

## Introduction

Night's falling. You're relieved. It's easier to pass as one of them when the shadows lengthen. You should be like a god among them but, they are many and you are few and, you're both afraid. They don't realize that you're stranded here, unable to return home. You'd tell them but the risks are too high and the rewards too low. They'd probably just dissect you, using you as you use them. But what can you do? They're ignorant savages and you have eons of civilization behind you.

**Alien** is a game of vicious survival and science fiction horror.

**Alien** is about paranoia and fear of the "other". It's about struggling to live in a foreign landscape. It's about how far you would go to survive.

**Alien** is about examining the strange fauna that populate this outlandish place and the hairless apes that rule over it. It's about struggling to blend in, while at the same time achieving your own agenda. It's about learning about the environment around you by any means necessary.

**Alien** is a game about skulking through the dark places of the night and maintaining a secret existence.

## Themes

**Alien** is designed around the idea of being marooned in a hostile environment filled with primitives that find the notion of your very existence too much to cope with. It's about walking the fine balance between finding a way to blend in with your neighbors while remaining true to your essential sense of self.

Focusing on blending in too much though will make you an easy mark for the shadowy forces that are perpetually hunting your kind down. Pursuing your goals too recklessly though will broadcast your presence to those same hunters.

## Stranger in a Strange Land

Aliens are extraterrestrial. They originally hail from distant stars and advanced civilizations. While they might have many means of appearing as one of the natives, it takes more than just mimicking a human's outward appearance to avoid notice. There is more than just vocabulary and grammar forms to language. Mannerisms, idioms, and local norms all serve to mark outlanders for what they are – strangers.

Likewise, the World that the Chronicles of Darkness takes place in is a vast and hostile place. Millennia of technological sophistication and centuries of life in the sterile environment of your Vessel have left your body ill-prepared for the natural hazards of this new world. When even a scratch at an inopportune time could lay you low, you must be ever vigilant and circumspect in your dealings with the natives.

Ultimately, **Alien** is a game of finding a way to survive in a world terrified by the very notion of your existence. As you pursue the resources you need, living a hidden life among the teeming tide of humanity, your very existence is threatened by your essential nature as your all-to-strange neighbors slowly begin to startle at the slightest misconception. The smallest exposure at the wrong time can have deleterious effects, bringing the attentions of dread, black-suited agents of the Chronicles of Darkness's shadowy organizations or can drive your neighbors to such

complete heights of hysteria that they begin to suspect one another of being something other than what they seem.

### Marooned or Shipwrecked

Either way, you're stuck on this world for the foreseeable future. While you might still have an array of impressive high-tech Ornāmenta at your disposal and your superior science gives you an edge with various Adaptations that you can prepare yourself with, your resources are all too finite. You'll have to eke out an existence among the natives.

Even if you were to lead the research and manufacturing efforts to replace the broken parts of your vessel (or build a new one from scratch), it would take centuries if not millennia to accomplish the task by yourself. It's not that it's impossible, it's just that you have more immediate concerns to cope with, like what to eat for dinner.

With a little effort and some kismet you'll be able to identify others like yourself. A cluster of Aliens has much better odds of accomplishing their goals by pooling their limited resources for mutual survival. Even as it increases the overall risk of their discovery, the cluster affords each of its members greater opportunities for progressing their plans to fruition.

### Hidden Among Them

Whether you were a criminal, an explorer, a scientist, or a scout, you hail from an advanced society with cultural norms completely different from anything the natives practice. Dissecting and experimenting on them is no different from their own dissections and experimentations upon frogs. Now that your ship's food supplies are exhausted you've found that they also make for a plentiful and relatively easily harvested protein source.

While they aren't intelligent the way that you understand it, they do find the missing time, the weird scars, and the half-eaten members of their community disturbing. If they could see you for what you really are, it would drive them to destroy you. You're not ready to die yet and so you cloth yourself in their flesh (or its likeness).

Whether it's projecting psychic illusions and sticking to the shadows or physically wearing the skin of a human or hijacking their bodies, you've accomplished the first step of blending in – disguise as one of the natives. You understand almost nothing of their exotic culture and foreign mannerisms though and so, you must be ever vigilant against accidentally exposing your true nature. If you're going to bring your plans to fruition and escape this alien world then you'll have to keep your wits about you and act surreptitiously.

### How to Use This Book

Alien: the Stranded is a storytelling game of science fiction horror. It covers everything you need to play one of the Stranded – aliens who have become shipwrecked or marooned in the Chronicles of Darkness setting's version of Earth. This fan-made book is not a whole game. You will need either the God-Machine Chronicle Rules update or the Chronicles of Darkness rulebook to play.

However, it does also contain rules describing both n-fractal phantoms, like the angelesque Vis, beings of pure energy that sometimes interact with the Stranded for good or ill, and United Technologies, Inc., one of the Chronicles of Darkness's many shadowy corporations. Both of these antagonists give Aliens additional impetus to blend in with their human neighbors as much as they can.

## Chapters

**Chapter 1: Shadows in the Dark** introduces the Taxa, the major archetypal forms (humanoid or otherwise) that the stranded conform to. It also presents the Occupātio around which every alien plans their actions around. Some Castaways are the victims of accidents while others were purposefully planted or exiled onto Earth.

**Chapter 2: The Stranger Within** describes what it's like to be an alien struggling to survive among humans. Here, you will learn about the myriad cultures that cross time and space, what their interest in earth is, and how their extrabiology copes with the stress of the Chronicles of Darkness's environment. It will also reveals the secrets of the Stranded's space ships, which serve as both an alien's most potent tool and safest sanctuary.

**Chapter 3: The Extraterrestrial Condition** explains the rules and game systems for alien characters. It reveals the properties of their disguises, technology, and otherworldly biology, as well as their inherent weaknesses. You will also discover how difficult it is for a Stranded to blend in among the teeming human masses through Assimilation.

**Chapter 4: Rules of the Marooned** would typically lay out the Storytelling system. Players are referred to the appropriate pieces of text in the God Machine Chronicle Rules Update or the Chronicles of Darkness rulebook.

**Chapter 5: Dangerous Fauna** covers both n-fractal phantoms like the Vīsiōnēs and the corporate operatives of United Technologies, Inc. Specific portions of the Chronicles of Darkness's game systems for ephemeral beings are left out and players are referred to the appropriate sections of the God Machine Chronicle Rules Update or the Chronicles of Darkness rulebook. Additionally other Alien species are covered here, including truly bizarre things that could never hope to wear a human's mien.

**Chapter 6: Crash Sites** describes the signature setting for Alien, the Great Basin Desert. It also describes alien activities in places like Los Alamos, Eureka, Havana, Helsinki and hot beds worldwide.

**Chapter 7: Storytelling** describes the core principles behind running a game of Alien. It includes all of the basic concepts that will help bring the Chronicles of Darkness to life and a number of optional rules and techniques to flesh out taxon creation, Paranoia, and developing new Ornāmenta.

**Appendix 1: Conspirators** gives guidelines and rules for Collaborators, Cyborgs, Splices, and other humans who have been co-opted into a Castaway's service or who act as allies and guardians.

**Appendix 2: Conditions** is a reference for the new conditions described in this book.

## Truth and Lies

*Aliens are here to conquer the Earth.*

Mostly false. While some aliens are agents in the service of forces that remain off-world (or in the shadows), the vast majority of the Stranded were shipwrecked or purposely marooned on Earth.

*Aliens are here to initiate cultural exchange with Earthlings.*

False. Even if humanity had a worldwide federal government, there are relatively few resources that the Stranded could exploit. This doesn't stop the odd Alien from going native.

*Aliens are here because their old home-world was destroyed.*

True and false. Space is a vastly endless track and any civilization capable of interstellar travel is also capable of surviving indefinitely in space. While their home-worlds of origin may indeed have succumbed to the ages, the Stranded have no particular desire to colonize Earth.

*Aliens mutilate cattle and experiment on humans.*

Partially true. Like humans, the Stranded are accustomed to food resources being readily available, so it's no accident that they're clumsy at hunting and preparing their own food. Similarly, like human scientists, Aliens who take a scientific approach try to learn about their new environment using a variety of methods, vivisection among them.

*Aliens all possess super-human intellect.*

False. Like humans, their supposed "super-intellect" is the product of their education and not their capacity for problem solving. The average Stranded is here precisely because they were faced with a crisis they couldn't think their way out of. That being said, the average Stranded possess a number of technological advantages that the average human doesn't.

*Aliens are all hideous monsters.*

Some are and some are really quite elegant. The fact is that while none of them resemble humans more than superficially, they all have means of appearing as a human.

*There's no such thing as Aliens.*

If that were the case, the denizens of the Chronicles of Darkness setting could sleep much easier. But the fact that the Stranded are among them is a secret that few are privy to.

## An Introduction to Storytelling Games

Here's the first place where I refer you to White Wolf and Onyx Path's extensive line of many excellent games to get the story from the horse's mouth itself. See, for instance, Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> edition page 8 or Werewolf: the Forsaken 2<sup>nd</sup> edition page 10, among others.

## Inspirational Media

Focused on the fears of invasion and being supplanted, many of the following books and films serve as good examples of the mood of a typical Alien game.

### Media focused on Aliens

Robert Potter's *The Germ Growers* (1892) is one of the oldest of the science fiction horror genre that features aliens as an antagonist. It lays the foundation and serves as a template for many of the alien invader stories that emerged from the 1950s and 60s Red Scare zeitgeist in Hollywood.

H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* (1897) is the quintessential alien invasion story of all time. This timeless masterpiece has been adapted into film on several occasions and remains one of the most widely read science fiction stories the world over.

While *The Puppet Masters* (1951) by Robert A. Heinlein presents a relatively dated look at a future 2007 where alien slugs are slowly taking over the world on city at a time, it presents a good example of the kind of slow, insidious clandestine subversion alien invaders practice.

*The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), directed by Robert Wise, provides a classic counter-point to Heinlein's novel. Rather than trying to conquer the Earth, the human-appearing alien is seeks to warn us about the dangers of the atomic age. It really highlights the effects of paranoia on human behavior.

The 1956 film, *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (directed by Don Siegel) showcases the progression from invaders merely controlling the actions of human beings to replacing them whole cloth.

*Village of the Damned* (1960), directed by Wolf Rilla, blends in another common science fiction horror trope, unethical experimentation and science gone wrong, with the typical alien invader story. It does a very good job of demonstrating the kind of creepiness that the typical Stranded will inspire in any humans that she interacts with.

No list would be complete without Heinlein's award-winning *Stranger in a Strange Land* which suggests just a few of the many story seeds that the mere presence of an Alien can inspire in the conspiracy-ridden Chronicles of Darkness, where shadowy forces lie in wait for the innocent and powerless around every corner.

The BBC's *Dr. Who* (1963-1989, 1996, 2005~) television series is another genre staple. Its monster of the week style storytelling amply demonstrates a variety of alien archetypes pursuing a variety of goals. Despite the campy nature of its dialogue and admittedly cheesy special effects, there is a vast wealth of ideas that can be exploited by troupes.

*Quartermass and the Pit* (a.k.a. *Five Million Years to Earth*) is a 1967 film directed Roy Ward Baker that portrays the power of aliens' space ships. In the film, paleontologists find the evidence of a failed alien invasion – dead alien colonists entombed in the earth. They accidentally revive the aliens' space craft though which tries to execute its terraforming program, eliminating humanity in the process.

