune naturally with electronic data

## PHYSICAL PROCESS

The ichors of life flow strangely in metadimensionals. Entities with an unusual physical process are capable of ignoring the usual laws of meat and bone to produce strange limbs, alter their appearance, or defy some other physical commonplace. These physical differences are often dangerous or violent in nature, allowing the creature to survive in situations that might end a less unnatural entity.

## REPRODUCTION

These creatures reproduce in some way drastically different from that of terrestrial creatures. These methods may have nothing to do with conventional carnal union, but involve strange geometries, sonic emissions, or particular patterns of color and form. Other metadimensionals use humans as hosts for their brood, or construct them out of parts living or otherwise. Some require special conditions to reproduce, and work to manipulate humans into providing the right circumstances to swell their numbers.

## TANGIBILITY

Simple physical tangibility is not a given for metadimensionals. These particular entities may be impossible to touch or affect with conventional methods, requiring special artifacts or specific environments to make the creature susceptible to hostilities. Most intangible metadimensionals have some way of affecting the mundane world, though they may require willing servants or special circumstances to work their will upon common reality.

### D10 PHYSICAL PROCESS

- 1 They eat constantly and with no perceptible limit
- 2 They adapt rapidly to sources of injury
- 3 They inhabit an environment lethal to normal life
- 4 They're partly some impossible inorganic material
- 5 They generate foodstuffs instead of consuming them
- 6 They have a bizarre means of locomotion
- 7 They sprout temporary body parts whenever needed
- 8 Conventional injuries just make them stronger
- 9 They're symbiotic or parasitic with a host organism
- 10 They "un-die" after being slain

### D10 REPRODUCTION

- 1 Born of a specific understanding; gestates in human minds
- 2 Reproduced by massive geometric arrangements
- 3 Ages backwards and is unborn into its own parents
- 4 Parasitically impregnates the host via a projected pattern of lights and colors
- 5 Reproduces through precise chorus of sounds
- 6 Builds its progeny out of random or strange substance
- 7 Lures victim into willing progeny-transformation
- 8 Requires titanic energy discharges to reproduce
- 9 They can rapidly spore or bud when needed
- 10 Their offspring are indistinguishable from normal humans

### D10 TANGIBILITY

- 1 They're intangible to all but a specific type of material
- 2 They're tangible only after feeding
- 3 They're tangible only at certain times of day or year
- 4 They're tangible only in a location important to them
- 5 They're tangible only to their chosen prey
- 6 They're tangible only to energy discharges
- 7 They make their targets intangible to others
- 8 They're tangible only to a certain edifice's structure
- 9 They're tangible only to those who can't see them
- 10 They become tangible at will, using sudden materialization as a weapon

## TEMPORALITY

These metadimensionals are not tied to the strict progression of cause and effect. The flow of time is something different for them, either a tool to be used for their purposes or a more mutable aspect of their existence. Some exist outside the usual temporal flow, stepping in and out as needed, while others consume time to fuel their existences. These creatures can be very difficult to comprehend, as they may be reacting and responding to events that other entities have yet to even experience.

### D10 TEMPORALITY

- 1 They always know another's immediate intentions
- 2 They feed off the youth of others
- 3 They can grant or take away youth to others
- 4 They can "rewind" time for brief periods
- 5 They can "skip forward" in time, vanishing briefly
- 6 They can call temporal echoes of themselves
- 7 They can perceive prior events in a location
- 8 They seek to destroy all time-altering things
- 9 They can reverse prior choices they made
- 10 They cause time to pass more slowly for others

## VISIBILITY

These creatures are somehow more difficult to perceive than ordinary terrestrial entities. This may be a simple matter of invisibility, or it might be a more subtle form of unnoticeability, like a cloud of psychic occlusion or a tendency to appear as some ordinary object instead of a living entity. Other metadimensionals have the opposite quality, and are somehow more easy to perceive than ordinary creatures, becoming a cynosure for the senses of those around them.

### D10 VISIBILITY

- 1 They are entirely invisible to human senses
- 2 They strike blind or maim those who see them
- 3 They attack anyone who looks at them
- 4 They always appear as something else
- 5 Onlookers can't see anything *but* the creature
- 6 Being seen physically hurts them
- 7 They absorb all electromagnetic energy
- 8 They intoxicate or craze those who see them
- 9 They are always visible regardless of barriers
- 10 They steal the appearance of others, leaving their victims unable to be seen



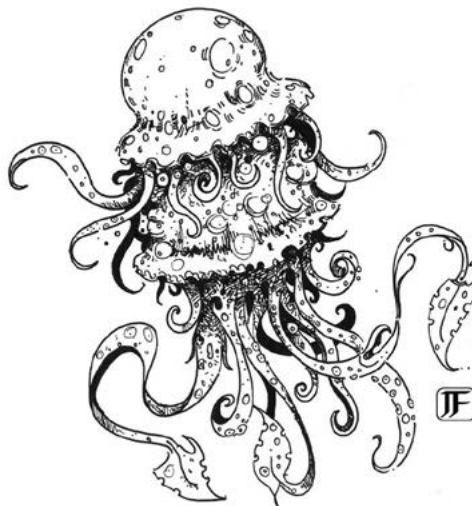
# CHOOSING A SHAPE AND APPEARANCE

The tables here provide some quick distinguishing characteristics and basic body forms for the Lost you create. The tables should be used as much for inspiration as for specific details, and you shouldn't feel obligated to use all of them. If you want a fundamentally humanoid race of Lost to serve as builders for a set of ruins, you shouldn't bother rolling on the body format table, but you might find use from the general motif or integument tables.

The general motif table gives you an overall style to apply to the creature's appearance. You can use it to tie together an otherwise peculiar collection of qualities, giving an otherwise garbled creature a general organizing principle. The body format is most useful for synthetics, aliens, and metadimensionals, all of whom might have drastically different shapes than the conventional transhuman outlines.

The animal aspect table can be used to give a general overlay for a creature, adding a quick reference for any small details you may need to add to the entity's appearance. The other body part tables can be used to add to the strangeness of a creature, or provide that single note of difference that can make an otherwise humanlike creature appear more disturbing or uncanny.

Vocalizations and smell give a creator some cues as to how the creature strikes the other senses of a PC. The particular smell of a creature can provide a warning of its presence that can often help to build tension; the smell of dry cinnamon can be a cause for terror if the players know it for the herald of a hideous foe. Playing up the unnatural sounds and smells of a creature can help add an extra measure of strangeness to an entity encountered by the heroes.



The last table is meant to add finishing details and hooks to the creature. Their natural habitat might suggest particular evolutionary modifications or interpretations of existing traits, even if the Lost long since migrated away from their original homes. Clothing forms may not apply to all creatures, but a standard style of dress can imply what their worn artifacts might look like, or differences in dress that might alert the players to different ranks or castes within a species.

The favored elements are simply artistic or architectural notes that tend to inform their creations. Particularly strong elements might alert heroes as to the nature of a ruin or an object just from the look of its style. Finally, the list of unusual needs can be used to give quick motivation to a given creature, pointing it toward a goal for its immediate schemes. Such creatures often need help in acquiring their desires.

## D20 GENERAL MOTIF

1	<b>Strength.</b> Muscularity, size, and brute power
2	<b>Agility.</b> Liteness, perhaps with compact size
3	<b>Symmetry.</b> They have perfect proportions and form
4	<b>Color.</b> All their hues reference a single color
5	<b>Beast.</b> Their bodies are inspired by a type of animal
6	<b>Allure.</b> They are built for carnal enticement
7	<b>Material.</b> They have aspects of inanimate material
8	<b>Allegiance.</b> They are marked with signs of their creator's cause
9	<b>Elemental.</b> One or more classical elements inform their style
10	<b>Decay.</b> They have a degenerate or decayed aspect
11	<b>Size.</b> They are unusually small or large in scale
12	<b>Unity.</b> They all share the same basic appearance.
13-18	No especially pronounced motif.
19-20	Two or more mixed motifs.

## D20 BODY FORMAT

1	Centauroid, either bestial or humanoid
2	Additional one to three limb pairs
3	Tentacular replacements or additions
4	Winged, membranous, feathered or insectile
5	Absence of one or more limbs/extremities
6	Quadrupedal, but can stand upright
7	Amorphous or jelly-like
8	Acephalous, mouth in torso or extremity
9	Serpentine body flexibility
10	Pincers added or replacing hands
11	Large number of additional legs or arms
12	Finned or flippered limbs
13	Snakelike limbless or naga-esque form
14-18	Human or generally humanoid
19-20	Two or more formats mixed together



<b>D10</b>	<b>ANIMAL ASPECT</b>	<b>MOUTHPARTS</b>	<b>MANIPULATORS</b>	<b>LOCOMOTION</b>
1	Canine	Humanlike teeth	Humanlike fingers	Walking upright
2	Piscene	Fanged maw	Taloned claws	Quadrupedal motion
3	Insectile	Sucking proboscis	Small tentacles	Winged flight
4	Feline	Chewing mandibles	Telekinetic grabbers	Serpentine undulations
5	Beetle-like	Grinding jaws	Prehensile extremities	Telekinetic levitation
6	Avian	Filter feeder	Agile mouthparts	Swims in air or water
7	Reptilian	Digestive sac	Secondary feet	Creeps on the ground
8	Equine	Beak	Hair-fine strands	Brachiates from heights
9	Wormlike	Bone tooth ridges	Delicate suckers	Natural jets or hovering
10	Rodent	Circular rasp	Both strong and fine types	Short-range teleportation

<b>D10</b>	<b>INTEGUMENT</b>	<b>LIMBS</b>	<b>VOCALIZATIONS</b>	<b>SMELL</b>
1	Soft skin	Tentacles	Sweet, humanlike voice	Perfectly scentless
2	Leathery hide	Jointed humanlike	Buzzing	Musky
3	Chromed or metallic	Digitigrade legs	Metallic	Sewage or rotting flesh
4	Stony and mineralized	Insectile limbs	Whispering	Lemony or citrus
5	Chitinous	Skeletally thin	Fluting	Acrid or ozone-like
6	Feathered	Artificial-seeming	Rasping	Dusty
7	Scaled	Coherent energy	Polytonal chords	Floral
8	Slimy skin	Bestially coarse	Harsh cawing	Spicy
9	Furred	Many-jointed	Wet or burbling	Earthy or cut grass
10	Bony plates	Spidery	Gestures only; no speech	Cinnamon

<b>D20</b>	<b>NATURAL HABITAT</b>	<b>CLOTHING FORMS</b>	<b>FAVORED ELEMENTS</b>	<b>UNUSUAL NEED</b>
1	Sandy deserts	Ornately jeweled	A geometric shape	An exotic foodstuff
2	Extremely hot lands	Austere wraps	A color or colors	Fresh blood
3	Underwater	Intricate webwork	An animal motif	An uncommon mineral
4	Alien atmosphere	Concealing cloaks	A number	Sunlight each day
5	Heavy gravity	Armored plating	A pattern of lines	Particular emotions
6	Forest or jungle	Delicate chains	A scent	Particular sounds or music
7	Swamps and marshes	Skin-tight suits	A type of music	A gas or scent
8	Mountain peaks	Tunics and leggings	A use of light	Rare spare parts
9	Icy tundras	Toga-like mantles	Subsonic music	Silence and calm
10	Waterless badlands	Many small cloths	Flowing lines and circles	Unusual sleep
11	Subterranean tunnels	Layered robes	Harsh angles	Large amounts of food
12	Ultra-refined urban zones	Heavy furs	Layers in items and areas	Live animals for food
13	Light gravity	Sweeping skirts	Great heights or depths	Alien devices to consume
14	Open savannas	Loincloths only	Reflections or mirrors	Companionship
15	Lightless world	Elaborate hats	Smooth, featureless things	Rare drug
16	Hard vacuum	Mesh or network	Faces or their own forms	Performance of a ritual
17	Perpetually airborne	Opaque force fields	Bones or remains	Must be at a location
18	Solar corona	Flowing liquid cloth	Cyclopean slabs	Protection from sunlight
19	Void between worlds	Controlled mists	Tangled, twisted cords	Possession of an item
20	River banks and coasts	None; only harnesses	Particular sigils or marks	Feeds on energy

# CHOOSING SPECIAL POWERS

Many of the random results thus far have implied some special power for the Lost. A creature with the unique trait of freezing others in time certainly sounds like they've got some kind of power that might apply in a conflict, and an entity that's supposed to be remarkably fast and nimble should likely have some kind of mechanical representation of that special quality.

It's not hard to create special powers in **Stars Without Number**. At their most basic, you just give the creature a special power that they can use as their action. If the target fails a saving throw of a type appropriate to the power, then the power takes effect on the target.

Another type of special power is intrinsic to the creature. Whenever they are in a position to use it, it just naturally takes effect. Tentacles might do extra damage on consecutive hits, failed saving throws might cascade into a steadily-worsening effect, or it might be able to ignore certain forms of armor with its attacks.

The delicate part of defining a power lies in deciding what exactly the effects should be in terms of lost hit points, lost actions, boosted creature abilities, or persistent negative effects. A few basic questions can help sort this out.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

Is the power automatic or does it allow a saving throw? If a saving throw is allowed, is it rolled normally or is it modified? If the power is sufficient to take a PC out of the conflict entirely, it should have a saving throw, possibly at a bonus for the PC. If the ability simply does extra damage or inflicts a special result under a specific condition, then an automatic effect may be appropriate.

How is the power better than a regular attack? There should be a clear situational advantage to the creature in using the ability, but if it's *always* better than a regular attack, then it should be limited to a particular situation or against a certain type of target.

Is the power simply reflecting a special quality or advantage of the creature? Brutish titans might reasonably do unusually large damage on a melee hit while nimble creatures might have exceptionally good AC. Creatures that are unusually good at a particular activity, such as climbing, resisting deceit, or fending off psionics might also have automatic successes at these things. If the thing they're especially good at is unlikely to come up in the course of a conflict, it's not usually worth recording it as a special power. The Dzyrr might be fabulously talented cakewalkers, but you can deal with that when it actually comes up.

How much damage should a harmful power do? As a good rule of thumb, if the power can't be used every round, allowing it to inflict twice as much damage as the creature's regular attack is a good average. If the power affects multiple targets at once, it probably doesn't do more than the usual damage. If it's a once-per-fight power, it might do 1d6 per creature hit die or even more.

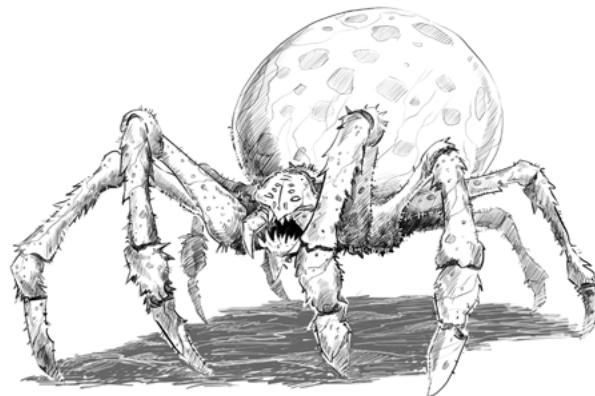
What special conditions or situation is necessary to activate the power? Whatever it is should be something that might plausibly come up during the course of a conflict, particularly if the creature has time to prepare the situation. The creature's natural environment is likely to be especially accommodating to these powers.

## POINTS TO REMEMBER

It's best to give a creature only two or three powers at the most, including modifiers to armor class or other passive abilities. A larger range of abilities can be difficult to track during play and makes it harder for each one of them to stand out during a conflict. A creature with one or two powers it favors will be more memorable for the PCs than one that throws a volley of odd abilities at the heroes.

Not every creature aptitude requires a specific power. If a creature is good at something that has no bearing on a conflict situation then it can just be written into its description and taken into account with its off-screen activities. If a creature is a fabulously talented liar, then it's going to be successful at lying to people when the plot or the campaign finds it relevant.

Powers should be reflected in the creature's environment and trappings. An metadimensional with control over gravity should likely lair in a place with arbitrary floors and ceilings, and a transhuman immune to toxins might be found in a lost palace wreathed in poisonous fumes.



# CHOOSING A NAME FOR THE LOST

Simple as it can seem, it can sometimes be difficult to pick a proper name for a freshly-minted race of Lost. For those GMs who want a little extra inspiration for their work, just use the tables below to give yourself some structure for your naming.

## D6 WHERE DID THIS NAME COME FROM?

1-2 It's the name that they called themselves, at least as far as a human throat can pronounce it. It may be a translated version of that proper name.

3-4 It's the name given to them by the local humans, likely referencing their biggest difference from those natives, whether physical or mental.

5-6 It's the name given to them by their enemies, having survived down to the present day. Those enemies might be the current inhabitants of the land or some long-forgotten other race of Lost.

Once you know who gave them the name, you can start to decide what form the name takes. An epithet can be modeled on the examples to the right, while a set of random syllables can use the table at the bottom. Roll until satisfied, replacing all Cs with a consonant of your choice, and Vs with a vowel that makes for a euphonious complement.

