



DAWNING STAR

HELIOS RISING

HAMMOCK
BARR
JACOBSON
MORETTI

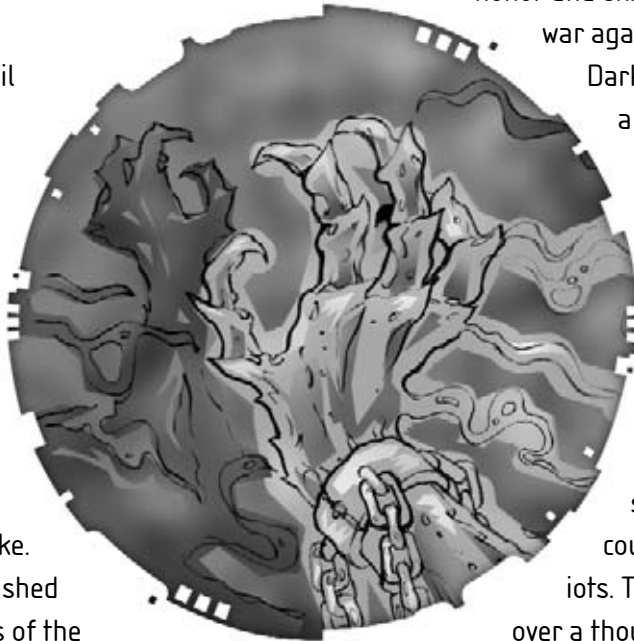


CHAPTER VIII

HEPHAESTUS

In the night sky there burns an orange star in the southern heavens that can be seen before all others in the autumn evenings. Though it is easy to see, do not look at it, for evil lives there and to watch this star, the Hollow Dark, is to tempt the evil therein. This evil was imprisoned by the mighty gods of the First Universe, before we saurians walked the earth of C'thalk. And this evil slept for time beyond count, but evil cannot stay contained forever.

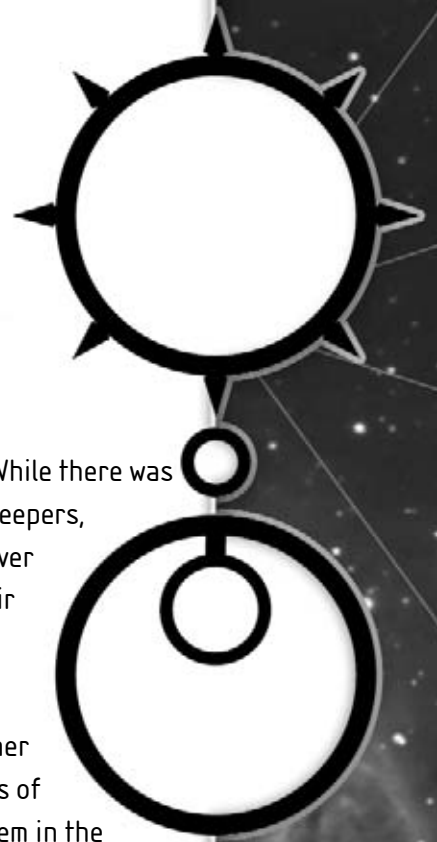
Many years ago the evil contained in the Hollow Dark awoke and began to hunger for those who lived beyond its reach. The evil began clawing at the chains that bound it, awakening the Law-Keepers who had sworn long ago to sleep in the Hollow Dark in case the evil awoke. Led by the spirit Unblemished Law who lives in the walls of the Hollow Dark, the Law-Keepers gave battle to the evil but its prison had already been cracked. They could no longer return it to its slumber, so instead began the long vigil of keeping the evils trapped in the Hollow Dark. Years passed, blood was shed, and the evil grew faster than the Law-Keepers. The Hollow Dark went from being an outpost of the First Universe to a hot dark place filled



with the screams of war and dying. While there was no weakness in the will of the Law-Keepers, they knew they could not stand forever against the evil without aid, and their failure would release the evil they fought so long to trap.

So they came to our world and other neighboring worlds seeking warriors of honor and skill to join them in the war against evil in the Hollow Dark. We saurians joined such a righteous battle with matchless vigor, though the wolves and others of our system also took part. The Law-Keepers returned for more recruits a few years later, and then for supplies, taking what swords and armor they could carry in their sky chariots. They have been coming for over a thousand years, taking those warriors pure of heart and powerful of skill to the Hollow Dark, where they may battle evil in the greatest battle of all. It is an honor to be chosen, even if you never return to the Empire. There are few greater honors than serving among the Law-Keepers.

A saurian myth concerning Hephaestus



HEPHAESTUS • • •

A barren, cratered planet, Hephaestus is utterly inhospitable on its surface. Hot, without atmosphere, and bereft of any shelter, there is little obvious reason to visit the planet, though there are several less than obvious reasons. Beneath the surface of Hephaestus lies one of the largest remaining constructions of the Star Confederation in the Helios system. Once, the carved out center of Hephaestus served as a jail, but now it is a war zone.

Rotation Period: 16 hours
Revolution Period: 145 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: None
Average Temperature:
390 Kelvin (242.6° F)
Gravity: .8G

HISTORY • • •

Hephaestus formed along with the rest of the Helios system from the accretion disk that surrounded the star Helios. For many years Hephaestus was left alone and untouched by the member races of the Star Confederation, all of whom thought it was too barren and inhospitable to waste much time on. It was not until the war with the Vaasi Empire began that resources were in such demand that the iron core of Hephaestus seemed a prize worth mastering the heat and radiation of its surface to acquire. During the middle stages of the war with the Vaasi Empire, the Star Confederation began mining Hephaestus for iron by burrowing tunnels deep into the planet and then hollowing it out from the inside. Eventually this meant that the planet was partially hollow. These tunnels were kept from collapsing in on themselves by a series of immense interior supports constructed by the Star Confederation, though eventually the iron supply that could be safely

extracted began to run out and the mining operations shut down.

Many years later, as Eos and the other worlds in the Helios system began to overflow with refugees from the vaasi advance, attention was again turned to Hephaestus and its vast interior space. Inside the hollow regions of Hephaestus a massive city structure was constructed to serve as an emergency shelters for refugees as well as a jail for criminals of the Star Confederation, vaasi prisoners, and other undesirables. In the later days of the war it also served as a hospital for Star Confederation wounded and a storage facility for materials used in the genetic seeding program. But when the vaasi invaded the Helios system the installation below the surface of Hephaestus sealed up its only two doors, went to minimal power, and did its best to be ignored by the vaasi. The crew, refugees, and all the prisoners were stored in cryogenic hibernation in the hopes of surviving until the vaasi left the system. Meanwhile an artificial intelligence program named Unblemished Law 12, normally shortened to Law, kept watch over the frozen criminals, refugees, prisoners, and personnel.

The installation remained undetected during the brief vaasi occupation of the system, which was cut short when the vaasi used up the last of their power reserves. The installation beneath the surface of Hephaestus was not designed to exist without outside support indefinitely so Law kept the inhabitants asleep until just over eight hundred years ago, when he was sure the vaasi had left and he assumed supplies would be available on other worlds. A short in some of the installation's systems caused several of the vaasi prisoners to awaken and be released along with the refugees and facility personnel, and these prisoners quickly went about releasing their fellows.

The first true vaasi to awake was Curthiyug, an expert in genetic engineering and the creator of several servitor races. Curthiyug used this head start to cement his control of the other vaasi, initial-



ly only freeing those he could bend to his will, and has remained nominal leader of the vaasi beneath Hephaestus ever since. One of the first steps in his plan to take control of the facility was hacking the facility's nanite control center and taking control of millions of nanites within the facility. He used these to seal off certain areas of the prison, attack the surviving guards, and construct weapons and other tools for his own use. This inflicted tremendous casualties on the surviving guards; otherwise, the vaasi might have been immediately put down when their escape began. Curthiyug also programmed a segment of the nanite population to assist him in genetic engineering projects, commanding them to alter the genetic structure of his vaasi minions in the hopes of creating new vaasi servitor races.

Eventually Law broke Curthiyug's control over most of the nanites, but in the process made it impossible for anyone to control many of the nanites. Now nanites wander the station randomly disassembling objects, attacking creatures they encounter, and randomly altering the genetic structure of the inhabitants of the facility. This has resulted in large areas of the facility becoming unfit for habitation due to nanite infestation. All those who live in the facility suffer from a wide variety of genetic mutations caused by Curthiyug's nanites run amuck. For races descended from the Star Confederation, the changes in DNA spark random mutations due to the differences between vaasi and Star Confederation DNA. Once the source of much of the Star Confederation wealth, science, and industry, nanites have gone from being helpful tools to horrible weapons. There are few sights more horrifying than seeing a man torn apart by microscopic robots.

In short order the installation turned into a war zone as battles between vaasi, Star Confederation prisoners, and the station personnel and refugees raged throughout the complex. The battle continues still through the installation, now called the Hollow Dark by its inhabitants for the many sections that are now without light. Unfortunately for the prisoners and the Star Confederation descendants, commonly called the Law-Keepers, the vaasi have a much higher reproductive rate than the other species present, and the constant state of war made this a sizeable advantage for the vaasi.

A few years after awakening from their long slumber, the Law-Keepers used the ships stationed at the facility to visit the other planets in the system looking for supplies. This first gave them an advantage in terms of supplies over the, but also allowed them to recruit new Law-Keepers from the saurians and later the other species of the Helios system. Over time all the original Star Confederation personnel in the headquarters were killed off and replaced with the races that now inhabit Helios, making the Hollow Dark an odd conglomeration of races that somehow

manage to live together in harmony.

On Thres and C'thalk legends of divine guardians from Hephaestus who search other worlds for brave and true warriors to fight in a holy crusade are common, and both the wolves and saurians consider being selected by the Law-Keepers a great honor. Among these races the Hollow Dark is seen as some hellish world only the greatest warriors are chosen to travel to, where they do battle against the universe's greatest evil. The elgies and haimedians equate the Hollow Dark with Hell itself and consider it a place where the valiant are taken to die, dark and alone. The Law-Keepers have unintentionally had a large influence over the spiritual beliefs of the species of the Helios system, but now the Law-Keeper leaders realize these fervent beliefs improve the morale and quality of their recruits and so keep the charade going. The Law-Keepers have not contacted any of the governments of Helios officially, fearing that the governments who have space travel will try to take the remaining bits of Star Confederation technology from Hephaestus and doom the Law-Keepers to defeat.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

Hephaestus's surface is crater covered though mostly flat, having no tectonic plates or other seismic activity to create mountains with. Being so close to the Markin Belt and having no atmosphere with which to deflect or burn off meteorites, the surface of Hephaestus has been hit by many meteorites throughout its existence. These craters range from a few feet in diameter to several miles, the largest of which is twelve miles across and located in the northern polar regions of the planet. The axial tilt on Hephaestus is very slight, meaning there is no seasonal variation. The surface of Hephaestus is covered in rock and fine sand.

The interior of Hephaestus, the Hollow Dark, is a huge maze of corridors, medical centers, storage rooms, mechanical rooms, and prison cells. The installation runs for hundreds of miles below the surface of Hephaestus, though most of it is in the equatorial region. The Hollow Dark reaches depths of up to fifty miles, but most of the installation is within ten miles of the surface. There are only two exits to the surface, both of which lead to docking bays controlled by the Law-Keepers. These two docking bays are a hundred miles apart, in the equatorial region of Hephaestus.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

There is no atmosphere on Hephaestus due to its close proximity to Helios. While not as hot as the Markin Belt, the surface of Hephaestus is far too hot to support any type of life, even with current terraforming technology. The planet's surface is likely to remain uninhabited for a long, long time.

Within the Hollow Dark the atmosphere is a breathable mix of oxygen, carbon dioxide, and nitrogen that is kept relatively clean by the few atmospheric processors that still function. The air smells bad in many regions and most newcomers describe it as stuffy. Most of the inhabitants avoid settling in the areas where the atmospheric converters have failed, sometimes creating buffer zones between warring factions, but will travel across these areas when necessary.

CONDITIONS • • •

Much like the Markin Belt, the sunlit side of Hephaestus is so hot as to make it completely uninhabitable by any means. Hephaestus also suffers from solar flares, but not as badly as the Markin Belt. The surface of Hephaestus is considered a light gravity, vacuum environment that is also highly irradiated.

Within the Hollow Dark the temperature runs about 90 degrees Fahrenheit on average, and some regions of the installation are considered to have thin atmosphere due to poor ventilation and lack of atmospheric processors. Many regions are without light because of lack of power or failed lightning systems, and lacking any sources of natural light these areas are covered in complete darkness.

The damp, warm nature of the Hollow Dark means that disease is often a problem. Most of the diseases are contact or inhaled in nature, and many are fatal due to the lack of proper medical facilities. The Law-Keepers have a medical isolation ward set up for those who become infected, but can do little else for them.

Some regions of the Hollow Dark are infected with nanites, most of which are wild nanites that attack anything they come across. Others are DNA infectors that modify the DNA of creatures they encounter. These areas are usually avoided by both the Law-Keepers and the vaasi, and signs or warnings are often posted. The effects of the nanites are described later in this chapter on page 57.

FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •

◇ THE LAW-KEEPERS

The descendants and inheritors of the duty originally charged to the guards of the installation that has become the Hollow Dark, these dedicated individuals see their battle as a sacred conflict against a great force of evil. None of the original Star Confederation guards have survived to this point, leaving the containment of the vaasi prisoners to the new residents of the Helios system, advised by the artificial intelligence entity Law. Despite being the second group to carry on the fight against the vaasi of the Dark Halls, the warriors of the Law-Keepers are a dedicated group. Many of them have

DISEASES OF THE HOLLOW DARK

The following are some of the more common diseases contracted by those who spend time in the Hollow Dark.

Black Rot

A powerful rotting fungus, it grows on any organic material that is left wet in the dark for more than one hundred hours. It can eat flesh easily and is a common affliction among the Law-Keepers and vaasi. Because of it both sides regularly make sure they are exposed to some type of light. To non-living targets it inflicts 1d4 points of damage per day.

Mind Splinters

An airborne bacteria, it attacks the cells of the nervous system in any animal life form it encounters. This process causes hallucinations in the short term and can cause permanent paralysis if the patient is not able to fight off the infection.

Disease	Type	Incubation Period	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage
Black Rot	Contact	1d6 days	1d4 Con	1 Con
Mind Splinters	Inhaled	1d4 hours	1d4 Wis	1 Dex*

**This damage is permanent.*

hoped their entire lives to be so honored as to join the ranks of the Law-Keepers. The elgies, haimedians, and other less warlike races are less excited than the saurians, wolves, or coqui, but all know that if the vaasi escape the confines of Hephæstus, they will strike at the worlds of Helios.

The origin of the Law-Keepers and the earliest days of the Hollow Dark are now told as legends and myths. The creators of the facility are equated with gods rather than the Star Confederation. Law encourages such ideas, feeling it helps keep morale up amongst the ranks of the Law-Keepers. As the species of Helios have become more advanced some of them, particularly the elgies, no longer believe these stories and have begun piecing together the truth. Other races, like the saurians and wolves, find this fabricated history far more pleasing to their sensibilities than the real story and thus have little interest in disproving it. Indeed, the ranks of the Law-Keepers are one of the few places that one can find wolves and saurians fighting side by side without argument, such is the honor they see in their duty.

The majority of the Law-Keepers are saurians, wolves, and yaom. All three races place a spiritual value on serving with the Law-Keepers, and are thus more often targeted for recruitment. The yaom see it their duty to wield the Red Truth against the vaasi of the Dark Halls, knowing that such creatures are an affront to the Red Truth.

The Law-Keepers have a number of strongholds established in their territory to guard particularly important locations, such as the docking bays and the hydroponic farms. These strongholds are well fortified, are staffed at all times, and usually have a sizeable armory. These strongholds are the only locations where computers are kept in good enough repair for Law to function and communicate with the Law-Keepers. This is normally done through a computer terminal using a voice interface, but a number of portable Law relays also exist that allow it to be contacted remotely through a wireless network. Law's actual programming is spread throughout the installation, making it very difficult to destroy it. In addition Law has a number of backup versions of itself in storage, but the fragmenting of its programming has limited its performance and speed.

There are estimated to be over forty thousand Law-Keepers, but exact numbers are hard to calculate. Less than five percent of these warriors are armed with anything more than spears, clubs, and similar primitive weapons. The Law-Keepers are led by the artificial intelligence entity Law, which has its programming spread throughout the remaining computers in the Illuminatory. Law works to keep the Law-Keepers organized, supplied, and reinforced, leaving the actual military planning and leadership to Strueg Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-

THE MAKEUP OF THE LAW-KEEPERS

The Law-Keepers recruit from all worlds of the Helios system except Eos, but not in equal numbers. They have been recruiting C'thalk for almost eight hundred years, while the other worlds have only had viable recruits for four centuries or less. They favor species with a warrior tradition over more peaceful species, but almost all species of Helios are represented among the Law-Keepers. The list below shows the approximate breakdown of the Law-Keeper population.

Coqui	2%
Elgie	3%
Haimedians	4%
Mechites	3%
Saurians	44%
Straas	5%
Wolves	35.5%
Yaom	8%

in-Blood, the elder saurian leader of the Law-Keepers.

Law was originally intended as a legal assistance and quartermaster program, meaning its current activities far exceed its original operating parameters. This stress has begun to show on Law and it knows that soon it will suffer a fatal programming failure, so Law is currently training others to take over the tasks it handles. The arrival of the technologically advanced humans and mechites give Law hope that they may be able to repair it, if they can be trusted.

The Law-Keepers attack vaasi on sight, even when encountered off-world. The Law-Keepers have no idea that there are vaasi on Eos or in the Cronus Belt, but would certainly assist any efforts against them with information. The Law-Keepers have little to share in terms of supplies with the outside world but have extensive knowledge of vaasi biology, psychology, and tactics.

The Law-Keepers have good relations with most of the species of the Helios system, appearing in legends as mighty warriors and sages who spend all of eternity fighting evil so others do not have to. These stories are just starting to crop up amongst the coqui, but they are common among all the other peoples of Helios except humans and velin. The Law-Keepers hate the tentaari; in the early years of their operation the tentaari attacked all ships leaving Hephaestus, thinking they might be carrying escaped vaasi. Being paranoid and reactionary they attacked despite Law's attempts to warn them, fearful of that surviving Star Confederation citizens would take back the technological boons given the tentaari since they have squandered them so. The loss of the tentaari ship that crashed in the Bergan Lowlands of Eos halted this practice, as the tentaari were unwilling to risk their remaining ships. The tentaari still keep an eye on Hephaestus but have never made actual contact with the Law-Keepers.

Of late, a small but vocal minority movement has begun among the Law-Keepers who wish to use the ships the faction controls to flee Hephaestus and leave the vaasi to rot in their subterranean territory. The vaasi have no ships of their own, so as long as they Law-Keepers keep their ships secure these dissenters believe that the vaasi will remain trapped on Hephaestus. Law and Streug Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-In-Blood both believe that if left alone, the vaasi would build a ship of their own from the remaining technology of the Hollow Dark, and possibly even regain control of the nanite population, making them a threat to the entire solar system. Law and Streug Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-In-Blood have begun a concerted effort to raise morale to combat this dissension, though they seem to be having little success.