John Carpenter's 1982 remake of *The Thing* showcases the extremes of paranoia when an isolated group of humans are faced with an alien that can appear as any one of them. By the end both the audience and the protagonist are left wondering if the creature has truly been destroyed or if he has become it.

### Other Media

More generally, invasion stories, in and of themselves, provide a lot of inspirational material for stories focusing on the Stranded. *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) by George Tomkyns Chesney is the prototypical novel for the invader fiction genre and showcases the effects of paranoia and fear of the unknown.

E.M. Foster's almost prescient short story, "The Machine Stops" (1909), showcases the kind of reliance on technology and the cost of its loss that every Stranded faces during the course of their Earth-bound lives.

H.P. Lovecraft's novella – *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936) – demonstrates the risks that ordinary humans run when they encounter the otherworldly and explore things best left unknown. While nominally more appropriate to a Mage story, the ideas of mystery and forbidden knowledge dovetail nicely with Alien's stranger in a strange land themes. Very useful if one wants to cross Alien over with games like Mage: the Awakening.

George Orwell's dystopian novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is another classic that focuses on paranoia and its psychological effects. It provides a very nice treatment of the constant 'looking over one's shoulder to see who's watching' lifestyle that the Stranded must maintain.

## Chapter 1: Shadows in the Dark

You wander the night hours desperately skulking through the dark corners of human civilization searching for anything that might help you in your situation. Unfortunately the natives are still too primitive to be helpful and their broken cast-offs are only so much junk.

Even though their technology seems to be increasing in sophistication at a suspiciously accelerating rate, they still lack the sophistication to mine the materials you really need. Not that it matters, you have precious little to barter with and there are many risks inherent to exposing yourself to them.

None of these shortcomings are going to stop you. You never know when one of your jaunts through the night will reveal something you can exploit. From potential energy sources that can recharge your vessel to biological samples from native flora and fauna that will help you stay alive, the possibility of reaping rewards keeps you venturing out. You must take care though, interacting with the dominant primitives too much will draw the wrong kinds of attention.

Your fellow expatriates tell stories of humans in dark suits flocking to places where unlucky Stranded have made themselves too visible. These accounts usually don't end too well for their protagonists. These aren't the only tales Aliens share with one another. Collect too many specimens, snack on too much of the flora and fauna, interact with too many of the natives – all of these things can draw the attentions of the even more alien *Vīsiōnēs* or the other, darker things that you share the night with. Best not to stray too far from your vessel, the last meager reminder you have left that you're the member of a sophisticated, star-spanning civilization.

### Empires in the Night

Whether a member of a Cluster or operating on their own, every Alien was once an almost god-like being, capable of crossing whole galaxies and existing on timescales difficult for humans to comprehend. While your technology on hand wasn't enough to dominate an entire planet you once possessed the power to easily bring settlements the size of the average Earth city to their knees.

Whatever the cause, whether they were shipwrecked by hapless happenstance, purposefully marooned against their will, or simply ran out of Fuel, each of the Stranded has come to rest on Earth, a place rife with its own dangers. While they still have access to the Vessel that brought them here, most of their advanced technology has been rendered useless by their circumstances.

The memories of their birthrights still blaze deep within the heart of each of the Stranded, whether they actively strive for a means of return or have set themselves some terrestrial task, each and every one of the Stranded fully expects to see the day of their triumphant homecoming. It is these memories that drive Aliens to brave the dark, scavenging for refuse that they can use or weak-minded natives that they can exploit.

Even as the memories of their homelands motivate an Alien's actions, so too do they make it difficult for them to interact with the average human denizen of the Chronicles of Darkness setting without attracting unwanted attention. Every Stranded is constantly at risk from the primitives surrounding them, the stranger denizens that move through those primitives like sharks through schools of fish, and from one another. Only occasionally do Stranded have the good fortune to happen across others of their own kind and, all too frequently those others have plans that don't mesh with a Stranded's own survival strategies.

## Chariots of the Stars

Each Alien lives in a symbiotic relationship with the Vessel that brought it across the galaxy's byways to Earth. Their spacecraft are at once part resource, part refuge, and part jail. It provides a wide assortment of technological Ornāmenta that aid each Stranded in their day to day lives. From providing simple, literal interpretations of what the natives are saying, to assessing the threat level of never before encountered macro-fauna, the Vessel is an Alien's most valuable tool and even those who are prisoners will take measures to protect it.

Despite not being able to move in and of itself, Vessel's still afford Aliens the ability to travel, sometimes great distances, away from it by tapping into the arcane forces that fuel its damaged furnaces. This is very helpful as Stranded scour their strange new environment for resources that will help them survive and which may one day return them to their rightful place in the universe.

Whether it was badly damaged in a crash or its systems have been locked down by outside agencies, many of the Vessel's most potent systems are offline and inaccessible to the average Stranded. Despite this, most Stranded cling to their Vessel the way an overboard sailor clings to a life preserver, desperately hoping for some form of deliverance from the calamity that now consumes their existence. Restoration of functionality or access to those systems is frequently a primary concern for Aliens and is the primary reason why they brave interacting with the Chronicles of Darkness's denizens.

Only Stranded who are determined to go native will willingly abandon their spacecraft. These odd individuals are looked down upon by their fellows. These Aliens take the time to purposefully complete what either happenstance or others started with their marooning, trading the safety of the familiar for a chance to live anonymously among the Chronicles of Darkness's human masses.

## Trappings of the Sky Walkers

In addition to their Vessel, every Alien possesses a variety of equipment that they have salvaged or were permitted access to by their captors. The majority of these Ornāmenta are tools designed to make survival in the otherworldly environment easier. These include a wide variety of sensors and analytics devices as well as protective devices and the occasional weapon.

Many Ornāmenta exist that can aid the Stranded with their day-to-day disguises, which affords them further opportunities to observe and mingle with the natives. Those Aliens that lack such advantages find that they must cling to the shadows and keep their distance, cornering and ambushing humans that have strayed from the crowd if they want to learn anything about the human culture that surrounds them.

Devices that aid in the finding, harvesting, and refining of Fuel are especially important to Aliens as Fuel is used to power both their Vessel and their panoply of Ornāmenta. The more powerful the advantage provided by the Vessel or Ornāmentum the more Fuel it consumes. Aliens must carefully husband this precious resource lest they find themselves unable to rely on their superior technology during their hour of need.

Without a Fuel source, many Stranded eventually succumb to their predicament and die. Those that don't die are frequently swept up by the agents of corporations like United Technologies, Inc. The shadowy organizations that fill the dark corners of the Chronicles of Darkness's civilization are always on the hunt for any new thing that might give them an advantage over their competition and the teeming masses of humanity are ever hungry for newer and newer conveniences.



Of course, every Alien must be circumspect when employing their superior technology. While the usage of Fuel does not, in and of itself bring the attentions of n-fractal phantoms like the Vīsiōnēs or the dark suited agents of United Technologies, Inc., the presence of human witnesses, often already driven to the heights of paranoia by an Alien's unnatural presence, is sure to substantially increase the risk of Exposure.

## Extraterrestrials

While the Stranded are few in number they represent individuals from a wide variety of sapient extraterrestrial species. Denied their natural cultures, Aliens tend to form groups with others that either possess similar physical forms or find themselves in similar circumstances. These groupings express themselves as Taxa, Clades and various Occupātiōnēs.

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### Designer's Notes

#### Why Latin?

No doubt some readers will be wondering why the Aliens presented here don't have more fanciful names. Part of the reason is that each Alien Taxa only represents the broadest general categorization of a group of physically similar Aliens. Hence the Cerebra captures a closely related range of aliens that all physically resemble the stereotypical "Greys". That range also includes things like "little green men" and Wells' tripod-piloting "martians."

Another reason is that Latin is *alien enough* to the average English speaking person for which this fan manuscript has been written. Very few people receive the kind of classical education that was prevalent in nineteenth century colleges. Thus the pool of knowledgeable Latin speakers primarily consists of lawyers, professional diplomats, classicists, some historians, a few linguists, and the occasional English major. Thereby the author is taking the license that the rarity of Latin provides to exploit its use here.

It is important to note that the Taxa names are not the names that various Stranded call themselves. Most of those true names could not be uttered by human tongues anyway. Serviceable Romanizations do appear in the Lexicon; however, very few Romanized terms appear there as each group of Aliens speak (or sometimes just think) multiple mutually unintelligible languages.

#### Why Diacritcs?

Some publishing and English purists will doubtless object to the usage of diacritics markings in the writing of the Latin words used in this fan manuscript. Despite these objections the author feels that the usage of diacritics is both correct and important. Diacritical marks are primarily for native English-speaking audiences and provide indispensable pronunciation clues to readers. Native speakers of other languages frequently don't use diacritical marks when writing for themselves or others that natively share their language. In some cases, such as pīnyīn, diacritics are a wholesale part of a writing system intended specifically for the Western world and, as is the case with pīnyīn, the essential mellifluous sound of Mandarin cannot actually be realized by non-native speakers without the presence of diacritical marks, making navigation of the many homophones and pseudo-homophones extremely difficult at best.

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## In Human Clothes

Each Taxa has a particular means by which they try to blend in with the native population. Some Stranded project mental illusions directly into the minds of those around them. Others kill humans and use their skins to masquerade as something other than what they are. Some have skin tissue that permits them to mimic those around them, while there are those that physically assimilate with a human, absorbing the lesser being's DNA in the process. Finally there are the Gregēs, or the "Swarm", who infest and hijack their hosts much like the more ephemeral beings of the Chronicles of Darkness setting.

Most effective when they can either keep their distance from humans or constrain their transactions to dimly lit places. Only those Aliens who have assimilated to a greater degree are able to cultivate an appearance that lets them interact more directly with their much more normal neighbors. The most proficient Stranded can even move through human communities by the bright light of day. Of course these Aliens are also the ones most likely to go native.

Their native disguises cannot withstand much in the way of scrutiny. Any Stranded unexpectedly confronted by humans can find himself suddenly at risk of exposure, necessitating the abandoning one appearance for a new one. This frequently doesn't end well for the hapless human that happened across the Alien and realized what he was.

One lesson that the Stranded learn very quickly is that each human face is unique to the others of its kind. Even if it wasn't a time consuming task to change their human appearances, an Alien faces the risk of exposure each time she does so. Combined with the trail of bodies or suspicious disappearances, it would not be long before an Alien finds herself hunted by the agents of United Technologies, Inc.

The rub is, if an Alien expects to blend in and make the most of the resources around her then she's going to require a steady supply of human subjects to consume, to experiment on, and to observe. The risk of exposure is not something that any Alien can truly avoid. Even going native is a state of affairs that had to be earned through many long weeks, months, and sometimes years of trial and error and at the cost of human lives.

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### Blending In – Clades

While Clades are closely associated to a particular Taxa this is primarily an association based on physical appearance. The abilities and talents of Clades frequently vary from those of the Taxa that they are associated with. For instance, if the Cerebra Taxa includes the stereotypical "Greys", "Little green men", and beings resembling Wells' "Martians". While the "Greys" have an aptitude for psychic projections, it doesn't mean that either of the two Clades also have that aptitude. In this case the "little green men" (who incidentally call themselves the Malranti when using human tongues) are able to mimic the appearance of things around them and the "Martians" (the Thuree'veean'ti) physically merge with humans absorbing their shape and appearance but maintaining their own abilities.