## D10 WHAT FORM IS THIS NAME?

- 1 An epithet on their most obvious trait
- 2 Syllables without any English meaning
- 3 A descriptor of where they live
- 4 A descriptor referring to their prior empire
- 5 A descriptor based on their dominant religion
- 6 A descriptor referring to their ultimate downfall
- 7 A referent to an impressive thing they built
- 8 A reference to a weakness they have
- 9 A reference to their supposed creator
- 10 A descriptor based on their government type

## D20 SYLLABLE

- 1 Cvv
- 2 vvCv
- 3 v
- 4 vC
- 5 vv
- 6 CCv
- 7 vCv

## D20 SYLLABLE

- 11 vCC
- 12 CCvC
- 13 C
- 14 Cv
- 15 CC
- 16 vvC
- 17 CvC
- 18 Add an apostrophe
- 19 Add a color prefix
- 20 Repeat last result

## D6 D20 SAMPLE EPITHETS

- |     |                        |                               |
|-----|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1-3 | 1                      | Men of Black Brass            |
|     | 2                      | Singers of the Dawn           |
|     | 3                      | Legless Ones                  |
|     | 4                      | Eaters of Days                |
|     | 5                      | Kivvik-Nim                    |
|     | 6                      | Haologoi                      |
|     | 7                      | Tik'ikkin                     |
|     | 8                      | Shaddai                       |
|     | 9                      | Southmost Ones                |
|     | 10                     | Sleepers Below                |
|     | 11                     | Dwellers in the Iron Mountain |
|     | 12                     | Sons of the Black Sky         |
|     | 13                     | Lords of the Red Throne       |
|     | 14                     | Hundred Caliphs               |
|     | 15                     | Yellow-Eyed Princes           |
|     | 16                     | Pillars of the New Sky        |
|     | 17                     | Daughters of God              |
|     | 18                     | Idol Feasters                 |
|     | 19                     | Holy Dancers                  |
|     | 20                     | Beloved of the Thousand       |
| 4-6 | 1                      | Swallowed Ones                |
|     | 2                      | Ones Who Burned               |
|     | 3                      | Plague-Eaten                  |
|     | 4                      | Ash People                    |
|     | 5                      | Tower Folk                    |
|     | 6                      | Mountain Raisers              |
|     | 7                      | Sun Quenchers                 |
|     | 8                      | Deepest Ones                  |
|     | 9                      | Howling Lords                 |
|     | 10                     | Skinless Walkers              |
| 11  | They Who Thirst        |                               |
| 12  | Weak-Armed Ones        |                               |
| 13  | Sons of the Bronze God |                               |
| 14  | Akkat's Children       |                               |
| 15  | Deep-Spawned Ones      |                               |
| 16  | Steel Kin              |                               |
| 17  | Manifold Voices        |                               |
| 18  | Old Kings              |                               |
| 19  | Sleeping Sages         |                               |
| 20  | Free Ones              |                               |

# CHOOSING THEIR HISTORY

History for most Lost is a steady sequence of troubles. You can create a quick thumbnail past for a species by using these tables to build a sequence of obstacles overcome, seeds of trouble planted, and the ways in which these challenges and temptations were met.

For ease, you can divide the history of the Lost into four stages: their rise from obscurity, their peak age of accomplishment, their era of decline, and their current modern condition. For each age, roll an obstacle that they were forced to answer. Assuming that they overcame it, you can use the table to the right to find out how they conquered their trouble.

At the same time, their conquest was not costless. A seed of ruin was planted by their actions, one which you can roll below. Eventually, this seed worsened in the ways given to the right, possibly leading into the next era's obstacle. Other seeds might spin out to fester in their society, or even be the ultimate cause of their current downfall.

The final era, that of the modern day, might be the result of an obstacle of decline they were never able to conquer, or the final fruit of a seed of ruin. The ways in which their society collapsed will doubtless influence their current condition, and some of them might yet nurse a wild dream of overcoming their ancient troubles. The aid of modern humanity might be useful in that, even if the world they resurrect is one that has no place for those that helped them rebirth it.

## D20 AN OBSTACLE TO OVERCOME

- 1 A hostile species strove against them
- 2 They lacked for some vital necessity
- 3 The world was scourged by some environmental disaster
- 4 Their creators or mentors tried to destroy them
- 5 They were harshly oppressed by former lords
- 6 They were plagued by some flaw in their bodies or minds
- 7 They induced a terrible calamity with their science
- 8 They were forced to make a great migration
- 9 They were almost eradicated by a foe or plague
- 10 They relied upon ancient infrastructure that wore out
- 11 They dwelt in a resource-impooverished area
- 12 Their society was torn by civil strife
- 13 They were helplessly reliant upon some other species
- 14 They were scorned and despised by their neighbors
- 15 They overtaxed their available resources
- 16 Their society was rigid and unable to adapt to change
- 17 Their society was anarchic and unable to act in concert
- 18 They suffered a terrible plague that did worse than kill
- 19 Their creations got loose and wrought havoc
- 20 They were prey to a terrible mistake or delusion

## D10 OBSTACLE WAS OVERCOME BY...

- 1 Struggling against it by the society as a whole
- 2 Sacrifice, with much suffering and loss of wealth
- 3 Wisdom of science or spiritual leaders
- 4 Luck, by blind good fortune that fell upon them
- 5 Endurance, by surviving until the obstacle ended
- 6 Bloodshed, by killing or allowing much death
- 7 Negotiation, by diplomacy or outside help
- 8 Exploration, by finding some solution elsewhere
- 9 Adaptation until the obstacle ceases to be one
- 10 Construction of a physical or social solution

## D10 THE SEED WORSENE DUE TO...

- 1 Treachery, the betrayal of some important figure
- 2 Misfortune, an unforeseen affliction goading it on
- 3 Ambition, someone thinking to use it for power
- 4 Apathy, an indifference toward resolving it
- 5 Weakness, and failed, feeble attempts at a cure
- 6 Greed, for a thing the Seed provided
- 7 Folly, a terrible decision prosecuted with vigor
- 8 Intrusion, the machinations of outside foes
- 9 Blindness, a refusal to admit the Seed exists
- 10 Factions, an elite profiting by the Seed

## A SEED OF RUIN

- 1 A viciously xenophobic faction
- 2 A faction that hated their own society
- 3 Consumption of a dwindling resource
- 4 The bitter hatred of a neighboring polity
- 5 Accumulation of power in the hands of a few
- 6 Mob rule by populist demagogues
- 7 Carelessness with great scientific powers
- 8 Religious obsessions outweighing practicality
- 9 Leadership obsessed with self-advancement
- 10 Negligence of needed environmental engineering
- 11 Uncontrolled genetic drift
- 12 Rebellious slaves or servant-species
- 13 Unconstrained ambition and aggressiveness
- 14 Consumption of wealth over its production
- 15 Zealous militarism toward neighbors
- 16 Nepotistic familial or associative ties
- 17 Corrupt and mutable laws
- 18 Hedonistic indifference to all but pleasure
- 19 Desire to know maddening truths of reality
- 20 Goading of a dangerous outside power

# CHOOSING THEIR CULTURAL TRAITS

Intelligent Lost sometimes have a culture that is at least partially comprehensible by modern humans. The tables here can help a GM flavor that culture with some of the elements most likely to make a difference in actual play.

The current government of the Lost might not be their original mode of rule, particularly if they've been reduced to a faded fragment of their former empire. Still, identifying a ruler and a mode of decision-making can help a GM decide what kind of rulers and officials the PCs might meet in their efforts.

The default greeting the Lost offer to those of other species has obvious uses, though this will be influenced by the Madness and special traits of the Lost in question. Some species really have no excuse for any response but unalloyed violence, while others might be more amenable to reason.

Cultures have their own set of virtues and vices, and the ones given below might serve as the special foci of their system of morality. You might even choose to invert these. The family structure provided can help the GM decide what kind of groups are to be met by the hero, and the prevailing temperament of these entities can color general roleplay.

For small groups of Lost, these details here may be universal. Larger populations may have multiple cultures within the same race of Lost, some of which may be mutually hostile.

## D10 GOVERNMENT

- 1 Pure Anarchy. No visible government.
- 2 Oligarchy of a small elite of families or leaders
- 3 Monarchy, autocracy by inherited position
- 4 Theocracy of their priests or holy entities
- 5 Tribal leadership by clan chieftains
- 6 Ideological rule by intellectual faction leaders
- 7 Coded rule by implanted programming
- 8 Crude dictatorship of force by the strongest
- 9 Democratic or republican rule by the many
- 10 Psychic Unity. All serve the consensus will.

## D10 GREETING GIVEN TO OTHER SPECIES

- 1 None. They hide from outsiders at all costs.
- 2 Murder. All outsiders are to be slain.
- 3 Wary. They will deal, but with great caution.
- 4 Mercantile. Outsiders are for trade and barter.
- 5 Infiltration. Outsiders are to be spied-upon.
- 6 Intimidation. Outsiders are to be cowed.
- 7 Friendly. They welcome outside contact.
- 8 Superior. Outsiders are inferior, but teachable.
- 9 Reclusive. Outsiders are to be firmly kept away.
- 10 Reverent. Outsiders are honored and revered.

D20	PRAISED VIRTUE	TERRIBLE VICE	FAMILY STRUCTURE	TEMPERAMENT
1	Loyalty to the group	Mercy to a foe	Solitary individuals	Easily angered
2	Perfect truthfulness	Theft from another	Nuclear family	Amorously inclined
3	Adherence to promises	Killing the surrendered	Clan living together	Relentlessly curious
4	Fidelity to a leader	Enslaving others	Ideological groups	Driven by grudges
5	Ferocity in battle	Personal weakness	Work groups living together	Incorrigible liars
6	Skill in trickery	Submitting to another	Location-based families	Strictly honorable
7	Compassion to the weak	Deceiving others	Commercial cabals	Greedily acquisitive
8	Avid acquisition of wealth	Personally doing violence	Faith-based groupings	Haughty and proud
9	Self-sacrifice for others	Mating with outsiders	Owner and slave-kin	Painfully truthful
10	Piety in a faith	Harming children	Wealthy elder and kin	Apathetic indifference
11	Abstention from pleasure	Not spreading a faith	Noble houses and subjects	Utterly hedonistic
12	Consumption of the weak	Destroying beauty	Professional kinships	Deeply paranoid
13	Great personal authority	Fleeing from battle	Academic lineages	Naturally treacherous
14	Learning and sagacity	Abandoning territory	Temporary pairings	Grimly dedicated
15	Beauty and grace	Forsaking rulership	Protector and subjects	Prankish and japing
16	Strategic brilliance in war	Being stolen from	Contractual kinships	Saddened despair
17	Construction of things	Fighting authority	Ritually-ordained groupings	Jaded ennui
18	Artistic refinement	Failing to be productive	Task-based groups	Still and watchful
19	Physical excellence	Amassing goods	Queen and spawn	Gluttonously appetitive
20	Curiosity and research	Making peace with foes	Sex-divided group	Boisterous and loud



# AN EXAMPLE OF CREATION : THE GREEN HOWLERS

With a campaign in front of him, a GM finds himself in need of a little material to fill in the blank spots of his campaign. There may be some points during the game where the PCs will want to take a side trek to some interesting ruins, or events might require an artifact or NPC to be planted in some remote ruins worth exploring. To help give these places some coherence, he decides to make a race of Lost responsible for many of the edifices that dot this region of the sector.

He starts by rolling for their Madness, and comes up with "Protection." These Lost were obsessed with defending against some terrible foe or pervasive danger. This need to protect and shelter their people will inform their society and the structures they create, along with whatever remnants of these Lost might still survive in the present day. The GM could decide what awful doom they were trying to fight, but decides to let things play out a bit more before choosing.

Next, he picks a type for them. Since these ruins and relics are meant to be fairly comprehensible to the PCs, he decides to make them transhumans. While they're profoundly different from modern humanity in some ways, they share the same basic configuration and mental processes.

As transhumans, they have an aberration, and the dice on those tables suggest that they are mentally crippled in some way. This is an interesting twist, and the GM strongly suspects that their Madness has to do with this mental maiming. He decides that many of them have become bestial, unthinking creatures, a fate caused by whatever it is they're trying to protect themselves against.

The GM decides to make them humanoids in order to ensure that their ruins and artifacts are at least moderately familiar in their construction. A roll on the motif table has Unity as their overriding theme; they all look largely identical. This points strongly towards some manufactured origin. Combined with their mental degeneration and desperate struggle to defend themselves against something, this is starting to paint a picture of their nature and past.

To add novelty, the GM decides to roll on the Integument, Vocalization, and Smell tables. He discovers that they have smooth chitinous plates, with fluting voices and the smell of oranges about them. He decides that they look like hairless humans, with flexible, jade-green chitin in place of skin and subtly-seamed joints where the plates meet. They have two genders, but all of them of a given gender look identical to others of the same kind, distinguished only by markings.

For additional flavor, the GM rolls on the last set of tables to discover that they are native to riverbanks and wetlands. Their clothing consists of delicate clouds of flowing nanite-generated mists, as their chitin naturally repels water and their native climate required no natural protection. Their constructions and artifacts often make use of deep subsonic noises inau-

dible to human ears but very musical and pleasing to their kind. And finally, it appears that they need to consume alien devices in order to maintain their health, as their digestive systems can plunder them for vital elements.

At this stage, he might now choose any special powers the Lost possess, particularly if their aberration suggested some unusual ability. If none of these Lost survived into the modern day, the GM could skip this step, but he's decided that a few of these entities are still around, and the PCs might have cause to meet them.

The GM wants to give them some ability to distinguish them from normal humans, but their mental degeneration isn't much of a talent, and so he instead takes inspiration from their appearance and motif. Their Unity and love for subsonic elements suggests that the intelligent members among them can control the bestial ones through subsonic vocalizations, using them as servants and combatants. This integral ability has a more limited effect on modern humans, but it can force a target to perform simple, reflexive actions.

As an action, the creature can force a target to make a Mental Effect saving throw. On a failure, the victim must use its next action to perform a simple physical act that does not obviously result in bodily harm to itself or an ally. This focus is tiring for the creature, and it every use of this ability after the first inflicts 1d4 hit points of damage on it until it has a chance to rest for ten minutes.

The GM has decided that some of these entities have survived into the modern day, so putting a little thought into their history and culture could be useful. If these weren't particularly important he could just slap a name and some statistics on these entities and call it good, but since the PCs might run into an organized community of them, some extra background now will save work later on.

He starts with their rise in the ancient past and rolls to find out what obstacle first challenged them, how they overcame it, what seed of ruin was planted by the act, and how that seed became worse. When the dice have settled, it appears that they suffered a terrible plague that they simply endured until it ended, but that this plague made them careless with scientific powers, and it worsened when they committed a great act of folly.

Here we have the roots of their Madness. The GM decides that their human ancestors unearthed an ancient alien bioweapon that damaged the victim's brain tissues and reduced them to violent, feral mindlessness. Their former society was shattered and the survivors engaged in desperate scientific experiments in vain search of a cure before the bioweapon's effects petered out. The damage was profound and genetic, however, and a certain portion of their children would always go feral sooner or later, despite their best efforts.

An act of folly brought about the obstacle that defined their greatest age, which the dice tell was rigidity and an inability to change. The Lost desperately enacted unpredictable genetic experiments on themselves to extirpate the Howling Curse, as they called it, but nothing worked. Their entire culture became obsessed with protecting themselves from their feral brethren and trying to reverse the clinging curse.

In the end, this rigidity was overcome by exploration. A brave researcher plumbed the depths of another alien research facility and emerged with the genetic blueprints of a control protocol. By manipulating their own gene stock, they could produce the subsonic patterns that would tame their feral brethren. With these new techniques, the Lost came to control the mad violence of their unfortunate fellows and used them as laborers and defenders against their rivals. For a time, even the urgency of finding a cure began to fade.

A seed of ruin was planted, as their leaders became less concerned with saving their feral brethren or preventing their own offspring from degenerating. They were focused only on their own power and the glorious works their feral slaves constructed. And in the end, it was an act of their own folly which sparked the inevitable decline of their race.

The Lost had thought that the genetic damage done by the Howling Curse was complete, that the condition could grow no worse. The Scream altered that; it somehow caused the Howling Curse to suddenly explode in prevalence, until ninety six percent of the entire race was reduced to savage mindlessness. Even with their control of the brutes, there were too few Lost remaining to maintain their society, and it slowly but inevitably collapsed as more and more of their kind fell prey to the curse.

There was no overcoming this obstacle. They fell prey to the seed of ruin that is despair and hedonistic obsession. Feeling that their entire race was doomed, those that survived became decadent, bitter souls, determined to wring whatever pleasure they could out of a world that had cheated them. They renewed the old Madness of protection against the curse, and redoubled their efforts to defend their genetic lines against further degeneration. This obsession kept a few lineages intact through constant subtle genetic adjustments. The inbreeding and unified genetic template used has gradually erased all physical variance among them, with male and female templates now standard for them all.

In the modern day, the obstacle that curses them is the fear and contempt of their neighbors. The few surviving groups are hated by those who dwell near them, as the Lost use their feral brethren to kidnap victims and plunder wealth from other communities to feed their self-obsessed pleasures. Their leaders have lost all hope for a better future, and the common folk among the Lost merely mark time until they, too join the slaving mob afflicted with the Howling Curse. Interlopers who draw too near rarely survive the attentions of this mob, and those who do are subject to barbaric cruelties for the jaded amusements of their captors.

While these Lost aren't the friendliest sort, the GM decides to use the culture tables to give a few clues as to their organization. Each small group is led by the science-priests who control the community's stock of genetic lore, and who make the treatments that hold back the Howling Curse. These treatments require the consumption of devices to maintain their effectiveness. The families themselves are clusters of intelligent Lost and those ferals who are related to them by blood, who are treated as slaves and property. While they would still do anything to find a cure for the Howling Curse before it consumes them, they have largely given up hope.

Now statistics are needed for these entities. The ferals are simple; they're just foot soldiers and mooks. Two HD are appropriate for them, with 1d6 points of damage done on a successful attack. The feral alphas are stronger, at 4 HD and 2d6 damage, and they retain enough focus to use the race's mind-controlling subsonics to force a victim to do nothing while their packmates attack for a round. The remaining intelligent Lost average out at 4 HD, and might have artifacts or salvaged weapons that do 2d8 points of damage on a successful attack.

Finally, a name is needed for these creatures. The GM could've done this at any time, but saving it for the end makes it easier to pick a name that fits the species. Random rolls suggest that the name was chosen by their enemies and is an epithet on their most obvious trait. They're green and they're largely feral, so the GM dubs these people the Green Howlers. They likely have their own name for themselves, and the PCs might learn it if they manage to form diplomatic relations, but their neighbors know them by this name.

And with that, the Green Howlers are complete. The race is ready to include in a game and has enough detail to make future ruin and artifact creation much easier for the GM. Further details can be fleshed out with the tables if needed, but this should be plenty to start a campaign.



# HOUSES WITHOUT VOICES

## THE FORGOTTEN EDIFICES OF THE LOST

One of the regular duties of a GM consists of the creation of interesting places for the heroes to explore. These adventure sites might be part of a vast overarching set of events or they may just be side interludes to fill out an evening's play, but in either case they need to be interesting enough to hold the players' attention and reward their investigation.

**Stars Without Number** often involves exploration and discovery, but it can be exhausting to a GM's creativity to be constantly creating new marvels for their players to unearth. *Houses Without Voices* provides a step-by-step process for maximizing the return on your creative efforts and provides you with a basic framework for elaboration in your own game.

While the process below gives a large role to random generation, you should always feel free to pick appropriate results or adjust the decree of the dice to fit your own imagination. The random tables are meant to be a spark for your own creativity and a fallback for those occasions when you want something specific on which to build. They are not meant to be the final word for your own creations.