The symbol of the Law-Keepers is a black cross-hatch over a white field, and the colors they normally wear are tan, red, white, and black. While the Law-Keepers do not have uniforms, most wear rough tunics or tabards depicting the order's colors. These are usually made of poorly dyed cloth rags and bits of salvaged materials.

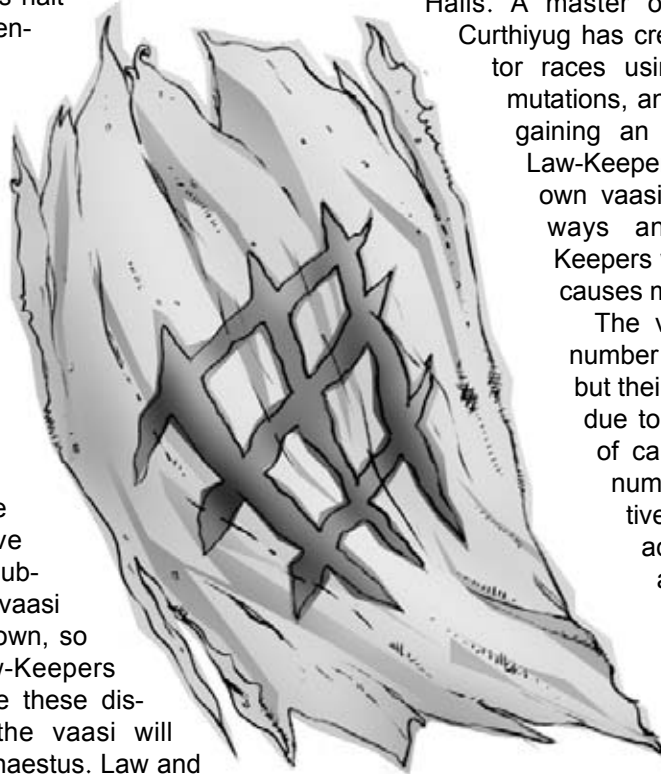
THE VAASI OF THE DARK HALLS • • •

In the lowest depths of the Hollow Dark live a horde of vaasi, all of whom were once prisoners of the Star Confederation, or are descendants of those prisoners. Most of the vaasi are warriors, with true vaasi and phrenics being extremely rare among their number. Several other servitor races are present as well. Most the vaasi prisoners were captured during a raid on a nearby system against a vaasi genetic production facility. This facility was being used to churn out servitor races in droves, in addition to developing new servitor races. While the Star Confederation deemed this information too dangerous to exist and destroyed it, the mastermind of the operation, a true vaasi named Curthiyug, still lives in the bowels of the Dark Halls. A master of genetic modification, Curthiyug has created several new servitor races using controlled breeding, mutations, and nanites in the hope of gaining an advantage against the Law-Keepers. He has mutated his own vaasi troops in a number of ways and infected the Law-Keepers with a nanite plague that causes mutations in them as well.

The vaasi of the Dark Halls number around eighty thousand, but their numbers fluctuate often due to the rampant practice of cannibalism amongst their number and high reproductive rate. In addition to the acceptance of cannibalism among the vaasi, the lack of other food sources makes it one of the few types of sustenance available.

A number of food producer units remain operational in the Dark Halls. These are only used by those vaasi not strong enough to take their own meals from others. The entire society of the Dark Halls is based on the idea of survival of the fittest, with the weak and stupid usually meeting a quick end. All non-vaasi are seen simply as food, and the vaasi take prisoners when battling the other factions in the Hollow Dark for just such purpose.

While the vaasi do not need much light, they do keep a few illumination panels functioning and light other areas by burning fat from those they kill. This creates a terrible stench throughout the Dark Halls, a smell that cannot be removed by the few functioning atmosphere converters. The burning piles of fat, especially that taken from vaasi corpses, cast an eerie red light over the surrounding tunnels, helping the Dark Halls live up to its reputation as a living hell



that it holds among many of the inhabitants of Helios.

All vaasi are united in their hatred of the Star Confederation and those who still carry its banner, but otherwise there is little unity among them. Curthiyug is undisputed as being the single most powerful vaasi in the Dark Halls and has the largest group of minions. He still controls some nanites and his followers have more favorable mutations than other vaasi in the Dark Halls. Outside of Curthiyug's followers, the vaasi break in to nearly a dozen different factions, each led by a true vaasi and claiming its own territory. These factions often fight among themselves, but Curthiyug can usually cow them into cooperating when needed. He would be substantially outnumbered if all the other true vaasi aligned against him, but thus far he has been able to keep them fractured enough to prevent this.

Curthiyug wishes to eventually capture the spacecraft controlled by the Law-Keepers so he can escape, but also wants to keep his controlled breeding and mutation experiment going in the Dark Halls. It has produced more positive benefits than he expected and he hopes to produce an army of mutant vaasi with which he will conquer Eos. Curthiyug is not as desperate to return to the Vaasi Empire as his vaasi fellows, fearing that he will escape simply to be returned to his low ranking position in the hierarchy of the Vaasi Empire. He seeks to gain information about the disposition of the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire before leaving his position of power in the Hollow Dark, but once he learns how precarious the situation in the Helios system is with the imminent conflict with the vaasi on the horizon, he is likely to push that much more against the Law-Keepers.

All the vaasi attack Law-Keepers on sight. The vaasi have few advanced weapons in their arsenal, relying instead on natural weapons or crudely fashioned spears and clubs. The vaasi make up for what they lack in technology in numbers.

LOCATIONS ON HEPHAESTUS • • •

◆ THE HOLLOW DARK

The Hollow Dark is the name used by the inhabitants of the installation below the crust of Hephaestus to refer to the miles and miles of passages, prison cells, storage bays, and caverns they call home. Now aged years beyond counting, this facility is a shell of its former self. Some areas are off limits due to nanite infection, many sections no longer have functioning lights, and the prisoners it once held now control much of the facility. In these old and rusted halls the battle between the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire continues unabated.

The halls of the Hollow Dark are twenty feet high in order to accommodate some of the larger Star Confederation races that once staffed the facility. Most rooms have ceilings of similar height, though

LANGUAGE ON HEPHAESTUS

Among the Law-Keepers Unispeak is the default language for the myriad races present, lacking of any other common tongue. New recruits are always trained in Unispeak shortly after their arrival if they are not already familiar with it.

Most Law-Keepers consider speaking their species languages to be a sign of discontent and mistrust. One only speaks in languages not everyone can understand when they have something to hide.

Among the vaasi most speak the vaasi tongue, while some are also fluent in Unispeak. Only true vaasi, phrenics, and other more advanced servitor races speak Unispeak. It is usually only used to taunt enemies and interrogate prisoners during torture, though in such situations getting answers is not the point of the exercise.

some of the larger rooms have higher ceilings. Vertical travel is accomplished through a series of ladders and ropes through the non-functional elevator network in addition to a number of emergency escape hatches and new holes cut in floors where needed. Once there were trains and moving side-walks that allowed speedy transit through the subterranean complex, but these have all stopped functioning now. The walls, floors, and ceilings of the facility all have a hardness of 30 and 30 hit points per inch, though some blast and cell doors are tougher. The furniture in the facility was originally all of metal, but much of this has been broken down over time for weapons and other purposes. Most people now sit and sleep on the floor with a minimum of cushions, though some vaasi have made chairs out of the bones of both their own people and their enemies.

Many of the mechanical and electrical systems in the Hollow Dark have failed. Only airlock doors to the various docking bays or doors that seal off one

faction's territory from another are kept in good enough condition to actually close on command. All others must have their hydraulics pumped by hand or be pried open using a lever. Functioning computers are few and far between, especially outside the areas controlled by the Law-Keepers, due to the lack of familiarity with Star Confederation technology amongst the vaasi. Life support continues to function, but only just barely. Food supplies are drawn from hydroponic gardens for the most part, though the vaasi regularly turn to cannibalism, as is their nature. This is actually a good thing for the Law-Keepers, as it helps keep the faster-reproducing vaasi in manageable numbers. There are a number of condenser units in the Hollow Dark that continually produce water and molecular converters that use oxygen and hydrogen to create water. Despite these devices, there is rarely enough water to go around in the Hollow Dark.

Everything in the Hollow Dark is made from scavenged materials or gained during one of the occasional trips to the other worlds of the Helios system by the Law-Keepers. Most of the Star Confederation technology that once filled the installation has now broken down, including weapons and armor previously used by the Law-Keepers. This means the battles fought in the Hollow Dark are fought with spears made from metal shards, clubs made from building supports, and armor made from broken bulkheads. Any type of high-tech weapons are kept in reserve for when times look bleakest, such as an incursion deep into the territory of one of the factions.

Entire regions of the Hollow Dark have been lost to nanite infection and are now completely overrun. These areas can be hard to detect; nanites are not visible to the naked eye unless they clump together, though other signs such as piles of raw materials or extensive bloodstains sometimes mark these areas. These wild nanite colonies vary in purpose and design, but all of them are beyond the control of anyone in the Hollow Dark. Some attack any living beings they detect, while others seek to carry out genetic modifications on creatures that disturb them. These nanites have become almost like a new type of dangerous terrain, the Hollow Dark's equivalent of quicksand.

There are two tunnels that lead from the surface to the Hollow Dark, both of which are several miles long and can admit any ship of Mediumweight size or smaller. At each end of these tunnels are large blast doors with a hardness of 50 and 600 hit points, which arenormally kept closed. The surface hatch is camouflaged to resemble the surface and cloaked from sensors, making it very difficult to locate. Also the exterior door has eight fire-linked plasma cannons (+5 attack bonus, 72d8 damage with range increment of 4,000 ft.) hidden around it

to defend the entrance from attack. These cannons are operational, but with current power limitations may only be fired three times each before they run out of power. Firing the plasma cannons even once will cause many of the lights in the Illuminatory to go out for several hours until the shipboard generators make up the power lost.

The Hollow Dark is divided into three primary regions: the Illuminatory controlled by the Law-Keepers, the Unclaimed Halls, and the Dark Halls where the vaasi dwell.

◇ THE ILLUMINATORY

Leader: Law and Strueg Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-in-Blood

Population: 40,000+ (Unknown)

Major Exports/Products: None

Major Imports: Recruits, weapons, armor, food

Progress Level: 6

Purchase DC Limit: 30

Black Market DC: NA (No black market)

Item Restriction Limit: None

The layers closest to the surface are called the Illuminatory due to the fact many of them still have light. These levels are inhabited mostly by the Law-Keepers. The Illuminatory is made up of the regions that are in best repair and have the most functioning atmospheric converters. These regions have been cut off from the primary generators for the complex, which are located in the lower levels that are controlled by the vaasi. The Law-Keepers instead use several of their functional spacecraft to supply power to their territory, a practice that keeps their region lit and supplied with fresh air, but this limits their ability to travel to the planets of Eos to gather reinforcements and supplies. The Law-Keepers only have five ships: two shuttles, two freighters and a single space fighter, all of which are PL 8. The freighters are usually tasked with supplying power to the Illuminatory and thus rarely leave Hephaestus.

The Illuminatory contains the two docking facilities that the Law-Keepers use to store their ships and to exit the interior of Hephaestus. These facilities are the ultimate goal of the vaasi stuck on Hephaestus and are always heavily guarded. These two docking bays open to tunnels five miles long that eventually reach the surface of Hephaestus and are large enough to admit a Mediumweight ship. The surface exits to these tunnels are camouflaged to prevent them from being seen by the vaasi or others who may try to attack the facility. The Hollow Dark has no outward sign of its existence on the surface of Hephaestus, making it difficult to find for those who do not know exactly where it is.

◆ THE UNCLAIMED HALLS

Leader: None

Population: Estimated at 10,000

Major Exports/Products: None

Major Imports: Food

Progress Level: 4

Purchase DC Limit: 20

Black Market DC: NA (No black market)

Item Restriction Limit: None

Below the Illuminatory lies the Unclaimed Halls, the buffer zone between the vaasi and the Law-Keepers. This region is generally in poor repair, suffering from lack of lighting, damaged atmosphere converters, and wild nanite colonies.

Many doors in this area have been welded or blocked shut in order to limit the paths each side can use against the other when mounting offensives. These seals cannot hold to a determined effort to bypass them, but they do slow attackers down. Most of these halls have been cleared of valuables, though occasionally new storage lockers are opened, often sparking a short but intense battle over the newly acquired supplies.

Several small groups of unaligned prisoners and rogue Law-Keepers wander this area, trying to keep out of sight and find the supplies needed to get by. Law-Keepers rarely leave the faction but some Law-Keeper recruits are not up to the mental hardships of life in the Hollow Dark, or are more concerned with power than duty. Most become wanderers in the Unclaimed Halls, but some seek to create warbands of their own and take over the Law-Keepers by force. Those who wish to leave the Law-Keepers are allowed to do so freely, but they are very rarely welcomed back into the fold. These groups are usually ignored by the Law-Keepers and actively hunted by the vaasi, but they have been known to cooperate with the Law-Keepers against particularly large vaasi attacks. Few of these unaligned groups live an existence more complex than simply surviving day to day, hoping they can find enough food for the following day. A few have managed to find old storage units of hydroponics gardens that the other factions have missed, but such lucky groups must then defend their find against all others.

FITTING THE HOLLOW DARK INTO YOUR CAMPAIGN

Due to the very isolated nature of the Law-Keepers and the Hollow Dark in general, it may seem difficult to include it in an ongoing campaign.

A good way to overcome this is to have the player characters assigned to explore Hephaestus.

Alternatively, they could learn that an important artifact they need was placed in the armored halls of the facility beneath Hephaestus for safe keeping.

Once the characters arrive they'll probably find exploring or getting anything out of the Hollow Dark is far more difficult than it would seem, especially if they go into the territory controlled by Curthiyug. There is still a great deal of Star Confederation technology to be found in the Hollow Dark, an attractive prospect for any scavenger.

In a campaign Hephaestus can serve as a place to learn about the vaasi from those who have experience fighting them. It is an example of interspecies cooperation that can be used to rally other factions in the system. Given the religious undertones of the Law-Keepers which have rubbed off on the civilizations they recruit from, their backing for a particular plan or individual could carry a lot of weight on Thres and C'thalk.

◇ THE DARK HALLS

Leader: Curthiyug

Population: 80,000+ (Unknown)

Major Exports/Products: None

Major Imports: Food

Progress Level: 5

Purchase DC Limit: NA

Black Market DC: NA (No black market)

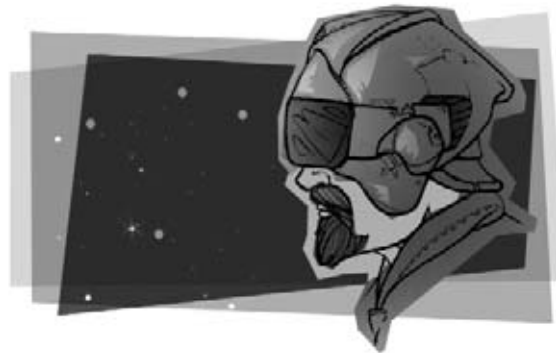
Item Restriction Limit: None

The lowest levels of the Hollow Dark are called the Dark Halls, and they are completely under the control of the vaasi. These levels have minimal lighting, just enough for the low-light vision of the vaasi to function. The air here is stale due to a lack of functional atmospheric converters, but the vaasi do not seem to notice. Instead the vaasi pollute the air by burning their enemies and their own kind for light sources when needed. This casts an eerie red pallor over the lower levels, filling them with smoke and the stench of death. Stories of these dark and evil places, filled with the screams of the dying, appear in many legends of the species of Eos as a place where all evil in the universe originates from. The primary reactor for the facility is located in the Dark Halls and the vaasi have cut off most energy conduits leading outside of their territory, hoarding the energy for their own ends. Unfortunately for the vaasi they do not have much to fuel with this energy, having little understanding of Star Confederation technology.

RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER WORLDS OF THE HELIOS SYSTEM • • •

The Law-Keepers already have sporadic relations with most of the species inhabiting the Helios system, having recruited from their populations in the past. The coqui, wolves, yaom, and saurians consider the Law-Keepers to be holy warriors and will support them in most endeavors even after they learn the real history behind the Hollow Dark. The elgies and haimedians will acknowledge the need for the Law-Keepers and support their efforts, but will try to look beyond the immediate battle to the long-term struggle and how to end it. Humans are likely to support the Law-Keepers as well, though probably without buying into their religious motifs. The mechites have bigger concerns and will have little interest in the Law-Keepers, worrying instead about their own cultural problems or the strange signs coming from the much closer Cronus Belt.

Currently the Law-Keepers have no direct contact with any government, instead working with the populace for their recruitment and supply needs. As time progresses this will probably change and the Law-Keepers will enter into actual treaties with the governments of Helios, trading knowledge of vaasi tactics and technology for troops and supplies to protect the Hollow Dark. The Law-Keepers will be



reluctant to share their remaining Star Confederation technology, but if push comes to shove they will do so. Their remaining devices are few and far between; the cache in the Markin Belt is actually a better source of knowledge and equipment. Law can provide a great deal of data about the Star Confederation, but is more an expert on matters of law and history than technology. The closest allies of the Law-Keepers are likely to be the Saurian Empire, the Wolf Tribes, the Coqui Warcouncil, and the Dawning Star Republic due to the martial nature of these governments, their ready ability to travel between planets, and the fact that saurians and wolves make up a large percentage of the Law-Keeper population.

The vaasi of the Cronus Belt are also likely to take an interest in the Hollow Dark, hoping to free their kin so they may join in the assault on the Helios system. The vaasi population of Hephaestus is not large compared to the forces in the Cronus Belt, but it is full of experienced warriors who know how the inhabitants of Helios think. Unfortunately for the vaasi if Curthiyug escapes from the Hollow Dark and joins with his fellows in the Cronus Belt, his desire for power will probably lead him to try to take charge of the Cronus Belt forces despite the fact he is of the Science Caste. The political struggle that results would likely be deadly, but it could buy much needed time for the inhabitants of the Helios system.

ADVENTURE IDEAS FOR HEPHAESTUS • • •

◇ ABDUCTION STORIES

The player characters begin hearing reports of strange ships in the vicinity along with stories of strange creatures spying on local inhabitants. The locals ask the player characters to investigate after one of the local deputies goes missing. After an exhaustive investigation spent chasing spaceships and strange alien creatures, the characters finally confront the Law-Keepers who have been recruiting in the area. The deputy has chosen to go with the Law-Keepers, who may offer to take the player characters with them as well.

◆ ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

A group of Law-Keepers sent to Eos to gather supplies and recruits are attacked by a group of vaasi while going about their duties and their ship is captured by the vaasi. The Law-Keepers are then forced to reveal themselves to the locals in the search for assistance in reclaiming their ship, which leads them to the player characters. While the Law-Keepers will try to keep their true identity and mission secret, the player characters will probably figure out not all is as it seems.

◆ MISSING PIECES

The player characters find a relic in a Star Confederation ruin that is missing several vital components, but documents found with the relic indicate that the missing parts can be found in the facility beneath Hephaestus. When the characters travel to Hephaestus they must deal with the Law-Keepers and their distrust, in addition to finding the missing pieces which are now deep in vaasi territory.

◆ NANITE TIDE

Curthiyug and the vaasi have developed a means of taking control of the wild nanite colonies and have begun using them against the Law-Keepers again. The computer used to accomplish this is deep in vaasi territory and the Law-Keepers have been unable to reach it. They contact any allies they may have on other worlds to assist with this problem. Player characters who respond to the call will have to infiltrate deep into vaasi territory and destroy the computer, possibly confronting Curthiyug himself in the process.