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### Biological Advantage

In addition to having a particular way of aping the human form, each Taxa is naturally inclined towards certain kinds of biological advantages. These advantages take many forms and exist for many reasons. In the Cerebra's case, their penchant for psychic abilities is the outcome of the evolutionary pressures to interact with the highly automated environments of their

spaceships. Other advantages are evolutionary hold overs from a time when the Alien's species was more primitive. A few represent abilities grafted onto the Stranded by outside agencies and exist for a variety of purposes.

Whatever the source of the Alien's Adaptations, the effects are the same – every Stranded has one or more innate supernatural abilities at its command. These run the gamut from scaly armored skin to telepathy. An Alien possessing one or more super-human traits are not common. These tend to be physical or mental traits but occasionally a Stranded evinces unnatural facility with social traits. This is especially true of Aliens whose modus operandi is that of ambush predator, where being able to lure prey close is a particularly useful skill.

## Taxa

Each Taxon is an arbitrary grouping of physically similar Aliens and usually includes several Clades. All Taxa have an affinity for a certain kind of Adaptation which is typically evidenced by the manner in which they set about disguising themselves in the human form. They are also innately superior to the natives in some specific characteristic manner.

## The Cerebra

The typical Cerebrum is relatively short with spindly limbs and a bulbous head containing enormous eyes. Called “greys” by human popular culture, the most commonly appearing kind has diminutive flat facial features. It's mouth being little more than a slit.

The Kel, as they call themselves, are an inquisitive race that have been exploring the universe for countless millennia. Most frequently found on Earth in the capacity of explorers or scouts in service to a patron, the average Kel is both psychic and a technological savant. A Cerebrum is almost never on Earth by happenstance and they are some of the Aliens that are least likely to go native.

Less violent than other races, a neighborhood that calls itself home to a Cerebra nevertheless frequently finds itself with a reputation as a strange place in which pets, small objects, and occasionally people are known to vanish without a trace.

The Cerebra like to take samples and study their surroundings. Perfection of the illusory human form that they cloak themselves in is of tantamount importance to them and, their Vessels often possess intricate medical labs that can keep a vivisected creature alive for days or weeks at a time.

There are a number of Clades that vary from the Kel in ways that range from the cosmetic, as is the case with the Jin'eer who have no mouths, to the aforementioned Thuree'veean'ti, who physically melt into and merge with their victims.

## Point of Origin

- The Kel were once a slave race to an ancient species of god-like beings whose empire spanned the universe. Designed as living calculators, the Kel foresaw the empire's downfall among all of the data and facts that they processed. Rather than warn their masters, they collectively hid the truth from them and claimed their own empire from the ruins of the old one.
- A plague species, the Blight, fell across the galaxy where the Kel made their home. Forced to flee before the Blight's endless hunger. After endless generations, they finally

crossed the dark between galaxies and have arrived in our galaxy as pilgrims who are looking for a new home.

- As one of the member races of a confederation of star systems, the Kel have assumed the duty of surveying new star systems to determine their appropriateness for membership in the confederation or exploitation for resources. During the course of the survey they discovered ancient ruins on the moons of the outer planets of Earth's solar system but in doing so they also awakened a dark force the lingers in the shadows between worlds, biding its time.

## Specimens

### Typical Roles

The average Cerebrum is mostly concerned with cataloging and observing their environment and so are frequently less social than other Aliens. They generally have a careful, more considered approach to interacting with humans.

**Assessor** – After its discovery by your species, you were selected to make planetfall and thoroughly examine its environments, cataloging all of the inorganic and organic materials present. Something went horribly awry as your craft entered the atmosphere and now you cling to the mangled remnants of your spacecraft, wondering if rescue is ever going to arrive. In the back of your mind you know you still have a job to carry out and doing it well might just make the difference between your life or your death.

**Collector** – You've visited countless worlds in the past. Selection of prime exemplars of a planet's finest flora, fauna, and where possible the creative output of its natives. Earth was to be your next port of call, before you were shipwrecked. Even as you struggle to survive among the humans, you find that the desire to acquire the finest things still burns within you.

**Scientist** – Your vast intellect lends itself to the role and demeanor of a hyper-educated researcher. Your cold clinical detachment served you well as you secured samples of the local wildlife. You were on the Finis of a great discovery until one of your specimens got loose and all but destroyed your ship. Now your expansive knowledge is all that you have left to rely on.

### Creating a Brain

When making a Cerebrum character, consider these questions:

**Who was he before he was marooned?** Cerebra have brains that are physically superior to humans. As such they tend towards avoiding menial tasks. Was he one of the classic citizen-scientists of his species? Or did he play a different role in his civilization? Was there anyone he left behind? Family members? Offspring? Where did he fit in the greater scheme of things? Was he part of a hive mind? Does his grounding leave those he left behind in some kind of predicament?

**What was his purpose for traveling to Earth?** While many Cerebra come to Earth in the capacity of scientist, either as part of an expedition or on their own, not every Cerebrum is part of the Kel's scientist-citizenry. Was he a technocrat intended to be an envoy to some entity on Earth? Was he a cartographer in the process of mapping out spatial anomalies? What happens if his task goes undone?

**How does he relate to the human natives?** Of all of the Stranded, the Cerebra frequently possess the most innocuous means of blending in with the native population. This affords them the option to forgo violent interactions with humans altogether. Does he kidnap animals and

humans? Does he experiment on them? Or keep them as pets? Would he know what to do if he found an abandoned child? Is he timid and remain at a distance in his dealings with the natives? Or does he actively seek them out, pushing his disguise to its limit?

**How does he relate to other Stranded?** The Kel are generally better educated and possess much greater faculty for cognitive skills that rely on logic and reasoning than other Aliens. As such, they frequently become either the masterminds of a Cluster or the advisors to its leaders. Is one of these the case for the player's character? Or does he shun other Stranded? Or does he strictly stick to his own kind? Does he have reason to? Under what circumstances would he be willing to pool his resources with others to survive?

**How does he plan to survive?** What remains of the facilities in his Vessel? Does he have means of procuring a food source? If he is injured and gets an infection, does he have access to medicines that will help? When his stores eventually run out, how does he plan to replace them? To what lengths is he willing to go to survive? Would he kill or steal from a native? What about another Stranded? Or one of his own kind?

Cerebra often have mental attributes as primary and physical attributes as tertiary. While warriors among their kind are rare, they do occur. Leaders who prioritize social attributes have also been known to occur. Mental attributes almost never appear as a tertiary choice.

Similarly, mental skills typically merit the highest priority, with social an important secondary choice and physical skills usually left underdeveloped. Academics, medicine, and science will be important skills for almost all Cerebra. Animal ken, empathy, and subterfuge have a lot of utility for those Kel who focus on telepathy and related psychic abilities.

**Favored Attribute:** Intelligence or Composure

**Camouflage:** Psychic Illusions

**Adaptation Affinities:** Psychic Feedback, Telekinesis and Telepathy

**Stereotypes**

- Cīmicēs: Useful for muscle but dissatisfying for intellectual conversation.
- Fōrmae: Odd, I wonder what happens when I...?
- Gregēs: Be wary of these parasites. Infection with them can be difficult to treat.
- Lacertae: Cold, calculating, and always looking for their next meal.

**Native Perspectives**

- Vampires: There's no such thing as little green men or Martians. All the pets and people that mysteriously disappear at night? That was us.
- Werewolves: I don't believe in UFOs. Still, the Shadow has been restless lately. There are whispers that an Idigam is nearby.
- Mages: Spacemen? It's certainly not weirdest thing I've heard of. I have better explanations for what you thought you saw but, I agree, this does merit further investigation.
- Prometheans: Not of this Earth? I don't know about that. There was something unnatural in the dark staring back at me though.

**Bane:** In addition to the normal susceptibility that all Aliens have to terrestrial diseases, Cerebra possess brittle bones. A side effect of millennia of living in space, any damage from blunt force trauma that would normally cause bashing damage (e.g., fists, falling short distances, etc.), instead causes lethal damage. Similarly, blunt force trauma that would normally cause

lethal damage (e.g., maces, falling from heights greater than ten feet, being in a car accident, etc.), instead cause aggravated damage. Note that attacks that cause damage by cutting or piercing (e.g., swords, spears, etc.), only upgrade the first point of damage to aggravated (representing the force of the weapon's impact). Minor sources of this form of damage (i.e., paper cuts) still do bashing damage as normal.

### The Cīmicēs

A Cīmex is a giant space-faring insectoid. Relatively better at adapting to the rigors of micro-gravity than humanoid species, there exists a wide number of Clades representing Alien species related to the Cīmicēs.

The Shey'daan, as they refer to themselves, take up the appearance of a ginormous cockroach crossed with a hornet. A warrior race, the average Cīmex has arrived on Earth either in some military capacity or was purposely marooned there by others of her kind. Occasionally a Cīmex finds herself grounded purely by bad luck.

The Shey'daan take have practical mindset with regards to surviving their abandonment. As scavengers they can consume either plants or animals, and while they infrequently feast on humans they don't go out of their way to procure or cultivate the natives as a food source. That isn't to say that the lives of humans that cross paths with a Cīmex don't end violently and quickly.

Since their bodies can accommodate a fair amount of deformation without harm, Cīmicēs wear the skins of other creatures as a means of camouflage. Since humans typically command their environment, the skin that a Shey'daan typically wears will be a human one.

One misconception that the natives have about Aliens like the Cīmicēs that is frequently born out in exemplars of their media, is that Cīmicēs identify with terrestrial insects. In point of fact, a Cīmex considers flies and cockroaches to be just as much of a pest as humans do and, the relationship between them is not unlike that of humans and mice or rats.

There are myriad Clades of species resembling or related to the Shey'daan. The most alien of these are the worm-like Sharm who absorb their victim's appearance. The most humanoid are the J'ghan who partially molt the outermost layer of their exoskeleton as means of mimicking the flesh of creatures around them.

### Point of Origin

- The Shey'daan consumed all of the resources on their home world and now stalk across the star-ways like intergalactic locusts. They descend on planet after planet and consume what they can before leaving again. Earth seems to have plentiful resources but it also possesses formidable defenders in the form of the Visōnēs. The Shey'daan's elderly brood queens desire to know more about this backwater world and why the Shining Ones have taken an interest in it.
- The Shey'daan's empire stretches across a dozen galaxies and its citizens comprise a thousand races numbering into the quadrillions of souls. All but exhausted by millennia of governance, their grip on power is beginning to wane. As civil order frays on the imperial frontiers, smugglers and pirates ply the star ways from the safety of uncharted worlds.
- With their ancient civilization long since collapsed, the Shey'daan eke out a living by renting out entire broods as mercenary armies to the highest bidders. Now that a local confederation of star systems has declared war on an interstellar warlord's nascent

empire, they find themselves fighting for both sides across the broad frontier of space. The primitive beings that dwell on several of these frontier planets have little idea of the violence transpiring in the void far beyond their sky.

## Specimens

### Typical Roles

Survival is going to be the central concern of the typical Cīmicēs. As they often consider the natives to be little more than a means to an end, Shey'daan tend to be somewhat less cautious in their dealings with others.

**Bounty Hunter** – You've pursued your bounty across millions of light years to this small, rather insignificant, ape-infested rock. Just as you were closing in your prey turned the tables on you, disabling your Vessel and leaving you for dead. Now you find yourself surrounded on all sides by primitives that would see you as little more than a monstrous version of the pests they so fear.