### THE PURPOSE OF DUST

Before starting to create an adventure site, it's important to be clear as to its purpose in your game. A site meant to serve as the arena for a climactic battle with a story arc campaign's long-hated archvillain is going to demand a different kind of investment than a mysterious ruin you plan to keep in your pocket to flesh out a sandbox sector.

If a site is meant to be a component of a specific story arc, you'll want to take care to put appropriate callbacks and references into its construction. If the party has had prior experiences with antagonistic faction that holds it, put in features that have come up before and notes of decor that call back to past adventures. Try to fit at least one visible reference to the heroes' prior activities into the site, perhaps in the ceremoniously enshrined armor of a villain they slew earlier, or a report angrily cataloging their prior successes in the campaign. Try to build these perceptible connections into the site as you go through the process of creation.

For sites intended for filler content or edifices built for a more sandbox-styled campaign, it's less important to tie it to a campaign's earlier events. Indeed, it can often be most convenient to build largely self-contained sites for purposes like these, the better to ensure that you can tuck them wherever in the campaign you might need them. Buried sites are especially good for this, as you can put one of them almost anywhere on a world.

Don't hesitate to create connections and allusions that don't necessarily have anything to do with a campaign's main events. A series of ruins might all touch on some ancient Lost species and their tragic downfall, with artifacts and clues as fragments of a grim and ancient tale. Even if the players don't take the time to investigate these connections, their existence will help *you* put together coherent areas. Knowing the secret pattern behind their purposes and constructions will give you the hints you need to build things out properly.

One note of caution is useful, however. It can be very tempting to insert purely random or nonsensical things into a site as a cheap way of playing up the incomprehensibility of the deep past. This can work if used sparingly as oddities and small notes of flavor, but you should try to avoid relying too heavily on "alien incompressibility" in your creations.

The danger of an excess of the ineffable is that it risks training the players not to bother searching into the meaning of the world around them. If much of their daily adventuring fare consists of creatures, objects, and places that they know have no deeper meaning than a random table result, then there's no point in trying to make them sensible. Almost all the objects you intend for them to seriously investigate should have some kind of logic behind them, even if it's unknown to the party. Save random strangeness for flavor trimmings.

### PLACING THE KEYSTONE

To start the site's construction, decide on its builders. Knowing the manner of creature that built the place will help you determine details of furnishing, scale, and the purposes of locations within the edifice.

In some cases, the builders will be obvious. If the campaign requires an ancient fortress built by an antagonist's ancestors, then it's not going to take much time to figure out its provenance. In other cases, you might simply decide that it was constructed by the forebears of the current inhabitants of the region and abandoned after some great catastrophe.

In other situations you might reach back to the deep past and credit some strange race of Lost. You might use the earlier chapter of this book to create a former empire-ruling species that has left its ruins scattered over the sector, sharing the same style of construction and recurring thematic elements.

And in other cases, you might not really care and simply credit the place to a default race of vanished, human-like builders. While this angle gives you less guidance, it's still a viable answer.

## THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

Next, you'll want to shape the basic outline of the site and establish the fundamental facts about it. The three most important things to choose are the purpose of the site, the intriguing discovery it contains, and the hazard that keeps off intruders and plunderers.

The tables that follow offer a set of possibilities for the site's original purpose. You'll want to adjust this purpose for the nature of the builders and any Madness that might inform their creations. You might want to pick an additional purpose if the site was later overtaken by another group and used for a different end, or else pick two purposes and blend them together for a site with a more complex role.

Discoveries can be anything that might make the players sit up and take notice of a place. Discoveries are used to cover any hidden truth, facility, or object that might justify the exploration of the site. They're the thing about the site that makes it worth the interest of the party and that should theoretically reward sufficiently vigorous exploration.

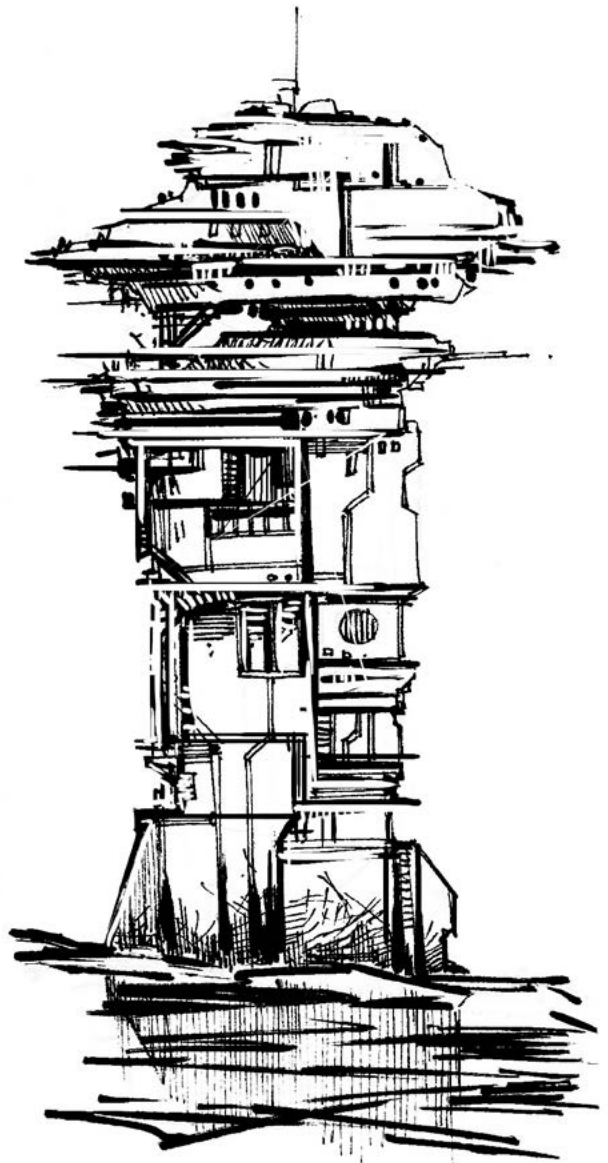
Discoveries aren't always *happy*, however, and some of them can be outright lethal to those that unearth them. Imprisoned metadimensional entities, sites built as traps for intruders and worse things can be found in the dust of the Lost. Discoveries can be dangerous to those who trouble the past. You should not feel obligated to make every discovery a pleasant or overly safe one.

Discoveries are often most meaningful in the context of native inhabitants of the planet or system around the site. Many of the things that can be discovered aren't terribly useful to an adventuring party, but they can be life-changing to the existing inhabitants of a region. Automated pretech forge-factories, vast stores of raw materials, cures for lingering sicknesses, and many other such treasures can change the balance of power for light-years around.

A site usually has one major discovery somewhere within it. Large sites or particularly rich ones might have additional, lesser elements to uncover through exploration. While the tables that follow offer specific suggestions, you might choose to take more than one and mix them together.

The last important fact to establish about the site is its largest hazard. The hazard is what has kept the place from being looted to the bare walls long before now, assuming it hasn't been freshly discovered within the past fortnight. The site may have other perils associated with it, but the hazard is the biggest and most imposing.

Hazards tend to color other threats in the site. If the site is Crumbling, for example, then other dangers in the place are likely related to its advanced state of decay and the steady collapse of its systems. Haywire security bots, environmental systems gone out of tune, and the occasional gout of crazed nanite Dust might all complement such a hazard.



## A SENSE OF PLACE

Once the basic facts of the site have been established, you can start to construct individual locations within the site. While it's perfectly possible to sit down with a sheet of graph paper and sketch every wall or natural feature in the area, many groups are served just as well by a looser, less traditional form of map. With these groups, it's often only important to have a reasonably clear impression of each "important" location in the area. Connecting passageways or stretches of empty terrain between these important locations can be glossed over in play without harming the average group's sense of verisimilitude or flavor.

Creating a site's details with this method is fairly simple. The GM decides how many locations of interest are in the site, characterizes each of these locations with as much detail as is important, and then connects them in a rough diagram representing their general spatial relationships and any important barriers or hazards between them. To use this process yourself, walk through the following steps.

First, decide how many locations of interest exist in the site. These may be conventional rooms, or they might be gardens, treacherous passes, nearby asteroids, or anywhere else that something interesting is going to happen or something worth investigating has been placed. The exact number of locations to pick will depend on how much time you want the site to absorb in play, but about twelve locations is usually a good starting point for a single session of exploration.

Next, generate a purpose for each location. The tables provided later give ideas for both general purposes and specific room details. In some cases, the purposes might not fit those who created the place. In that case, you can either reroll or simply interpret the result metaphorically, and translate it into something meaningful to the original builders. As always, simply selecting results is perfectly valid as well. You should keep the site's original purpose in mind when choosing the details of each location, but don't worry too much yet about "stocking" the locations with hazards or interesting features. At this point you're just sketching in rough meanings for each.

Next, place the discovery in the most appropriate location. If you have more than one discovery, situate each in that place that makes the most sense for it, adjusting the locations as needed for your plans. Remember that just because the discovery is important to the heroes, it doesn't mean the original builders thought to carefully enshrine the thing.

Next, get out a sheet of paper. At the center of the top of it, draw a circle and label it with the discovery's location. Then draw another set of circles down the page, representing half of the remaining locations. Choose whichever locations you like for this, with the bottom-most circle representing the most obvious entrance to the site. If you want a particularly long route to the discovery you might use as much as three-quarters of the remaining locations, while short jaunts might use no more than a quarter. Connect these circles with lines, to represent a path that connects all the locations. This is the "main path" of your site. Make sure it's not *too* straight.

Use the remaining locations to create branches or loops off this main path. It's often handy to have at least one loop leaving the path and rejoining it later on, as well as at least one diversion that dead-ends without returning to the path. At this stage, plant any other entrances to the site that might exist, perhaps representing secret passages or dangerous routes past still-active defenses. Connect these alternate entrances to one of the branches or to a location on the main path of the site.

At this stage, you now have a basic diagram of the site, showing the way that important locations relate to each other. You could take this information and turn it into a more conventional map if you wished, but for many groups this is all the data you strictly need. So long as the party understands that the corridors or terrain between these locations can be safely handwaved and that they won't be punished for not searching every ten-foot stretch of corridor there shouldn't be any real problems.

## TRIMMING THE WRECKAGE

While minimally sufficient for play, most GMs will want to further adorn their creations. Once you have the basic framework, you can start to stock it with occupants, dangers, and features worth investigating.

First, consider the denizens. Sticking creatures or sapient in about a quarter to a third of the locations is usually a good balance. Many GMs prefer to arrange these entities so that it's possible to get to the discovery without absolutely needing to engage in combat. Denizens might be distracted and susceptible to evasion, or they might block a location that can be bypassed through a loop, or they might not be automatically hostile to intruders. It can be tempting to put some sort of "boss" or guardian on top of the discovery, but a GM should be careful on that count. Some discoveries have no reason to be important to the denizens of a place, and putting a traditional "boss battle" at the end of every "dungeon" can be a little stale for some groups.

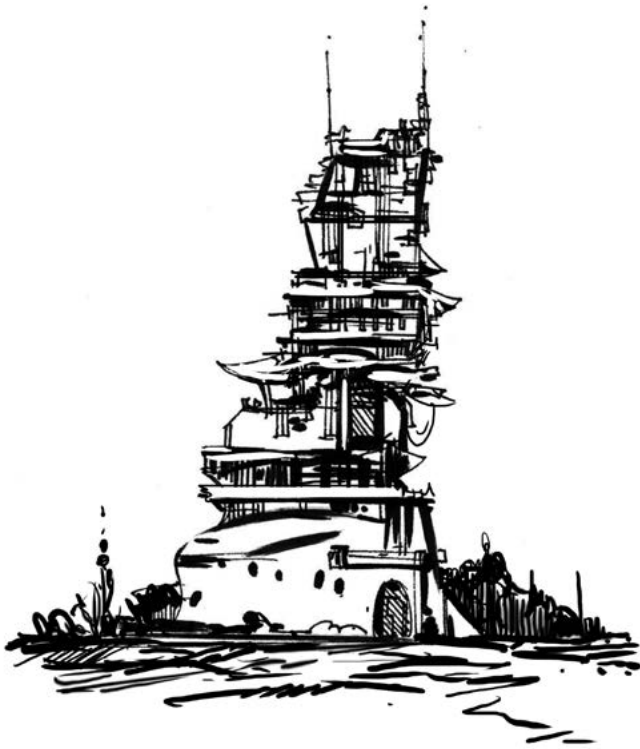
Forcing the heroes to engage in combat before attaining every discovery of importance also teaches the group that violence is ultimately a mandatory part of success. If a GM trains his players to automatically assume that they've got to cut their way to glory, nobody should be surprised if other means of handling obstacles are allowed to atrophy.

The specific nature of the denizens will vary based on those entities that created the site, the purpose it was intended to fulfill, and the kind of occupants that might reasonably have moved in or survived since the site fell into neglect. The difficulty of any probable fights will also depend on the role the site is meant to fill in the GM's campaign. Sites built to serve as a location in a specific story arc are likely to have challenges calibrated to the group's current capabilities. Sites meant to serve simply as features in a sandbox campaign are more likely to have foes that match the site's importance and vitality, even if they greatly overmatch the heroes.

Next, think about the hazard of the site. In at least one location along the path to the discovery, place some manifestation of the Hazard that the heroes will need to overcome or endure in order to continue. They might eventually plunder this site, but they're going to come face-to-face with the reason why it hasn't already been looted. Of course, a side-loop might exist that allows them to bypass this challenge if they explore with sufficient vigor.

With the main obstacle in place, put lesser manifestations of the hazard in a fifth to a quarter of the other locations. These may be actual dangers to the group or they might just be signs of the hazard's presence and the marks of its effects on the location. Denizens in these locations will either be immune to the hazard or have learned to avoid or even exploit it, perhaps with painful consequences to intruders. The goal with these lesser perils is to emphasize the overall theme of the site and give more of a sense of presence to the hazard that defines it.





Now, for the final touch, put features in at least a third of the room. These features may be harmless or possessed of uses irrelevant to heroes, but they should be something the group can interact with and investigate. A matrix of glowing crystals connected by beams of light might be a feature, opening and closing doorways as different crystals are moved. So also might be a fountain flowing with a strange black liquid that forms verminous creatures when separated from the basin. The feature should usually relate to the room in some way, though the logic may not be obvious to anyone but the entities that created it.

While you're distributing features, now's also a good time to decide what locations have salvage or "treasure" that might interest the heroes. Such locations might have their plunder hidden, or it could be lying out openly. Indeed, that something might be a location feature itself. While you can always roll up a quick device from this book in play, it's just as efficient to note down any devices that might be discovered by successfully scavenging a feature. Such pre-planning lets you take a little more care to ensure that any fruits of scrounging will match the particular nature of the feature and the site in which it was found.

With the features in place, you now have a complete site ready for your players' intrepid investigations. Slot it into your campaign when the a story line comes to it, or keep it on hand to fill in a blank if you're running a sandbox-style campaign. If it turns out you don't need it after all, just reskin the contents later, changing details and hooks to reconnect it into the game when you next need something of its general type. GMing a game is hard work, and you want to avoid wasting your effort whenever such frugality is possible. What you can't use today, you can repaint for tomorrow.

## SITE CREATION SUMMARY

- 1. Determine the site's role in your campaign.** Is this going to be part of a story line, or is this a side adventure or random site in a sandbox campaign?
- 2. Choose the site's builders.** Who made it? Is it a race of Lost, the predecessors of the current inhabitants, or some nameless race of the deep past?
- 3. Choose the site's original purpose.** Why was it made? Did later waves of inhabitants change this purpose, or has it lain untouched for ages since it fell into disuse?
- 4. Choose a discovery to be found at the site.** What is the most interesting or important thing to be found here? It need not be conventional treasure, but it should justify any interest in exploring the site. A site might have several discoveries, one major and the others of lesser importance.
- 5. Choose a hazard to protect the site.** Why hasn't the place been plundered hollow already? What danger hangs over the entire site?
- 6. Decide on the number of locations of interest.** A side adventure's site might have a dozen places worth the group's notice, while a complex intended to eat up several sessions might have scores of them.
- 7. Decide on a purpose for each location.** For rooms in an underground complex, this might just be the original role of the room, while outside locations might be gardens, fields, satellite dish arrays, or something otherwise worth investigating.
- 8. Make a rough diagram map of the site.** Put the discovery in the most appropriate location, then make a chain of locations out of half the remaining locations. This is the "main path" to the discovery. Use the remaining rooms to create loops and branches.
- 9. Place beasts and sapients.** About a third to a quarter of the locations should have some kind of inhabitants, not all of which need to be hostile.
- 10. Place the site's hazard.** One room along the main path should be blocked by the hazard, with other manifestations in about a fifth to a quarter of the other locations in the site.
- 11. Place interesting features.** At least a third of the rooms should have something interesting in them, either as oddities, novel details of construction, or other objects that invite the players to interact with them.

# CHOOSING THE SITE'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

One of the first steps in creating a site is to decide what its original purpose might have been. If you know what the builders originally meant for a place to be, you'll have a much easier time stocking it with appropriate denizens, features, and discoveries of interest to the heroes.

The table to the right offers some suggestions, or you could simply pick and choose to suit your own needs. You might also roll more than once if the site's purpose changed over the course of time, or if you wished to build some edifice that blended multiple purposes into its construction. If the Lost who created it are long since dead, new occupants might have different uses for the place.

**Aesthetic** sites were built for strictly artistic reasons, to be monuments or components of some grand edifice of beauty.

**Communication** sites served as nerve centers for data transfer or record storage, and might have links remaining to other sites, some of which may not be abandoned.

**Domiciles** were meant for housing one or more groups of the original builders' race, and may range in size from small private homes to massive alien arcologies.

**Embassy** sites were intended to house ambassadors to the local ruling power. Such places might have areas of very different environment to better accommodate the envoys.

**Extractors** were erected to collect some resource. Mines, atmosphere filters, slaughterhouses, and other edifices that squeeze something valuable from the world might qualify.

**Factory** sites built something. They might be small workshops, the secretive ateliers of rare masters, or vast gray factory-forges for massive alien constructions.

**Farm** sites include not only vast plantations of potentially mutated flora, they also include sealed hydroponic facilities and sinister breeding compounds.

**Fortresses** were built to impose the builder's rule on the surrounding area. Some might have been overthrown before their final collapse, while others remain sealed and intact.