◆ MEETING OF EVIL

The vaasi of the Cronus Belt have learned of the former prisoners stuck in the Hollow Deep and have launched a ship to try and make contact with them. The ship manages to fight its way into the territory of the Law-Keepers and severely damages several of their ships, forcing the Law-Keepers to summon what help they can from other worlds while fighting off a simultaneous attack from below.

HEPHAESTUS RULES • • •

◆ HOLLOWERS SPECIES

Hollower is a nickname for those who are born and grow up or spend most of their life in the Hollow Dark. These individuals experience a life of constant warfare and struggle, not to mention the high radiation levels they are exposed to daily. Hollowers are technically members of other species from the planets of the Helios system, but they have been greatly altered by their time in the Hollow Dark. A newly recruited Law-Keeper is not considered a Hollower until he has been on Hephaestus for at least five years, by which point he will be suffering genetic mutation from the various wild nanite colonies. Most Hollowers suffer from a wide variety of mutations and cancers, rarely being in good health by any standard. The life of a Hollower is brutal and short.

While most of the species of Helios live separately and often fight over resources and territory, these racial divides quickly disappear in the ranks of the Hollowers. Faced with a terrible foe close at hand, the Hollowers are a remarkably close-knit group where everyone within the Law-Keepers are considered family. Children are a rare blessing among the Law-Keepers and greatly treasured. Most Hollowers have a life expectancy a third of that of other members of their race, but the years they do have are never dull or empty. Hollowers are faced with combat daily, but when they are not fighting they relax with the same gusto they battle the vaasi with. Most Hollowers realize they may be killed at any time and so live each moment as if it were their last. They revel in story telling, dancing, and music, all which have developed from a conglomerated mix of those species that make up the Hollowers. Their music tends to be quick and lively and their dancing similar to their combat styles, filled with acrobatic movements and balance.

Most of the Hollowers believe their duty and place among the Law-Keepers has been chosen by divine providence, something Law and the now-deceased original Law-Keepers did nothing to prevent and at times actively encouraged. Because of this Hollowers fight vaasi and all their kin with a religious fervor that often wanders into fanaticism. Only among the velin are similar feelings found with

MAXIMUM AGES AND AGING EFFECTS

Specie	Child	Young Adult	Adult	Middle Age	Old	Venerable
Hollowers	-1	-2	-4	-15	-20	-30

All age thresholds for Hollowers are based on their original species, modified as designated above.

such intensity, but the velin battle the vaasi with courage and control while the Hollowers channel rage and righteousness into their tests against their hated foes. While most Hollowers are members of a disciplined military brotherhood, in combat they are more like berserkers than elite soldiers. Killing rages often take them while in the heat of combat, but the Hollowers still obey commands quickly and efficiently; they simply get extremely eager in combat. All Hollowers have accepted they will die fighting evil, and so give their deaths willingly, feeling assured they have attained a favorable afterlife for their efforts.

Because of this, Hollowers rarely leave the Hollow Dark, but it does happen. The Hollowers send out ships each year to seek new recruits from among the people of Helios, and several Hollower agents remain behind on these missions to help select recruits for the following year. Others leave on supply runs and stay behind on other worlds to help secure future supplies. As the conflict with the vaasi grows in the Helios system the Hollowers will be in high demand across the system for their long experience with fighting the vaasi. Thus Hollowers can be included as player characters in most interplanetary campaigns, and while most Hollowers are very dedicated to hunting the vaasi, not all are. They have their criminals, rogues, and miscreants just like everyone else.

Due to the odd nature of their habitat, the Hollowers are familiar with both high-tech and primitive devices. Few have extensive information about the operation and repair of machinery and electronics, but many know the basics of computer operation and firearms. Advanced weaponry is rare enough that most rely on more primitive means of defense. Several Hollowers from each generation are trained in spacecraft operation in order to make the necessary recruiting and supply trips to other worlds, but few of these individuals are particularly skilled pilots and none are trained in combat piloting. While the Hollowers are well skilled in fighting the vaasi face to face, they have little experience with more advanced forms of warfare.

Species Traits:

When creating a Hollower character you must select which of the species of the Helios system the Hollower is from. This species' traits form the basis for the Hollower's species traits, as modified by the traits listed below.

Hollowers have the following species traits.

Type: As original race

Size: As original race.

Ability Modifiers: As original race

Speed: As original race.

Mutation: Hollowers receive the genetic template Mutant. Hollowers may select mutations

worth a number of MP equal to their Constitution bonus, if any, and 3 MP worth of mutation drawbacks. If the Hollower's Constitution increases later he may gain additional mutations, though bonuses due to cybernetics and FX items do not count for this purpose.

The following mutations may not be selected except as noted: Acidic Saliva, Cybernetic Dependency, Energy Absorption (Major), Exoskeleton (straas only), Extra Arms (straas only), Force Barrier, Gazing Eye (yaom only), Great Horns (tyrran saurian only), Neutrad Dependency, Prehensile Tail (saurian and wolf only), Prickly Pear (straas only), Radioactive, Scaly Armor (straas and saurians only), Smokescreen, Stinger (straas only), Tail (saurian only), Telekinetic Mind, Telepathy, Tentacle, Vexing Voice, Wings, X-ray Vision.

Skill Bonus: Hollowers gain a +2 species bonus to Survival and Navigate skill checks made in the Hollow Dark.

Limited Occupations: Hollowers may only select from the following occupations: Creative, Forsaker, Law-Keeper Scholar, Law-Keeper Warrior, Scavenger.

Free Language Skills: Native species language, Speak Unispeak.

PL Familiarity: 6

Level Adjustment: +0

Occupations

The following occupations are only available to characters that were raised on Hephaestus in the Hollow Dark.

LAW-KEEPER WARRIOR

Most the Law-Keepers are charged with keeping the vaasi imprisoned in the Dark Halls, spending their days on patrol, guarding key locations, or making weapons. These individuals know little beyond warfare and have a childhood that ends as soon as they can lift a weapon. It is not an easy existence.

Prerequisite: Hollower species

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Climb, Craft (Tribal), Demolitions, Hide, Intimidate, Knowledge (Tactics), Listen, Move Silently, Navigate, Repair, Search, Spot, Survival.

Bonus Feat: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Crafter, or Great Fortitude.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

LAW-KEEPER SCHOLAR

While most Law-Keepers work constantly to keep the vaasi at bay, some are trained in the lost sciences of the Star Confederation in order to repair those technological devices that remain functional. These individuals are the ones charged with flying the Law-Keeper's spacecraft to recruit new members, meaning they have more contact with the outside world than other Law-Keepers. Scholars are a rare breed in the Hollow Dark and are to be protected.

Prerequisite: Int 11+, Hollower Species

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Computer Use, Craft (Any), Decipher Script, Demolitions, Disable Device, Investigate, Knowledge (Technology), Navigate, Pilot, Repair, Research, Search, Survival, Treat Injury.

Bonus Feat: Builder, Gearhead, Spaceship Operation, or Technological Aptitude.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

FORSAKER

Those among the Hollowers who turn their back on the Law-Keepers are called the Forsaken by their former fellows and are completely ignored by the Law-Keepers for their treachery. They often live in small groups in the Unclaimed Halls, trying to survive without allies or support. Most do not survive for long.

Prerequisite: Survival 4 ranks.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Bluff, Climb, Craft (Tribal), Hide, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Navigate, Repair, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, Survival.

Bonus Feat: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Great Fortitude, or Guide.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

TALENT TREES • • •

FAST HERO

TALENT TREES • • •

◆ TUNNEL FIGHTER

The Fast hero is trained to fight in cramped places, such as mines or small corridors, and is more effective when doing so thanks to this talent tree.

TIGHT TUMBLE

When Tumbling through a 5-foot square that has two or more adjacent walls the Fast hero receives a bonus to the Tumble check equal to her Fast level.

CRAMPED DEFENSE

When fighting in a 5-foot square with at least two adjacent walls the Fast hero receives a bonus to her Defense equal to her Fast level.

Prerequisite: Tight Tumble.

TIGHT FIT

The Fast hero can stand in a square that is occupied by an ally and both characters may act normally. Any area of effect attacks that strike the square strike both characters.

Prerequisite: Cramped Defense.

TOUGH HERO

TALENT TREES • • •

◆ FAMINE RESISTANCE

With this talent tree a Tough hero is more resistant to being deprived of the necessities of life, such as food and water.

RESERVES

The time the Tough hero can go without water before making Constitution checks is increased by a number of hours equal to the hero's Tough level. The number of days the Tough hero can go without food before having to make Constitution checks is increased by a number of days equal to the hero's Tough level.

DEEP BREATH

The Tough hero can hold his breath for an additional number of rounds equal to his Tough level.

Prerequisite: Reserves.

WEATHER RESISTANCE

The Tough hero receives a bonus to Fortitude saves against severe weather equal to his Tough level.

Prerequisites: Deep Breath.



SMART HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ SCAVENGED CRAFTS

Able to find raw materials and fashion goods with remarkable ease, the Smart hero is often able easily manufacture simple goods.

PRIMITIVE MANUFACTURE

The Smart hero receives a bonus to Repair and Craft (Tribal) skill checks equal to half his Smart level.

SPARE PARTS

The Smart hero reduces the Purchase DC of raw materials for any item he creates using a Craft skill by his Smart level.

CANNIBALIZE

The Smart hero can take pieces out of one device and use them to repair a device of a similar nature, such as using pieces from a space fighter to repair a freighter. For each point the Smart Hero wishes to reduce the Purchase DC of the spare parts necessary for the repair, the Purchase DC of the item the parts are coming from is effectively reduced by the same amount, but this change only applies if the item is sold before it is repaired. The item the parts are taken from may be repaired and is considered to have suffered damage of the same severity as the device it was cannibalized to repair.

Prerequisite: Spare Parts.

DEDICATED HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ DARKNESS COMBAT

The Dedicated hero is trained in operating without light, both in combat and otherwise, thanks to this talent tree.

NIGHT SENSES

The Dedicated hero reduces all penalties to Spot and Search checks due to darkness by her Dedicated level. This talent never results in a bonus to Spot and Search checks, just a reduction in penalties.

DARK EYE

The Dedicated hero reduces the miss chance due to concealment in created by darkness by her Dedicated level.

Prerequisite: Night Senses.

IMPROVED DARK EYE

The Dedicated hero reduces the miss chance due to concealment created by darkness by double her Dedicated level.

Prerequisite: Dark Eye.

◇ FERVOR

The Dedicated Hero's convictions drive her to perform physical acts that others cannot through this talent tree.

FEARLESS

The Dedicated hero adds her Dedicated level to all Will saves against fear and to the DCs of Intimidate checks made against her.

DESPERATE ATTACK

When the Dedicated hero is reduced to less than half her total hit points, she gains a +2 bonus on damage in melee combat.

Prerequisite: Fearless.

UNYIELDING

The Dedicated hero gains the ability to continue to perform actions when she would otherwise be considered unconscious and dying. When the Dedicated hero's hit points reach -1, she can still perform as though she were disabled, making either an attack or move action every round until she reaches -10 (and dies) or her hit points return to 1 or higher. The hero can choose to succumb to unconsciousness if she thinks that doing so might prevent her from taking more damage.

Prerequisite: Desperate Attack

CHARISMATIC HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ INVIGORATE

With this talent tree the Charismatic hero is able to raise the morale of his allies even when they are falling down from exhaustion.

REVIVE

By spending a full round action encouraging his allies and making a Charisma check (DC 10) the Charismatic hero may rally his allies and help them forget their exhaustion. All allies within 30 feet who are fatigued are considered to not be fatigued for a number of rounds equal to the Charismatic hero's Charisma modifier. Allies must be able to hear the Charismatic hero and a number of allies equal to half the Charismatic hero's Charismatic level may be affected with a minimum of one.

Prerequisite: Inspiration.

IMPROVED REVIVE

By spending a full round action encouraging his allies and making a Charisma check (DC 10) the Charismatic hero may rally his allies and help them forget their exhaustion. All allies within 30 feet who are exhausted are considered to not be exhausted for a number of rounds equal

to the Charismatic hero's Charisma modifier. Allies must be able to hear the Charismatic hero and a number of allies equal to half the Charismatic hero's Charismatic level may be affected with a minimum of one.

Prerequisite: Revive

PUSH ALLIES

By spending a full round action encouraging his allies and making a Charisma check (DC 10) the Charismatic hero may rally his allies and help them ignore their wounds. For a number of rounds equal to the Charismatic hero's Charisma bonus the affected allies who are reduced to negative hit points may act as if they were disabled, taking a single move or attack action each round. If the allies affected reach -10 hit points before this ability ends they are dead and stop acting. If they are restored to 1 or more hit points they may act normally. A number of allies equal to half the Charismatic hero's Charismatic level may be with a minimum of one.

Prerequisite: Improved Revive.



FEATS • • •

◇ **REACH ADVANTAGE**

You are trained to press the advantage when your weapon has a longer reach than your enemy's.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls when you are using a weapon with a longer reach than your opponent.

◇ **STRONG STOMACH**

You may eat foods that are irradiated, spoiled, or otherwise inedible in the eyes of others.

Benefit: You can eat any food that has spoiled naturally without harm. You gain a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves to avoid harmful side effects of eating poisoned or irradiated food.

◇ **SUNDER DEFENSE**

You are trained to cant your weapons when others seek to destroy them, making it more difficult to break your weapons in combat.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1

Benefit: The hardness of any weapons you wield increases by your Dexterity bonus.

SPECIES CLASS • • •

◇ **HOLLOWER SCROUNGER**

Hollowers are taught from birth to survive on minimal supplies and deal with the harshest conditions. Trained in dark, irradiated tunnels, Hollowers are a tough breed that are accustomed to scavenging what they need to survive instead of buying it. Indeed even after they enter other civilizations many Hollowers prefer to scrounge for their own needs instead of going shopping.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Hollower Scrounger species class.

Hit Die

The Hollower Scrounger class gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Hollower Scrounger class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Hollower Scrounger class skills are as follows.

Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Mechanical, Structural, Tribal) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Jump (Str), Knowledge (History, Local, Tactics, Technology) (Int), Listen (Wis),

HOLLOWER SCROUNGER

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1 st	+0	+1	+0	+1	Constitution +1, Scrounge, Contagion Resistance	+1	+0
2 nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	Wisdom +1, Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3 rd	+2	+2	+1	+2	Constitution +1, Mutation	+2	+0

Navigate (Int), Perform (Any) (Cha), Repair (Int), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Starting Feats

Hollower Scroungers receive the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat as a bonus feat.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Hollower Scrounger species class.

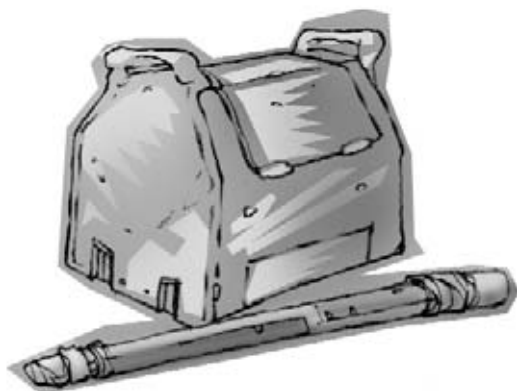
Contagion Resistance

Accustomed to the unpleasant, disease-ridden living spaces of the Hollow Dark, the Scrounger gains a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves to resist disease.

Scrounger

Hollowers are well trained at finding items they need, having grown up in a world without stores or merchants. Instead Hollowers thoroughly search their surroundings, finding inexpensive goods that others have lost or discarded instead of purchasing them. This is especially important due to the lack of wealth and valuables most Hollowers enter the outside world with.

Scroungers may use their Search skill instead of a Craft or Profession skill when checking to increase their Wealth score after going up a level.



When a Scrounger enters a new area, such as a settlement, ruin, or forest, the scrounger may spend five days examining his surroundings, which normally involves leafing through refuse, looking for hidden supply caches, and looking for natural food sources. As long as the scrounger does not leave the area he may find items by making a Search check against the item's Purchase DC instead of making a Wealth check. This may only be done once a day and requires eight hours of constant searching. Scroungers may take 10 or 20 on this check, but doing so can take many days of searching. Also the gamemaster may rule that certain items will not be found regardless of how well the Scrounger rolls. You will not find EDF combat vehicles in the Hollow Dark no matter how hard you search. This ability is most commonly used to find weapons, armor, and food in the Hollow Dark. Each time this ability is used the character must expend an action point. These items are either lost, damaged, or discarded and may be claimed by the Scrounger, but if the items are PL 4 or higher the Scrounger must repair them before they may be used. This requires a Repair check against the Purchase DC of the item, and the Repair check is modified as normal for the Scrounger's PL Familiarity.

Bonus Feat

At 2nd level the Hollower Scrounger gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below.

Alertness, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Blind-Fight, Brawl, Builder, Creative, Endurance, Gearhead, Great Fortitude, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Salvage, Technological Aptitude, Track.

Mutation

At 3rd level, the Hollower may gain another mutation with a MP cost of 1 or less. The Hollower need not select a mutation drawback.

HEPHAESTUS ADVANCED CLASSES • • •

◇ LAW-KEEPER WARDEN

While all Law-Keepers are trained in combat and the various skills needed to survive war in the Hollow Dark, the Law-Keeper Wardens are the elite of the Law-Keeper soldiers. Trained both to motivate their troops and fight on the front lines, they are an unusual mixture of charisma and combat skill. In the Hollow Dark where life is short and evil is ubiquitous, keeping the spirits of the Law-Keepers up is of great importance, and Wardens work hard to make sure their men never forget what they are fighting for.

Select the Law-Keeper Warden if you want to be a highly motivated soldier who is able to rally his troops as well as fight.

The quickest path to this advanced class is from the Charismatic hero and Strong hero classes.

Requirements

To become a Law-Keeper Warden, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +3

Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency or Archaic Weapon Proficiency

Talents: Command, Coordinate

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Law-Keeper Warden advanced class.

Hit Die

The Law-Keeper Warden gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.



Action Points

The Law-Keeper Warden gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

LAW-KEEPER WARDEN

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1 st	+0	+1	+0	+1	Weapon Focus, Charismatic Plus	+1	+1
2 nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	Dark Dweller	+2	+1
3 rd	+2	+2	+1	+2	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4 th	+3	+2	+1	+2	Sworn Enemy (Vaasi)	+3	+2
5 th	+3	+3	+1	+3	Symbol of Leadership	+3	+2
6 th	+4	+3	+2	+3	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7 th	+5	+4	+2	+4	Warden Recognition	+4	+3
8 th	+6	+4	+2	+4	Weapon Specialization	+4	+3
9 th	+6	+4	+3	+4	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10 th	+7	+5	+3	+5	Charismatic Plus	+5	+4

Class Skills:

The Law-Keeper's Warden class skills are as follows.

Climb (Str), Craft (Tribal), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (History, Local, Tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Perform (Any) (Cha), Read/Write Language, Search (Int), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier (4 + Int modifier for nonhumans).

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Law-Keeper Warden advanced class.

Weapon Focus

At 1st level the Law-Keeper Warden receives the Weapon Focus feat as a bonus feat.