**Thug** – You were muscle for an interstellar crime syndicate. Unfortunately you were pinched during a sweeping raid. One of the "lucky ones", instead of facing the certain death of execution you've instead been exiled to one of the galaxy's low-tech backwaters. While you can't see them, you know that there are wardens you are probably watching your every move.

**Warrior** – As a grunt in the Shey'daan's massive war machine you were once one of millions of soldiers engaged in military operations. Unfortunately your ship was knocked out of the fight and after drifting for countless centuries has come to rest on the first viable biosphere it came across. Now you are alone, bereft of virtually all of your materiel, and find yourself struggling to survive amid billions of mammals.

### Creating a Bug

When making a Cīmex character, consider these questions:

**Who was she before she was marooned?** Cīmex are one among thousands and tens of thousands of brood members, what happened to all of those siblings? Why is she alone now? Where they destroyed by some calamity or cosmic war? Did she have a career or occupation? Was she part of some intergalactic military? Or was she part of some criminal enterprise? What about her personal past? Does she have mates? Has she had mates in the past? Has she mothered broods of her own?

**What was her purpose for traveling to Earth?** Most Shey'daan are not on Earth by choice. Consider why she is there. Did she have a falling out with her superiors or bosses and end up purposely marooned? Is she a criminal and her abandonment a form of punishment? Or perhaps she is a long range scout who has suffered something as commonplace as simple equipment failure?

**How does she relate to the human natives?** Since Cīmicēs wear the skins of others as a means of camouflage, encounters with humans can oft-times take a turn for the sinister. How does she cover her tracks? Does she actively try to move among the natives to better her survival odds? Or does she cling to the shadows and hope that no one notices the imperfections that her hastily repaired disguise possess? How frequently does she take new skins? Has anyone noticed that people and pets are disappearing?

**How does she relate to other Stranded?** The Shey'daan are generally better at acclimating to new environments than other Aliens. As they frequently possess Adaptations that allow them to

move quickly and sense things that others cannot, those who join Clusters often find themselves in charge of gathering intelligence on the world around them and maintaining the group's security. Is true for the player's character? Or does she avoid other Stranded and work alone? Does she seek out others of her kind or does she have reasons to avoid them? Is there a particular state of affairs that would see her contribute her resources to the survival of the group over her own?

***How does she plan to survive?*** Is her Vessel completely locked down? Is it damaged beyond repair? Does she have access to resources that can help ameliorate this problem? If she gets injured, does she have means of avoiding infections? How is she gathering the resources basic to her survival? When she kills for a new skin, does she lure the first available human into an ambush or does she stalk particular prey? Does she try to integrate herself into her victim's old life? Does she ever take the skins of other Stranded? What about the exoskeletons of other Cīmicēs?

The Shey'daan are well adapted to moving in microgravity environments and so it is not unusual for physical attributes to have been prioritized over the others. Being born into and growing up among vast broods allows a Cīmex ample opportunity for interacting with others and so social attributes tend to be of secondary concern if they are not the primary priority. Mental attributes are often secondary or tertiary but they do appear as the primary choice of those Cīmicēs that are invested in the sciences and exploration.

A mixture of physical and social skills is a must for almost every Shey'daan. Mental skills are often a tertiary concern except for those few individuals who are experts. On the whole Cīmicēs are practiced veterans of living in space and find time planetside confining and discerning in ways that others find hard to fathom as their specialized physiology begins to re-optimize itself for their new environment.

**Favored Attribute:** Dexterity or Stamina

**Camouflage:** Skin Borrowing

**Adaptation Affinities:** Armored Carapace, Enhanced Senses and Wings

**Stereotypes**

- Cerebra: You may be hyper-intelligent but let's see you solve complex equations while I bend your arm backwards.
- Fōrmae: Ancient, storied, creepy. Stay away from these formless things at all costs.
- Gregēs: Your little things are so cute. It takes how many of you to replace the capacitor in a shock pistol?
- Lacertae: Respect for your strength. Envy for your long life.

**Native Perspectives**

- Vampires: A giant bug wearing a skin suit you say? Of course it wasn't real, it's just in your head. It's there because I put it there.
- Werewolves: Vermin hosts are vermin hosts and, claimed are claimed, no matter what shape they take.
- Mages: Look I know Johnny, and that wasn't him. Sure it vaguely resembled him and those were his clothes but that wasn't him. It was more like something had emptied him out and was wearing him like a suit.



- Changelings: The Gentry are among us and wearing the skins of people is neither strangest nor the most terrifying thing I've seen them do.

**Bane:** In addition to the normal susceptibility that all Aliens have to terrestrial diseases, Shey'daan are extremely sensitive to biologically volatile chemicals. When suffering from the effects of the Poisoned Tilt, all poison damage is aggravated rather than lethal. Likewise, chemical substances that inflict lethal damage to humans instead inflict aggravated damage to a Cīmex. Substances that inflict bashing damage to humans, like tear gas, pepper spray, or Raid, will instead inflict lethal damage. Even chemicals which are nominally harmless to humans (i.e., cigarette smoke) are dangerous to the Shey'daan. And exposure to these substances will quickly cause bashing damage to them.

### The Fōrmae

The primordial Fōrmae are rumored to be among the most ancient of all sapient lifeforms in the entire universe. Feared and reviled by almost every species they've ever encountered, most Fōrmae are drifters, exiles, or refugees. If shapeshifting were the limit of their strange abilities other Stranded might find them easier to get along with but, a Fōrma doesn't just change the shape of its body. It physically absorbs those it wants to masquerade as, stealing their lives in addition to their appearance.

Among the most alien of Aliens, the Alsyxzier as they call themselves, are also among the most spiritual of all Stranded. They are the ones most sensitive to ephemeral beings and thereby the ones most likely to be aware when angels, ghosts, and spirits are nearby. They're also the most likely to come into conflict with the Vīsiōnēs and other, even more exotic Aliens and n-fractal phantoms.

<Sidebar>

### Truly Alien Things

It would be tempting to think that Aliens who possess so much in the way of technological sophistication are somehow more spiritually sophisticated than humans. But much as religion can play a role, both negative and positive, in our sociological well-being, so too does spirituality play a role our psychological well-being. The Stranded are no different than the primitives surrounding them in this respect.

Ephemeral beings, both manifest and lingering in twilight, are something that Aliens do have to contend with during the course of their travels. In rare instances, the outcome of a battle or the fall of an entire intergalactic empire has been brought about because not enough attention was paid to appeasing the right kinds of beings.

As a part of the universal reality, Aliens are a part of the God-Machine's design and so Angels occasionally interact with extraterrestrials. Aliens have a wide variety of spiritual practices which occasionally cause them to develop Adaptations that allow them to see into the Twilight and perceive Ghosts, Spirits, and stranger creatures. There are also the Vis, a wholly ephemeral Alien species and other, even stranger beings (n-fractal phantoms), including intelligent viruses and ethereal waves of light.

## The Haunted Starways

As they travel space, Aliens are for the most part unaware of the spirits that they carry with them. Every Vessel is full of spirits native to the Alien and its homeworld. These entities coexist with the Vessel in symbiotic state not dissimilar to that of the Stranded themselves.

These spirits stand as the first line of defense against unwanted entities hitching rides and is one of the major factors in preventing beings like the Idigam from hitching a ride with each and every starfarer. Of course, sometimes this isn't enough and Angels, Idigam, Vis, and other stranger entities have been known to make planetfall riding a Vessel's coattails as it were. Sometimes Vessels that have been in deep space long enough get infected by Ghosts or other Spirits of the dark. While their Vessel provides the same advantages as other supernatural beings, even Aliens can be possessed and eventually become one of the Claimed.

</Sidebar>

The Alsyxzier frequent Earth more because it is a spiritual nexus than because they have an interest in its flora and fauna. The spiritual realms predate the Earth's existence by ages. The Abyss, Astral, Shadow, Underworld and similar realms have existed since time immemorial and the most ancient of artifacts have crossed from one world to the next through them.

It is in search of these antediluvian relics that the Fōrmae are most often found roaming the dark recesses of the Chronicles of Darkness setting. Other Stranded look on the Shapeless with deep suspicion, unable to understand the eternal quest that the Fōrmae's formless gods have tasked them with. Occasionally a Fōrma finds itself marooned on Earth through the penal actions of some other species that it has infiltrated. There are also those Alsyxzier who tire of the endless search and dealing with substanceless entities and abandon their quest altogether.

Secrecy is the key strategy for a Fōrma's long-term survival. It takes time to absorb the substance of their living victims and even if it didn't, a trail of mysterious disappearances is likely to lead the natives' local constables, if not far worse agents, straight to the Alsyxzier's doorstep.

Fōrmae are also unique in that only one Clade is known to exist and the Chellix are little more than shapeless blob-like amoebas. Their thought patterns are completely unlike that of other species, not so unlike that of more esoteric ephemeral beings, and unlike other Stranded, Chellix have no means of Camouflage.

## Point of Origin

- Since time immemorial the Alsyxzier have watched over the galaxy and guarded it against the things that dwell in other realms. As the galaxy's stars align in a mystical pattern, the great evil that they have watched for is finally being born into the universe. It could not come at a worse time. Already few in number, there are very few who can make the journey to the distant world at the confluence's center.
- The being that the Alsyxzier call Rajenjendra was already ancient when the shapeless raised themselves up from the evolutionary muck and achieved sapience. Wise and kindly, Rajenjendra took them under its wings and taught them the Truth of the universe. With its time in this existence nearing completion, the mighty and wise Rajenjendra invested them with the sacred duty to carry its teachings to the stars so that others might know its divine wisdom.
- In times long past The Alsyxzier forged a republic the likes of which the galaxy has never known since. Like all great things, the republic's fortunes dwindled as the eons passed

and the shapeless found themselves lapsing into a deep slumber one by one until too few of them remained to repel the barbarian hordes of the rest of the universe. Now they have awoken to find their civilization's works pillaged and its jewels spread among the stars.

## Specimens

### Typical Roles

The average Alsyxzier is something of a mystic and many of them find themselves engaged in a never ending quest to find and recover the aged relics of their long-dead gods. When they do take notice of the natives surrounding them, they frequently fashion themselves into the role of savior from beyond the stars and found cults that venerate UFOs or antediluvian entities that have long passed from the memory of all but the most ancient of beings.

**Messiah** – You've traveled trillions of light years bearing the *truth* of Rajenjendra's teachings to a new world. Now you dwell among the humans, slowly subverting them to your god's service. Nothing will keep you from achieving the glorification of Rajenjendra. You even savagely damaged the Vessel that brought you here in a show of pure devotion. Nothing can get in the way of your holy mission, not even the challenges of survival.

**Treasure Hunter** – There were once seven stars of Dysidiodosos. Each of the stars was a beautiful jewel without compare in the whole galaxy. Then came the calamity that ended your homeworld's existence and the stars were scattered across the galaxy. You and prospectors like you have been plying the star lanes ever since trying to recover these ancient artifacts. Sabotage by your competitors might have left you grounded on Earth but you know something that they don't. One of the stars is close at hand.

**Vagrant** – You are eons old and have traveled from one end of the universe to the other. You've learned all of the truth – there is no *Truth*. There's also no such thing as intelligence or good or bad or much of anything that other "intelligent" being pursue. Now you just drift from place to place and this place you've come to rest upon, is just like a thousand inhabited worlds you've visited in the past. If you bide your time they'll simply annihilate themselves but in the process of doing so, they'll set you adrift once again to repeat the process on the next world.