**Laboratory** sites were devoted to research and development, and not all their creations might rest peacefully in the dust.

**Palaces** were the seats of ruling authority for the area, and are usually splendid or imposing in their structure. Most included housing for the local ruler and their kindred.

**Pleasure** sites range from the innocence of gardens and pleasing artwork to darker and more terrible enjoyments. Some alien delights are incomprehensible to humans.

**Prisons** were necessary in some societies, not only for misbehaving locals, but also for the containment of entities that were both dangerous and somehow impractical to kill.

**Refuges** were necessary for some Lost, places of hiding and security against a world angered by their existence. Most refuges are self-contained and fashioned for secrecy.

**Schools** might be meant for undeveloped members of the species or they may be advanced institutions devoted to the most dangerous and esoteric knowledge.

**Temples** exist in most cultures, though not always in a form recognizable to modern investigators. Such sites often have structures built for ritual reasons, ones not always logical.

**Tombs** are usually for great rulers, beloved saints, or horrific tyrants. Many have guards of some kind to ensure the serene repose of the great and terrible dead.

**Transport** sites were built around moving goods and people. They may be simple embarkation nodes for subterranean tunnel cars, "airports" for flying devices, or even apertures for some advanced teleportation gate.

**Vaults** were to guard some precious thing or person, one invariably well-guarded by walls and active security systems. Some have false treasures to allay the greed of robbers.

**Watchposts** were meant to monitor an area. If the builders were the legitimate rulers of a place, they are usually obvious and imposing. Spy centers keep a lower profile, and might be disguised as a different structure.

**Xenofarm** sites speak to a former age, when the world was not as it is now. These sites were built to cover an area with an atmosphere and ecology more to the creators' liking. Some vestiges of these changes may still remain.

D20	ORIGINAL PURPOSE
1	Aesthetic
2	Communication
3	Domicile
4	Embassy
5	Extractor
6	Factory
7	Farm
8	Fortress
9	Laboratory
10	Palace
11	Pleasure
12	Prison
13	Refuge
14	School
15	Temple
16	Tomb
17	Transport
18	Vault
19	Watchpost
20	Xenofarm

# CHOOSING A DISCOVERY AT THE SITE

Not all sites have a meaningful discovery somewhere within them, but most of them should have *something* worth unearthing, if only to reward the inquisitiveness of the heroes. Too many dry holes can leave a group wondering why they're bothering to plumb these forgotten ruins.

Many of the discoveries below are important chiefly because of their meaning to the local denizens. Heroes may not have much interest in a warehouse full of pretech agricultural tools, but the discovery could be life-changing to the poor farmers of the surrounding area. Clever groups can often devise some way to profit by these finds.

An **Ally** suggests that some entity in the site might be a useful and willing ally to the heroes. This may be a surviving member of the culture that built the site, or it might be some more recent intruder willing to aid the party.

**Comms** imply the existence of some sort of useful communications node, one connected with a distant city, star system, or other site of consequence. These can be precious, as interstellar communications are beyond common postech.

**Cures** can be found for some local affliction or prevalent condition. Local environmental afflictions or persistent plagues might all have cures somewhere within the site.

**Gateway** sites provide transit to some distant location. It may be through ancient tubeway cars, flying vehicles with locked destinations, or metadimensional portal apertures.

**Habitats** grant comfortable and secure lodgings for at least a small group, often with usable food and water resources. Such discoveries can be precious in harsh badlands.

**Keys** open the way to some other site, perhaps one containing some long-lost treasure. Such keys usually provide a hint as to their ultimate use.

**Kindred** are lost splinter groups or prisoners taken from the local natives. Some are more friendly than others.

**Legitimacy** discoveries reveal some token, substance, or visible blessing that confers political legitimacy in the surrounding communities. Such instant rulers are precarious.

**Maps** lead to some lost cache of valuables or to some distant site long since lost to the memory of men.

**Plunder** implies the discovery of some treasure long ago stolen from the natives of the area, a thing that is perhaps mentioned in their legends and myths.

**Prisoners** may be captives from the surrounding locals or they may be denizens sealed away since the site's founding.

**Relics** are treasures of the kind beloved by adventurers the world over. They are devices, artifacts, or some other tangible devices of utility to the group.

**Scanner** discoveries reveal some sort of powerful sensory array, something capable of detecting something interesting over a wide stretch of outside terrain.

**Shinies** are just that. These precious objects are worth good credits to the locals.

**Stockpiles** are vast sums of some substance valuable to the local natives. Food, clean water, processed metals, or the like all might make for good stockpiles to be discovered by the heroes.

**Tomb** discoveries usually revolve around the resting places of some mythic hero or local legend. Such tombs often are the resting places of ancient regalia that could be of great value to the rulers of the modern day.

**Tools** might range from a storage room full of pretech cutting lasers to a full-fledged factory preserved against the ages. Some of these tools might be adaptable to artifacts useful to heroes, but most of their value is to the local inhabitants.

**Traps** imply that not every discovery is a happy one. Something about the site is designed to catch or kill intruders, often in the form of a lure to entice the careless. The trap may be integral to the site's original construction or it may be a later addition by other inhabitants.

**Truths** can be found in lost sites, most of which are somehow unpleasant or distressing to the locals. The ruling family's true nature, the reality of what their houses are built upon, the real price they pay for their peace... these things can be ruinous to know, and silence is sometimes bought with blood.

**Vehicles** might be flying devices, landcars, lost tubeway terminals, or some other engine of swift, far travel.

## D20 DISCOVERY

1	Ally
2	Comms
3	Cure
4	Gateway
5	Habitat
6	Key
7	Kindred
8	Legitimacy
9	Map
10	Plunder
11	Prisoner
12	Relic
13	Scanner
14	Shinies
15	Stockpile
16	Tomb
17	Tools
18	Trap
19	Truth
20	Vehicle

# CHOOSING A HAZARD FOR THE SITE

There are reasons why the site has yet to be entirely stripped of anything of value, and the hazard of a site is the largest of these. A site may have more dangers than this, but the hazard is the most imposing of its perils and usually influences the other dangers to be found within the place.

**Allure** implies that something about the site snares intruders not with force, but with irresistible enticement. Mind-influencing emissions, intoxicating vapors, or other traps await here.

**Atmospheres** are not always friendly to humans. The original inhabitants might have breathed a toxic or even corrosive mix, or some accident might have suffused the environment with poisonous fumes.

**Automatons** might infest the site. Security bots might still keep their vigil or common service artificials might have become wild and dangerous to intruders.

**Beasts** may lair within the empty halls. Some might be relics of the pets or service animals of the original inhabitants, while others might simply have found the place a convenient nest for their spawning.

**Crumbling** sites are in a state of advanced decay, with interior systems gone haywire and structural supports threatening to give way at the slightest shock or errant blow.

**Hidden** sites are simply very difficult to find. They may masquerade as already-plundered ruins, innocuous empty structures, or natural features. Important interior locations are likely also hidden somehow.

**Inaccessible** places are very hard to get to, being remote from civilizations, perched amid perilous terrain, or locked away behind ancient seals.

**Nanites** may take the form of a persistent eddy of Black Dust or some more subtle scourge that twists and taints the life around the site.

**One Way** sites are simplicity itself to enter, but much less convenient to leave. The entrances are usually sealed against egress, forcing those inside to find less conventional means of getting out.

**Plagued** sites are infested with some biological scourge. Some plagues are swift and murderous, while others warp the victims into dangerous beasts and terrible mutants.

**Savages** might be the remnants of the original builders, devolved into brutality and feral violence. Other savages are more modern, being bandits, exiles, or mad cultists.

**Sealed** sites are simply all but impossible to get into, often requiring special keys found in some distant cache.

**Submerged** locales are fully or partially underwater. Particularly dangerous sites might be flooded with something far worse than mere water.

**Taboo** sites are ward-ed by local natives who hold the site as holy or otherwise off-limits to outsiders.

**Temperatures** can prove lethal in some sites, being very hot or cold. Some sites were designed for such extremes, while others became so after an interior system failure ran wild.

**Toxic** sites are unlike Atmosphere-tainted ones in that the poison is not pervasive, but instead a particular lethal substance that is distressingly common inside the site. It may be a malignant liquid, fuming solid, or visible tendrils of murderous gas. The toxin might be infused into the local wildlife, giving them poisonous fangs.

**Traps** might consist of the site's original security system still functioning in some sense, or they may be newer additions added by later inhabitants of the site. Many traps require some kind of tender to reset or clear them after they trigger, and synthetics or other artificials might serve this role.

**Treachery** is a more subtle peril. The inhabitants of the site seem friendly and harmless, but seek to lure intruders into a disarmed ease before striking. The treacherous locals might be heritors of the original builders or they might be outsiders who found the place a good base for their tricks.

**Twisted** sites are suffused with some strange metadimensional energies that warp basic rules of space, time, or other physical fundamentals. Corridors may twist in non-Euclidian directions, hours may pass in moments, or normal physical processes may halt or accelerate madly.

**Vertical** sites are defended by simple space. They are so high or so deep that only those with some means of flight or knowledge of a secret entrance can reach them. Such sites are often riddled with pits, cliffs, or other obstacles that require a deft hand at climbing to overcome.

## D20 HAZARD

1	Allure
2	Atmosphere
3	Automatons
4	Beasts
5	Crumbling
6	Hidden
7	Inaccessible
8	Nanites
9	One Way
10	Plagued
11	Savages
12	Sealed
13	Submerged
14	Taboo
15	Temperature
16	Toxic
17	Traps
18	Treachery
19	Twisted
20	Vertical



# CHOOSING LOCATIONS IN THE SITE

With the basic facts of the site established, it's time to characterize the locations of interest at the site. These locations will vary depending on the nature of the place. In a labyrinthine underground habitat, they might be actual rooms. In an overgrown pleasure garden they might be clearings or small buildings erected by the ancients. A location is simply a place where there is something interesting to be found.

Of course, locations are not the only places in a site. A sprawling habitat center might have hundreds or even thousands of rooms, corridors, and service spaces underneath its rotting metal skin. The vast majority of these places are going to be devoid of anything worth an adventurer's time. During play, the great majority of them can be glossed over by the GM, dismissed with a few words about empty, dust-filled rooms or ordinary stretches of wilderness.

Some players may be concerned that they'll miss something if they don't carefully catalog their interrogation of every square meter of a site. If you're using the location model, you should take care to reassure these players that they won't lose out or be punished for ignoring those parts of the site that you gloss over.

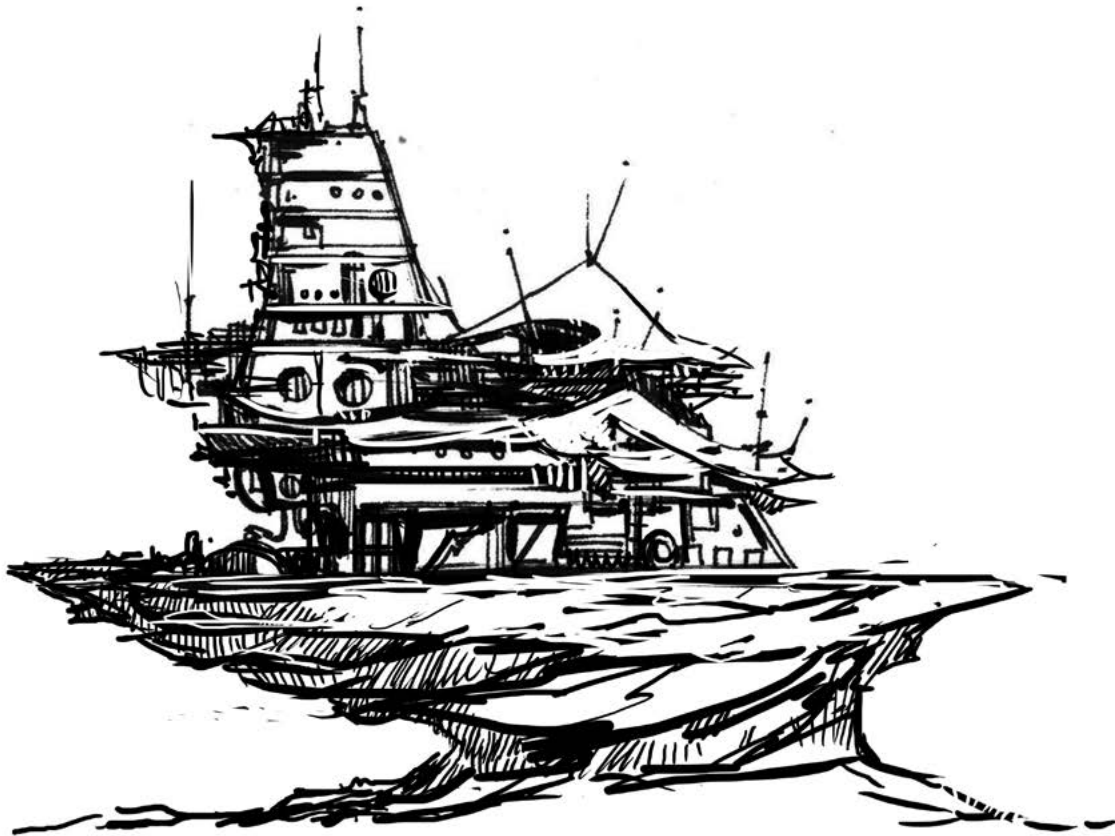
When defining a location's role, the table to the right gives a few basic concepts which are elaborated in the pages that follow. The basic idea should be enough to give you some possibilities for a given location's role in the site.

## D10 LOCATION ROLE

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | <b>Aestheticizing.</b> It is for exercises of art.        |
| 2  | <b>Constructing.</b> Something is fabricated there.       |
| 3  | <b>Consuming.</b> Food or other needs are served.         |
| 4  | <b>Healing.</b> Injury or damage is repaired here.        |
| 5  | <b>Protecting.</b> The site or a purpose is protected.    |
| 6  | <b>Recording.</b> Records are kept or made here.          |
| 7  | <b>Reproducing.</b> Creating more of their kind here.     |
| 8  | <b>Resting.</b> Recuperating and relaxing after labor.    |
| 9  | <b>Socializing.</b> Interacting with others in the group. |
| 10 | <b>Worshipping.</b> Serving their religious needs.        |

It may be useful to make a small sketch of the general dimensions of a location, if combat is likely to take place there. Some idea as to the dimensions and important features of the area can be helpful during play, but it's not generally necessary to map out the entire site in classic cartographic specificity. Save your creative energy for the parts that are most likely to be needed in play.

On rare occasions, it will be necessary to establish some facts about the corridors or terrain between locations of interest. In such cases, just make a spot decision and sketch it out if necessary. A few words of description and a half-dozen pencil marks should be sufficient for most needs.





## AESTHETICIZING

The location was meant to serve the aesthetic priorities of the builders. For those with pronounced Madnesses the location likely celebrates the particular focused ideals of the species. Conventional sculpture and imagery might adorn the space, or it might rely on modes of art that aren't even perceptible to normal human senses. More ominously, some of the more participatory installations might be highly dangerous to outsiders unfamiliar with its expectations.

## CONSTRUCTING

The location saw a great deal of creative effort, either as the workshop of a particular artist or artisan, or as part of some larger-scale construction or factory work. Taken metaphorically, the place might instead have been a locus of planning and scheming, the site where dark purposes were fabricated and formed.

## CONSUMING

Kitchens, mess halls, and uglier places all serve the purpose of consumption, where the original builders once came to nourish their particular needs. Given the alien nature of some of the Lost, it's not impossible that humans might be mistaken for food beasts... or possibly not *mistaken* at all.

## HEALING

All natural creatures are prone to decay and damage, and this location was dedicated to repairing such ravages. Whether a conventional medical center or a repair depot for synthetic creators, a location devoted to healing can often have useful tools for clever scavengers, assuming that biological imiscibility doesn't bring about unfortunate reactions.

## PROTECTING

This location was once devoted to protecting something, either the site itself or some purpose it embodied. Some protective locations were more offensive in nature, such as those of fortresses placed to keep down a restive native population. Weapons are often found in such places, along with more advanced security than many other locations.

### D6 AESTHETICIZING

- 1 Garden of peculiar flora
- 2 Gallery of exotic artworks
- 3 Chamber of pleasing sounds
- 4 Room with satisfying geometry
- 5 Place symbolic of their Madness
- 6 Room with a participatory installation

### D6 CONSTRUCTING

- 1 Peculiar private workshop
- 2 Broad factory floor
- 3 Location for refining raw material
- 4 Place with large half-finished object
- 5 Place for building Madness-related item
- 6 Studio for an art traditional to the builders

### D6 CONSUMING

- 1 Large communal mess hall
- 2 Private dining chamber
- 3 Pen for food animals
- 4 Zone for growing food crops
- 5 Kitchen for food preparation
- 6 Midden for bones or worse

### D6 HEALING

- 1 Sophisticating hospital area
- 2 Private sick room
- 3 Physical therapy exercise area
- 4 Serene chamber for mental healing
- 5 Morgue for the unfortunate
- 6 Medical fabrication area

### D6 PROTECTING

- 1 Guard post
- 2 Well-stocked armory
- 3 Watchtower or surveillance room
- 4 Barracks for military residents
- 5 Cells for unruly denizens
- 6 Bunker or fortified area

## RECORDING

Most builders had reason to record events at the site. Some purposes, such as research or surveillance, all but demanded such archives. Others kept more selective records of famous figures or important leaders, the better to carry on a cultural thread as their people waned and faded.

## REPRODUCING

While humans rarely require a very particular environment to encourage reproduction, other species are not always so fortunate. Some may require controlled environments to successfully reproduce, while others may make more of their kind in ways wholly non-biological in nature. Others place great ritual importance on the process, and dedicate areas to it much as some cultures might place temples.

## RESTING

Exhaustion of the mind and body prey on most entities, and so this location was meant to encourage refreshment. Conventional sleeping quarters might fall under this heading, along with meditation cells, soothing natural overlooks, or careful reproductions of an alien homeworld's environment. Things that were restful to the original inhabitants may be distinctly less so to later intruders.

## SOCIALIZING

Few species can tolerate a wholly solitary existence, and so many sites will have locations given over to various forms of social contact. These may be as informal as an open plaza at the center of the site, or it may be a chamber equipped with the necessary fittings to accommodate some complex alien ritual of salutation.