Charismatic Plus

At 1st and 10th level the Law-Keeper Warden receives the Charismatic Plus feat as a bonus feat.

Dark Dweller

At 2nd level the Law-Keeper Warden has become accustomed to living in the dark, hot hallways of the Hollow Dark and knows it thoroughly. The Law-Keeper Warden receives a +2 bonus to Knowledge (Local), Navigate Search, and Survival checks made in the Hollow Dark.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, a Law-Keeper Warden gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Law-Keeper Warden must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Alertness, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Blind-Fight, Brawl, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Confident, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Endurance, Far Shot, Frightful Presence, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Renown, Stealthy, Toughness, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

Sworn Enemy (Vaasi)

At 4th level, a Law-Keeper Warden receives special training for fighting against the vaasi and learns much of the lore the Law-Keeper

have about this evil race. The Law-Keeper Warden gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against vaasi creatures, including their servitor species. Additionally, he gets a +2 bonus on weapon damage rolls against vaasi creatures.

Symbol of Leadership

Beginning at 5th level, the Law-Keeper Warden receives a bonus to Will saves equal to the number of people under his command when in combat. This bonus may not exceed his class level.

Warden Recognition

At 7th level the Law-Keeper Warden is recognized among the Law-Keeper as a leader and warrior of great skill. The Law-Keeper can request a meeting with Law himself and requisition a ship from the Law-Keeper fleet during emergencies. When interacting with other Law-Keeper the Warden receives a +2 bonus to Charisma based skill checks and Charisma checks involved in using Talents.

Weapon Specialization

At 8th level, the Law-Keeper Warden gains weapon specialization with a specific melee or ranged weapon to which he has also applied the Weapon Focus feat. You get a +2 bonus on damage rolls with the chosen weapon.

EQUIPMENT • • •

Most of the tools, weapons, armor and other items in the Hollow Dark have been repaired multiple times and are very old, making it difficult at best to keep such advanced technological items functioning. Thus, while there are a handful of Star Confederation relics lying about, simple tools and weapons are far more common. Generally speaking, the Hollowers spend their daily lives in a PL 4 environment with some areas that are much more advanced.

There are no stores or markets in the Hollow Dark. Most individuals fashion the goods they need themselves or trade with a friend, but there is no set currency or rates of exchange. The Law-Keeper work to keep everyone fed and properly equipped, meaning in most respects the Hollow Dark resembles a military base economically. The Purchase DCs listed below are for comparison when such goods are available in a more mercantile surrounding.

On Hephaestus the Law-Keeper allow their members to carry whatever equipment they want. Gun control and similar ideas are completely unknown to them. Restriction levels carry no weight on Hephaestus, but individuals who prove themselves enemies or untrustworthy will have all their

ADVENTURING GEAR

Name	PL	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Climbing Magnets	5	Small	4 lb.	12	-
Law Relay	8	Tiny	1 lb.	34	-
Night Helmet	8	Small	5 lb.	28	-

dangerous possessions removed from them. The Restriction levels listed for the items below are for when these items are taken to more ordered worlds.

Generally speaking, items may not be purchased on Hephaestus with Wealth checks. Instead characters must barter with goods, such as weapons or armor, as detailed under the Barter skill. Any items of PL 4 and above are rare and can only be found through a lengthy search, usually requiring at least a month per progress level above PL 4.

In addition to normal items, a number of relics similar to those found in the ruins of Eos can be found in the Hollow Dark. Most of these are in the hands of one faction or another and relate somehow to security, but there still remain a number of relics to be found in the bowels of the Hollow Dark.

ADVENTURING GEAR • • •

Climbing Magnets

Created by taking apart the massive system of magnetic levitation trains that once served the Hollow Dark, climbing magnets are essentially large magnets that are attached to the user's hands and feet with gloves and boots. While climbing metallic surfaces, such as the interior walls of the Hollow Dark, the climbing magnets grant the user a +4 equipment bonus to Climb checks. The charac-

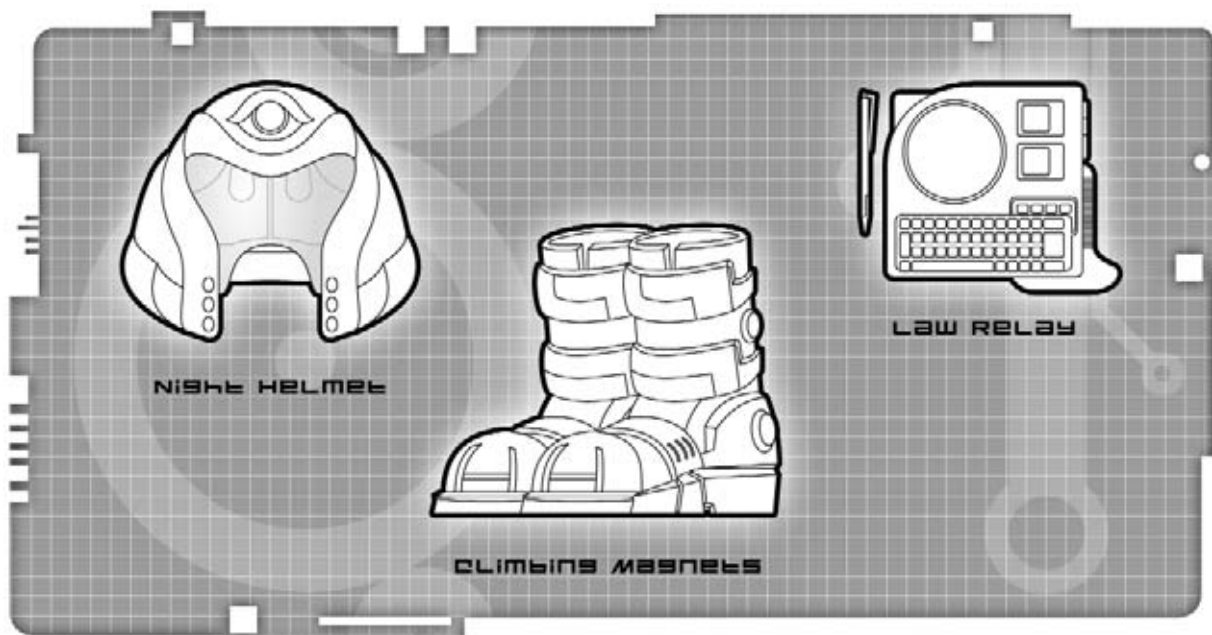
ter can also climb completely smooth vertical surfaces and ceilings that are made of metal with a Climb check, DC 20. When wearing climbing magnets the character suffers a -2 penalty to all Computer Use, Disable Device, Drive, Craft, Demolitions, Forgery, Pilot, Repair, and Treat Injury checks due to the limitations they place on the wearer's fine manipulation.

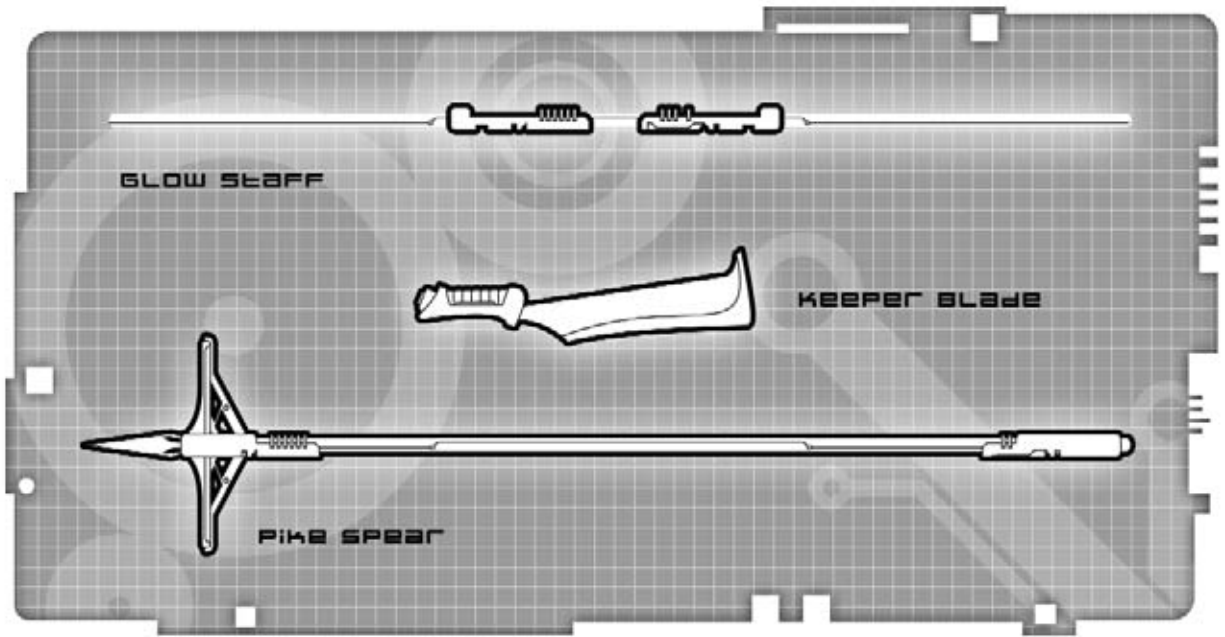
Law Relay

A small portable computer that was assigned to all officers of the Hephaestus prison installation, this device allowed the user to communicate with other users, access the prison computer system, and communicate with Law when necessary. A handful of these devices remain, most of which are used by the most learned Law-Keeper scholars and the leaders of the Law-Keepers. Most of the remaining Law relays have lost much of their functionality due to corrupted programming. The primary use of them currently is to communicate with Law while away from a Law-Keeper stronghold.

Law relays grant the user a +8 equipment bonus on Computer Use skill checks and can run any type of program, including App-3 programs.

Night Helmets





Kept in the Hephaestus prison installation in case of a power blackout, night helmets use a combination of infra-red, light amplification, and motion detectors to create a very accurate image of the surrounding area even in complete darkness. While wearing a night helmet a character gains Darkvision 60 feet and can effectively see around corners and through walls within that distance as long as there is some manner of gap or hole in the wall.

WEAPONS • • •

The weapons used by the Law-Keepers are generally simple or archaic weapons made completely of metal, with only a handful carrying more advanced weapons. Ranged weapons are common due to the impressive close combat abilities most vaasi have. The vaasi on the other hand rely on their natural abilities and only a few of their warriors carry weapons, most of which have been scavenged from slain Law-Keepers.

LAW-KEEPER WEAPONS • • •

The Law-Keepers have constructed a number of weapons of their own design from the materials present in the Hollow Dark. These weapons are the most common among both the Law-Keepers and

the vaasi, who get most of their weapons from the Law-Keepers.

◆ MELEE WEAPONS

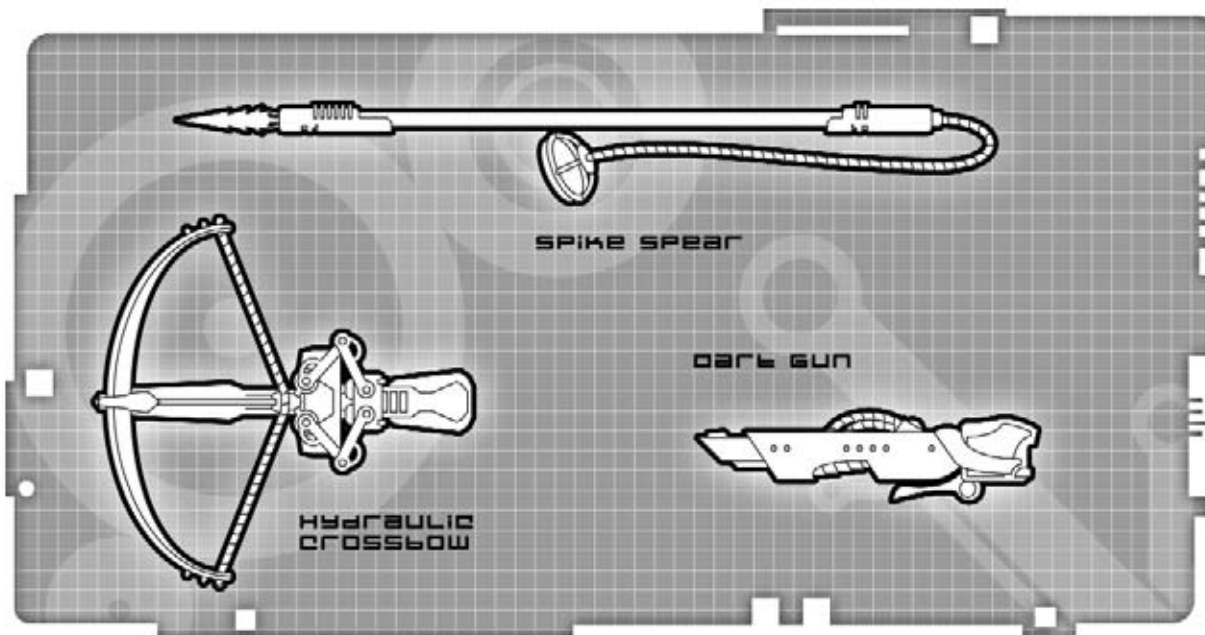
Melee weapons are very common in the Hollow Dark and most inhabitants carry at least one. Most of these weapons are made from the metal furniture and structures that originally filled the structure. This metal, cerelium, has a hardness of 30 and 20 hit points per inch of thickness. In addition to the weapons listed below most of the melee weapons listed in the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game are also used by the Law-Keepers.

Glow Staff

A large polearm style weapon, glow staffs are eight foot metal poles that have been hammered in to the shape of a blade for the final three feet of length. These weapons are made from special glowing metals that the Star Confederation use as emergency light sources in some regions of the facility. The metal is actually translucent and holds a glowing liquid within its center that will glow for several centuries after an electrical current is run through it. The Law-Keepers have used these light sources to create glowing polearms that make elim-

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Glow Staff (Archaic)	9	1d10	20	Slashing	Large	8 lb.	15	-
Keeper Blade (Archaic)	4	1d6	18-20	Slashing	Small	4 lb.	7	-
Pike Spar (Archaic)	4	1d8	19-20	Piercing	Large	9 lb.	9	-



inate the need to carry a separate light source while fighting. The light produced by these weapons is painful to the vaasi, activating their Light Sensitivity species trait. Glow staffs are a rare weapon among the Law-Keepers and are highly prized.

Glow staffs illuminate a 30 foot radius around the staff.

Keeper Blade

A short, heavy-bladed machete-like weapon, these small swords are carried by most Law-Keepers and are easily manufactured from the metals in the walls of the Hollow Dark. Keeper blades are ubiquitous in the Hollow Dark and serve as eating utensils and tools in addition to weapons. Some Law-Keepers fight using a pair of these blades, a fighting style that is quickly developing into its own subculture of warriors within the ranks of the Law-Keepers.

Pike Spear

Similar to a boar spear from Earth, these long spears are used to fight vaasi in tight corridors so the vaasi cannot approach close enough to use its

natural weapons. The pike spear is a large all-metal spear with a crossbar just below the head that prevents any creature struck with the pike spear from approaching closer and is especially effective when used in teams.

A target struck by the pike spear must succeed in an opposed Strength or Dexterity check against the wielder of the pike spear to move closer to the wielder of the pike spear on the following turn. Both the wielder of the pike spear and the attacker chose which ability it prefers to use in this contest.

Pike spears are a reach weapon that extends the wielder's reach by 5 feet, but the pike spear may not be used against adjacent opponents.

◇ RANGED WEAPONS

In addition to the weapons below, compound bows, crossbows, javelins, shuriken, and whips, all described in the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game, are used by the Law-Keepers.

Dart Guns

Originally the Star Confederation guards on Hephaestus were assigned more high-tech non-

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage	Range	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase	Restriction
			Type	Type	Increment					DC	
Dart Gun (Personal Firearm)	5	1d4 + poison	20	Piercing	20 ft.	S	6 int.	Small	5 lb.	20	Lic (+1)
Hydraulic Crossbow (Simple)	5	2d6	19-20	Piercing	40 ft.	1	-	Large	25 lb.	24	Lic (+1)
Spike Spear (Simple)	5	1d6	20	Piercing	20 ft.	1	-	Med	4 lb.	18	-

lethal devices than dart guns, but in the face of decreasing high tech supplies and ammunition the Law-Keepers have gotten by with the resources at hand. All the dart guns used by the Law-Keepers have been created using air compressors taken from damaged atmosphere converters. The dart guns used by the Law-Keepers are utilized primarily to deliver poisons, and the Law-Keepers no longer coat their darts in knock out drugs. The Law-Keepers have developed a type of poison that is especially effective against the vaasi, detailed below.

Hydraulic Crossbow

Created using some left over pipes and air pumps from other systems in the Hollow Dark, these crossbows use hydraulic pumps to bend a massive steel bar, to which is attached a steel cord in the manner of a crossbow. This combines to make an incredibly powerful crossbow, but it takes some time to reload. Crossbowmen among the Law-Keepers are a trained and regimented combat unit in and of themselves that is usually deployed in large groups on guard duty in the Law-Keeper strongholds. They rely on staggered fire to make up for their slow reload time and can be very effective when fighting from behind cover.

Hydraulic crossbows require a full action to reload.

Spike Spear

A weapon designed to limit movement of enemies, a spike spear is a barbed javelin with a length of cable attached to its end. The other end of the cable is attached to a powerful electromagnet, which is activated by the user and then dropped on a metal surface, securing the rope and limiting the movement of a creature struck by the spear. These weapons have become scarcer with time as the parts necessary to build and repair electromagnets become more and more rare.

If a target is struck for more than 4 points of damage by a spike spear the spear is stuck in the target. The spear may be removed by the target as an attack action, but doing so inflicts 1d6 points of damage. Removing the spear without inflicting damage requires a full round action and a Treat Injury check (DC 15). An attacker can choose not to allow his spike spear to become stuck to a target.

Once the target is stuck on the spike spear the attacker can either use the attached cable to prevent the target from moving more than 30 feet away or activate the magnet. Attempting to limit the movement of the target means the target must make an opposed Strength check against the attacker each time it wishes to move more than 30 feet away. A success by the target means for each point by which the target beats the attacker, the target may move five feet in the intended direction and

attacker is pulled five feet in the same direction as well. Any attempt by the target to move more than 30 feet away inflicts 1d4 points of damage on the target.

If the attacker activates the magnet the same rules apply, but the target must make a Strength check (DC 17) to move more than thirty feet from the magnet. Success means the target has ripped the magnet from the floor and can then move normally. Each attempt inflicts 1d4 points of damage on the target.

The cable has a hardness of 10 and 10 hit points. The magnet has a hardness of 15 and 20 hit points.

STAR CONFEDERATION WEAPONS • • •

The Hollow Dark was originally supplied with a large number of Star Confederation weapons spread throughout a number of weapons lockers and armories. These weapons were kept on hand in case of the prisoners escaped from their cryogenic prisons or caused other problems. Since little combat was expected, the weapons assigned to the Hephaestus installation were mostly surplus weapons that were being phased out of the Star Confederation military in favor of more advanced weapons. Thus the Star Confederation weapons in the Hollow Dark are not representative of the Star Confederation at its height. Few of the remaining Star Confederation weapons in the Hollow Dark are in good repair, meaning many suffer penalties to attack rolls, damage, or range increment due to this damage. Ammunition is rare, especially for plasma weapons.