### Creating a Doppelganger

When making a Fōrma character, consider these questions:

**Who was it before it was marooned?** Each Fōrma is a shapeless mass of wriggling flesh in its natural state. Since such things are easily picked out as unnatural by others, they spend most of their time masquerading as someone else. Who does it look like now? Is it hiding among the native population? Or has it taken the form of another Stranded?

**What was its purpose for traveling to Earth?** Is it a missionary bring the holy words of one of its Chthonian deities to the Earthlings? Is it searching for lost relics of times past? Is it hunting for a specific ephemeral being that it suspects has taken sanctuary on Earth? Is it fleeing from other Aliens and is using Earth as a Sanctuary? Was it just drifting across the galaxy and happened to crash onto Earth accidentally?

**How does it relate to the human natives?** Does it view them as cheap clothing, worn for an occasion and then discarded? Does it try to fit in among them? Does it try to teach them its ways or somehow adulterate their knowledge of the world? Does it view them as minions to be co-opted and used for the furtherance of its cause? Or are they collaborators in service to the same universal Truth.

**How does it relate to other Stranded?** Does it seek them out? Does it avoid them? Are they actively hunting it for some past transgression? Is it masquerading as one of them? Is it trying to spread its faith among them too? Or is it using them as tools in the endless quest for ancient relics? Does it need them as a means for getting off planet? While they are seldom welcomed among other Stranded, those that do gain acceptance in a Cluster typically do it under the guise of another species and so find themselves fulfilling all manner of roles. Is there a particular Stranded that it would reveal its true nature to?

**How does it plan to survive?** Is it gathering humans to aid it? Is it stealing lives from the natives, absorbing their substance and dwelling among them for a time before moving on? Has it done anything to draw attention to itself? Is it singling out the powerful or the weak as a means of maintaining its Camouflage? How does it deal with natives who are suspicious of its disguise?

Where other Aliens might consume, discard or hide the remains of their victims, every one of the Alsyzzier completely integrate their victims into their bodies, using their DNA to fashion uncanny disguises for themselves. The Fōrmae thus have both the most perfect and the most dangerous disguises. They are the Aliens most likely to come into frequent close contact with the natives and are the most at risk for Exposure.

As such social attributes and social skills are going to be an important priorities for almost every Fōrmae. Obtaining multiple specialties in Subterfuge will particularly useful. Physical or Mental attributes and skills are often secondary according to the needs of the Alsyzzier. Those intending to develop and lead cults will find the get the most traction out of Mental traits and especially the Occult skill, while treasure hunters tend to focus on Physical traits and develop both their Larceny and Survival skills.

**Favored Attribute:** Manipulation or Presence

**Camouflage:** Absorption

**Adaptation Affinities:** Distension, Extra Limbs and Secretions

**Stereotypes**

- Cerebra: You know what they say about curiosity...
- Cīmicēs: You wear the skins of your victims while we wear our victims. Not much of a difference afterall, is it?
- Gregēs: I wonder what secrets your makers told you.
- Lacertae: Your ancient gods worshipped our ancient gods.

**Native Perspectives**

- Vampires: Of course Sarah hasn't been the same since last Saturday. She's my friend's mentor's Child's thrall.
- Werewolves: Claimed come in all shapes and sizes, especially those Claimed by an Idigam.
- Mages: Something fell from the sky last Tuesday and your neighbor hasn't acted normally ever since? What do you mean she *knows* the *truth* of the world?
- Hunters: Eh...what? Gross. Burn it with fire.

**Bane:** In addition to the normal susceptibility that all Aliens have to terrestrial diseases, Alsyzziers highly morphic anatomies are extremely sensitive to heat. Fire obviously causes aggravated damage but other heat sources cause increased damage to their extraterrestrial physiologies too as it denatures and disrupts the proteins that allow them the assume different

shapes. When within the effects of the Extreme Heat tilt, any bashing damage that the Fōrma would suffer is marked as lethal damage instead. Similarly, any damage that would normally be lethal (the effects of prolonged exposure) is aggravated instead.

### The Gregēs

Each Grex is a communal hive mind comprising dozens, if not hundreds, of individuals. The tL'ivaffi are an unusual insectoid species. Whereas a Cīmex is a relatively humanoid sized and shaped insectoid Alien, every Grex is a colony of small millipede like creatures, averaging just under an inch in length.

Each colony thinks and acts as one aggregate being, not too dissimilar to a colony of ants, bees, or wasps. They hide themselves by infesting native beings. As space farers, they have a preference for advanced tool users. Their relationship with an infested host being is more parasitic than symbiotic and quite frequently host bodies are modified to make more room for the colony's members. Unused organs are slowly devoured over time and replaced with a muscular honeycomb material that reinforces the host's structure. Features of the digestive tract and the frontal lobe of the brain are among the parts that are most frequently consumed.

Gregēs find themselves on Earth for a number of reasons, but most frequently because their Vessel was damaged in battle or through happenstance. As such, they are frequently looking for resources to repair their damaged space ships. Like the Alsyxzier, the tL'ivaffi are a species feared for their ability to subsume the bodies of others and while other Stranded don't view them with quite as much suspicion as the would a Fōrma, Gregēs often find themselves at the edges of the pseudo-civilization that Stranded have eked out on Earth.

A race of builders, the tL'ivaffi might be the Stranded with the best odds of accomplishing their various goals and getting off planet. Despite worries over the manner in which they hide themselves from the natives, other Aliens still deal with any Gregēs that have been marooned near them. As master engineers, tL'ivaffi often have access to Ornāmenta that other species don't and have a knack for adapting the native technologies to serve purposes that no human would have ever considered.

A variety of Clades exist. Most of them are not the gifted engineers and inventors that the average Gregēs is. The ravenous Imsikiel devour their hosts completely and wear the skins like bulging suits. The slug-like Traaven spread themselves across multiple hosts, forming a hive-network of multiple individuals. The spider-like El'gki'anto maintain a stable of brutish host-beings and rely entirely on psychic illusions to pass for human.

### Point of Origin

- The tL'ivaffi were once the masterminds behind a broad federation of worlds and lived in harmony with a vast number of slave races. Not all of their hives were satisfied with the morality and ethics of enslaving other species so that they could found an advanced star-spanning civilization. More and more hives aided the various native species in escaping and founding their own free colonies, which eventually led to an intergalactic civil war which the slave masters lost. Hated and feared by all, the tL'ivaffi have been reduced to seeking refuge on the most distance of fringe worlds far from the center of their once immense civilization.
- Since their last servitor race rebelled, the tL'ivaffi have decided to turn over a new leaf. They now actively search out species willing to cohabitate in a symbiotic relationship. This has led to them participating in a new confederation of worlds where, through

volunteer servitor beings, they provide advice and the bounty of their centuries of experience.

- The tL'ivaffi are not the natural product of evolution. They were once the tools of an even older species that dominated the universe by constructing an immense intergalactic network of sub-spatial canals. A species of biological nanite-like beings, they eventually gained a form of gestalt sapience. Over time they grew bored with the tasks that their creators had given them and devised goals of their own. Goals which culminated in throwing off the yoke of their creator's ownership in the fires of revolution.

## Specimens

### Typical Roles

A Grex has many adaptations that allow it to coordinate activities requiring thousands of laborers, subsume control of distributed systems that rely on the transfer of power in one form or another, and interact with extremely minute details. As such a great many of the individual hives are craftsbeings or engineers. Some Clades possess Adaptations that make them better suited towards combat-oriented or scholarly roles.

**Engineer** – You were overseeing the construction of the next node of the intergalactic railway. Unfortunately an unforeseen calamity struck the project site, damaging your Vessel in the process and leaving you stranded here. To make matters worse the disaster has attracted the attention of the locals and now natives are swarming around everywhere. Survival was going to hard enough but now you must make sure the railway's technology doesn't fall into the hands of these primitives and avoid discovery at the same time.

**Inventor** – You were always pushing the edge, seeking out the next technological challenge. Pushing yourself and your machines to the breaking point. Unfortunately you pushed too hard. You flaunted your people's norms one time too many and now they've exiled you to this drowned rock. Deprived of your tools and watched by your jailor, you struggle to eke out a meager existence among the natives. If only what passes for sophisticated technology among them wasn't so basic as to be useless. If you could withstand the test of time, you know you could bring this backwards planet into a new golden age but, your captors are watching you.

**Volunteer** – The people of Earth are suffering. Their masses are wracked by hunger, poverty, and violence. You've left all of your technological conveniences behind and come to dwell among them. You strongly feel that sharing your knowledge is the best way to lift them up. If only they felt the same way.

### Creating a Swarm

When making a Grex character, consider these questions:

**Who were they before they were marooned?** Were they engineers working on some interplanetary or intergalactic project, like a network of star gates? Were they pariahs exiled for delving into forbidden technologies or learning secrets they shouldn't know? Did they enjoy a symbiotic relationship with one or more other Alien species? Or were they parasites that were despised and hunted down?

**What was their purpose for traveling to Earth?** Did they come to Earth and cannibalize their Vessels in an attempt to improve the Earthlings lot in life? Were they simply working at a remote wilderness site (galactically speaking)? Were they in search of a new servitor species? Or were

they fleeing a sweeping rebellion that was in the process of consuming their empire? Are they searching for something like a lost ship or probe? Or are they merely prospecting for resources.

**How do they relate to the human natives?** Are natives merely meat puppets to be inhabited and controlled? Or do they seek a more balanced symbiotic relationship where the host body is well cared for and may eventually be released back into the “wild” one day? Does the hive spread themselves across multiple individuals? If so, did they infest an existing family unit or, are they an assemblage of disparate people?

**How do they relate to other Stranded?** As master craftsbeings, tL’ivaffi can produce useful items from almost any assortment of junk. Despite the reservations that other Aliens have about them, it is not unusual for a Grex to be invited to be part of a Cluster. Have they been accepted into such a communal group? Or has the hive decided to remain aloof from other Stranded? Have they infested a member of another Alien species? If so, how do they maintain its Camouflage?

**How do they plan to survive?** Even with their knack for building, the tL’ivaffi often find that the natives possess frighteningly primitive technology which takes years, decades, and occasionally centuries to modify into something usable. How do they avoid attracting attention over the intervening timespans? What do they do when their host bodies age and die? How do they cope with the effects of random violence and social upheaval when it surrounds them?

As engineers and machinists, most Gregēs will prioritize mental traits followed by physical traits. Somewhat ironically, the hive-minded tL’ivaffi find little use in social traits and rarely prioritize them even as a secondary concern. When the whole think with one voice there is little need to converse.

Gregēs skill sets will be similarly prioritized. Dots in Crafts are nearly ubiquitous and it is not unusual for tL’ivaffi to evince multiple specializations in that skill. Each Grex frequently has extensive knowledge of vehicles and weapons, and so concentrations in Drive, Firearms, Larceny, and Weaponry are not unusual.

**Favored Attribute:** Dexterity or Wits

**Camouflage:** Infestation

**Adaptation Affinities:** Gestalt, Larval Cloud and Venom

**Stereotypes**

- Cerebra: Your brilliance is only matched by your cold detachment from the universe.
- Cīmicēs: Fear not big cousin, our way is the righteous way.
- Fōrmae: So old you can’t remember where you came from eh?
- Lacertae: It must be hard to always be yearning for former glories.