## WORSHIPING

The desire for the numinous is not a passion exclusive to modern humanity. Locations of worship are particularly common among splinter groups, castaways, and exile factions, as the reassurance and continuity of the group's faith gives strength in the face of such adversity. Under this pressure, however, some creeds deform into redder and more terrible faiths, making grim demands on their devotees.

### D6 RECORDING

- 1 Library of what passes for books
- 2 Historical sculpture garden
- 3 Gallery of historical images
- 4 Record storage room
- 5 Internal security observation post
- 6 Memorial for some great hero

### D6 REPRODUCING

- 1 Creche for undeveloped grubs
- 2 Room of alien reproductive tech
- 3 Intimate salon with alien decor
- 4 Storage for larva-bearing host animals
- 5 Educational or programming area
- 6 Clone vats or body transfer equipment

### D6 RESTING

- 1 Group sleeping zone
- 2 Grave or tomb area
- 3 Rest area with brothel-like decor
- 4 Private sleeping chamber
- 5 Alien equivalent of a bathroom
- 6 Sauna, bath, or other salubrious facility

### D6 SOCIALIZING

- 1 Bar with appropriate liquids
- 2 Training hall or workout area
- 3 Playing field for inscrutable game
- 4 Ritual room for bizarre group event
- 5 Auditorium for speaking or music
- 6 Open area for casual conversation

### D6 WORSHIPING

- 1 Strange and splendid altar room
- 2 Chambers for important clergy
- 3 Storage for religious artifacts
- 4 Pens for sacrifices or offerings
- 5 Room adorned with icons and idols
- 6 Incomprehensible ritual chamber

# PLACING BEASTS AND SAPIENTS

The tables on this page aren't intended to give you the specific species and difficulties for your encounters, but instead to give you some ideas for motivations, activities, and situations that might add flavor to the choices you do make. The exact power or hit dice of the foes you plant in a ruin will vary with the role it plays in your game. The *Stars Without Number* core book provides examples of different types of denizens.

About a quarter to a third of the locations should have some sort of occupants. Intelligent occupants in small structures will usually all belong to the same group, though friendly groups can tolerate close proximity. Choose beasts and sapients according to the site's nature and the kind of entities you want the group to encounter.

To give yourself some ideas for more complex encounters, you can use the tables on this page to hint at the group's motivation, current situation, and most likely response to intruders. The former two tables can be rolled on a d20, though the reaction table is best used with 2d10 and a modifier of your choice, to give a greater likelihood to the most probable responses.

It's an instinctive PC urge to check the corpses of their foes for shiny objects. Most beasts and patrolling entities won't have anything of value on them, but creatures found in their lairs or homes might have a few usable objects.

## D20 THEIR CURRENT SITUATION

- 1 They're in trouble; some disaster is upon them.
- 2 Some of them are badly injured.
- 3 They're drunk or intoxicated, perhaps violently.
- 4 They're lost or trapped and in need of help.
- 5 They've been captured by another group.
- 6 They're lying in ambush for an enemy.
- 7 They're sleeping or resting.
- 8 They've stolen away to do something wrong.
- 9 They're on patrol, looking for intruders.
- 10 They're performing a religious rite.
- 11 They're looking for a lost member of the group.
- 12 They're going to raid rivals or enemy intruders.
- 13 They're going to trade with neighbors.
- 14 They're gathering some useful material.
- 15 They're preparing traps for prey or foes.
- 16 They're keeping watch for intruders.
- 17 They're preparing prey or an enemy to be eaten.
- 18 They're recuperating from a bloody recent fight.
- 19 They're idly talking or socializing.
- 20 They're arguing over something important.

## D20 THEIR BASIC MOTIVATION

- 1 **Building.** They're trying to make something.
- 2 **Curiosity.** They're trying to figure something out.
- 3 **Deceiving.** They're trying to trick someone.
- 4 **Desire.** They're hunting or impressing a mate.
- 5 **Destroying.** They're trying to disassemble a thing.
- 6 **Faith.** They've received a great divine sign lately.
- 7 **Fear.** They're frightened of something nearby.
- 8 **Flight.** They've been forced out of their lair.
- 9 **Folly.** They're determined to do something stupid.
- 10 **Friendship.** They're seeking allies or help.
- 11 **Greed.** They're trying to seize a precious thing.
- 12 **Hunger.** They're starving or perishing of thirst.
- 13 **Hunting.** They seek prey or victims.
- 14 **Malice.** They want to hurt others for pleasure.
- 15 **Purifying.** They're trying to drive out the impure.
- 16 **Rule.** They want to dominate the locals.
- 17 **Scouting.** They're investigating something near.
- 18 **Stealth.** They're trying to avoid notice.
- 19 **Strife.** The group is arguing or fighting with itself.
- 20 **Weariness.** They're either asleep or trying to rest.

## 2D10 THEIR REACTION TOWARD STRANGERS

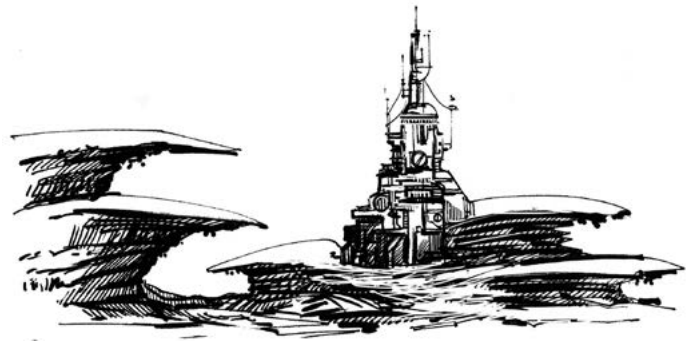
- 1 - Instant hatred and murderous violence.
- 2 Immediate violence if at all plausible.
- 3 Immediate violence if at all plausible.
- 4 Violence unless a good reason interposes.
- 5 Violence unless a good reason interposes.
- 6 Violence if such is ordinary behavior for them.
- 7 Violence if such is ordinary behavior for them.
- 8 Unfriendly and becoming worse if not avoided.
- 9 Markedly unfriendly and unwilling to talk.
- 10 Their predictable response, given the situation.
- 11 Their predictable response, given the situation.
- 12 Their predictable response, given the situation.
- 13 Willing to parley if not out of character for them.
- 14 Willing to parley if not out of character for them.
- 15 Will initiate a parley unless the PCs are hostile.
- 16 Will initiate a parley unless the PCs are hostile.
- 17 Will give aid if not overly burdensome to them.
- 18 Will immediately offer minor aid.
- 19 Will offer minor aid, or more if asked persuasively.
- 20 + Immediate and vigorous friendliness and aid.

# PLACING HAZARD MANIFESTATIONS

With the inhabitants duly placed, now's the time to put down manifestations of the hazard that has kept the site relatively intact. The hazard is intended as a thematic overlay to help tie together the most common dangers of the place, and also give a well-prepared or canny group the chance to come up with solutions that might be helpful in more than one instance.

Hazards are placed as manifestations— as particular situations, instances, or events that reflect the greater hazard of the site. You should put one manifestation along the main path of the site, something the PCs have to overcome in order to progress along the route. Of course, there may still be an alternate way around the location if the heroes are careful about exploring the place. Additional manifestations should go in about one-fifth of the locations in the site.

The exact effects of a hazard will depend on the manifestation. If the site's hazard is "Verticality," then a manifestation might just be a wide gap in a stairway leading up some vertiginous height. Failure to navigate the gap means somebody's liable to take a long step down. Conversely, a nanite cloud might do almost anything to a luckless wretch. Damage and difficulties for overcoming a manifestation should be chosen as seems appropriate, with the understanding that heroes might just be clever enough to figure out a way to bypass the entire problem.



The tables below offer incidental effects and complications for your hazard instances. Sometimes a literal application might make sense, but in others, a metaphorical one might give the best use. If the broken stair's incidental effect is "It causes temporary but lengthy debility," then maybe anyone who falls will be caught in a web of debris below and break their leg, leaving them limping until healed. If the complication is "One person benefits greatly when triggered," then maybe the fall dislodges an artifact from the debris pile.

Also remember that any inhabitants of the site will have had to make some sort of terms with the peril. They may know ways of bypassing it, or be immune to its effects, or simply be smart enough to stay away from the location. Those who don't have such advantages are unlikely to last long.

## D20 MANIFESTATION INCIDENTAL EFFECTS

- 1 It will drain one or more devices.
- 2 It causes the destruction of mundane party gear.
- 3 It blinds, deafens, or mutes victims.
- 4 It's contagious in some way.
- 5 It marks victims with scars or cosmetic deformity.
- 6 It creates hallucinations or illusions.
- 7 It leaves victims unconscious or asleep.
- 8 It's extremely noisy and draws attention.
- 9 It closes the path behind the PCs.
- 10 It damages certain types of technology.
- 11 It horribly alters NPCs allies or bystanders.
- 12 It conceals something precious.
- 13 It opens a lateral path to another location.
- 14 It causes temporary but lengthy debility.
- 15 It slows hit point or System Strain recovery.
- 16 It enrages or offends local inhabitants.
- 17 It creates a debility that doesn't trigger for days.
- 18 It destroys something beautiful.
- 19 It looks much worse or far milder than it is.
- 20 It forcibly moves the party elsewhere.

## D20 MANIFESTATION'S COMPLICATION

- 1 Manipulating a particular feature will trigger it.
- 2 Neglecting to deactivate something will cause it.
- 3 It forms a natural trap concealed from easy sight.
- 4 Someone has made a trap or snare of it.
- 5 It was partially overcome by a dead explorer.
- 6 It's disguised as a different danger.
- 7 The locals intentionally trigger it as a defense.
- 8 It must be triggered to benefit from a feature.
- 9 It waxes and wanes on a particular schedule.
- 10 It's linked to a particular inhabitant's control.
- 11 It's the degenerate consequence of a feature.
- 12 It would be beneficial with some adjustment.
- 13 When triggered one place, it moves to another.
- 14 The locals erroneously think they've fixed it.
- 15 Triggering it here will trigger it everywhere else.
- 16 Triggering it produces something valuable.
- 17 It activates in purely random fashion.
- 18 The locals don't realize it's there yet.
- 19 One person benefits greatly when it's triggered.
- 20 Triggering it is subtle and its effects delayed.

# PLACING FEATURES OF INTEREST

What's a forgotten ruin without enigmatic devices to manipulate and esoteric objects to discover? Features of interest include any sort of object, architecture, integral system, or other gubbin that the party might reasonably be expected to take an interest in manipulating. They're the mysterious pools of liquid, shining trapezohedrons, and perpetually-moving statues of brass that give novelty and interest to a location.

About a third of the locations in a site should have a feature of interest. The tables on these two pages should help you to come up with some contents to pique the interest of investigating heroes. To use them, just roll for the general type of feature, then get a more specific suggestion from the table below if necessary. The tables on the opposite page give some specific ideas for interesting data, item traits, and the kind of action that manipulating the feature will provoke.

The tables are intended to provide some simple, specific ideas for your site-stocking needs, but you should take a little more time to make your features match the particular tenor of the site you're building. Objects and furnishings within the site should fit the location's builders, and the particular functions of each should tie into the overall purpose of the place. While it's simple to create a set of random doohickeys and frobs for a site, tying their effects into the overall purpose of the place will help add a proper note of coherence to your creation and give your players a handle on the place.

## D6 TYPE OF FEATURE

1	Abandoned possession or personal object
2	Furnishing or integral room fitting
3	Remains of a creature or a recent event
4	Book, holographic crystal, or data object
5	Site damage, such as a hole or live wire
6	Anomaly, as an oddity from active pretech

There are several simple ways to add that coherence. You can use a unified color scheme, recurring geometric patterns or animal motifs, particular shapes that are regularly employed, or even recurrent smells or sounds related to the features. Adding similar notes between different features helps emphasize the fact that they were all made by the same creators.

Of course, features don't necessarily work the way their creators intended after an intervening World or three. Many features should work only in a creaky, provisional way, sparking and twitching and showing signs of incipient failure. Some might prove worthwhile objects for scrap and device salvage, while others might catastrophically collapse in mid-function. A feature that works with perfect reliability ought to be something unusual, a hint of some ancient importance or the legacy of builders with superlative skills.

D20	POSSESSION	FURNISHING	REMAINS	DATA	DAMAGE	ANOMALY
1	Worn clothing	Chair	Intruder's corpse	Scroll	Cracked floor	Glowing sphere
2	Weapon	Table	Scorch mark	Book	Stressed pillar	Strange smell
3	Religious icon	Pool	Ragged clothes	Graffiti	Sagging ceiling	Hologram
4	Pouch or pack	Obelisk	Acid burn	Painting	Live power line	Teleporter
5	Cameo image	Firepit	Recent firepit	Map	Leaking gases	Elevator
6	Worker's tool	Hanging arras	Charred thing	Tapestry	Brittle flooring	Device effect
7	Broken utensil	Trap door	Denizen corpse	Sculpture	Rotten supports	Strange device
8	Treasured item	Stairway	Animal bones	Bas-relief	Mold cloud	Crystal matrix
9	Fine couture	Light fixture	Ritual markings	Mosaic	Leaking liquids	Gravity flux
10	Jewelry	Fountain	Combat site	Notebook	Flooded area	Temporal oddity
11	Footwear	Bath	Explosion crater	Paper scrap	Radioactive zone	Invisible object
12	Statuette	Divan	Stripped device	Data crystal	Light failure	Plasma spheres
13	Trophy	Rugs	Animal corpse	Music	Heating glitch	Hard light item
14	Flask or bottle	Windows	Broken engine	Sound recording	Bad atmosphere	Poisonous sound
15	Art tools	Skylights	Smashed art	Hologram	Fungal infestation	Animate object
16	Broken weapon	Shelving	Yellowed bones	Engraving	Vermin nest	Warped space
17	Science tool	Desk	Toxic residue	Object pattern	Spore haze	Warding sphere
18	ID item or badge	Dresser	Gnawed bones	Epitaph	Fallen wall	Nullifier zone
19	Instrument	Cabinet	Animal nest	Memorial	Hole in the floor	Shapeshifter
20	Inscrutable thing	Chest	Dead synthetic	Video panel	Sunken room	Contingent door



## D20 TOPIC OF DATA

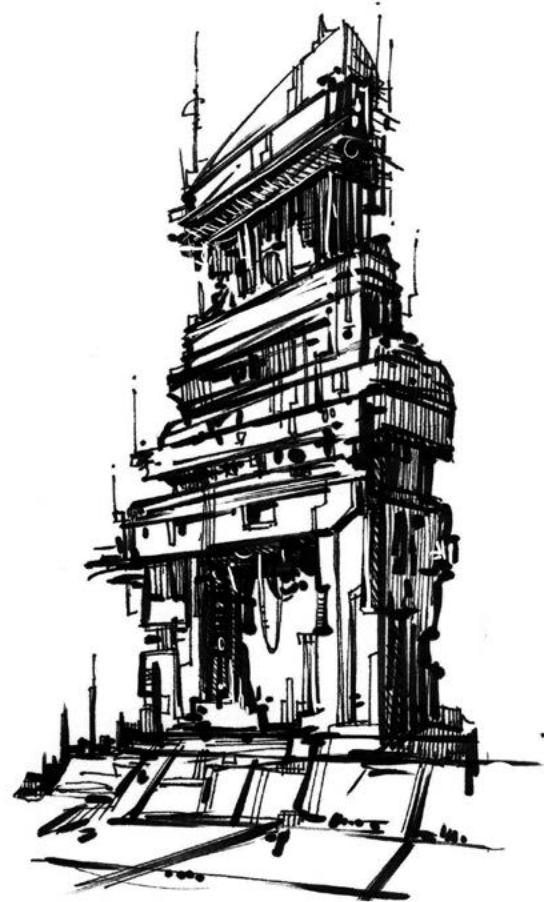
1	A warning regarding a hazard manifestation
2	Graffiti excoriating a dangerous inhabitant
3	A map or map fragment of the site's layout
4	Diary fragments from the site's occupants
5	Mention of a secret portal or hidden entrance
6	Details of another site of interest in the region
7	Music pleasing to the original inhabitants
8	Records of the site's original operation
9	Details of a hidden cache of plunder
10	A dark truth about the area or an important NPC
11	Pornographic material appealing to the creators
12	A piece of misleading ancient fiction
13	Religious text of the site's builders
14	Work of esoteric poetry or visual art
15	Parenthetical mention of the site's discovery
16	Text alluding the reason for abandonment
17	Note from a now-dead scavenger or dweller
18	Cryptic note that no longer has any meaning
19	Lost secret of vital interest to neighboring locals
20	Operation notes for one of the site's features

## D20 TRAIT OF ITEM

1	It's worth a lot of credits to a collector
2	It's a clue about a hazard manifestation
3	It's unbreakable by conventional force
4	It contains an alien device
5	It's invisible to normal human vision
6	It is intangible to a certain type of matter
7	It transforms into something else
8	It can't be removed from the location
9	It's prized by a local denizen
10	It carries a subtle infection or nano-curse
11	It's only part of a greater object
12	It unlocks or leads to an important cache
13	It functions impossibly well at its purpose
14	It remains with its owner until death
15	It's important to some local community
16	It contains a topic of data as above
17	It protects the possessor from a local hazard
18	It repairs itself if damaged
19	It's potentially explosive or otherwise dangerous
20	It functions as an artifact

## D20 TYPE OF ACTION

1	It opens a door or passageway
2	It transforms the user in a cosmetic fashion
3	It creates something fragile and temporary
4	It activates factory machinery or other gear
5	It reads data crystals or other storage media
6	It summons guardians or watches for intruders
7	It gives visions of other parts of the site
8	It links denizens for two-way communication
9	It explodes or otherwise dramatically fails
10	It inflicts a terrible, lasting change on the user
11	It transforms objects it is used on
12	It processes a raw material into finished goods
13	It releases energies in a semi-controlled fashion
14	It reconfigures areas when activated
15	It simply falls apart when used
16	It grants a temporary special ability to a user
17	It invokes a data display of some useful info
18	It produces a beneficent effect on users
19	It interlocks with another feature to function
20	It does absolutely nothing



# AN EXAMPLE OF RUIN CREATION

The campaign is underway, but the GM has decided that a small ruin is going to be needed at some point for session filler. Having already created the Green Howlers, he decides to put together a modest ruin that he can produce whenever he needs something to keep the players busy for a bit.