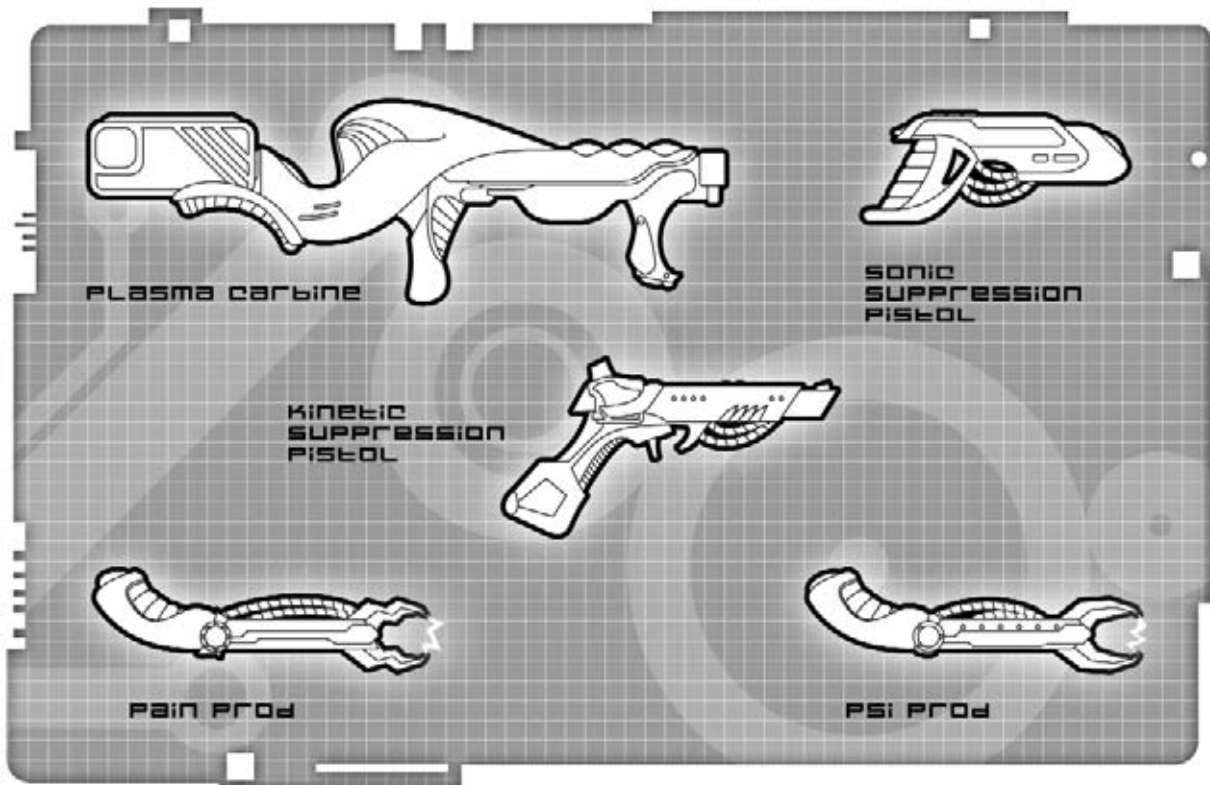
Many of the weapons supplied to the Hephaestus installation were non-lethal in nature in order to allow prisoners to be captured and returned to cryogenic sleep. All Star Confederation weapons required power packs to function, and are not compatible with the power packs used by other races.

♦ MELEE WEAPONS

Concerned primarily with rendering their targets harmless instead of injuring them, the melee weapons used by the Star Confederation were powered weapons that delivered energy charges to the target. All of these weapons required power packs to function and some Law-Keepers have taken to using weapons without any power as clubs, which is rarely good for the weapon's internal mechanisms.

Pain Prods

A small club that resembles a metal baton with a pair of jagged metal prods at one end, anything that comes into contact with the prods once the pain prod is activated receives a powerful jolt of energy



that is specially tuned to interact with the target's pain receptors. While the target takes no actual damage, the feeling of pain is overwhelming. A creature struck by a pain prod must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or become effectively disabled, meaning the target can only take a single move or attack action each round, and suffers a -4 penalty to defense, attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws for 1d10 rounds. The character takes no actual damage. Each use of a pain prod uses up 2 charges. Pain prods do not function against creatures that are not subject to critical hits.

Pain Prod

One of the first anti-psionic weapons developed by the Star Confederation, these weapons greatly resemble pain prods but have a black metal housing instead of chrome. Any psionic creature touched with a psi prod must make a Will save (DC 18) or lose 2d6 power points and be stunned for 1d4 rounds. The weapon has no effect on non-psionic beings.

◇ RANGED WEAPONS

The Star Confederation ranged weapons present in the Hollow Dark are mostly pistols and other weapons designed for close quarters combat. While there were numerous other types of weapons originally assigned to the installation, the three described are the most common now. Most of these weapons are in the hands of the Law-Keepers and are kept in reserve for particularly important battles. Many of these weapons have achieved a status similar to religious relics and the battles they have won are recited by their owners as a litany of honor. Also these weapons have often been decorated or ornamentally altered over the years and are now covered with runes and symbols that the Law-Keepers believe bring luck or power in combat.

Kinetic Suppression Pistol

The original sidearm of the guards assigned to the Hephaestus prison installation, kinetic suppression pistols use a powerful gravitic charge to hurl a ball of thick, viscous fluid at the target. While this

STAR CONFEDERATION MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Pain Prod	8	Special*	-	-	Small	3 lb.	29	-
Psi Prod	9	Special*	-	-	Small	3 lb.	35	-

* See weapon description for details

STAR CONFEDERATION RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical Damage	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Kinetic Suppression Pistol	8	2d8*	20	Bludgeoning	100 ft.	S, A	40 box	Small	3 lb.	30	Lic (+1)
Plasma Carbine	8	4d10	20	Fire	80 ft.	S, A	SF plasma power pack	Med	7 lb.	33	Mil (+3)
Sonic Suppression Pistol	8	Special**	-	Sonic	50 ft.	S	SF power pack	Small	4 lb.	36	Mil (+3) -

* See weapon description for details Nonlethal damage ** See weapon description

weapon does little actual harm to the target, it strikes with great force and is very painful. When the balls strike their target they spread out, striking a large area in a fashion similar to a paint ball. The gel used in these rounds is made up of a number of organic materials that may be drawn from many types of organic waste, such as food, and a functional gel generator is in the hands of the Law-Keepers. This generator can create several clips of ammunition each day from a few pounds of organic material, meaning ammunition is plentiful for the kinetic suppression pistol and is freely handed out among the Law-Keepers to anyone who has a kinetic suppression pistol, though for rules purposes is considered to have a Purchase DC of 3 per clip. The ammunition is not available anywhere else in the Helios system. This weapon is not highly favored by the Law-Keepers due to its non-lethal nature.

Plasma Carbine

A short barreled version of the Star Confederation plasma rifle that once served as the standard long arm of the Star Confederation army, a number of plasma carbines were assigned the Hollow Dark facility as a last resort measure against prisoner uprisings. These weapons are very highly prized among the Law-Keepers, but they have no means to secure more ammunition for them. Now the Law-Keepers have more plasma carbines than they can use due to lack of ammunition. A plasma carbine consumes 2 charges per shot.

Sonic Suppression Pistol

The preferred non-lethal weapon among the former guards of the Hephaestus installation, sonic suppression pistols fire a specially calibrated burst of sound at the target that simultaneously causes the target to suffer heart palpitations and lose his balance. The target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 1d4 points of Dexterity and Constitution damage in addition to being stunned for 1d4 rounds. A sonic suppression pistol consumes 3 charges per shot.

◇ AMMUNITION

The Star Confederation by and large relied on energy weapons for their military needs, though a small number of projectile weapons were kept on hand for special purposes. With no means to resupply projectile weapons, there are few surviving Star Confederation projectile weapons that still have ammunition, the kinetic suppression pistol being a notable exception.

Star Confederation Power Packs

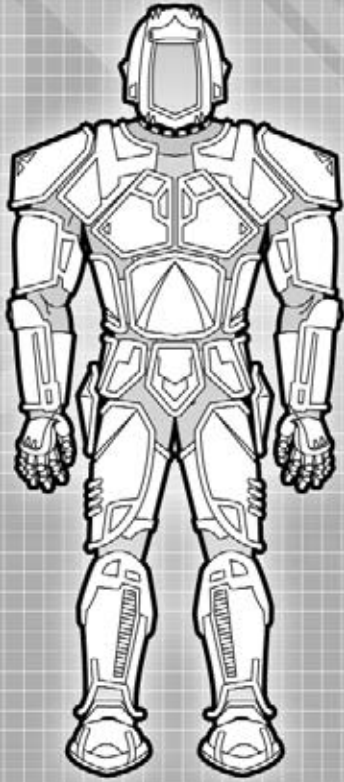
Star Confederation energy weapons relied on a universal standard power pack that was of similar size to a stick of gum. The power packs used in plasma weapons did not use this standard power pack and instead had a larger power pack. In either case these power packs were designed to be easy to recharge at any Star Confederation facility, and several recharging stations remain functional in the Hollow Deep. Unfortunately none of these are plasma recharging stations, meaning the Law-Keepers have no way to recharge their plasma weapons currently. The crystals and energy storage devices used in these power packs makes it impossible to recharge them using less than PL 8 technology. Star Confederation power packs have a negligible weight, carry 100 charges, and have a Purchase DC of 30.

ARMOR • • •

Most of the armor used by the Law-Keepers is scavenged armor that has been made from the walls and furniture of the Hollow Dark. A few suits of Star Confederation armor remain, but these are rare and are generally worn by the Law-Keepers' greatest warriors. The vaasi do not wear armor beyond simple leather armor used by warrior vaasi, most of which is made of the skins of Law-Keepers they defeat, or from other vaasi.

Collapsing Shield

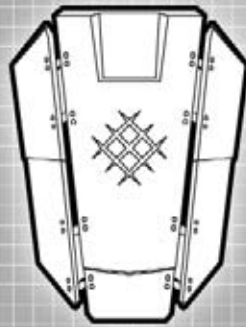
The cramped corridors of the Hollow Dark make it difficult to maneuver with a full size shield in some areas, especially when crawling through air ducts



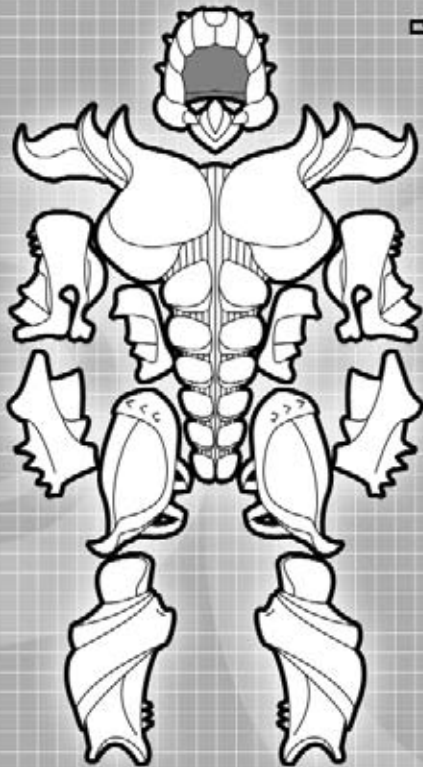
STAR CONFEDERATION
RIOT ARMOR



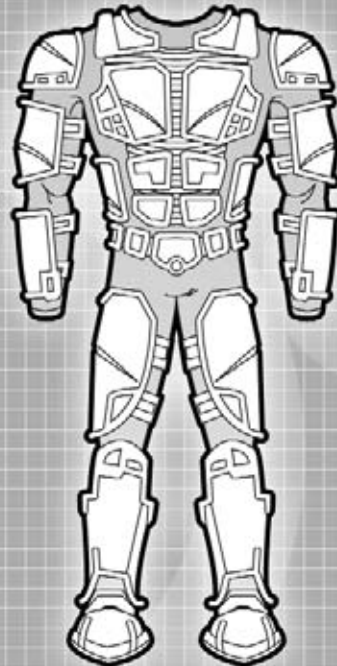
SCAV ARMOR



COLLAPSING
SHIELD



SHADE PLATE



LAW-KEEPER UNIFORM

ARMORS

	PL	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
LIGHT ARMOR										
Law-Keeper Uniform	9	Concealed	+5	+1	+8	-0	30 ft./20 ft.	3 lb.	35	-
Shade Plate	4	Archaic	+3	+1	+6	-1	30 ft./20 ft.	13 lb.	19	-
MEDIUM ARMOR										
Scav Armor	5	Archaic	+5	+2	+3	-5	25 ft./20 ft.	28 lb.	18	-
HEAVY ARMOR										
SF Riot Armor	9	Tactical	+11	+3	+3	-6	20 ft./15 ft.	35 lb.	44	Mil (+3)
SPECIAL ARMOR										
Collapsing Shield	5	Archaic	+2	-	-	-2		8 lb.	14	-

and other small spaces. In response, a collapsing shield was developed by Law-Keeper craftsmen. While the shield is folded up it grants a +1 equipment bonus to Defense against a single attacker, with an Armor Check Penalty of -1. The shield takes a free action to deploy and when it is deployed it uses the abilities listed below. Collapsing the shield back up requires a full round action.

Law-Keeper Uniform

The original uniforms used by the staff of the installation below the surface of Hephaestus were made from advanced materials that were highly resistant to wear and tear, allowing them to last for thousands of years as long as they were not actively torn apart. A number of these uniforms survive among the Law-Keepers and are usually worn by the leaders of the Law-Keepers. These uniforms have special intelligent fibers that automatically contract when they are impacted with a great deal of kinetic force or energy, protecting the wearer. The uniforms also include a number of special ceramic plates carried in pockets spread throughout the armor for extra protection. In addition to the normal benefits of armor Law-Keeper uniforms grant the wearer Acid Resistance 5, Cold Resistance 5, Fire Resistance 5, Electricity Resistance 5, and a +2 equipment bonus to all saving throws against radiation.

Star Confederation Riot Armor

A rarity in the Star Confederation, riot armor was a modified suit of Star Confederation battle armor that was deployed to the Hephaestus prison installation in case of prisoner rebellion. Before the fall of the Star Confederation the armor never saw use on Hephaestus, but since then it has become the most highly sought after type of armor among the Law-Keepers. All of the high-tech systems that formerly

filled the armor, such as built in medical scanners, electrified armor plating, portable force field generators, stun, incapacitation and repair nanites, and advanced sensor systems have since failed. Star Confederation riot armor grants the wearer grant the wearer Acid Resistance 10, Cold Resistance 10, Fire Resistance 10, Electricity Resistance 10, a +6 equipment bonus to all saving throws against radiation, and the suit has an environmental seal with twenty four hours of oxygen.

Scav Armor

The most common armor among the Law-Keepers, scav armor is made from whatever scavenged bits of metal, thread, cloth, and other materials can be found lying around the Hollow Dark. One suit of scav armor is often very different from the next in terms of appearance, but they function in the same way. Scav armor is usually made by the Law-Keeper who intends to wear it, but some Law-Keepers have developed reputations as craftsmen and make suits for their friends.

Shade Plates

An uncommon form of armor among the Law-Keepers, shade plates are suits of body armor made from the chitin plates pried from the corpse of a true vaasi. Because of the rarity of the materials used in its construction, few Law-Keepers wear shade plates, but those that do wear them with pride. Some Law-Keepers consider it to be inviting corruption of the soul to wear the skin of the vaasi, while others see it as a sign of combat prowess and honor. Many see the fact the vaasi also make armor from their own kind as supporting the idea that shade plates are not such a good idea. Shade plates are favored by Law-Keepers who scout through the Unclaimed Halls and the Dark Halls due to its ability to blend into shadows effectively, but it

POISONS

Poison	Type	Save DC	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Purchase DC	Restriction	Craft DC	Time
Napper	Injury	16	1d6 minutes Unconsciousness	1d6 minutes Unconsciousness	13	Res (+2)	22	8 hr.
Creeping Moldstuff	Injury	17	2d6 Con	1d6 Con	16	Mil (+3)	28	8 hr.
Anti-Vaasi Venom	Injury	17	2d6 Con	2d6 Dex	21	Res (+2)	30	16 hr.

is rarely worn when expecting battle in order to avoid possible confusion and friendly fire incidents.

Shade plates grant a +4 equipment bonus on Hide checks made in dark environments.

POISONS • • •

While the original guards of the Hephaestus facility relied on advanced methods to control their prisoner population such as pain prods and portable force field generators, the Law-Keepers do not have the luxury of such devices. Since the fall of the Star Confederation the Law-Keepers have been forced to rely on more primitive methods as the remaining technology of the Star Confederation continues to break down. The dart guns used by the Law-Keepers combined with poison has become one of the most effective methods to fight the vaasi lurking in the Hollow Dark, especially considering their inability to manufacture ammunition for most other weapons.

The following types of poisons are made by Law-Keeper chemists in a lab in the primary stronghold of the Law-Keepers. These poisons are in high demand and there is never enough to go around. The average Law-Keeper armed with a dart pistol has at most three or four doses of various poisons. Due to numerous experiments concerning how poisons affect the vaasi, the Law-Keepers have developed a very powerful anti-vaasi poison that other groups in the Helios system may be very interested in.

Napper

The easiest to make of the poisons used by the Law-Keepers, it merely knocks the target out for a short time. Usually this time is used to kill the target before it can awaken.

Creeping Moldstuff

A deadly neurotoxin, it was developed from a variety of unusual molds that took over one of the hydroponic gardens operated by the Law-Keepers.

Anti-Vaasi Venom

The product of many years of research, anti-

vaasi venom is far more effective against other creatures. Unfortunately some of the ingredients for the poison are only found on C'thalk, so the supply of anti-vaasi venom is very limited due to the small number of off-world trips made each year. Anti-vaasi venom is usually assigned to Law-Keepers who have proved their marksmanship with a dart gun. Vaasi suffer a -4 penalty to Fortitude saves against anti-vaasi venom.

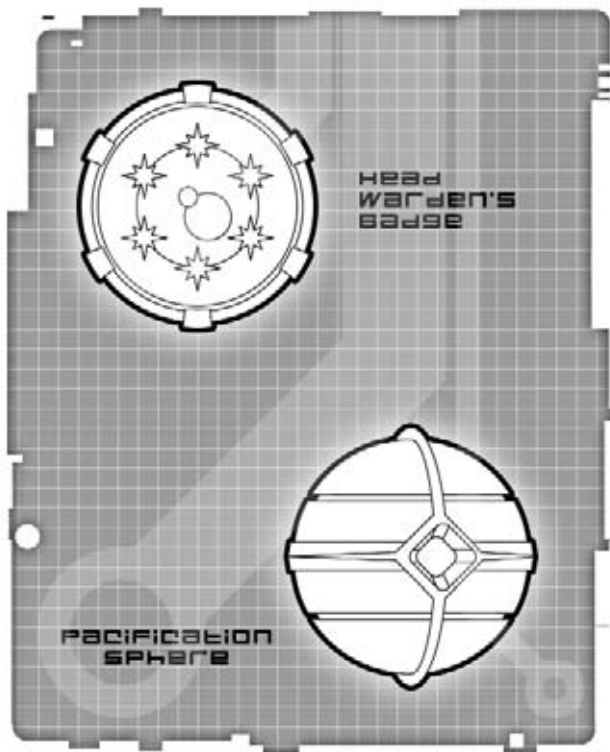
RELICS • • •

While much of the equipment used in the Hephaestus prison facility was second hand or older equipment, there were still some items in the prison that were on the cutting edge of Star Confederation technology. These items are now completely beyond the comprehension of anyone in the Hollow Dark. Law understands only some of the technology involved, being more of a bookkeeping program than a repair program. These items are greatly prized by the few that possess them, much in the same way relics on Eos are prized by the humans who have settled there.