**Native Perspectives**

- Vampires: Like a meat bag full of bugs? Of course you’re terrified. That’s exactly the effect I was going for. I told you, it’s all in your head.
- Werewolves: Some Claimed are just weirder than other Claimed. It’s really nothing I haven’t seen before.
- Mages: The cult members all moved in perfect coordination without once speaking to one another? Well, that’s not normal *human* behavior but I can think of some things that could cause that.
- Demons: Contracting with other supernaturals is difficult at best. These things are just Compromise waiting to happen.

**Bane:** In addition to the normal susceptibility that all Aliens have to terrestrial diseases, tL'ivaffi are vulnerable to the elements around them. While they are protected within the confines of their host body, Gregēs are at risk of being smothered. Since they must share an air supply with it, any source of respiratory distress (such as drowning) that would normally cause bashing damage to the host, instead causes lethal damage to both it and the hive.

A Grex can mitigate this affect by abandoning the host body wholesale. Once the swarm is free though, they will be completely exposed to the elements and will suffer damage when exposed to the Blizzard, Heavy Rain or Heavy Winds Tilts exactly as if they had instead been exposed to the Extreme Cold or Extreme Heat Tilts (i.e., periodic bashing damage). Also, while they are immune to any form of targeted attack and gain a +6 bonus to any rolls to Hide, all attacks that affect an area deal aggravated damage to them.

### The Lacertae

The saurian Lacertae are an example of how the evolutionary tree might have turned out if things had gone differently on Earth. While not as ancient as a Fōrma, every Lacerta is nevertheless the member of a species with ancient lineage and primordial connections to Earth. More closely related to birds than to lizards, the Jagh'den are uniformly possessed of an impressive stature and are frequently found in the employ of other species in the capacity of bounty hunters, enforcers or mercenaries.

Primitive by the standards of their peers, the Lacertae only recently invented superluminal travel. Those that find themselves marooned on Earth were often the victims of employers who exploited them as a disposable form of labor. Their ability to blend in with their surroundings give them a unique advantage for a number of missions that require delicacy and a low profile, including first contact missions.

The Jagh'den's original homeworld has been lost to the mists of time and a sizable minority of them devout some or all of their time in the search for the cradle of their civilization. The self-centered primitives that compose Earth's population often think that the Earth might be this cradle. While their sentiment is shared by a few Lacertae, the fact is that the haunted world of Mars is the primary draw for most of them.

The desiccated red planet is a regular feature, alongside dozens of other burnt-out worlds, of the strange conspiracy-theory riddled mythology that some Jagh'den indulge in. Exploring such planets is risky and dozens of Lacertae perish in search of their ancestor's primeval birthplace every year. For every hundred that suffer a mishap on Mars, only the rare one or two manage to bridge the gulf to the semi-sanctuary of Earth, where a new collection of survival problems confronts them.

While similar Clades, like the Baerek, the Mynp, and the Dalf, really do have exothermic metabolisms, the Jagh'den are an endothermic species. Despite this, they have developed a constitution that does not cope particularly well with cold environments. As such, they are most frequently found scabbling to survive in more tropical latitudes.

### Point of Origin

- The Jagh'den's ancient forbears were also spacefarers that colonized hundreds of worlds. As they spread through space, their domesticated animals spread with them. It was not unheard of for entire worlds to be managed as enormous ranches that grew, harvested and shipped meat to their sprawling empire. While they have identified Mars as some kind of



world of importance it remains unclear to them if Earth was once one of those sparsely settled agri-worlds.

- The Jagh'den are a species that has emerged anew from the tattered remnants of an older parent species. As the evolutionary successors to an older spacefaring race, these reptilian appearing creatures also see themselves as the true heirs to what was once a mighty space empire. As they reassert themselves, even the smallest of border worlds are being considered and reconsidered for whatever tactical or strategic advantages they might present.
- A cornerstone species of a declining galactic republic, the Jagh'den have been taking on more and more administrative responsibilities. The past few centuries have seen the rise of pirate states, upstart confederations, and the stellar empires of petty warlords. These lizard-like beings find themselves spread ever more thinly on an increasingly violent frontier.

### Specimens

#### Typical Roles

A Lacerta has an array of biological Adaptations that fully support much of his or her culture's warrior heritage. Many of the roles that Jagh'den find themselves in are as members elite military or security forces, either for that of their own species or for such units belonging to other Aliens. A number of them also operate in the capacity of various espionage or political agents. Finally, a sizable minority of super-wealthy Lacertae are engaged in archaeological hobbies related to their lost homeworld.

**Archaeologist** – Your preparations seemed impeccable at the time. You had prepared for every eventuality that might confront you in your expedition. Well...almost every eventuality but the one that occurred. Through some twist of fate or malfunction of equipment, you found yourself hundreds of millions of miles off course. Your Vessel was not prepared to cope with the much deeper gravity well that it suddenly found itself in and you were lucky to survive the crash. You're in the right star system, you're just on the wrong planet. You aren't yet sure how you're going to rectify that but all of those specimen jars probably won't be much help...

**Body Guard** – You were assigned to protect a high-prolife emissary to a joint diplomatic effort, taking place on a sleepy, quiet, undeveloped planet. Unfortunately, an assassin slipped by all of your security measures and your employers won't bring you back home until you catch the villain. Even worse, the assassin is probably long off-world by now, so you have been effectively abandoned on this backwater filled with hostile mammals. You uncertain how you'll survive the natives long enough to find the definitive proof necessary to win your freedom.

**Envoy** – You're initial mission was to assess the natives and determine if they were worthy of contact. Unfortunately you all but unwittingly exposed your entire civilization's existence to the primitive apes around you. Disavowed by your masters, you find that they've locked down your Vessel, stripping you of almost all of your resources and abandoning you to dying in disgrace billions of light-years away from home. Even as you struggle to find some form of redemption, the fight for survival begins to take its toll on your meager supplies.

### Creating a Lizard

When making a Lacerta character, consider these questions:

***Who was he or she before he or she was marooned?*** Was he or she employed as a soldier, agent, or politician within their own culture? Or was he or she in the service of some other Aliens as free-lancers or mercenaries? Was he or she someone of significance? Was he or she leading a self-funded or academic expedition in search of the lost Jagh'den homeworld? Did he or she find evidence for it?

***What was his or her purpose for traveling to Earth?*** Was he or she on Earth in the capacity of discharging some portion of their official duties? Or did he or she end up there through some mishap? Has he or she done something which led to them being disavowed or having punitive actions taken against them? Is he or she in pursuit of other Aliens? Is he or she looking for evidence that her or his ancient forbears visited Earth in the remote past?

***How does he or she relate to the human natives?*** All Lacertae are carnivores and while they consider eating their own kind to be cannibalism they have no qualms about consuming mammals. Does he or she consider the natives to be little more than free range food on the hoof? How does such an outlook impact her or his dealings with the apes? If he or she doesn't consume humans, does he or she hunt other food sources? How does he or she conceal her or his hunting activities from the natives?

***How does he or she relate to other Stranded?*** Jagh'den are often at the heart of Clusters, either leading them directly or serving as the social glue that holds them together. Those who are not leaders are often found in some type of enforcement, intelligence or security role. Is this the case for her or him? How does he or she relate to other Aliens? Are they also food sources to be yoked for her or his survival? Do they hold valuable clues to the mythological origin of her or his people? Is he or she an outsider to other groups of Stranded? Does he or she have a reason from her or his past not to trust them?

***How does he or she plan to survive?*** Lacertae have the weakest Camouflage of any Alien species. While they can make the outer layer of their flesh look like a human's or some other creature's close contact will often reveal its true nature. How does he or she overcome this obstacle? Has he or she heard the rumors about black garbed natives abducting other Stranded? Has he or she formed or joined a Cluster for mutual defense? Does he or she have a plan to get their Vessel released or repaired so that he or she can leave Earth?

The Jagh'den have long hunting and warrior traditions and so it is not unusual for physical attributes to be prioritized. Forming social units for mutual benefit is also an important part of their civilization and so prioritizing social traits happens almost as frequently. As whichever of these attributes is not prioritized will usually be secondary, mental traits tend to be a tertiary concern. Exceptions do exist, especially among those engaged in archaeological pursuits, either as hobbyists or in an academic capacity.

Physical skills are very frequently prioritized and skill specialties in Athletics, Brawl, Firearms, and Stealth are common. Social skills are also important, and many Lacertae take dots in Expression, Persuasion, and Subterfuge. Mental skills tend to be tertiary, but for those Jagh'den that prioritize it, Academics is a primary focus.

**Favored Attribute:** Stamina or Resolve

**Camouflage:** Mimicry

**Adaptation Affinities:** Chameleon Skin, Claws & Teeth and Regeneration

**Stereotypes**

- Cerebra: Your intellect is great but your arrogance truly knows no bounds.

- Cīmicēs: Edible with the correct preparations.
- Fōrmae: Not even good as an emergency food source.
- Gregēs: You youngsters may be proud of the clever games you play but, you haven't earned your place in this universe yet.

### **Native Perspectives**

- Vampires: Man-eating lizards? There, there, it's not something you're going to have to worry about.
- Werewolves: Those claimed by lizard spirits are still Claimed.
- Mages: Magic is a much art as science. Accidents resulting in unnatural things have been known to happen.
- Beasts: I see you brother. Let's join forces and together we could teach the galaxy to fear the night.

**Bane:** In addition to the normal susceptibility that all Aliens have to terrestrial diseases, Lacertae are susceptible to cold temperatures. Their ancestors having long-ago lost whatever plumage their more primitive forebears once possessed, the Jagh'den are a highly civilized society that prefers warm climates. Contact with ice causes bashing damage to Lacertae and contact with colder substances such as dry ice causes lethal damage. Supercooled fluids, like liquid nitrogen or liquid oxygen, which might cause lethal damage to humans that come into prolonged or concentrated contact with them, cause Jagh'den aggravated damage. Similarly, when within the effects of the Extreme Cold tilt, any bashing damage that the Lacerta would suffer is marked as lethal damage instead. Likewise, any damage that would normally be lethal (the effects of prolonged exposure) is aggravated instead.

### **Occupātiōnēs**

Aliens visit Earth with what would seem to be alarming frequency and while they have many disparate reasons for these visitations, the majority of Stranded fall into six broad categories (Occupātiōnēs) which describe both the manner in which they most likely became marooned and what kinds of resources their Vessel has been optimized to provide. Three of these categories involve Aliens who were fulfilling some official or semi-official role as scouts (Excursōrēs), scientists (Scīscitātōrēs), or surveyors (Explōrātōrēs). One category is comprised of Aliens who are visiting Earth for the purpose of doing good works and acting as saviors (Salvātōrēs). Another category consists of criminals (Malefactōrēs) who were purposely left on Earth as a penal measure. And the final category covers all of the aimless drifters (Grassātōrēs), who have no particular reason to be on any particular planet.

There are also six general ways by which the Stranded come to find themselves stuck on Earth. Some were purposely abandoned, either because they failed to fulfill some duty or because they are pawns in some larger conspiracy. Others were accidentally left behind; they may have missed a crucial launch window or been swept up in some domestic calamity occurring among the natives, either way they missed their opportunity to get off-world. Some, like Grassātōrēs, may have simply run out of fuel. Their Vessel may have been damaged through accident, misadventure, or on purpose by their own hand. And of course, Malefactōrēs are often purposefully exiled, although instances where they've fallen victim to any of the other circumstances, usually because they were fleeing from some other penal facility, are not unheard of.

## Excursōrēs

Alien Scouts are frequently in the employ of some military force. Sometimes this force is an active national force, occasionally it is some kind of imperial or international force, and most typically it is a small mercenary company in the employ of some other government. On very rare occasions, the scouts are freelancers in service to non-governmental agencies.