He starts with the site's original purpose, and the dice tell him that it was initially built as a fortress. Since he knows the history of the Green Howlers, he imagines that it must have been an edifice raised during their declining era, when they were busy raiding their neighbors and plundering them for fodder for the Howlers' hedonistic ways.

Next, he throws the dice to find out what meaningful discovery is hidden within the ruin. It turns out that it's "Legitimacy," which makes sense, given the plundering ways of its originators. They stole some sort of macguffin that was vitally important to one of the neighboring peoples, some token that confers important political legitimacy on the holders. For now, the GM leaves the specifics undefined.

So what hazard has kept this fortress from being plundered in the ages since its construction? The dice say that it's Hidden. The entrance is concealed, and it may be that the entire thing was built underground. The GM decides to run with this, since this way he can plant it anywhere he needs it to be and just let the PCs stumble upon it as needed. Optionally, he can plant a map or locator-artifact for it with some enemy they overcome.

With the basic facts of the ruins established, it's time to define the locations of interest in it. Since this is just a one-session edifice, the GM settles for twelve locations of importance. One of them is obviously the entrance itself, but the other eleven should be the sort of locations that make sense for a Green Howler fortress. The GM creates each one in turn.

He comes up with the following rooms: a playing field for a game, a private sleeping chamber, a garden of strange flowers, a participatory art installation, a bathing chamber, a genetic work lab with cold-sleeping Howler infants, a ritual chamber for group ceremonies, a military bunker, an armory, a library of genetic research data, and a communal barracks.

Now it's time to plant beasts and sapient in about a third of these twelve rooms. The GM decides that one room will contain the last surviving family of sapient Green Howlers in the edifice. Two more locations will have packs of feral Green Howlers- one in the entrance to alert the PCs as to the kind of inhabitants within, and another one planted in the barracks. For variety, the fourth set of foes are a squad of defense bots that the Howlers were able to reprogram in a prior age, and they are currently guarding the armory. In addition, the GM decides that a roaming pack of feral Green Howlers has a 1 in 6 chance of accosting the PCs every time they move between locations or dawdle.

The GM takes a few minutes to scratch out notes on the statistics for these potential foes before moving on to hazard manifestations. He'll plant one of these in the entrance, one in the room with the art installation, and one in the garden. According to the dice, the manifestation at the entrance "creates hallucinations or illusions." Obviously, it's an illusionary cover around the entrance itself. The feral Green Howlers hide within it and will leap out to attack the heroes when they approach. The art installation will siphon away a device's power if it's activated, though the hero won't realize this until they try to use the device. Finally, the garden has a particularly beautiful plant that will blind the unwary with its pollen if they fail an Evasion or Physical Effect saving throw.

Next, it's time to plant about four features of interest, which the GM does in those locations that otherwise haven't anything to make them special yet. In the sleeping chamber, the bones of a powerful transhuman cyborg lie amid a litter of feral Howler remains. Its left forearm is woven about with energy nodules, and can be used as a laser rifle, which the GM simply picks from the *Stars Without Number* corebook, giving it a +2 to hit and damage rolls. In the bathing chamber there is a perpetual roaring bed of flame that heats the flowing waters of the pool suspended in the basin above it. In the genetic work lab, aside from the Howler infants in stasis, there is a comm system that allows the sapient Howlers there to overhear any speech inside the facility and use their subsonic commands to direct ferals fighting the intruders. And lastly, in the library for genetic research data, there's a fractured dataslab that a sufficiently expert PC could analyze to give a thumbnail recap of Green Howler history up to the point at which the fortress was constructed.

The GM also takes this time to decide that certain locations in the ruin are suitable for scavenging. The art installation, the genetic work lab, and the armory can all be scavenged to discover 1d4 alien devices, though the time this takes will force a check for feral Howlers disturbing their efforts.

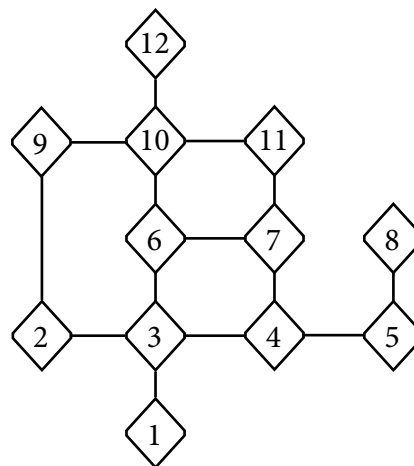
The GM then sketches out a location map, placing the genetic work lab at the top of the page, the entrance at the bottom, and the rest of the locations connected in between.

Finally, the GM spares a few moments to tie up the details. The sapient Howler family is lairing in the gene work lab. For centuries, they've revived new infants when needed and used them to maintain their numbers, releasing them when most of them go feral with age. The matriarch of the family wears a plundered crown that once marked the rulership of the nearest low-tech town, though she values it only as a token of her authority. They subsist on what the ferals bring for food and "tribute." They fear outsiders, remembering their ancient duty to gather tribute and hold down the "savages," but they are not immune to reason. They will try to negotiate with intruders who make it to the gene labs, but they feel no obligation to treat honorably with outsiders.

## THE HIDDEN FORTRESS

All interior surfaces are decorated with bright-hued reliefs of sapient Green Howlers enjoying sybaritic pleasures and ruling over human subjects. A steady throb of subsonic noise fills the air within, occasionally rising to a pitch that's barely audible to human ears. Some rooms have sufficient scrap to justify salvage, and are marked **(S)**.

1. **ENTRANCE:** A mob of feral Howlers waits behind the illusion of a grassy hillside. They dart out of it to attack passing prey, fleeing into an open metal doorway if the mob fails a morale check or is reduced by half.
2. **BUNKER:** Dead lenses once looked outside from an outer wall of monolithic stone slabs. The wall reliefs show Howlers speaking to chained human prisoners.
3. **GARDEN:** Every plant in this lush garden makes some sort of sound, many inaudible to human ears. A hologram of a sunlit sky covers the ceiling, flickering now and then to show scarred rock beneath. A brilliant red flower will blind an investigator with pollen if they fail an Evasion or Physical Effect save. The blindness lasts an hour.
4. **BATHING POOL:** A bed of perpetually-flaming artificial coals keeps a huge copper bathing pool constantly steaming, the clouds obscuring anything more than two meters away. The water is cycled through pipes below.
5. **SLEEPING CHAMBER:** A three-meter humanoid skeleton lies atop a crumbling sleeping dais, surrounded by the charred husks of dead feral Howlers. Its left arm is studded with energy projection nodules, and functions as a laser rifle with +2 to hit and damage rolls.
6. **LIBRARY:** Cylinders of delicately-incised crystal can be studied by a scholarly PC to reveal a basic outline of the Howler civilization's past with an appropriate difficulty 9 skill check. Such study requires at least an hour and forces a check for a feral Howler mob's intrusion.
7. **ART INSTALLATION:** Three massive tuning forks form a triangle around a basin of small tiles, a bronze mallet propped against one. If one is struck, all three will resonate in a way to make the tiles in the bowl dance in the seeming of a Howler's head emerging from the basin. Unbeknownst to the striker, one of their powered devices will be drained by the process. **(S)**
8. **SHOOTING RANGE:** A dozen laser rifles litter this long shooting range, images of human warriors from a prior age looping as targets on the far wall. The rifles were smashed by the ferals who used them for clubs.
9. **ARMORY:** Three security bots guard the armory and its age-unstable munitions from all intruders. Every round of fighting, there's a 2 in 6 chance something explodes, doing 1d6 damage to a random combatant. **(S)**



10. **RITUAL HALL:** The colored tiles at the center of this room emit sounds under each footfall, half of them too low-pitched to be audible to human ears. A massive greenstone statue of a Howler stands against the far wall, its mouth open as if speaking.
11. **BARRACKS:** Indescribable filth crusts the ruined furnishings of this nest chamber, where a mob of feral howlers will be found at any time it is entered.
12. **WORK LAB:** Surgical tools and lab equipment show bare metal through use-worn enamel. The walls are covered in glass tubes of perfectly still Howler infants, thousands of them. One nook has been repurposed as family quarters for four sapient Howlers, all adults. The matriarch, Sings-Sweetly, wears a diadem of glowing adamantine glass, the sacred regalia of the ruler of the nearest human community, plundered during the Scream. She and the others all speak the local language learned from prisoners, and will barter for their lives with intruders if combat seems unlikely to be costless for them. They have 1d4 alien devices rolled from later in the book. A control panel along the left wall has an open comm link that relays any speech or other notable sounds in the complex, and allows the Howlers to command feral packs in battle, though they can only identify an intruder's location if the interlopers say something to make it clear. **(S)**

**Feral Green Howler Mob:** 2d4 Howlers with 2 HD, AC 9, Move 30', Atk +2/1d6, Morale 8, Save 14+, and Skill +1.

**Sapient Green Howler:** 4 HD, AC 9, Move 30', Atk +4/1d6 or weapon, Morale 8, Save 13+, Skill +2. Can use subsonics as an action to force a target to use their action to perform a single non-injurious physical action if the target fails a Mental Effect saving throw. Each use of this ability after the first in a fight costs the Howler 1d4 HP.

**Security Bots:** 2 HD, AC 4, Move 30', Atk +2/1d8 sonics, Morale 12, Save 14+, Skill +1. These security bots are shaped like stylized Green Howlers and used focused sonic weapons against intruders.

# BROKEN TOYS

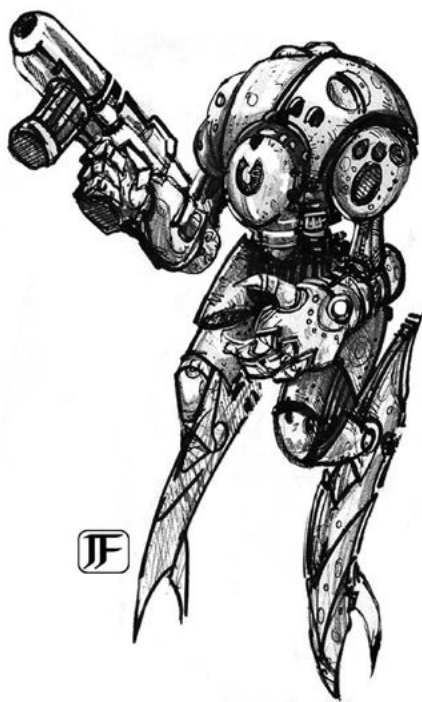
## DEVICES AND ARTIFACTS OF THE LOST

The treasures that excite the explorers of dead cities are not always the simple prizes of precious objects and salable goods. For the hardened interstellar adventurer, the real excitement comes from the discovery of mysterious technology and inexplicable alien devices. While many of these objects are no more than the trifles and baubles of some long-dead people, others can perform marvels that are entirely beyond the power of modern posttech science. These devices can be the margin of difference between glorious success and catastrophic failure, and so adventurers often prize them far beyond their mere selling price.

GMs sometimes find it difficult to deal with artifacts. Not only is it a challenge to come up with fresh devices and interesting effects, but artifacts are also hard to take out of a campaign once they've been added. A GM can always send in thieves or mysterious malfunctions to remove a problematic object, but this can feel like cheap GM fiat to some players.

This section will help provide a GM with the tools for leveraging their own creativity into interesting new relics. When it comes to handling the prevalence of relics in their campaign, there are several different techniques a GM can use.

One such technique is introduced in this chapter—the single-use device. Some alien tech is going to come in the form of consumable or otherwise one-shot objects. Some devices may be eaten up in use, or may draw on internal power cells that can't be replaced. These devices allow a GM to introduce potent effects that won't outstay their welcome.



If a longer-lasting artifact is desired, the GM can simply let it be powered by an energy source that can't easily be replicated by modern humanity. To continue using the artifact, the PCs are going to have to dig up fresh cells or cannibalize other equipment from that race of Lost.

As a third option, planetary governments can always make it very difficult to hold on to an artifact. Most worlds have no compunction about confiscating “dangerous unlicensed technology,” particularly from transient freebooters with few friends among the local rulers.

However you choose to handle them, this section provides a simple sequence of steps for creating these eldritch relics. It's up to you, as the GM, to give them the flavor, danger, and complications that your campaign deserves.

## BUILDING A BETTER MACHINE

First, think about the purpose of this object in the context of your game. If you're building the signature artifact weapon of a recurring villain, you'll want to put more effort into its detailing and effects than you might expend on a unique device meant only to fill out the loot of a random Lost ruin. Creative energy is a limited resource, and we get our best results when we focus most of it on the more important elements of our games.

At this point, you'll need to decide whether you're building an artifact or a single-use device. Artifacts tend to inspire the most enthusiasm and excitement from players, but careless abundance can result in an “golf bag full of artifacts” situation, where the heroes are so richly festooned with pretech plunder that they can find difficulty in deciding just which one of their toys to employ in a situation.

Conversely, one-shot devices are less thrilling to players but much less likely to be a running problem if misplaced. Even a device that utterly trivializes a challenge or combat can't do more than bypass a single situation in an adventure, and doesn't risk being the kind of long-term complication that an artifact might present.

If you've decided that you're making a device, you then need to decide whether the device is to be a simple, easy-to-use one or one that requires more complex operation. The former are obvious in their use; they're pills you swallow, ointments you apply, or anything else with a form that has only one obvious way to apply it. Operated devices may not be so easily employed. They require some sort of knowledge before they can be activated or targeted. The major point of choosing

between these two types is to give you some handle on how the device should look and operate.

Whether simple or operated, you should then decide on the effect the device produces, and whether it's internal or external. Internal effects are usually restricted to the user of the device, often because the bauble is something consumed or applied by the user. It doesn't make a great deal of sense for a pill you swallow to cause a foe to explode into flames, though it may be the case for some bizarre devices. These external effects are most often appropriate for guns, projectors, grenades, field casters, or other operated devices.

For artifacts, the process is a little different. You can use the tables provided for devices to sketch out the artifact's general appearance, but the effect can be pieced together from the tables provided later in this section. Rolled together, they give a plain English description of the artifact's effects that you can then translate into game-mechanical terms.

## POLISH AND FIT

The last step in creating a relic is to add those small touches that connect it to the environment in which it is found. If the device is meant for a Green Howler ruin, maybe it will be found in a pile of gnawed device husks, hinting at the device-eating ways of the transhumans. If it's an artifact pulled from an ancient Howler armory, it might operate by means of subsonic vibrations and bear ornate insignia still mimicked by the feral inhabitants of the complex.

## IDENTIFYING RELICS

Some of these devices will come in clearly-labeled packaging or with comprehensible operation manuals, and most simple devices are relatively obvious in their use, if not always in their effects. PCs can use these devices even without knowing exactly what will happen.

Conversely, many operated devices and artifacts will be utterly inscrutable without knowledgeable examination. To identify an unknown relic, the most competent investigator must make a Tech saving throw with a bonus equal to the better of their Intelligence or Wisdom modifiers, plus twice their most applicable Tech skill. On a success, the device's use and any side effects are identified. On a failure, only a two-word description of the device's effects is obtained. On a natural 1, the investigator accidentally uses the device or relic, targeting himself if applicable.

Once identified, similar devices or artifacts fashioned by the same creators will usually be automatically understood. Some objects may be so strange or esoteric that effective understanding is impossible without finding the original documentation for its use.



## RELIC CREATION SUMMARY

- 1. Clarify the need.** Why are you making this relic? Is it just filler for a pick-up ruin, or is this artifact supposed to be linked to a specific antagonist, a campaign plot point, or a particular race of Lost?
- 2. Choose a type.** Is it a one-shot device you need, or are you making an artifact? The latter is liable to hang around for some time in your campaign, but players tend to get more excited over "permanent" relics than single-use devices.
- 3. For devices, choose between simple and operated types.** Some relics are obvious in their employment- they're pills, ointments, weapons similar to those used by humanity, or the like. Others require a riskier process of examination. Some devices might require reference to operation manuals or other data.
- 4. For devices, choose between internal and external effects.** Consumed devices usually affect only the imbiber, but one-shot projectors, wraps, grenades, or weapons might have an effect on other bystanders.
- 5. For artifacts, determine the appearance of the artifact.** You can use the operated device tables to get some idea of what an artifact might look like, assuming its appearance isn't dictated by the function you intend to give it.
- 6. For artifacts, formulate its effect.** The tables of artifact effects can give you a general concept and you can then attach mechanical specifics and damage totals as needed.
- 7. Connect it to any necessary hooks.** Finally, add whatever tweaks or details you need to connect it to past events or present entities in your campaign.



# SIMPLE DEVICES

Simple devices are relatively obvious in their activation, if not their effects. A pill is a pill, even if the effects of that tablet may not be quite in line with conventional pharmaceuticals. When choosing the appearance of simple devices, it's important to remember that some of them were never intended for unshielded handling, let alone human consumption.

Many simple devices are found in their original packaging. For transhuman Lost, these packages might be familiar and labeled in comprehensible ways. Other types of Lost might store these devices in more esoteric containers and with less lucid instructions for their usage. An investigator with a metatool, medkit, or other basic assaying tools can usually perform basic identification of a device by the method listed on page 53, but particularly strange or complicated devices might not yield their secrets up so easily.

Most devices from a particular race of Lost share similar qualities of appearance and design. It can be useful to take a single trait from the tables below and ensure it appears on all devices and artifacts created by that species.

When describing the details of a specific device, take their fortuitous origins into account. Pills may be "pills," in the sense that they are small, ovoid, and swallowable, not in the sense that they were ever intended to be used that way. Other shapes and seemings might be equally far from intentions.