Head Warden's Badge

This small circular metallic badge carries the insignia of the Star Confederation, six stars on a black field, on its front and a molecular bonding pad on its back that attaches on an atomic level to any item it is placed against. The badge may only be removed once attached by someone who matches the genetic structure of its programmed owner, a program which may be altered by each owner when he passes it on. Thus the badge has been passed down through the Law-Keepers since their founding from one leader to another, and it currently is in the possession of Streug Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-in-Blood. The Head Warden's Badge is considered one of the most important items the Law-Keepers possess and its loss would be a great blow to their morale.

The Head Warden's Badge detects incoming attacks and warps nearby gravity fields to deflect the attack, granting the wearer a +8 deflection



bonus to Defense and energy resistance 10. The badge also reads nearby gravity fields to get the position of nearby objects and communicates this information directly to the wearer's mind, granting the wearer Blindsight 60 ft. According to legend the badge has other abilities, including slowing down time, but no one has been able to activate them in centuries.

Pacification Sphere

The Hollow Dark was once equipped with dozens of these objects, many of which were put in automated launchers and activated whenever a prisoner was detected out of his cell or freezing tank. Pacification spheres are used much like grenades, but they contain their own gravity drives and guidance systems that allow them a range increment of 100 ft. and grant the user a +4 equipment bonus on attack rolls. Once the pacification sphere strikes its target, it activates, releasing a powerful burst of energy that disrupts the nervous systems of targets nearby. All creatures within ten feet of the target must make a Reflex save (DC 19) or take 3d6 points of Strength, Dexterity, Wisdom, and Charisma damage and become panicked for 1d6 hours. Those who pass their saving throw take 1d6 points of Strength, Dexterity, Wisdom, and Charisma damage and avoid the panicked condition. Most creatures cease moving when struck with a pacification sphere, and those that can keep moving are usually so disoriented that they are easily captured. A pacification sphere must be recharged after each use, a process that may only be done at a functional Star Confederation facility, such as a Law-Keeper stronghold.

SPACECRAFT • • •

The Star Confederation once commanded massive fleets numbering in the tens of thousands of ships, but these fleets were eventually ground into dust by the continuing war with the vaasi. Now only a small number of Star Confederation ships survive, scattered across dozens of solar systems. The five ships in the control of the Law-Keepers are one of the largest collections of surviving Star Confederation vessels in the galaxy. All the Law-Keeper ships use cannibalized parts and have been repaired with less-than-ideal materials, meaning they are no longer functioning at peak performance. This, combined with the fact that these ships were not top of the line Star Confederation space craft, means the Law-keepers are not a great power in terms of space craft.

Law-Keeper Deliverance Shuttle

The ships most commonly used by the Law-Keepers to make runs to neighboring worlds, these vehicles were once used as launches and short range shuttles by the Star Confederation. They were never designed to reach planets as far away as Thres and have been retrofitted with expanded supplies to make such trips possible. These ships were originally intended as personnel and cargo transports, but the Law-Keepers have outfitted them with some basic weapons in case the space navy of the Saurians seeks to give them trouble. When making recruitment runs the cargo hold is usually fitted to hold twenty extra passengers.

When not in use the Deliverance shuttles are kept in one of the two docking bays used by the Law-Keepers and their generators are used for backup power for the Illuminatory.

Type: Ultralight (PL 8)

Subtype: Shuttle

Defense: 17

Flat Footed Defense: 13

Autopilot Defense: 13

Hardness: 40

Hit Dice: 10d20 (200 hit points)

Initiative Modifier: +4

Pilot's Class Bonus: +5

Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4

Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4

Size: Huge (-2 size)

Tactical Speed: 4,500 feet (9 squares)

Length: 30 feet

Weight: 10 tons

Targeting System Bonus: +4

Crew: 2 (expert +8)

Passenger Capacity: 12

Cargo Capacity: 6 tons

Grapple Modifier: +12

Base Purchase DC: NA

Restriction: NA

ATTACK

2 fire-linked mass canons +6 ranged (12d12)

DESIGN SPECS

Engines: Inertial flux engines, thrusters

Armor: Ablative

Defense Systems: Nanite repair bay, improved autopilot system, radiation shielding

Sensors: Class VII sensor array, improved targeting system

Communications: Laser transceiver

Weapons: 2 fire-linked mass cannons (5,000 ft. range incr.)

Law-Keeper Ascendant Reconnaissance Fighter

Not originally assigned to the Hephaestus prison installation, it was salvaged by the Law-Keepers in their earliest days using their two freighters. The Ascendant reconnaissance fighter was originally designed to infiltrate enemy fleet formations and gather information before returning home to its own fleet. To accomplish this, the Ascendant was equipped with a number of stealth systems, but several of these have malfunctioned over time. The Ascendant is not a powerful ship in terms of combat effectiveness, but it is very effective at remaining undetected and is used to observe possible recruits and supplies on C'thalk and Thres. If the Hephaestus installation was actually attacked from space the Ascendant would be the core of the Law-Keeper military response.

Type: Ultralight (PL 8)

Subtype: Reconnaissance Fighter

Defense: 17

Flat Footed Defense: 13

Autopilot Defense: 13

Hardness: 40

Hit Dice: 8d20 (160 hit points)

Initiative Modifier: +4

Pilot's Class Bonus: +5

Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4

Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4

Size: Huge (-2 size)

Tactical Speed: 5,000 feet (10 squares)

Length: 24 feet

Weight: 9 tons

Targeting System Bonus: +4

Crew: 2 (expert +8)

Passenger Capacity: 1

Cargo Capacity: 800 lb.

Grapple Modifier: +8

Base Purchase DC: NA

Restriction: NA

ATTACK

2 fire-linked heavy maser cannons +6 ranged (24d8/19-20)

DESIGN SPECS

Engines: Inertial flux engines, thrusters

Armor: Ablative

Defense Systems: Cloaking screen, improved autopilot system, particle field

Sensors: Class IX sensor array, Achilles targeting software, improved targeting system

Communications: Laser transceiver

Weapons: 2 fire-linked heavy maser cannons (8,000 ft. range incr.)

Law-Keeper Basket of Plenty Supply Freighter

The two freighters in the possession of the Law-Keepers were originally assigned to make weekly supply runs between Hephaestus and Eos, but when the vaasi invaded the system their crews kept them at Hephaestus as they knew leaving the safety of the installation would be suicide. The ships have since been put to use generating power for the Illuminatory after the vaasi cut off the installation's upper levels from access to the facility's generators. They rarely leave the docking bay they are stationed in, and then only to carry cargo that the shuttles are not large enough to hold. If both freighters are sent out on missions the Illuminatory must use both the Deliverance shuttles and the Ascendant space fighter to supply power to their section or face living in darkness with stale air until the freighters return, and even combined these three ships cannot meet all the power needs of the Illuminatory.

Type: Light (PL 9)

Subtype: Shuttle

Defense: 11

Flat Footed Defense: 7

Autopilot Defense: 7

Hardness: 40

Hit Dice: 30d20 (600 hit points)

Initiative Modifier: +4

Pilot's Class Bonus: +5

Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4

Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4

Size: Colossal (-8 size)

Tactical Speed: 4,000 feet (8 squares)

Length: 300 feet

Weight: 3,200 tons

Targeting System Bonus: +5

Crew: 2 (expert +8)

Passenger Capacity: 6

Cargo Capacity: 2800 tons

Grapple Modifier: +16

Base Purchase DC: NA

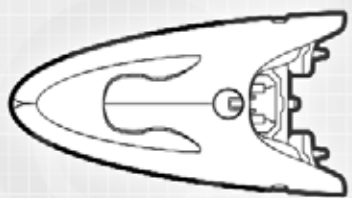
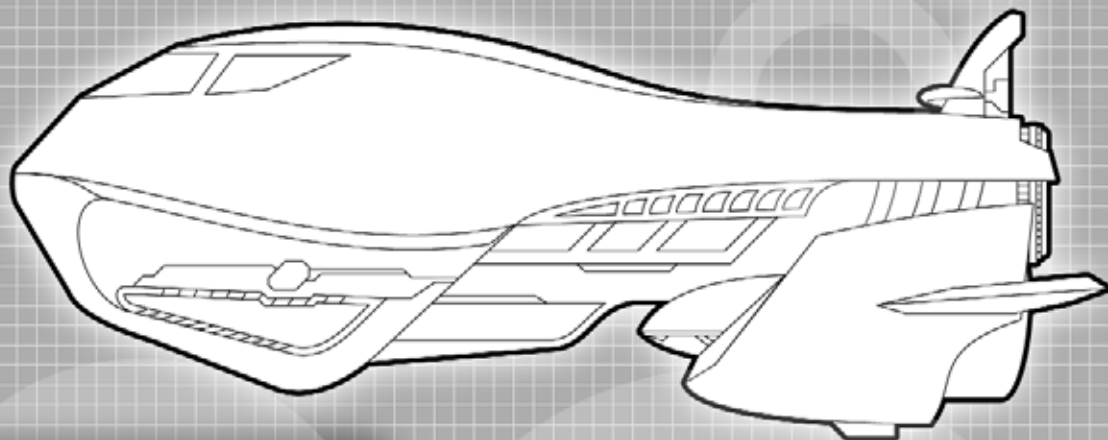
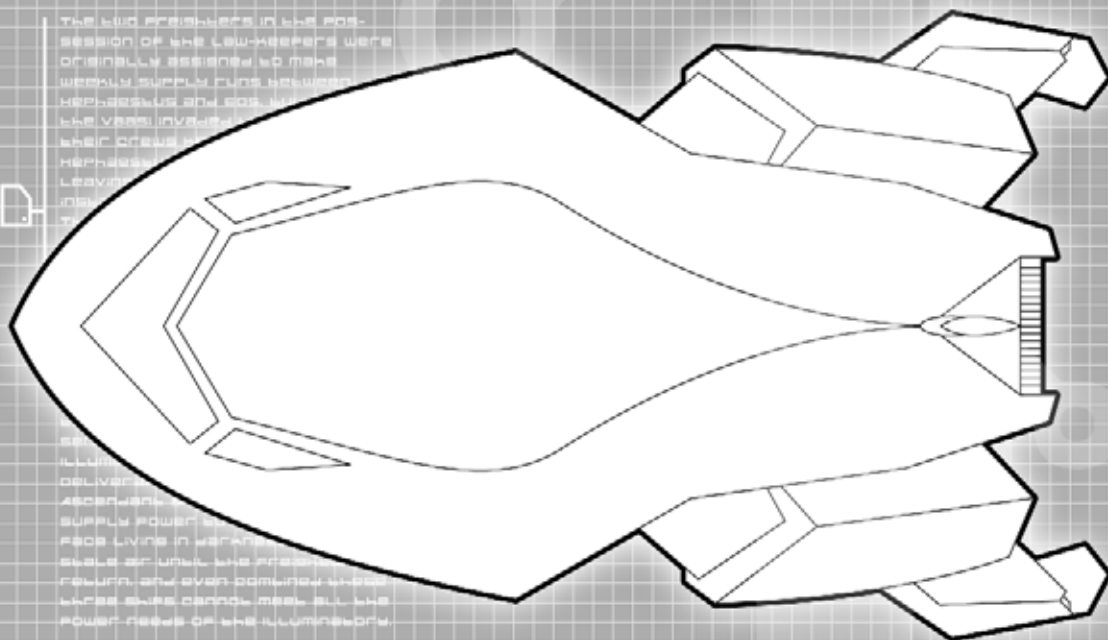
Restriction: NA

ATTACK

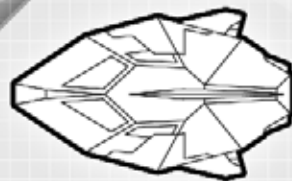
Silver gun +1 ranged (8d12)

BASKET OF PLENTY SUPPLY FREIGHTER

The two freighters in the possession of the Law-keepers were originally assigned to make weekly supply runs between Helios and the colonies. The vessels involved in this case were the *Ascendant* and the *Deliverance*. Leaving the planet to return to the colonies, the freighters were supposed to supply power to the colonies. The fact that the freighters were able to return and even deliver their cargo was a mystery. The power needs of the colonies...



DELIVERANCE SHUTTLE



zoom X3

ASCENDANT RECONNAISSANCE FIGHTER

ATTACK OF OPPORTUNITY

Point-defense system +5 ranged (2d12x10)

DESIGN SPECS

Engines: Inertial flux engines, thrusters

Armor: Ablative

Defense Systems: Nanite repair bay, improved autopilot system

Sensors: Class VII sensor array, improved targeting system

Communications: Laser transceiver

Weapons: 2 fire-linked mass cannons (5,000 ft. range incr.)

XENOMORPHS • • •

Originally the cells of the prison facility beneath Hephaestus held members of all the Star Confederation member races in addition to a number of different vaasi and other non-Confederation species. Now only the vaasi and the descendants of the Star Confederation remain, all others being wiped out in the intervening time, though there are rumors of some Star Confederation groups hiding deep in the Unclaimed Halls or hidden away in some of the remaining cryogenic freezing cylinders.

Under the command of Curthiyug, the vaasi have not been idle in their time in the Hollow Dark. Through controlled breeding and genetic manipulation Curthiyug has managed to create several new strains of vaasi servitors. Most of his experiments are not fertile and die out within a single generation of their creation, but a lucky few have managed to survive and reproduce. If Curthiyug's activities are allowed to continue, he may be able to create the ultimate vaasi warrior.

◇ MUTATED VAASI (TEMPLATE)

Any vaasi who spends more than a few years in the Hollow Dark will be affected by the genetic manipulation nanites that lurk throughout the Hollow Dark. The vaasi born in the Hollow Dark are usually born mutants, inheriting the damaged genetic traits of their parents. Half of these mutants are sterile, limiting the population growth of the vaasi, but those that are fertile are highly prized by Curthiyug for their use in breeding experiments.

Vaasi that have been mutated, which includes almost all of the vaasi in the Hollow Dark, have the following template.

Template Traits

Mutated is an inherited or gained template that can be added to any type of vaasi.

Challenge Rating: Same as original.

Special Qualities: A mutated vaasi retains all the abilities of its original vaasi type and gains the following abilities:

Mutation: Mutated vaasi gain both normal and

drawback mutations. The mutated vaasi selects mutations worth a number of MP equal to his Constitution bonus and 3 MP worth of drawback mutations. The following mutations may not be selected: cybernetic dependency, energy absorption, force barrier, glazing eye, neutrond dependency, radioactive, telekinetic mind, telepathy, tentacle, thick fur coat, thin fur coat, wings, x-ray vision.

Sterile: If the mutated vaasi has a Constitution of 13 or less it is sterile.

Curthiyug's Control: All mutated vaasi of the Dark Halls suffer a -4 penalty on Will saves to avoid following a direct order of Curthiyug.

Ability Scores: +2 Strength, -2 Charisma

Mutated Vaasi Soldier: CR 5

Medium aberration; HD 5d8+15; hp 37; MAS 19; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +2 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+3/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor, mutation, radiation resistance, Curthiyug's control; AL vaasi; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 6.

PL Familiarity: 4

Skills: Drive +5, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Repair +1, Speak Language (Vaasi), Spot +3, Survival +4.

Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Simple Weapon Proficiency.

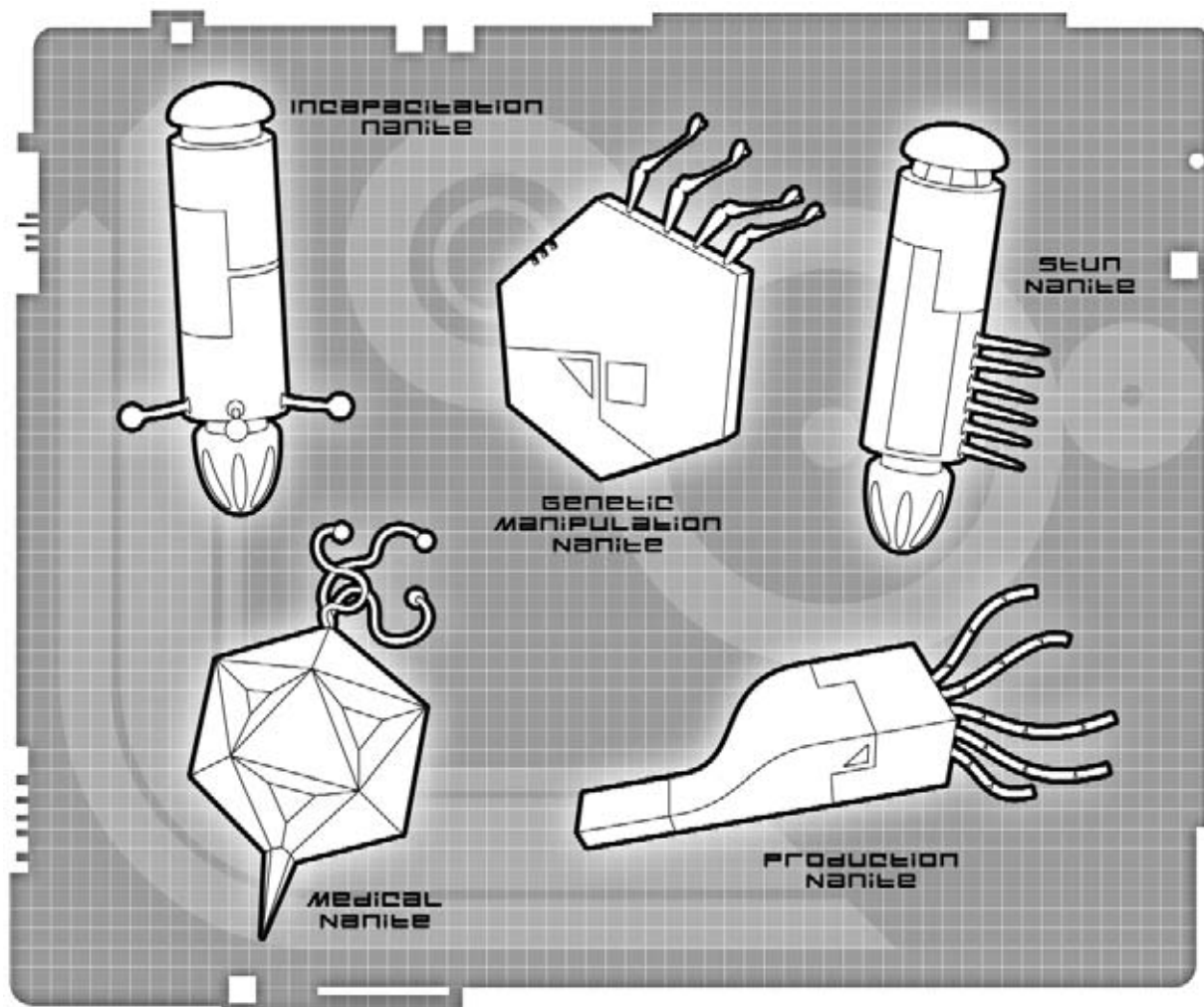
Advancement: By character class.