Of all the Stranded, scouts are the most likely to have been abandoned on purpose. Sometimes this is a punitive measure regarding some infraction or inability to accomplish their primary mission. Often it may be because they have caused some calamity among the locals or drawn too much attention to themselves and thereby been disavowed. Occasionally scouts find that they have been duped in volunteering (or have been actively assigned) a one-way mission with no plans for extraction. Very rarely, they have purposely signed on for what they know to be a forlorn hope.

Scouts may also become marooned for other reasons. Their vessels may have been damaged from conflict, natural disaster, or sabotage, leaving them with no means of signaling for rescue. They may have missed a window for extraction and been left behind (perhaps there is a star gate that only opens every 10 years). They may have chosen to purposely damage their vessel in an attempt to hide from enemies or as a means to protect the natives.

Excursion Vessels frequently provide their occupants with means for assessing and neutralizing threats. Their stores often contain Ornāmenta that take the forms of weapons and portable protective gear. Whatever misadventure befell them, these Stranded have lost access to all of their most potent resources and have access to a fraction of the firepower that they formerly had.

**Vessel Amenities:** Armory or Combat Information Center

**Common Ornāmenta:** Jet Packs, Personal Force Fields, Ray Guns

## Among the Taxa

Of all the Taxa, it is the Cīmicēs and Lacertae that are the ones most likely to end up becoming Stranded in the course of reconnaissance. Since both species have active military traditions. Aliens of these Taxa are usually in the service to their own governments or are employed as part of a mercenary unit. A Fōrma or Grex in this role is almost always a lone reconnaissance agent, like a ranger, and is usually in the service of some other species government which considers them expendable. Occasionally these Taxa intermingle with others but they almost always have to abandon their Alien disguise for a terrestrial one once they become one of the Stranded. Cerebra have very little in the way of military traditions and so they are almost always found as members of mixed species mercenary forces or represent some invited expert.

## Explōrātōrēs

Alien Explorers have a variety of backgrounds. Some are intergalactic surveyors that travel from planet to planet cataloging resources, life-forms, and terrains. Others are lone prospectors in search of mineral wealth. Some are even archaeologists or tomb raiders searching for long-lost relics of civilizations lost to the distant past.

Explōrātōrēs are the Stranded most likely to have become marooned through mishap. Perhaps the natives got access to their Vessel and damaged it or, maybe it was caught up in the throes of an earthquake or other violent force of nature. It's also possible that their accident occurred in

space and that Earth provided the only viable refuge that they could find. Occasionally they even fall victim to the machinations of competitors.

Of course sometimes an Explōrātor has become one of the Stranded for other reasons. Perhaps they were part of an expedition that got cut off from its mothership due to some unforeseen circumstance that necessitated that they be left behind. Or perhaps theirs was designed to be a one-way trip. They may have even chosen damage their Vessel on purpose, after perhaps having learned something sinister about the primeval bauble that they found.

Explōrātor Vessels are usually configured with sensors that make it easier to find and exploit mineral and energy resources or that map topography with a great level of detail. Their stores have a number of Ornāmenta that allow their Alien crew members to efficiently take samples of local materials, dig through solid rock, and even create new substances.

**Vessel Amenities:** Chemistry Lab or Topographical Sensor Array

**Common Ornāmenta:** Earthmover Droids, Portable Extra-Dimensional Extractors, Tunneling Lasers

### *Among the Taxa*

Cerebra and Gregēs are the Taxa most frequently encountered in role of explorers, prospectors, or surveyors. They find themselves employed by a number of agencies both governmental and corporate and may be exploring for new resources or assessing a border region for the construction of new infrastructure. It is also not unusual to encounter a Fōrma or Lacerta in this role. Both Taxa have ancient histories that describe many legends and myths scattered across the stars. Members of these Taxa are most frequently lone treasure hunters or are part of academic expeditions. The Cīmecēs rarely pursue resources in the same way as other Taxa. Their larger numbers mean that it is frequently easier to take what they want, even at the risk of intergalactic conflict.

### *Grassātōrēs*

These homeless drifters have come to rest on Earth from a vast array of places. Some are aimless vagabonds who left their home-worlds and civilizations behind for reasons known only to themselves. Others are reprobates fleeing from punishment, be it at the hands of some law enforcement agency or those of former allies that they betrayed. Still others are refugees, escaping from warfare or cataclysm.

All Grassātōrēs have one thing in common. They ended up marooned on Earth simply because they had run out of the resources needed to run any further. Unlike other Stranded, who ended up marooned through bad luck, betrayal, calamity, punitive measures, or their own hands, no Grassātor chooses the shore that they wash up onto. Instead, the almost uniformly succumb to travails of the time and distance that they have traveled

They find themselves come to stop in an eerie landscape populated by hairless apes and make do the best they can. Like other Stranded, each Grassātor struggles to survive on this new world. Unlike other marooned Aliens, Earth will be the final destination for most of these vagabonds. Many will fall victim to native diseases or the harsh environmental conditions. Of those that survive such dangers, many more will find themselves hunted by the agents of United Technologies, Inc., or other, darker things that move in the shadows of the night.

Grassātor Vessels are mostly exhausted of resources and provide fewer advantages to their Alien crews than the Vessels of those possessing other Occupātiōnēs do. They have no stores to

speak of and provide nothing in the way of Ornāmenta. Although, they are not completely devoid of advantages; Grassātor Vessels almost universally possess the most sought after of Amenities – the Teleportation Matrix.

**Vessel Amenities:** Teleportation Matrix

**Common Ornāmenta:** *none*

### *Among the Taxa*

As beings that parasitize other beings, both Fōrmae, and Gregēs succumb to the paranoia of others and find themselves adrift in the vast void. Like the Stranded themselves, these unfortunates struggle to survive as they hop from one world to the next, they fortunes never really looking up. Cīmicēs that have survived the all-but-complete annihilation of their brood have also been known to take up the hopeless lifestyle of an interstellar vagabond. Very occasionally one finds a Cerebrum who has been rendered homeless by his fellows. While they may be geniuses like the rest of their kind, these Cerebra are also usually insane. With their long warrior traditions and pride, it is very rare to find a Lacerta who has allowed her- or himself to fall into this state of affairs. Of course one might argue that all Stranded are now homeless but these wastrels will quickly point out that their fellow Stranded don't know the meaning of the word privation.

### *Malefactōrēs*

Alien criminals come from as wide a variety of backgrounds as those among the natives do. Some are psychotic murderers. Some are traffickers in illegal substances. There are also those who are criminals simply by virtue of being on the wrong side of a political disagreement or because they hold beliefs that are considered heretical by their own culture.

That Earth would be used as penal colony by Aliens would come as a surprise to no one if they knew the truth of it. The Earthlings have their own long heritage of exiling unwanted members of their own society to far-off lands where indigenous peoples could contend with them. While it is expected by their jailors that Earth will eventually be a death sentence, most of Malefactōrēs are given enough token resources to survive for a time.

Of course, direct punishment isn't the only way that a Malefactor can find them marooned on Earth. Some end up here while fleeing from greater authorities. In these cases their Vessels fall victim to battle damage. In other cases the criminal may find that his fellows have sabotaged his Vessel and left him behind to distract their pursuers. Other times the Malefactor may simply have been in the wrong place at the wrong time when the pursuers showed up and was accidentally lost in the chaos. Occassionally, Alien criminals will choose to hide among the Earthlings, purposely damaging their Vessel to reduce the odds that pursuers will find them.

Malefactor Vessels are designed to enforce that Alien's maroonment. Despite being a penal ship, the Vessels of these Stranded do provide them with a number of resources key to their survival. Many of them have highly advanced cells or surveillance systems that the Stranded can co-opt and essentially become the patient running the asylum. The amenities can then be turned on the local natives and used to cages in a zoo or to tap into the dense layer of radio communications that blanket the Earth.

**Vessel Amenities:** Containment Facility or Surveillance Hub

**Common Ornāmenta:** Agony Rods, Sensor Drones, Sticky Foam Cannons

### *Among the Taxa*

Cīmicēs and Fōrmae are the Aliens most likely to have been imprisoned on Earth. Containment on a penile colony is usually a punishment inflicted upon a Stranded by Aliens other than their own species. For the Fōrmae this exile is seen as a friendly method of excising an unwanted interloper from the greater whole among those rare species for whom life is sacrosanct. A Cīmex is often incarcerated because they have been separated from their brood-mates and had no other recourse for survival. Cerebra and Lacertae are also sometimes condemned prisoners but Gregēs are notoriously difficult to keep confined through these measures.

### *Salvātōrēs*

These self-appointed saviors are widely repudiated by their own kind. Salvātōrēs are typically found on Earth for one of three reasons. Some few are here to share their Alien technologies, much like Prometheus stealing fire from the gods and giving it to humanity. Others see themselves as international aid workers bringing the natives relief from their primitive state. There are also a few who style themselves messiahs spreading the gospel truth of their Alien deities.

The vast majority of these Stranded are stuck on Earth voluntarily. Many of them take the drastic measure of damaging their own Vessels flight and power systems as a means of steeling their wills to arduous tasks they've set before themselves. Others purposely damage their Vessels so that other members of their species cannot easily find them and put a stop to their dangerous or subversive activities. Whatever the case may be, these Salvātōrēs have all turned their backs on their own civilizations and cast their lot in with the Earthlings for the time being.

Self-appointed saviors only rarely find themselves marooned on Earth through purposeful abandonment or being accidentally left behind. For those that become members of the Stranded in this way, the primitive natives of Earth were not the savages that they originally intended to save. On rare occasions a Salvātor was exiled to Earth because their long history of unwanted volunteering or proselytizing caused authorities within their home government to finally take action. Finally, some Salvātōrēs do find themselves grounded due to an attack or natural disaster.

While all Stranded are at some risk from Aliens who do not share their marooned condition, those Stranded who style themselves as saviors of one kind or another are the most at risk. Those trying to share their Alien technologies are highly prized by the corporate echelons of United Technologies, Inc. In contrast, those preaching the bizarre litanies of their otherworldly gods quickly find themselves protected in the bosom of one of the Chronicles of Darkness's many, many cults.

Salvātor Vessels have a variety of amenities that make it possible to communicate across vast interstellar (and occasionally interdimensional) distances. Those that lack this kind of equipment typically have vast manufacturing systems to aid in disaster relief efforts. Their stores contain a selection of Ornāmenta designed to further the Salvātor's agenda.

**Vessel Amenities:** Communications Array or Fabrication Center

**Common Ornāmenta:** Hypnosis Blasters, Mind Control Beamers, Sonic Multi-Tools

### *Among the Taxa*

Fōrmae and Gregēs are the Taxa most typically found spreading one form of salvation or another among native populations. Their means of blending in combined with knowledge hailing back to the time when the universe was young often gives them the impetus to preach wisdom that their ears were the first to be privy to or to share lessons that will raise natives up from their primitive means. It is not unusual to find a Cerebrum or Lacerta in this role but, Cīmicēs are all much too self-centered to share their secrets with others, especially those that they often consider to be little better than prey beasts.

### *Scīscitātōrēs*

Scientists are a common feature among all Alien species. They come to Earth on expedition to study the native flora and fauna, including humans. Some among them study more esoteric and ephemeral phenomena and they find Earth to be a verdant location, rich in unusual entities and eldritch energies when one looks in the correct places.