## D20 THINGS TO SALVAGE DEVICES FROM

1	A former costume or piece of regalia
2	Ancient HVAC system for a strange atmosphere
3	Alien first-aid kit
4	Ancient drug user's private stash
5	Religious offerings or ritual paraphernalia
6	Machine ruined in a former age
7	Body of a dead cyborg or mechanical entity
8	Hydroponic system for alien crops
9	Life support system for a foreign environment
10	Broken home entertainment system
11	Wreckage of a battle with no survivors
12	Survival cache that was never claimed
13	Stripped-down manufactory robot
14	A piece of sophisticated art
15	Automated sanitation installation
16	Offerings at a hasty burial site
17	Downed drone or surveillance mobile
18	Memorial to some lost hero or event
19	Exhausted power generator
20	Unpowered computing interface

D20	SHAPE	TASTE	SMELL	FINISH	MATERIAL
1	Aerosol	Blood copper	Fetid reek	Oily smoothness	Glossy plastic
2	Crushable ampule	Oranges	Floral	Enameled	Bone
3	Drinkable liquid	Gritty particles	Dry and dusty	Fine crazing	Copper
4	Drug spike	Mouth-numbing	Moldering	Glowing	Rusted metal
5	Dry powder	Meaty	Ozone tang	Translucent	Glass
6	Edible morsel	Fungus-like	Lemony	Faceted	Coherent liquid
7	Emblem skin transfer	Sharply bitter	Camphor	Embroidered	Aerogel
8	Fragile jewelry	Carbonated fizz	Burning rubber	Inlaid	Fungus
9	Gel tube	Grapes	Stinging smoke	Embossed	Stainless steel
10	Incense to be burnt	Blandly crisp	Corpses	Mirror-smooth	Wood
11	Injector	Earthy	Fruity	Pockmarked	Soft lead
12	Light display	The last thing eaten	Musky	Gritty	Shell
13	Limb strap	Alcohol burn	Wet earth	Glassy	Pearly nacre
14	Memetic hologram	Acrid chemicals	Sawdust	Rubbery	Gold
15	Music box to hear	Sweet	Hot metal	Fibrous	Pale wax
16	Object to be broken	Charcoal	Rain	Cloth-like	Hard light
17	Ointment application	Extremely sour	Spilt blood	Grip-textured	Tar
18	Pill	Rotten flesh	Excrement	Slippery	Stone
19	Sealed vial	Tasteless	Fresh linen	Nubbed	Clay
20	Skin patch	Indescribable	Cheesy	Ragged	Ice

# OPERATED DEVICES

Operated devices have the same range of abilities as their simple brethren, though they tend to be directed more toward external effects than the internal changes that come from ingested or applied substances. They can be scavenged from most of the same sources, and they share the same risk for unpredictable side effects, particularly when used by wielders who don't belong to the creator's species.

Operated devices need to be manipulated in some way to activate them, unlike the relatively obvious trigger methods of simple devices. They need switches, dials, wires to push together, blisters to crack, or some other form of handling. The process of identifying these devices is usually sufficient to alert the owner to its trigger method, but these details can make a difference when the owner actually tries to use the thing in the heat of a conflict. An object that is only activated by waving it violently is going to demand more effort than one that is triggered by concentrating on a key thought.

Like all single-use devices, operated devices become useless after a single activation. Whatever power sources remain in their maimed, salvaged carcass exhaust themselves after a brief burst of activity, and the material remains burn out or burn up in a last desperate effort to function. The table provides some ideas as to the kind of display these devices might make on activation, and some of these self-destructions may be more dangerous than the actual device itself.



These tables can also be used to flavor or describe artifacts, as few of the more lasting relics of the past are ingested in the way that simple devices are consumed. The sounds and visual displays the object emits as it operates can also be used as a signature to suggest specific creators. For instance, if the lost implements of the Zeal Lords all emit a basso roar and a brilliant golden light in use, the PCs can start to pick up some hints about a ruin's original creators when they find an array of bright golden lamps lining a hall that groans with a tooth-vibrating throb of sound.

D20	SHAPE	SOUND	VISUAL	TRIGGER	DECAY
1	Wand-like	Basso drone	Brilliant light	Button press	Immolates
2	Handgun	Ultrasonic squeal	Distinct color	Trigger	Crumbles
3	Rifle	Soft chimes	Heat shimmer	Dial twist	Evaporates
4	Wristlet	Faint music	Bright beams	Lens focus	Shatters
5	Boots	Harsh buzzing	Dark cloud	Thumbstick	Withers
6	Tunic or shirt	Sussurant moan	Incandescent jet	Rocker switch	Liquefies
7	Grenade	Sharp squeal	Scintillation	Snap a wire	Shakes apart
8	Lens	White noise	Flickering lights	Twist projection	Chars
9	Tablet	Human groan	Distorted location	Shake violently	Explodes
10	Armor piece	Loud static	Radiation blue	Flip switch	Wilts
11	Hand tool	Precise tone set	Streaks of light	Break blister	Congeals
12	Gearwork object	Percussive thud	Pale luminosity	Think hard	Cracks
13	Hand weapon	Staccato cracks	Kirby dots	Speak a word	Bricks
14	Projectile	High shriek	Beam from above	Wave in a pattern	Fuses
15	Drone	Snatch of voices	Spiral arcs	Look through it	Vanishes
16	Disc	Soft burbling	Torrential waves	Unfold it	Transmutes
17	Jewelry	Choral voices	Nimbus of energy	Bite it	Freezes
18	Musical instrument	Rising chord	Chromed sheen	Roll thumb dial	Blackens
19	Ragged knot of wires	Rasping grind	X-ray translucency	Flex muscle	Arcs
20	Limb wrap	Dead silence	Invisible	Feel an emotion	Melts

# INTERNAL EFFECTS

Most simple devices have an internal effect, as they're most often consumed or applied directly to the user. These internal effects are contained within the user, altering their stats, granting temporary abilities, or otherwise augmenting the user's natural gifts. Below are some example suggestions.

Devices rarely have very complicated effects, as most of them are simply pills and applicators made for a single specific benefit. Still, some devices were actually intended for more sophisticated purposes, and have since been repurposed by adventurers for more heroic activities. In other cases you might roll multiple times on the table below and assemble a device with several powerful augments.

For such cases, you might benefit from the side effect table, adding some drawback or random benefit to the device. Internal devices usually have internal side effects, though it's not impossible that potent relics might have more dramatic consequences for those around their users.

The basic effects listed below are divided into minor and major strengths. You could choose randomly between the two potencies, or you might just roll a die; 1-4 means that it's a minor effect, and 5-6 means that it's a major device. As with all the tables, you should feel free to adjust the random results to better suit the specifics of your own game and your own campaign's needs.

## D20 INTERNAL SIDE EFFECTS

1	User changes color for 1d6 hours
2	User loses sense of taste or smell for an hour
3	User is ravenous; eat in an hour or 1d10 damage
4	User emits a loud noise or glow for 10 minutes after
5	User takes -1 modifier to highest stat for 1 hour
6	User goes blind for one round
7	A body part shifts shape for the device's duration
8	User is branded with ancient sigils for 1 day
9	User takes -1 Intelligence modifier for one day
10	An hour later, user is violently ill for 10 minutes
11	User is nourished fully for the following week
12	User falls unconscious for 5 minutes an hour later
13	User loses voice for 10 minutes
14	User only able to see living beings for 5 minutes
15	User exhales inky black mist for an hour
16	User immediately heals 2d6 damage
17	Lose all languages but device creator's for hour
18	All attacks are at +2 for 1d6 rounds
19	Hands spasm for one round, dropping everything
20	Roll again and invert effect, negative to positive

## D20 BASE EFFECT

		MINOR	MAJOR
1	Adds to an ability modifier for 1d6 rounds	Improves by 1	Improves by 3
2	Heals damage without System Strain	Heals 2d6 hit points	Heals all hit points
3	Negates a harmful condition, but not HP loss	A specific condition	All conditions
4	Allows a shapeshifting transformation	Into a specific type of thing	Into any living creature
5	Negates the next loss of hit points	Within the hour	Within the month
6	Renders user immune to an energy type	One kind of energy	All hazardous energies
7	Regrows lost limbs or undoes crippling injury	One injury or limb	All physical harm or maiming
8	User heals as if after a full day's rest	Rolled as normal	Treated as a natural 6
9	If user hits 0 hp within the hour, they remain active	For 1d6 rounds	Until the fight is complete
10	Allows one use of a psionic ability within the hour	The ability is level 1-4	The ability is level 5-9
11	Adds new sense accurate enough for combat use	For 1d6 minutes	For 1d6 hours
12	Eliminates need for air or sustenance	For 1d6 days	For 1d6 weeks
13	Improves attack rolls by +2	For 1d6+4 minutes	For one hour
14	Improves armor class by 2	For 1d6+4 minutes	For one hour
15	Adds temporary hit points for 1 hour	Adds 2d6 hit points	Adds 2d10 hit points
16	Adapts the user to a hostile environment	One specific environment	Any hostile environment
17	Immune to a very broad type of damage	For 1d6 rounds	For 1d6 minutes
18	Immune to hostile mental effects or telepathy	For one hour	For one day
19	Adds a natural attack: acid spit, claws, etc.	Does 1d10 damage	Does 2d10 damage
20	Boosts a type of skill check for 1 hour/level	Adds +1	Adds +3

# EXTERNAL EFFECTS

Operated devices often have external effects, ones directed toward the environment or outside targets. Some of these devices might be beneficent in effect, emitting some sort of healing beam or helpful aura. In these cases, you can use the opposite page to roll up a suitable internal effect.

Other operated devices might do something highly esoteric, in which case you could use the artifact effects on the following pages to generate some oddball result. In most cases, however, something a little more traditional is useful, and the table below offers a modest range of results that many adventurers could find useful.

When designing devices with external effects, it's important to make sure that they're genuinely useful effects. The occasional edge-case oddity can be refreshing, but if all of the one-shot devices the PCs have are only applicable to very narrow situations, it can be easy for them to forget they even have the things.

Internal devices provide boosts that most PCs can easily imagine wanting, but a device that creates a four-piece bedroom set made of steel-hard glass is likely to be forgotten in favor of more practical equipment. If you want to give the heroes a genuine decision to ponder, make sure your devices are actually doing something that they can imagine using in a moment of need.

## D20 EXTERNAL SIDE EFFECTS

1	Ignites for 1d4 points of damage when used
2	Creates a three-meter cloud of thick smoke
3	Emits invisible radiation, forcing radiation save
4	Dazes user, costing them their next action
5	Leaves persistent light nimbus around target
6	Creates hazardous pool around target; 1d4 damage
7	Drops temperature sharply around user
8	Corrodes a mundane object to fuel its effect
9	Turns all food and water on user to gritty powder
10	Emits a pungent stench or overpowering perfume
11	Emits piercing noise audible out to 100 meters
12	Disintegrates nearest article of clothing for fuel
13	After use, collapses into debris worth 500 credits
14	It continues to glow brightly for a week after use
15	An old wound is temporally duplicated; 1d4 damage
16	Acts as a flashbang; all in 5m save or be blinded
17	Draws fuel from user; inflicts 1 System Strain
18	50% chance of draining another device held
19	Lasts twice as long or is twice as strong as expected
20	Roll again and invert effect, negative to positive

## D20 BASE EFFECT

## MINOR

## MAJOR

D20	BASE EFFECT	MINOR	MAJOR
1	Can create a desired mundane object	Item lasts 1 hour	Item is permanent
2	Creates hostile environment zone for 1d6 rounds	Does 2d6 damage	Does 2d10 damage
3	Creates an area-of-effect burst of energy	Does 2d6 damage	Does 2d10 damage
4	Hurts 1d6 enemy creatures within 100 meters	For 2d6 damage	For 2d10 damage
5	Creates wall or barrier within 100 meters	Lasts 1d6 rounds	Lasts 1d6 hours
6	Teleports owner and willing companions	Within 1 kilometer	Within 500 kilometers
7	Snare a target, preventing it from acting	For 1 round	For 1d6 rounds
8	Grants flight or another novel movement mode	For 1d6 rounds	For 1d6 hours
9	Harms an enemy, hurting the user as fuel for it	1 damage does 1 damage	1 damage does 2 damage
10	Makes an area of terrain treacherous for movement	For 1d6 rounds	For 1d6 hours
11	Generates a bridge, doorway, or other path	Lasts 1d6 rounds	Lasts 6d10 minutes
12	Nullifies a target's psionic powers	Lasts 1d6 rounds	Lasts 2d6 rounds
13	Molds or reshapes inanimate matter	Affects Immediate matter	Affects matter within 5m
14	Creates a combat-ready servitor for 2d6 rounds	Servitor has 1d4 HD	Servitor has 1d10 HD
15	Grants the user the benefit of a level-3 skill	For one check	For one day
16	Translates language or decodes a mystery	Gives simple answers	Gives nuanced answers
17	Rolls back time for an unwanted event	Undoes one action	Undoes one full round
18	Reveals the future about a particular topic	Gives a simple answer	Gives a nuanced answer
19	Restores or repairs an object or artifact	Only mundane items	Restores an artifact
20	Reflects a psionic power back at the source	Once within an hour	1d6 times within one hour

# ARTIFACT EFFECTS

While books such as *Relics of the Lost* provide a wide range of artifacts for a GM to plant in their adventures, something fresh is always useful for intriguing players and adding a little extra spice to the plundering of an alien ruin. The tables on the following page provide a basic framework you can use to devise enigmatic devices for your own home game.

While it might seem intuitive to start with the artifact's physical appearance, it's actually often easier to begin with its game-mechanical effect. The basic type of effect table on the opposite page gives the essential function of the artifact, that thing it does that is most useful to the owner. Particularly weak or esoteric effects might qualify the device as nothing more than a trifle, but even the most awkwardly specific function can be handy in the right circumstance.

Artifacts are sometimes from the fathomless past, and as such they often operate in strange ways. The table to that effect gives you a number of mechanisms for the artifact to use in obtaining its effect. An artifact that repairs matter with a cloud of micro-fabricator nanites is doing something rather different than a device that reverses time on a target until it is in flawless condition. In some cases this might just be a matter of flavor in describing the artifact's effects, while others might affect the device's game-mechanical qualities.

Some artifacts affect matter, and the table to the right gives a selection of basic material categories. You can always make these more specific as the mood takes you, or generalize to different classes of matter. An artifact might control only computing devices, for example, or only create types of furniture.

The matching table lists energy types, some of which might be more prevalent than others. Most heroes won't often run into Cherenkov radiation in their explorations, but it's in precisely those types of ruin that they're most likely to find the esoteric devices meant to deal with the local perils. A clever GM can use an artifact's strange energy focus as foreshadowing that such dangers might be near to hand.

Once you have the basic outline of the artifact created, you can attach game mechanics to the device. An object that displaces thermal energy from one target to another might be an ancient heat pump that chills a target while filling an unstable thermal reserve, or it might be a thermal deflection shield that bounces back fire attacks against an assailant. You can use the existing artifacts in this book to get an idea of the kind of numbers that might be appropriate.

Most artifacts are either perpetually self-powered, can be jury-rigged to work on conventional power cells, or have a GM-defined limit to their available energy. For exceptionally powerful devices, you might add in additional negative side effects, or some dire consequence that will result from a failed skill roll for operation. Artifacts can be as dangerous to their owners as they are to foes.



## AN EXAMPLE ARTIFACT

To demonstrate, suppose a GM wanted to put together a fresh artifact for a Green Howler ruin. He rolls for the basic type of effect and gets "It compacts a type of matter into a small object," and it does this by means of "Irresistible mental compulsion." The matter in question is "Water or similar liquids." Clearly, this is a deeply peculiar artifact. The GM could always adjust these rolls, but decides to take them literally.

The artifact is a slim wand that amplifies the user's latent telekinetic abilities, granting them the power to compress water within 30 meters into a hyperdense sphere. Doing so requires a round's action. Releasing the sphere slowly will release the liquid harmlessly, but if the user cuts the power instantly it will flash into superheated vapor as it depressurizes, doing its 2d10 heat damage to everything within 5 meters, with an Evasion saving throw for half damage. The artifact will work 2d6 times before it depletes itself, and an energy readout will warn the user of the charges remaining.



**D20 BASIC TYPE OF EFFECT**

1	It generates a type of energy
2	It nullifies a type of energy
3	It redirects a type of energy
4	It stores a type of energy
5	It protects against a type of energy
6	It amplifies a type of energy
7	It detects a type of energy
8	It congeals a type of energy into matter
9	It converts one energy into another
10	It displaces a type of energy into another target
11	It creates a type of matter
12	It repairs a type of matter
13	It reshapes a type of matter
14	It converts a type of matter to a type of energy
15	It compacts a type of matter into a small object
16	It destroys a type of matter
17	It gives a type of matter an unusual quality
18	It alters the physical state of a type of matter
19	It moves a type of matter
20	It changes one type of matter to another

**D20 TYPE OF MATTER AFFECTED**

1	Earth, dirt, or loose stones
2	Bedrock or solid stone
3	Water or similar liquids
4	Burning matter or gases
5	Air or similar breathable gases
6	Wood or plant matter
7	Glass, gemstones, or ceramics
8	Ice or frozen things
9	Human tissues
10	Metal or metal-like substances
11	Bone, hair, teeth, leather, or corpses
12	Paper or data-bearing media
13	Blood or body fluids
14	Non-sapient creatures' flesh
15	Cloth or woven fibers
16	Plastics or synthetic materials
17	High tech such as devices or artifacts
18	Genetic data in living or unliving things
19	Relatively pure chemical compounds
20	Living matter of any kind

**D20 THE STRANGE WAY IT OPERATES**

1	Clouds of nano-manipulators
2	Temporal adjustment
3	Metadimensional gates
4	Array of microscopic waldos
5	Gravitic manipulation
6	Lasers or focused light
7	Spatial translocation or teleportation
8	Telekinetic waves
9	Radioactive emissions
10	Enigmatic chemical spray
11	Plume of strange gases
12	Focused sound waves
13	Electrical bolts
14	Irresistible mental compulsion
15	Manifesting temporary physical objects
16	Tendrils of eldritch force
17	Maddening song or music
18	Invisible kinetic forces
19	Temporary alteration of reality
20	No visible means of causing the effect

**D20 TYPE OF ENERGY AFFECTED**

1	Kinetic force, such as impacts or falls
2	Heat or infrared wavelengths
3	Cold, or the damping of kinetic energy
4	Temporal acceleration or future time
5	Darkness or the damping of electromagnetism
6	Physical growth or healing
7	Sound waves or sonic bursts
8	Temporal deceleration, or past time
9	Strengthening emotions or beliefs
10	Bodily decay or senescence
11	Light, or the presence of electromagnetism
12	Damping emotions or convictions
13	Thoughts and neural activity
14	Radioactive emissions
15	Eldritch metadimensional energies
16	Hunger or metabolic processes
17	Gravity or motion
18	Power supplies for devices or artifacts
19	Pressure from the surrounding environment
20	Damping radioactivity

# EXAMPLE DEVICES

The devices below are individual examples of the forgotten technology of the Lost. Most are but parts and fragments of some greater device or else are baubles of a former age now repurposed to different ends.