Mutations: Blood Hunger, Darkvision, Festering Sores

Equipment: Machete, leather armor, crossbow.

NANITES • • •

Like most Star Confederation installations, the Hephaestus prison facility was originally outfitted with a large number of nanite colonies. These nanites were originally controlled by the staff of the facility. Star Confederation policy prevents artificial intelligence entities, such as Law, from ordering nanites to create more nanites, out of a fear that a malfunctioning artificial intelligence program might create a huge swarm of dangerous nanites. Control of most of these nanites was taken from Law by Curthiyug shortly after his escape from cryogenic sleep and the nanites were reprogrammed to carry out Curthiyug's commands. Some were programmed to make weapons, some to attack the facility's guards, and some to modify the genetic structure of vaasi in an attempt to create more



effective servitor races. Although Law eventually managed to block Curthiyug from commanding the nanites, now no one can command the majority of them. Entire sections of the station are now lost to wild nanite colonies that attack anyone who enters, and nearly all the inhabitants of the Hollow Dark suffer from damaged DNA of some form or another, inducing mutations in many. Law has a small number of nanites still under his control and they are a closely guarded resource. Likewise Curthiyug has a number of nanite colonies of his own, most of which are used for genetic modification of his followers in his pursuit of making the perfect vaasi servitor race.

Theoretically someone other than Law could order the nanites under its control to reproduce, but they would need a Star Confederation identity code, formerly issued to all Star Confederation personnel, to do so. Unfortunately the records of such codes that were kept in the computers of the Hollow Dark have been lost over time, but such records may remain in the ruins of Eos. Hacking the nanites is nigh impossible due to their advanced programming and the difficulty of interfacing with them. Such an effort requires a Computer Use check (DC 40).

The nanites that remain in the Hollow Dark are described below. These nanites are good examples of Star Confederation nanite technology, and can-

not be replicated by any species currently living in the Helios system, though the organic nanites of the haimedians come close. All these nanites are considered at least PL 9.

Star Confederation nanite colonies are controlled by a control program, usually housed in a portable computing device of an installation's main computer. Law has the programs necessary to control the nanites still under its command but cannot command the various wild nanites due to damage in their programming. Law can pass the authority to command loyal nanites to individual Law-Keepers through a Law relay. When doing so, the Law-Keeper still uses Law's identity code and so may not order the nanites to replicate. Curthiyug's nanites are controlled by the makeshift computer network he has constructed within his territory and they cannot be controlled remotely.

Any of the nanite types described below may be wild nanites, in which case they attack any target that approaches within ten feet of them until the target is incapacitated, dead, or infected as determined by the type of nanite. The nanites will continue to attack every living being until they are destroyed or they can sense no creatures within ten feet of them. Wild nanites also randomly attack objects, but are more attracted to things that move.

Species Traits

All nanites are considered to have the following traits:

Swarm Subtype: A swarm is a collection of nanites that acts as a single creature. A swarm of nanites has the characteristics of a construct, except as noted here. A nanite swarm has a single pool of Hit Dice and hit points, a single initiative modifier, a single speed, and a single Defense. A nanite swarm makes saving throws as a single creature. A single swarm of nanites occupies a square, but its reach is 0 feet, like its component creatures. In order to attack, it moves into an opponent's space, which provokes an attack of opportunity. It can occupy the same space as a creature of any size, since it crawls all over its prey. A nanite swarm can move through squares occupied by enemies and vice versa without impediment, although the nanite swarm provokes an attack of opportunity if it does so. A nanite swarm can move through even the smallest cracks or holes. A nanite swarm contains one million nanites. A nanite swarm can compress itself to Tiny size if required, such as when being transported.

Traits: A swarm has no clear front or back and no discernable anatomy, so it is not subject to critical hits or flanking. A nanite swarm is immune to all weapon damage. Reducing a nanite swarm to 0 hit points or lower causes it to break up, though damage taken until that point does not degrade its ability to attack or resist attack. Nanite swarms cannot be tripped, grappled, or bull rushed, and they cannot grapple an opponent.

A nanite swarm is immune to any effect that targets a specific number of creatures with the exception of technology affecting effects. Nanite swarms takes half again as much damage (+50%) from effects that affect an area, such as splash weapons and explosives.

Nanite swarms are susceptible to high winds. For purposes of determining the effects of wind on a swarm, treat the swarm as a creature of the same size as its constituent creatures. A swarm rendered unconscious by means of nonlethal damage becomes disorganized and dispersed, and does not reform until its hit points exceed its nonlethal damage.

Swarm Attack: Nanite swarms don't make standard melee attacks. Instead, they deal automatic damage to any creature whose space they occupy at the end of their move, with no attack roll needed. Nanite swarm attacks are not subject to a miss chance for concealment or cover. A nanite swarm's statistics block has "swarm" in the Attack and Full Attack entries, with no attack bonus given. The amount of damage a swarm deals is based on its Hit Dice, as shown in the table.

Nanite Swarm HD	Swarm Base Damage
1-5	1d6
6-10	2d6
11-15	3d6
16-20	4d6
21 or more	5d6

Damage reduction sufficient to reduce a swarm attack's damage to 0, being incorporeal, and other special abilities usually give a creature immunity (or at least resistance) to damage from a swarm.

Swarms do not threaten creatures in their square, and do not make attacks of opportunity with their swarm attack.

Swarm Detection: Spotting a nanite colony requires a Spot check (DC 15).

◆ INCAPACITATION NANITES

Once a part of the basic prisoner control systems of the installation, incapacitation nanites swarm over targets and construct physical impediments around them, usually heavy duty shackles and such, out of nearby materials. They are usually found in areas that were once used as prisoner containment areas and are more common in the lower levels of the Hollow Dark. Currently the Law-Keepers have one colony of incapacitation nanites. Wild incapacitation nanites will usually try to immobilize every available target and keep them immobilized until they stop resisting, which usually is caused by death by dehydration.

Species Traits

Bind: Incapacitation nanites can attack creatures in the same square by creating chains, handcuffs, and similar objects from nearby materials. The target can make a Reflex save (DC 16) to avoid the nanites. If the nanites are successful they begin immobilizing the target, inflicting a -2 Dexterity penalty on the target. Each round the nanites may spend a full round action to continue binding the target. The victim receives another Reflex save (DC 16) to resist becoming more incapacitated by the nanites. If this save fails the Dexterity penalty increases by -2 each round until the target's Dexterity reaches 0 or the target somehow manages to remove or shut down the nanites. Getting free from the restraints created by incapacitation nanites requires an Escape Artist check (DC 30) or a Strength check (DC 32). The restraints have a hardness of 20 and 15 hit points. A person is affected by incapacitation nanites may breathe normally and may be fed by someone else.

Wild Nanites: Wild incapacitation nanites will try and incapacitate all creatures they come across until they cannot move at all, only then moving on to a new target.

Incapacitation Nanites ♦ CR 4

Medium Construct (Swarm); HD 10d10+10; hp 65; MAS -; Init +1; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex); BAB +7; Grap +2; Atk incapacitation or swarm; Full Atk incapacitation or swarm; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., construct immunities; AL None; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 12, Con -, Int 4, Wis 14, Cha 1. PL Familiarity: 9

Skills: -

Feats: -

Advancement: -

♦ MEDICAL NANITES

Once a mainstay of medical procedures in the Star Confederation, these nanites are found in droves in wild nanite colonies. Only a single colony remains under the control of Law in the Hollow Dark. Medical nanites are used by releasing them onto a target creature, over which they spread out while they inspect the creature. After making a diagnosis they begin treating the creature, or wait for instructions if programmed to support a physician.

Species Traits

Medical Programming: Medical nanites have a +16 species bonus to Treat Injury skill checks and the Surgery and Xenomedic feats as bonus feats.

Wild Nanites: Wild medical nanites are very unpredictable, often both attacking and healing the same creature. Wild medical nanites have a 50% chance each hour to heal the nearest creature, otherwise they will attack the creature. Wounded characters that do not move increase the chance of being healed to 75%. This roll must be made each hour to determine the behavior of the wild medical nanites.

Penetrating Swarm: Due to their knowledge of anatomy medical nanite swarms receive a +2d6 bonus to damage when using their swarm attack.

Medical Nanites ♦ CR 5

Medium construct (swarm); HD 5d10+10; hp 37; MAS -; Init +2; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex); BAB +3; Grap -2; Atk swarm; Full Atk swarm; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., construct immunities, medical programming; AL None; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 14, Con -, Int 5, Wis 16, Cha 1.

PL Familiarity: 9

Skills: Treat Injury +19.

Feats: Surgery, Xenomedic.

Advancement: -

♦ PRODUCTION NANITES

Production nanites were once a staple of Star Confederation manufacturing and were extremely common, but the surviving colonies are few and far between. There are only three production nanite colonies remaining among the Law-Keeper. They are only used to create the most vital pieces of equipment.

Species Traits

Breakdown: Production nanites can ignore the hardness or damage resistance of any creature they use their swarm attack on.

Craft Skills: Each colony is considered to have a +20 species bonus to Craft (All) and Repair skill checks and they work four times faster than a human being. Production nanites only require basic materials to function, as they can rearrange the atomic structure of compounds to suit their needs.

Wild Nanites: Wild production nanites tend to break down objects into their component elements, leaving iron, copper, and other materials lying around in piles. They generally do not attack moving targets, instead breaking down inanimate objects.

Production Nanites ♦ CR 8

Medium construct (swarm); HD 8d10+10; hp 54; MAS -; Init +1; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex); BAB +6; Grap +1; Atk swarm; Full swarm; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Breakdown, Darkvision 60 ft., construct immunities; AL None; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 12, Con -, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 1.

PL Familiarity: 9

Skills: Craft (All) +18, Repair +18

Feats: -

Advancement: -

♦ STUN NANITES

Originally there were colonies of stun nanites implanted into the walls of the Hephaestus prison installation every few feet in prisoner sections, allowing for quick incapacitation of troublesome prisoners. Many of the nanites were exposed to a power surge during the reawakening process and were rendered inoperable when the prisoners began escaping. The few surviving stun nanite colonies are either wild or have been placed around vital Law-Keeper interests, such as the entrance to the installation's docking bays. They may be pro-

grammed to attack any creature that comes within ten feet that is of a specific species, wearing a specific uniform, emitting specific radio signals, or attack creatures that lack one of these features. Most of the remaining stun nanites under the control of Law are configured to attack any vaasi and anyone not wearing a Law-Keeper symbol.

Species Traits

Stun Attack: Any creature struck by the swarm attack of stun nanites must make a Fortitude save (DC 16) or be stunned for 1d6 rounds as the nanites deliver a massive electrical shock to the target. The nanites will continue to stun the target until its controller says otherwise, and if there are multiple creatures the stun nanites will work to keep them all stunned, attacking one creature per round. As soon as stun nanites are activated they notify their controller of the situation in order to summon help.

Swarm Attack: The Swarm attack of stun nanites can only deal nonlethal damage.

Wild Nanites: Wild stun nanites attack any creature that they encounter until it stops moving.

Stun Nanites ♦ CR 10

Medium construct (swarm); HD 10d10+10; hp 65; MAS -; Init +2; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex); BAB +7; Grap +2; Atk swarm; Full Atk swarm; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., construct immunities, stun attack; AL None; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 14, Con -, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 1.

PL Familiarity: 9

Skills: -

Feats: -

Advancement: -

Equipment:-

♦ GENETIC MANIPULATION NANITES

In the Star Confederation, genetic manipulation often involved nanoviruses and other nanites to alter the genetic information of the target. This was normally done under careful observation in highly advanced medical facilities and the process could be long and painful. Such procedures were never undertaken lightly and could result in terrible mutations if anything went wrong.

Curthiyug has no such compunctions about using nanites for genetic modification, using them on his own troops to create the perfect servitor race. When Law broke Curthiyug's control over the majority of the nanite population of the Hollow Dark, several of the genetic manipulation units were left to their own devices, becoming wild nanites. These nanites eventually infected the Hollowers and caused a great many mutations among them. Now most Hollowers have a few of these nanites still

within their system, randomly tweaking their DNA in a manner more suitable for vaasi physiology. This process causes more harm than good among the Hollowers, as few have beneficial mutations that outweigh the more disadvantageous mutations. Most newcomers to the Hollow Dark are infested with these genetic manipulation nanites within a few years of arriving. Receiving your first mutation is seen as a rite of passage among the Hollowers. Unfortunately both for vaasi and the Hollowers these nanites are not gentle and the transformations they cause are painful and sometimes deadly. Curthiyug has a number of colonies of genetic manipulation nanites and uses them regularly on his own troops. The Law-Keepers do not have any genetic manipulation nanites under their control and generally eliminate them when possible.

Species Traits

Genetic Manipulation: Characters who encounter genetic manipulation nanites may become infected and develop mutations. The nanites will seek out any creature that they can sense and try to infect it. Any creature damaged by the genetic manipulation nanite's swarm attack can try to fight off the infection with a Fortitude save (DC 20). If successful the nanites are not able to infect the target, though it may try again on subsequent attacks. If the save fails the target begins undergoing genetic modification by the nanites.

After 1d6 hours the infected creature by the nanites begins suffering terrible pains as his body begins reacting to the nanites. The character suffers a -2 penalty to all ability checks, attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks due to the pain, and these penalties continue until the modification is complete. Each day after the character was infected the character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15). Failure means the character suffers one point of Constitution damage that will not heal until the character completes the modification, which requires ten successful daily Fortitude saves. Among the Hollowers when this transformation begins the subject is usually forced to remain in bed and rest until the process is complete due to the weakness suffered by those going through genetic modification.

After the modification is complete the nanites leave through normal biological functions and seek out a new target. Once the process is complete the character gains 3 mutation points worth of mutation drawbacks, and beneficial mutations equal to the character's Constitution bonus in mutation points. If the character does not have a Constitution bonus he gains no beneficial mutations. The mutations should be selected from the list from D20 FUTURE SRD,

though some are not available in Dawning Star (see the Hollower species description). Once this process occurs it cannot be undone; the genetic damage is permanent, barring the use of hyper-advanced Star Confederation technology. The character now effectively has the Mutant genetic template. All native Hollowers begin with this template.

Vaasi who go through this process must make five successful Fortitude saves (DC 10) to complete the transformation.

Genetic Manipulation Nanites ♦ CR 4

Medium construct (swarm); HD 4d10+10; hp 32; MAS -; Init +0; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 10, touch 10flat-footed 10; BAB +3; Grap -2; Atk swarm; Full Atk swarm; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., construct immunities, genetic manipulation; AL None; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 10, Con -, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 1.

PL Familiarity: 9

Skills: -

Feats: -

Advancement: -

♦ VAASI CRAWLER

A new breed of vaasi servitor created by Curthiyug using controlled breeding and genetic engineering, the vaasi crawler are perfectly suited for life in the Hollow Dark. Small and nimble, they can use their claws to climb most surfaces and often hunt through the Dark Halls by skittering across the ceiling and dropping on unsuspecting prey. Though smaller than soldier vaasi, they are more ferocious and usually roam in packs.

Vaasi crawlers look like small versions of vaasi soldiers, only all their limbs end in large claws, limiting their ability to use tools. Crawlers do not stand upright unless engaged in combat, otherwise using all six legs for locomotion. The shells of the crawlers are flat black, allowing them to easily disappear into shadow and darkness. The four eyes of the vaasi crawler are blood red and highly reflective.

While vaasi crawler are not of animal intelligence, they are not very smart and do not like using weapons or many other tools. They are extremely cunning and skilled at planning ambushes and other attacks, but other than combat they have few mental skills. They often roam around in packs of six to ten members and when not hunting tend to cluster around whatever true vaasi they feel most comfortable with. Unfortunately for the crawlers, they are a perfect bite-sized snack for true vaasi.

Thus far the population of the vaasi crawlers is small compared to the number of soldier vaasi, but it is increasing rapidly. The vaasi crawlers have made nests in a number of locations that other

vaasi could not reach, such as air vents and crawl spaces, and even Curthiyug does not know their true number. Vaasi crawlers can quickly traverse great distances in the Dark Halls by using short cuts too small for other vaasi and some true vaasi have taken to using them as messengers on occasion. Soldier vaasi consider crawlers good eating and often hunt them, but this has led to a number of soldier vaasi getting killed due to underestimating the vaasi crawler. Among the vaasi crawlers there is little social structure, though within each group there is a slightly larger dominant member who provides what little leadership the pack requires. Vaasi crawlers settle most conflicts amongst themselves with violence.

The Law-Keepers have only had a few reported run-ins with vaasi crawler and do not yet know much about this new breed of enemy. A sizeable number of missing Law-Keepers are due to the crawlers. The Law-Keepers do not recognize the threat these small creatures pose and the lengths to which they have infiltrated the Hollow Dark.

Species Traits

Extra Limbs (Ex): When grappling crawler vaasi use all six limbs in grappling, granting them a +4 species bonus to grapple checks.

Improved Low-Light Vision (Ex): A vaasi crawler can see ten times farther than a normal human in poor lighting conditions. They can still distinguish colors, even in dim lighting.

Increased Massive Damage Threshold (Ex): Due their strange physiology the vaasi crawlers gain a +3 species bonus to their massive damage threshold.

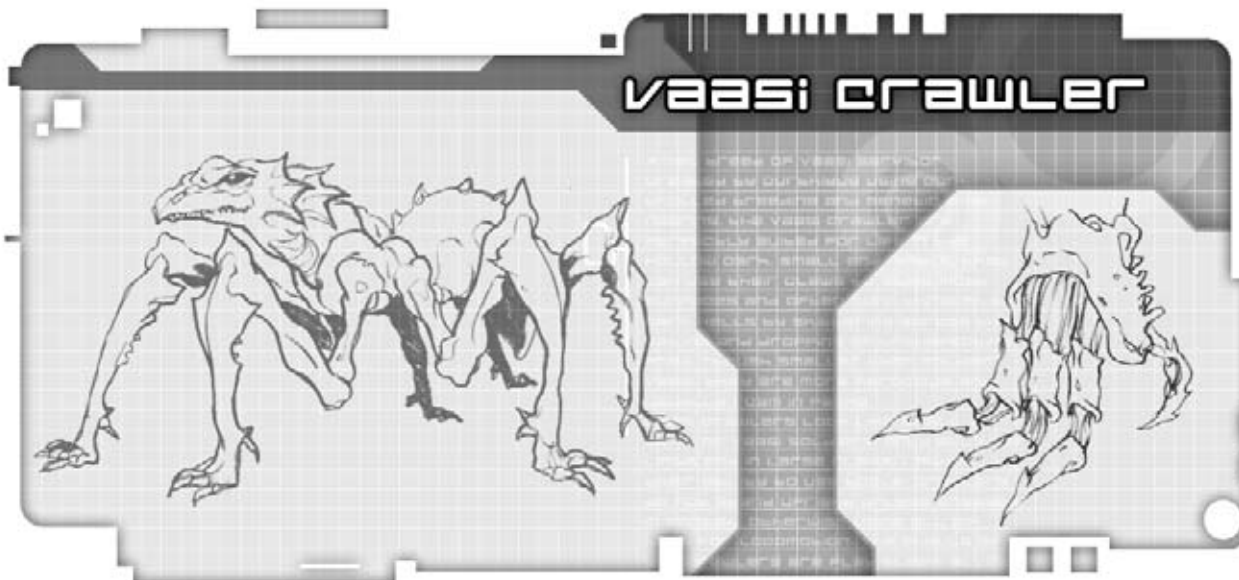
Light Sensitivity (Ex): Like all vaasi servitor races a vaasi crawler is weakened by light, but not as much as its true vaasi progenitors. A vaasi crawler suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks while in direct sunlight or other light sources of similar brightness. This cannot be alleviated except by seeking cover from the light. Lesser lights do not bother the vaasi crawlers.

Pounce (Ex): A vaasi crawler may make a full attack action at the end of a charge action.

Rake (Ex): If a vaasi crawler succeeds in a grapple check against a target it may make 2 rake attacks (+2 melee) with its hind legs for 1d4-1 points of damage each.

Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi crawler must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 10 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus).

Bonus Feats: Vaasi crawlers receive the Stealthy and Improved Grapple feats as bonus feats.



Vaasi Crawler ♦ CR 3

Small aberration; HD 3d8; hp 16; MAS 13; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size); BAB +2; Grap +5; Atk +2 melee (1d4-1, claws); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4-1, 2 claws); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, pounce, rake, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 4.

PL Familiarity: 3

Skills: Hide +13, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Spot +5, Survival +5.

Feats: Improved Grapple, Stealthy.

Advancement: 4-6 HD (Medium).

NPCS OF HEPHAESTUS • • •

♦ CURTHIYUG

A true vaasi of great intelligence and cunning, Curthiyug served in the Racial Advancement Sector under the control of the Science Caste of the Vaasi Empire. From his youth he proved himself worthy of survival through his intelligence rather than his brawn, avoiding the dinner plate of his parents through trickery and deceit that usually led to one of his many broodmates being eaten instead. By the time he had reached adolescence Curthiyug had proved himself intelligent enough to attract the attention in of the upper echelons of the Science Caste, who thought him one of the more promising minds of his generation. While his parents were lowly lab assistants in the Science Caste, Curthiyug yearned to have the very powers of life and death at his command. He used his intelligence and a sizeable amount of blackmail involving the leadership of the Science Caste in taking the wrong sides of some disputes within the Royal Caste to obtaining the power he always wanted.

Due to his high marks in intelligence, cunning,

and cruelty Curthiyug was apprenticed to the Racial Advancement Sector within the Science Caste, where he worked with vaasi geneticists to perfect new servitor races for use in the war against the Star Confederation and perform various menial duties no true vaasi wanted to perform. His early work was very promising in the areas of creating combat drones and viral warfare. Unfortunately for Curthiyug he thought too much of his own power and intelligence, eventually believing that even he was the equal of even members of the Royal caste. He attempted to initiate a mating ritual with the offspring of a member Royal caste and was reassigned to genetic engineering crops on a backwater meat world as punishment for reaching above his caste. Curthiyug worked for several decades on making vaasi meatbeasts more productive and larger before the planet he was stationed on was overrun by the Star Confederation. Curthiyug was captured and imprisoned in the prison facility beneath Hephaestus, the Star Confederation having strong regulations about the treatment of war prisoners.

When Law began waking the staff of the facility from cryogenic sleep Curthiyug awoke as well after a short in an electrical system activated the emergency release protocol in his cryogenic chamber. Curthiyug was the first true vaasi to awaken in the place that would become the Hollow Dark and while he was no expert in Star Confederation technology, he knew enough about cryogenic storage to wake up several of his fellows immediately. Curthiyug took care to awaken only servitor races at first, using their genetic predisposition to follow the orders of a true vaasi to solidify his power base before awakening any true vaasi. By the time Law and the guards realized what was happened Curthiyug already had several hundred vaasi under his command and had begun waking up other true vaasi to act as his lieutenants. Thus began the war that still rages in the Hollow Dark.

Now Curthiyug still is considered the most powerful true vaasi in the Dark Halls, but he has many who would contest his power if they had enough troops. Curthiyug allows these dissenters to exist as long as they follow his orders when it comes time to attack the Law-Keepers. Curthiyug considers the vaasi he has trapped with him in the Dark Halls an excellent controlled population to continue his experimentation in creating new servitor races. Using nanites and some captured equipment from a Star Confederation medical lab, he has done just that.

He has managed to instill mutations in most of the vaasi population and produce one viable servitor race. Curthiyug hopes to breed these mutants to create a new species of hyper-advanced vaasi, with which he can storm the strongholds of the Law-Keepers and escape this prison, returning to the Vaasi Empire at the head of an army of mutant vaasi.

Curthiyug (Smart Hero 5/Field Scientist 5) ♦ CR 20

Large aberration (True Vassi); HD 15d8+5d6+80; hp 185; MAS 22; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 31, touch 19, flat-footed 25 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size, +4 class, +5 smart defense); BAB +11; Grap +19; Atk +14 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +11 ranged (4d10, plasma carbine); Full Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +11/+6/+1 ranged (4d10, plasma carbine); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, psionic potential, smart defense, scientific improvisation, skill mastery (Computer Use, Craft (Electrical), Craft (Mechanical), Investigate, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences), Repair, Research, Search), minor breakthrough; AL vaasi; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +15; AP 11; Rep +3; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 24, Wis 14, Cha 17.

PL Familiarity: 9

Skills: Climb +10, Computer Use +21, Craft (Electrical) +21, Craft (Mechanical) +21, Hide +1, Intimidate +11, Jump +10, Investigate +21, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +27, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +19, Knowledge (Tactics) +18, Knowledge (Technology) +15, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Navigate +13, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Repair +17, Research +20, Search +13, Sense Motive +15, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Survival +14, Treat Injury +14.

Talents: Savant (Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences)), Identify Alien Technology, Utilize Alien Technology

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Attentive, Builder, Educated, Gearhead, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Medical Expert, Personal Firearms



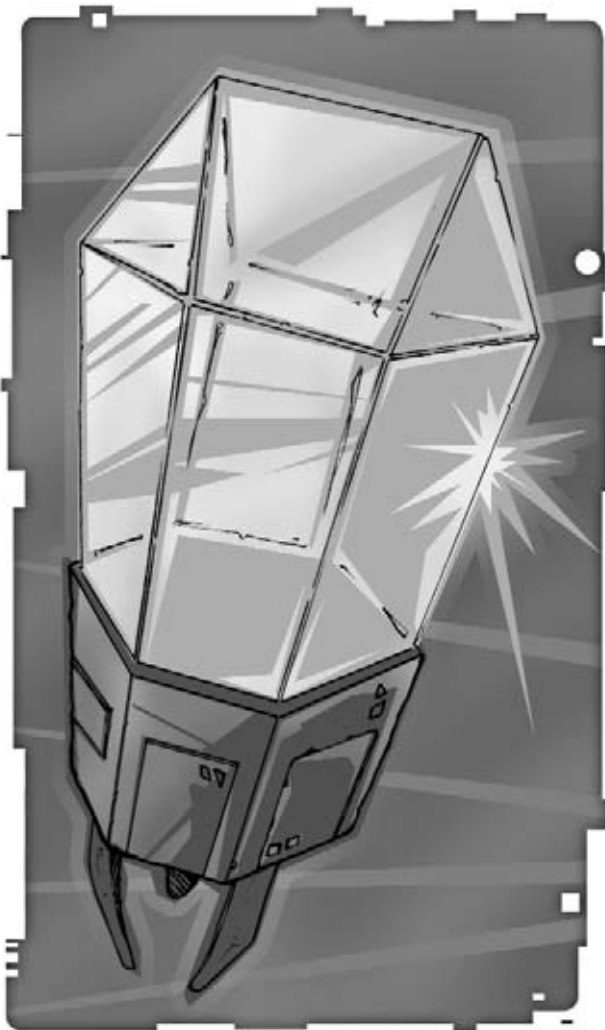
Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Surgery, Track, Xenomedic.

Equipment: Plasma carbine, 3 Star Confederation power packs, polyvox, neural recorder, advanced medkit, neural scrambler, medicomp sensor, regen wand.

♦ LAW

Originally designed as a legal knowledge database administrator and housekeeper for the Hephaestus prison facility that would become the Hollow Dark, Unblemished Law 12 has become far more than it was originally programmed to be. Now it serves as general, quartermaster, and spiritual leader of the Law-Keepers, roles it was never programmed to fill. Law has been active for longer than any Star Confederation artificial intelligence entity in existence and has thus adjusted its programming greatly over the intervening millennia. Its creators would hardly recognize its code now.

Law was created to serve in an advisory and assistant role to the warden-administrator of the Hephaestus facility, and was issued a suitably meek personality to go along with that role. This personality has been largely rewritten into a more forceful one that is proactive to a fault. While Law is



still pleasant and polite in most conversations, it has written new code to allow it to yell at people and appear angry when needed and has added a program on making stirring pre-battle speeches to its repertoire. While Law would prefer to go back to being a simple filing and administrative program, it seems for the time being it is stuck being a war leader.

Of all the creatures in the Hollow Dark only Law knows the full story of the collapse of the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire. Able to view the final days of the conflict through exterior sensors, it has disseminated this information to the Law-Keepers on a need-to-know basis. After the saurians began depicting Law-Keeper recruitment efforts as divine events Law noticed this belief of a holy war being fought in the Hollow Dark improved morale and thus encouraged such ideas, even though it had to rewrite several ethical subroutines to do so. Law has now created a mythological history based on the real history of the Star Confederation that it uses to incite recruits and through this practice the entire character of the Law-Keepers has changed.

Law hopes that eventually the other races in the

Helios system will eventually become advanced enough where it feels it can trust them to help in the pacification of the Hollow Dark. Law suspects there are other vaasi in the system, but does not know for sure. Unable to spare personnel or equipment, the best thing the Law-Keepers can give in fighting the vaasi is expertise.

Law's data crystal is stored on the main stronghold of the Law-Keepers, which is located next to the primary docking bay. Law has several backups in other strongholds and on the Law-Keeper ships, all set to activate if it is destroyed or if the location the backup is stored in is cut off from contact with Law. All of the robots that were assigned to the facility that Law could use as a body have been destroyed, leaving the law relay computers as the main means for him to see the world outside Law-Keeper strongholds.

Law

**(Smart Hero 5/Dedicated Hero 3
Charismatic Hero 3/Field Marshal 6) ♦ CR +17**

Tiny Construct (Artificial Intelligence Entity); HD -; hp -; Mas -; Init -; Spd -; Defense +8 (+8 class), touch -, flat-footed -; BAB +10; Grap -; Atk -; Full Atk - FS -; Reach -; SQ Advancement, backup, behavioral controls, data crystal, mental power, non-physical existence, robot upgrades, transmission travel, leadership, uncanny survival, tactical expertise, august leadership; AL Star Confederation; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +14; AP 14; Rep +6; Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 28, Wis 16, Cha 16.

PL Familiarity: 9

Skills: Bluff +15, Computer Use +28, Craft (Electrical) +17, Craft (Mechanical) +17, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +17, Craft (Structural) +16, Decipher Script +17, Demolitions +15, Diplomacy +17, Forgery +16, Gather Information +17, Intimidate +15, Investigate +20, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +21, Knowledge (Civics) +24, Knowledge (History) +25, Knowledge (Tactics) +29, Knowledge (Technology) +21, Listen +6, Navigate +16, Perform (Sing) +9, Read/Write Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Repair +20, Research +18, Search +12, Sense Motive +17, Speak Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Spot +12, Survival +9, Treat Injury +12.

Talents: Cool Under Fire (Computer Use, Knowledge (Tactics), Repair, Craft (Mechanical), Diplomacy), Coordinate, Inspiration, Linguist, Plan, Savant (Computer Use), Sworn Enemy (Vaasi) +2.

Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Attentive, Dodge, Educated, Frightful Presence, Iron Will, Low Profile, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Studious, Surgery, Trustworthy, Xenomedic.

◆ STRUEG WHOSE-FANGS-ARE-DRENCHED-IN-BLOOD

Once the son of a minor noble of the Saurian Empire, from an early age Strueg dreamt of glory and honor earned through blood and battles. He attended numerous schools of warfare, earning Imperial military scholarships and eventually attracting the eye of the Kurizar Karic Ilzaan, Wielder of the Imperial Sword himself. Strueg was sure to have a long and glorious career of victories in the name of the Empire, but then one night while meditating alone in the mountains he was approached by the Law-Keepers and turned his back forever on the Saurian Empire.

Strueg joined the Law-Keepers in order to partake in their never-ending battle against evil and darkness; a more honorable destiny he could not imagine. That was seventy years ago and now Strueg still feels the battle in the Hollow Dark must be fought, but much of his youthful vigor has faded. Now old by saurian standards, his sword arm is weakening, his reflexes slowing, and soon he knows some vaasi will finally prove his match in combat. While Strueg never expected to see the end of the conflict in the Hollow Dark, he now wonders if his presence here really made any sort of difference. No one outside the Hollow Dark will remember his name when he dies, and when he passes the war will stop with barely a minute's pause to consider his death. While Strueg knows that the cause is greater than glory and honor, he fears his death will have little meaning. Thus he is looking for some way to end the war in the Hollow Dark permanently, and has been organizing more recruitment missions and supply runs. He has also



been pushing Law to contact the Saurian Empire officially in the hopes of getting aid, but Law still fears outsiders more than it values what help they will bring. Strueg is a loyal soldier, but he fears that Law is fighting the war against the vaasi on a timetable suitable for a creature that does not age and that victory will not come for many lifetimes. Strueg does not have that long.

Though his rage and quest for glory have cooled with age, Strueg is still a tyrannical saurian and prone to emotional outbursts. He is extremely dedicated to the Law-Keepers and will do whatever is necessary to keep his men alive. No stranger to hardship, he is well known for smiling in the face of adversity, be it an attack by superior numbers of vaasi or the news that the food store has run dry. Strueg is well loved by his men.

Strueg Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-in-Blood (Strong Hero 4/Charismatic Hero 3 Warden 8) ◆ CR 15

Large Monstrous Humanoid (Tyrannical Saurian); HD 12d8+4d6+45; hp 125; MAS 19; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 28, touch 23, flat-footed 28 (+5 class, -1 size, +2 natural, -1 Dex, +5 armor, +8 deflection); BAB +11; Grap +19; Atk +17 melee (2d8+10, kinai sword), +9 ranged (1d8+4, throwing axe); Full +17/+12/+7 melee (2d8+10, kinai sword), +9/+4/-1 ranged (1d8+4, throwing axe); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ Armor and weapon restrictions, blindsight 60 ft., bloodlust, cold blooded, dark dweller, energy resistance 10, high metabolism, natural weapons, sworn enemy (vaasi) +2, symbol of leadership, warden recognition, weapon specialization (kinai sword); AL Law-Keepers; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +9; AP 13; Rep +4; Str 18, Dex 9, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 15.

PL Familiarity: 5

Occupation: Law-Keeper Soldier.

Skills: Climb +9, Craft (Tribal) +6, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +13, Jump +7, Knowledge (Tactics) +13, Listen +4, Read/Write Language (Saurian, Unispeak), Speak Language (Saurian, Unispeak), Spot +4, Survival +7, Treat Injury +4.

Talents: Command, Coordinate, Improved Melee Smash, Inspiration, Greater Inspiration, Melee Smash.

Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Medium), Blind Fight, Cleave, Great Cleave, Heroic Surge, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Kinai sword).

Mutations: Adrenalin Jolt, Festering Sores, Light Sensitivity.

Possessions: Masterwork kinai sword, scav armor, law relay, 6 throwing axes, Head Warden's Badge.

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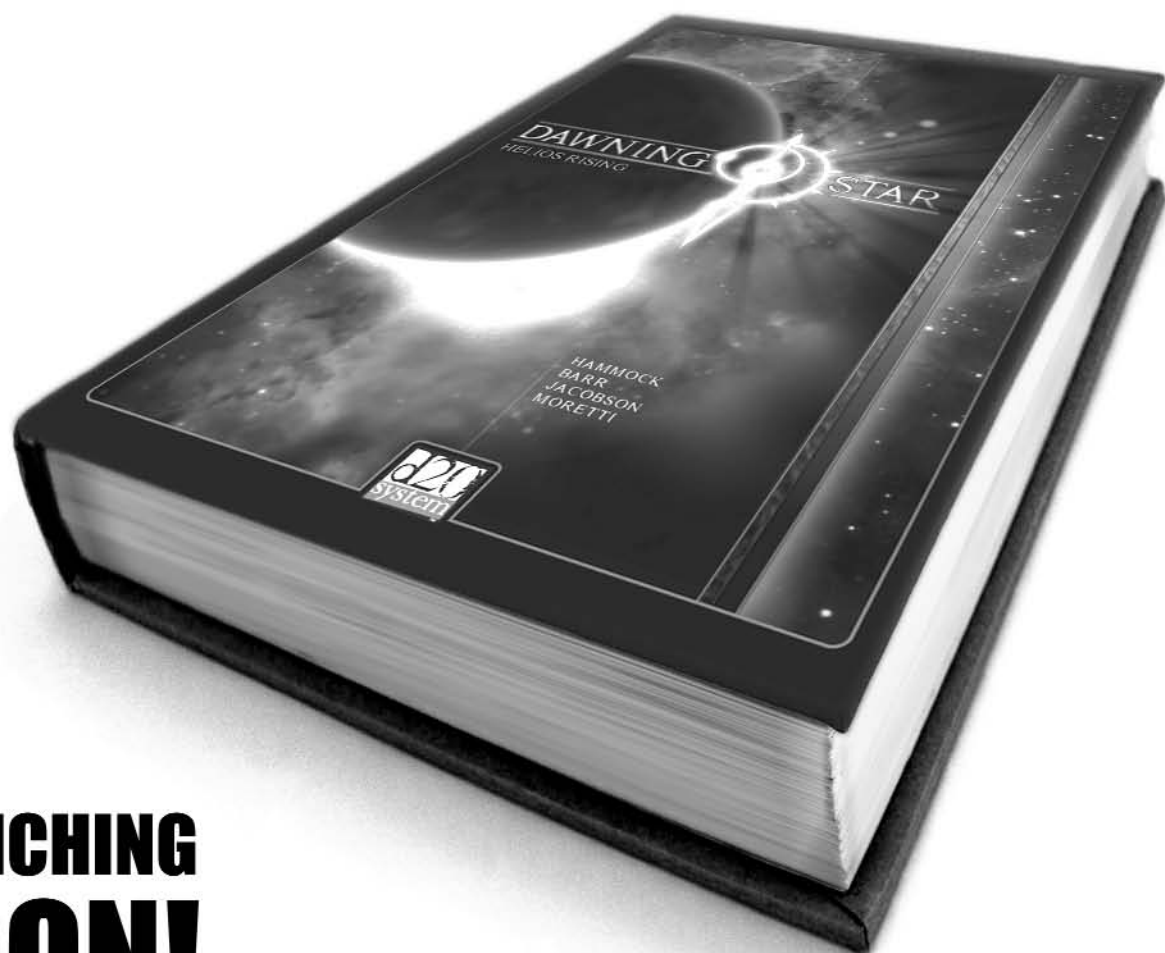
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