## A FACE KNOWN AND LOVED

A relic of an ancient sect of transhuman thespians, this nondescript mask melds imperceptibly with the wearer's face when donned. For five minutes thereafter, the user may adjust their appearance and clothing to match any humanoid they have seen before, with the effect lasting for an hour after the appearance is set.

For the following hour the user will also be telepathically appraised of the answers or behaviors that others might expect from them given their appearance. For example, when confronted by a guard demanding a password, the user will become aware of the password the guard expects to receive. Together with the implicit social cues provided, this device allows for almost faultless impersonation of another.

## AGILE GENETIC RECOMBINATOR

Often daubed with the worn markings of an ancient survival kit, the agile genetic recombinator is a prickly-surfaced skin patch that adjusts the user's physical profile on the fly to adapt to hostile environments.

For an hour after its application, the user can ignore dangerous temperatures, pressure, radiation, environmental toxins, and even the absence of a breathable atmosphere. The recombinator is fast, but not fast enough to protect from thermal attacks or other elements used as offensive weaponry.

## BACKWARD ROAD'S STONE

Part of an ancient temporal art installation, the backward road's stone is activated by throwing it over the user's shoulder. The user may then immediately teleport to any point they have occupied within the last hour.

## CORPSE SCRIBE'S SALT

This sinister powder has a pale, gritty texture and tastes of copper and acrid salt. When sprinkled over human or transhuman flesh, it creates a neurotemporal linkage which can be exploited by the person who then consumes the tissue. For every pound of flesh eaten, one question may be asked of the owner's memories. The answers come in the form of brief visions from the corpse's stolen recollections.

## DATA VERITY TAP

An earpiece that emits a faint, steady tone when activated, the data verity tap patches into the ambient temporal fact pool related to a person in conversation with the user. If that person makes a claim that is false in light of their own experience, the tone modulates to a soft, insistent buzz. The tap can be activated only for one conversation or subject, but lasts for fifteen minutes before expending its charge.

## D20 DEVICE

1	A Face Known and Loved
2	Agile Genetic Recombinator
3	Backward Road's Stone
4	Corpse Scribe's Salt
5	Data Verity Tap
6	Lens of Negative Light
7	Merciful Blade
8	Oathmaker Seal
9	Omnipresence Sphere
10	Pact Nail
11	Revenant Brand
12	Rose of the Carnelian God
13	Stonebreaker Song
14	Temporal Reconstructor
15	The Golden Sleep
16	The Steps of the Dance
17	The Summons to Dawn
18	Trans-spatial Ripcord
19	Metadimensional Splice Field
20	Zeal-Slave's Unguent

## LENS OF NEGATIVE LIGHT

When activated, this palm-sized lens warps the ambient illumination within 5 meters of the user, plunging the zone into inky darkness. The holder of the lens can continue to see through the field but others are effectively blind while they remain within the gloom. The zone travels with the holder and will last for 1d6 minutes.

## MERCIFUL BLADE

A quivering fragment of silvery, metallic matter, the merciful blade can be merged with any sharp object by pressing it against the edge of the implement, whereupon it collapses into a thin coating around the weapon. For one minute, any wound inflicted by the weapon can be completely and instantly undone by the weapon's holder up to a day later. Even a person killed by the weapon can be restored to perfect health, provided no other mortal wounds have been delivered to the corpse in the meantime.

## OATHMAKER SEAL

This thumb-sized jade tablet appears to have been a fragment of a larger work. If snapped in the presence of a person who has just made a freely-offered promise, the seal will bind them to the completion of their vow. The promise need not have been sincere, but it cannot have been elicited by force or threat. If the subject breaks the vow or fails in their promised act they will ignite with a sulfurous green flame, suffering 4d10 damage.

## OMNIPRESENCE SPHERE

This faceted sphere contains an unattuned spatial nexus, which is released by smashing the device. Once triggered, its effects last for 1d6+1 rounds. While in effect, the user may arbitrarily choose to be at any point within 30 meters of their original position at any time.

Thus, they may choose to be out of range of any given melee attack, behind cover against any ranged attack, or exactly where they need to be to snatch up an object or aid a friend. Assuming an attack is even possible against the user, it must be rolled twice and the worse roll used. Once the sphere's effects wear off, the user is dazed and unable to act for as many rounds as the sphere was in effect.

## PACT NAIL

This fearsome bronze spike must be driven into a limb by its user, and can function for at most 1d6+1 rounds. For each round of use, the subject gains +4 to all hit rolls, +2 on all physical skill checks, rolls damage twice and takes the better result, and is immune to any effect that would daze, snare, or constrain them. This power comes at a price, however, and the user permanently loses one point from an attribute of their choice for each round they leave the nail embedded.

## REVENANT BRAND

This fragment of twisted thermal wiring has been woven into a peculiar glyph. When pressed against a corpse's brow, it will sear the sigil into the flesh and reanimate the body with half its original hit points, along with the use of any of its abilities that do not require sophisticated thought. The revenant cannot communicate, but will obey the wielder for 1d6+1 rounds before falling dead once more.

## ROSE OF THE CARNELIAN GOD

A delicate bloom of a long-dead faith, this flower bears petals of glassy black carnelian. One who breathes deeply of its fragrance will briefly glimpse a vision of the probable future related to their most immediate concern. This fragment of prophecy comes at a price, however—the user will automatically be hit by the next serious attack made against them.

## STONEBREAKER SONG

These chimes throb in a peculiar set of vibrations that corrode and weaken stone and earth structures within 5 meters. For 1d6+1 rounds afterwards, such structures and barriers may be broken apart with bare hands and ordinary strength, though structures will not collapse unless intentionally undermined by the diggers.

## TEMPORAL RECONSTRUCTOR

This wired sphere can be triggered to detonate, blasting every inanimate object within 5 meters with a hard blue radiance that creates a brief temporal flux. For the next 20 minutes, every inanimate unattended object, feature, and structure in range is returned to a perfect and fully-functional condition. After the time elapses, the objects return to their original condition and location, even if they have been moved or destroyed in the meantime.

## THE GOLDEN SLEEP

This vial of glowing golden gas can be released to plunge a number of enemies into temporal stasis. Up to 1d6 foes within 10 meters can be affected, with the stasis lasting 1d6 rounds with no saving throw allowed. While under the Golden Sleep a victim is limned in pale yellow radiance, frozen and unable to be moved or affected.

## THE STEPS OF THE DANCE

This handful of glowing motes can be hurled to mark a safe path through any peril or trap, assuming a path even theoretically exists. The gleaming lights will show a clear way through a minefield, around a trap trigger, or through an artillery bombardment.

## THE SUMMONS TO DAWN

This golden disc is snapped to trigger the effect. Immediately, the user and up to a half-dozen willing allies are jumped forward in time to the next local dawn, appearing at that moment in the exact same condition as when the disc was used.

## TRANS-SPATIAL RIPCORD

A user of this thin cord must tie one end around an object, whether living or inanimate. Once the cord is tied, the loop evaporates, leaving only the end of the cord. Gripping and pulling this cord will instantly transport the user to the object it was originally tied to, regardless of its current location. The ripcord must be used within a day after tying.

## METADIMENSIONAL SPLICE FIELD

This set of interlaced spinning metal circles is evidently a remnant of some experimental pretech metadimensional travel device. When the constantly-spinning circles are forcibly stopped, local reality within 10 meters is reinforced to standard Terran norms. Metadimensional entities and psychics within this range lose all their unnatural powers and take a tangible physical form that is subject to ordinary violence, though armor class still applies when relevant.

It's up to the GM as to whether any specific metadimensional ability is damped by the splice field, but powers that rely on the creature's body form or physical manifestation are usually still available. The damping lasts for 1d6 rounds and allows no save by the victim.

## ZEAL-SLAVE'S UNGUENT

A relic of a former empire of tireless workers, this gritty cream will restore up to 2d6 lost hit points and renders the user immune to fatigue or exhaustion for 1d6 hours afterwards. The user can indulge in even the most ferocious exertions without growing weary, and cannot be forced to sleep even by pharmaceutical means.

As a side effect, however, the user is also unable to remain still. They are compelled to move constantly while under the effects of the unguent, motions large enough to make stealth impossible and to add an additional 2 points of difficulty to any checks reliant on small, precise motions or patient stillness. If restrained, they can think of nothing but escape.

# EXAMPLE ARTIFACTS

The artifacts here aren't given with an explicit number of uses or specific power source. If you aren't certain you want them to hang around in your campaign, allow them 1d10 uses before a new power cell must be found for them.

## BLOOD CHAIN

One end of this slender chain of deep garnet links may be hurled at a target within 10 meters. The chain automatically binds and links the wielder and target until it burns out or the wielder spends an action to detach the blood chain from the victim. While the chain connects the two users, any injury suffered by the wielder is automatically duplicated in the target, with a Tech save to resist the duplication. The device remains attached for 1d6 rounds after use before it coils back to the wielder's hand. It may also be destroyed by inflicting at least 8 points of damage on the chain, which is AC 4.

## CHORUS OF FOREIGN SUNS

These delicate chimes are held in the bearer's hand and must be constantly stroked to maintain their strange, tuneless song. So long as the music is in effect, non-human sapients will be unable to perceive the bearer unless they do something to draw attention, such as an attack or violent motion. After each minute of use, the holder must make a Tech saving throw to maintain the chimes' effects.

## DEAD GOD'S BONES

Countless lost faiths have cherished relics of the holy dead, and some of these remnants still induce the mad ecstasy of the numinous in those that behold them. When raised and presented with the intonation of the dead god's name, all who look at the bones are seized with delirious awe, frozen in place for 2d6 rounds. This reverie is ended if the onlookers are attacked or otherwise placed in obvious peril. The bearer must make a Tech saving throw when using the bones. If failed, they sublimate into a psychoactive nanite cloud in a burst that utterly paralyzes the bearer for 1d6 rounds.

## DOUBLED MANTLE

These mantles are invariably found in pairs, each a nondescript cloak of neutral-colored cloth with several small pockets in the lining. Anything placed within one of these pockets exists within both cloaks, and can be removed from either. In the same vein, anything drawn, painted, or sewn into one cloak appears on the other—they are essentially one cloak with two different spatial manifestations.

## DIRTSKIMMER WRAPS

These limb wraps elevate the user from a few centimeters to as much as a meter above the ground, allowing them to skim over broken terrain or liquid surfaces without coming in contact with the ground. Indeed, the user cannot return to earth until the wraps are removed. They can even be used to absorb any amount of falling damage, albeit such drastic exertion of the artifact's power forces the user to make a saving throw versus Tech to prevent their ruin by the impact.

## D20 ARTIFACT

1	Blood Chain
2	Chorus of Foreign Suns
3	Dead God's Bones
4	Doubled Mantle
5	Dirtskimmer Wraps
6	Flowing Sand Sigil
7	Genetic Revision Controller
8	Glyph of Odium
9	Lamp That Lights Hell
10	Logos of the Immanent
11	Memorious Codex
12	Node of Perfected Evasion
13	Panoply of the Zeal Lords
14	Seven Copper Razors
15	Skyshaker Staff
16	The Screaming Knife
17	The Throat of the Red Word
18	Tongue of Negative Flame
19	Tripartite Prosopon
20	Viridian Book

## FLOWING SAND SIGIL

This glyph takes the form of an small case formed into the shape of an intricate mandala. When opened, the case is shown to contain perhaps a kilogram of pale golden sand which cannot be removed from the case by any conventional force. When the sand is traced in the pattern of the mandala on the case, it begins to flow and rise in a basic mimicry of the surrounding terrain and structures, forming a crude map of the environment. The map is sufficient to give a basic idea of a building's layout or the general lay of the land within a day's march of the user.

## GENETIC REVISION CONTROLLER

An invocator of ancient genetic protocols transmitted through a cloud of bioactive nanites, this emitter can be used by the wielder to rework their appearance into any humanoid shape of the same general mass. The revision can even alter the user's sex and build, though the changes cannot affect the user's attributes or provide new physical abilities. The revision controller is too finicky to apply to unwilling targets.

## GLYPH OF ODIUM

Vengeful trackers favor this wrist-mounted projector, as it can be used to fire a small tracking tag at a target within 30 meters. The nanite-based tag melts instantly into the target and can be detected or removed only by advanced pretech means. While active, the projector provides a direction and distance to the tag, even at interstellar distances. The projector can track only one thing at a time.

## **LAMP THAT LIGHTS HELL**

A relic of an Second Wave faith of purity and purgation, the Lamp That Lights Hell appears as a simple hand-held lamp with a deflector to direct the light. When activated, it shines both on the user and a chosen target. The sins and vices of both subjects then manifest in subtle shadows and glyphs upon their faces, conveying vast subtleties in strange, wordless fashion. The user may determine whether the target was involved in a particular crime or given to a specific vice, but each such question allows the target to equally interrogate the user's face. The creators of the Lamp appear to have had a fairly conventional understanding of what constitutes a sin or crime, but occasional odd omissions or inclusions remain.

## **LOGOS OF THE IMMANENT**

This data tap attaches to the user's nape and allows them to briefly manifest an entirely different environmental configuration on their surroundings, drawing it from the ambient potentiality expressed by the artifact. The user can impose any physical environment they choose within 30 meters of the user, adding, removing, or altering objects, furnishings, and structures. Living creatures and their possessions cannot be added or affected, and intrinsic security protocols prevent harmful effects from being produced. The changes last for 2d6 rounds before the environment reverts to its original state.

## **MEMORIOUS CODEX**

This codex of crystal sheets may be placed against the brow of a living or very recently dead subject, drawing their memories of a particular topic into a single vivid image in the codex. This single image is all that is ever drawn regarding a particular topic, even if the question is elaborated.

## **NODE OF PERFECTED EVASION**

This neural booster is wrapped around the joints of the user, and allows them to automatically succeed on a given Dexterity-based skill check. The next such skill roll they make within the next week, however, suffers a -2 penalty as the node is forced to recharge. The node cannot be removed until the penalized check has been made or a week passes.

## **PANOPLY OF THE ZEAL LORDS**

While a simple bronze cube in its inactive form, the Panoply can be activated with three rounds of effort, unfolding into a massive suit of ornate golden armor around the bearer. The Panoply allows free action underwater, in vacuum, or in other hostile atmospheres and provides an effective armor class of -2 without burdening the user.

The Panoply was intended for a race of tireless laborers, however, and forces the user to be in constant motion while the Panoply is active. They cannot be still for a moment or the Panoply will deactivate. This frenetic motion takes a dire toll on modern humanity, and forces a loss of 1 hit point for every round the Panoply is worn, starting one minute after the suit is donned for each point of Constitution modifier, Athletics skill, and Exosuit skill. It deactivates if the wearer is reduced to less than 2 hit points by wounds or exhaustion.

## **SEVEN COPPER RAZORS**

These seven copper blades are always found as a set. Once taken up by a user, they cannot be lost or stolen- they will appear instantly in the user's hands or on their person whenever desired, until the bearer either dies or willingly casts away the razors. They may be used as conventional knives that do 1d8 points of damage or hurled up to orbit in a spinning cloud of deflection. While used for deflection, they improve the user's armor class by 3, provided the knives could plausibly block or deflect an attack. Throwing the knives up in a cloud or reclaiming them from their orbit invariably results in the wielder being cut for 1d4-1 points of damage. Throwing or reclaiming the razors takes one action, and they can remain orbiting for up to 10 minutes at a time.

## **SKYSHAKER STAFF**

A simple crystalline rod, the Skyshaker Staff can automatically quell or summon storms and rain within two kilometers per level of the artifact. While the control is not fine enough to use the storm as a focused weapon, it can cause flash flooding and smash fragile structures.

## **THE SCREAMING KNIFE**

This crystalline knife emits a shrill, vibrating scream when drawn, rendering stealthy use impossible. It strikes as a knife that does 1d6 points of damage on a hit and ignores all physical armor, albeit not force fields. It may be amplified for a particular strike, doing 2d10 damage and ignoring even force fields, but after this the user must make a Tech saving throw to maintain control. Failure causes the knife to burst for 1d6 sonic damage to the user and target alike.

## **THE THROAT OF THE RED WORD**

This torc allows the utterance of an ancient organic self-destruct protocol that inflicts 2d8 damage on every organic listener able to hear the user. This damage is also invariably taken by the speaker of the Word.

## **TONGUE OF NEGATIVE FLAME**

A tube that spills a cold blue flame, the Tongue can "un-burn" anything it touches, healing thermal damage and repairing burnt objects. It can cure one target or un-burn three cubic meters as one "use" of the artifact.

## **TRIPARTITE PROSOPON**

This cultic mask splinters the wearer into three separate individuals, each with the same equipment and statistics. The duplicates last for one round per level of the artifact. Any psionic expenditures or damage taken is shared, however, and any expended devices or artifacts are expended for all duplicates. At the effect's end, the user can decide which two of the duplicates vanish.

## **VIRIDIAN BOOK**

The pale green pages of this book can answer any question about a subject or place visible to the reader, albeit the answer is never more than five words. The book is dangerous, however— each question requires a Tech saving throw, with failure inflicting 1d8 damage on the user.



## **DEAD WORLDS LIE DREAMING**

**BENEATH THE DIRT OF FALLEN WORLDS LIE THE BONES OF FORGOTTEN EMPIRES AND THE RELICS OF PEOPLES NOW VANISHED INTO LEGEND. COUNTLESS WONDERS LIE SILENT, AWAITING THE HANDS OF STARFARING ADVENTURERS AND THE CURIOSITY OF FEARLESS INVESTIGATORS. WHAT GLORIOUS CITADELS AND ELDRITCH MARVELS REMAIN UNDISCOVERED BY HUMANITY IN THE PRESENT AGE, AND WHAT MIRACLES LIE IN THE SILENT TOMBS OF ANCIENT ALIEN KINGS?**

**DEAD NAMES PROVIDES A STARS WITHOUT NUMBER GM WITH THE TOOLS TO BUILD THESE LOST RACES AND THEIR MAGNIFICENT WORKS. WITH THE RESOURCES IN THIS BOOK, GMS CAN QUICKLY AND EASILY FABRICATE THE STRANGE DENIZENS OF A LOST WORLD AND FLESH OUT THEIR RUINS AND STRONGHOLDS WITH THE DETAILS THAT HELP MAKE FOR EXCITING PLAY.**

**THE STRESS OF CREATING FRESH CONTENT CAN WEAR DOWN THE MOST DILIGENT GM. DEAD NAMES EASES THAT STRAIN WITH WORTHY TOOLS FOR A DEMIURGE.**