Among the Stranded, Scīscitātōrēs are the most likely to have joined their ranks simply by having missed a connection. Sometimes they stayed in the field too long and missed their mothership mandated retrieval time and other times local disruptions from the natives prevented them from making an important rendezvous. Some of them simply become buried in their work and lose track of time. Regardless of what connection was lost, these scientists are thereafter on an immersive sabbatical for an indefinite time.

It's not always the case that a Scīscitātor was marooned on accident. Sometimes they are purposely abandoned by their funders or overseers. Perhaps they learned a secret that the home culture is not ready to know or perhaps they ran afoul of some kind of Byzantine political scheme. Scīscitātōrēs also fall victim to calamities or get exiled for conducting banned research. Rarely, one of the scientists will make an astounding discovery that they go to great lengths, including damaging their Vessel, in order to protect.

Scīscitātor Vessels are often well appointed with facilities and equipment that make their research possible. Whether it contains a particle beam installation for probing the depths of other dimensions or a fully automated surgical suit, these Aliens often have more resources (even if they are esoteric resources) than other Stranded. Their Vessel's stores are often filled with a variety of analytics engines and sensory apparatuses that make exploration much easier.

**Vessel Amenities:** High Energy Physics Lab or Medical Bay

**Common Ornāmenta:** Hostile Environment Exo-Suits, Multi-Phase Anomaly Scanners, Portable Spectro-Analyzers

### *Among the Taxa*

Cerebra and Lacertae are both Taxa with highly developed post-secondary education systems. In the Cerebra's case, a Cerebrum might spend many decades mastering topics to a level undreamed of by Earth's resident scholars. Conversely, the average Lacerta is expected to master a variety of topics to what would be equivalent to the graduate level among terrestrial academia. Gregēs are also frequently highly educated in the technical arts. While infrequent, some Cīmex also fulfill the role of scientist-scholar for their broods. Practitioners of naturalism and similar observational, experimental, or computational science paradigms remain extremely rare among the mystical Fōrma who cleave to their shamanistic practices.



## Others

There are Stranded who are not permanently marooned. These are often agents working undercover for specific purposes. Alien Clusters are constantly on the lookout for these intruders, as they can never be certain that such agents aren't searching for them. Unlike other Stranded, these Aliens are well equipped and can usually count on the arrival of reinforcements or an extraction should a situation spiral out of control.

The following two Occupātiōnēs best describe the intentions and typical resources that these false Stranded possess. Vēnātōrēs are hunters that have come to Earth in search of a particular kind of game. Pervāsōrēs represent both professional soldiers and space pirates whose mission brief can best be described as raiding. None of these Aliens come to Earth with the end goal of total conquest, the World that the Chronicles of Darkness takes place on has too little strategic value in the machinations of their intergalactic feuds.

### Vēnātōrēs

These Aliens represent the gamut of hunters. Some are bounty hunters who have come to Earth expressly seeking those Stranded who represent rogue or renegade elements. Others are more like the Native's own big game hunters and have come to collect trophies. A few are their culture's equivalent to contract killers and are on planet only long enough to meet the terms of their pact.

Of these three, bounty hunters are the most likely to treat the natives with some modicum of tolerance, if not actual respect or politeness. Often times the Stranded they come seeking are dangerous and psychotic, giving them more than sufficient reason to make common cause with the local inhabitants. Aliens who are assassins are indifferent to the local population and try to keep any interactions with them to a minimum so as to avoid the risks of distraction and alerting their prey through unwanted attention. Big game hunters are the most likely to come into conflict with the natives. This is especially true of conflict with the native supernatural creatures.

Like the other Occupātiōnēs listed above Vēnātōrēs can find themselves temporarily (and on very rare occasions) permanently stranded. There is no particular way in which a Vēnātor may find themselves marooned on Earth. Those that have been abandoned or who have survived their destruction at the hands of their fellows can usually expect to see more Vēnātōrēs in the near future as Alien species are as expeditious in tying up loose ends as the Earthlings are.

A Vēnātor Vessel is usually equipped similarly to those that contain Malefactōrēs. Some type of prison that doubles as a trophy room is one of the most frequently seen features on these spaceships. Those that lack such a feature frequently possess intricate predictive navigation systems that make it easier to track prey across the vast emptiness of space. These Vessels provide their crew with a variety of Ornāmenta (some quite ceremonial) that make tracking and killing prey easier.

**Vessel Amenities:** Inertial Navigation System or Trophy Hall

**Common Ornāmenta:** Energy Lances, Knuckle Bombers, Pheromone Trackers

### Pervāsōrēs

Pervāsōrēs are Aliens who have made planetfall with the intent to fulfill some purpose. Because the Earth is a backwater frontier world with few exploitable resources, full blown

conquest is not the agenda of these invaders. Instead these invaders, pirates, and raiders are frequently found on Earth when they need a place to hide from pursuers or as part of some black market resource gathering activities.

Of the few resources that Pervāsōrēs usually remove, human beings are at the top of the list. Whether they are going to be used as slave labor or as a source of medicinal and herbal remedies, there is a steady trickle of humans heading offworld and disappearing into the sprawling underbellies of the universe's intergalactic empires. In times past, Aliens such as these would scoop up whole villages in the night. The ambient surveillance of the modern Earth makes such obvious activities undesirable. Fortunately the primitives have their own vast network that traffics in human lives.

Only in the most extreme of cases will Aliens with this Occupātio actually find themselves in positions similar to those possessed by the Stranded. Typically they can count on a rapid rescue or sizable quantities of reinforcements. Those that do not receive such aid (usually because it was not timely enough in arriving) quickly succumb to the force of whatever terrestrial calamity that has befallen them.

Pervāsor Vessels are some of the most dangerous machines in the galaxy and their remains are very highly prized by those entities that are aware of the Stranded. These ships are typically equipped with formidable batteries of cannons and missiles or have hangars brimming with small craft designed to exercise total control over their local space. They are well stocked with a variety of Ornāmenta that make their crew lethally efficient marines.

**Vessel Amenities:** Small Craft Hangar or Weapon Battery

**Common Ornāmenta:** Personal Combat Drones, Portable Mass Drivers, Tactical Power Armor Suits

## Chapter 2: The Stranger Within

Human beings like to picture themselves as the center of the universe and, from a psychological standpoint, that view makes some sense. As they are born into the world and grow, each human builds a vast accumulation of experiences centered around their perspective. It is only natural then, for each of them to proceed through their day-to-day lives as the centers of their own very personalized universes. Their individual universes interact with one another and communication occurs. Information is exchanged. Conflicts are resolved and, a person's notion of their universe expands as they are forced to accommodate the notions of others.

It is much the same for the Stranded. They begin life in a manner that is not so very dissimilar to the primitives they share the world with. Unlike the Earthlings though, each Alien knows that the Universe itself is an enormous place full of stars just like the yellow one that burns in the sky each day. Worlds amalgamated from rock and water revolve around millions of those stars, just like Earth revolves around its primary and, intelligent life has emerged upon hundreds of thousands of those worlds, just as it has here. From the Stranded's point of view, there is nothing terribly amazing about Earth or the life on it, save perhaps, the ignorance of the creatures inhabiting it and the state of abject squalor in which the subsist.

Unfortunately for the Stranded, they find that they must now try and find a way to survive amongst the all-to-hostile natives. They might rule them. If they could. But even if they had the means, they'd still have to contend with others with dispositions similar to their own. Even if this were not the case, there are the *Vīsiōnēs* and other, far stranger entities moving in the Chronicles of Darkness's shadows to consider.

And so the Stranded struggle to eke out what living they can amid the terrestrial masses surrounding them. Whether they strive to find a means of escaping their world-bound prison or they mean to enrich its peoples' lives, they must be constantly wary of the forces that move around them. Always though, even as they keep one step ahead of the dark suited agents employed by the corporate and government powers that seek to exploit them, always do they recall the fabled halls and sprawling metropolis's of the star-spanning civilizations that gave birth to them.

### Fires in the Sky

Intelligent life has existed throughout the universe in which the Chronicles of Darkness take palce. And as grim and mysterious as the life of the average human is on Earth, the lot of Aliens is not so very different. Even the most technologically advanced of Taxa are descended from humble beginnings. Some Taxa still evince their ancient heritage through occult practices. A very few of them wholly embrace their spirituality, and depend on the guidance of nameless primeval shades as much as they do their sophisticated machines.

### Celestial Kingdoms

Much like plant and animals have spread themselves to every corner of Earth, so to have spacefaring species spread to every corner of the universe. Just like the planet-bound primitives that the Stranded find themselves dwelling amongst, every Taxon and Clade groups around its most powerful members. These groupings express themselves through every manner of governance system imaginable. From petty pirate and warlord states hidden away inside

asteroids and moons to galaxy spanning republics and empires, all manner of nation state can be found among the stars.

Most Taxa support a broad variety of disparate astro-political entities, some which mount rival claims to the suzerainty over the whole of their species. The time it takes to travel the enormously vast intergalactic distances, ensures that such claims can never really be enforced and the existence of most Aliens is not unlike that of the earliest maritime cultures that inhabited Earth. Since individual members of the well-known Taxa are common enough, even in the huge vastness of space, it is not unusual for them to form enclaves within aggregations of multiple Alien species, which has led to the existence of a series of ever-emerging and collapsing alliances, confederations, federations, and unions. Even less common Clades have been known to amass in numbers large enough to enforce *de facto*, if not *de jure*, sovereignty for their own states.

This is not to say that Aliens do not have sovereign home-worlds which served as the cradles for their starspanning civilizations. It is just that the whereabouts of a great many of those cradles has been lost to the vagaries of time and the immediacy of each Taxa or Clades' current state of affairs.

For some Taxa, like the *Fōrmae* and the *Lacertae*, the endless quest to recover the original location of those primordial birthplaces is a matter of cultural import. Others might only whisper of such places through ghost stories told to one another during recreational periods. Still others are so focused on the here and now that notions of cultural identity, historical perspective, and the linear heritage passed down to them from their forbears do not even register as a matter to be concerned with.

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### Aliens and Xenophobia

One of the primary conceits of *Alien: the Stranded*, is that Aliens are common enough that even if particular Taxa have not encountered one another, they have some knowledge of one another from the various combinatorial permutations of nation-states and enclaves that riddle the galaxies spread across the universe. This way even if your character is a *Cerebrum* that hails from *The Technocratic Kingdom of the Seven Well-springs*, it's still heard rumors of *Cīmicēs* from *Cerebra* enclaves that are part of the *Billion World Empire*.

This does not mean that your *Cerebrum* isn't xenophobic though. Each Taxa's camouflage ability is as effective on other *Stranded* as it is on the natives. This is intentional so as to promote an undercurrent of paranoia among the players. Whereas characters in a game of *Demon: the Descent* may not be who they *say* they are, characters in a game of *Alien: the Stranded* may not be who they appear to be.

As was mentioned in the descriptions for both the *Fōrma* and *Gregēs*, many Taxa fear one another for the precise reasons that natives fear all *Stranded* – they can be replaced by something wearing their features. *Stranded* that have gone native or otherwise lost all access to their *Vessels* are particularly vulnerable to falling victim to other Aliens, some of whom are only masquerading as *Stranded* in order to fulfill some Byzantine goal for their off-world masters.

In addition to the discomfort caused by the knowledge that they have such Camouflage abilities, Aliens cause Paranoia in humans that dwell near their *Vessel's* hiding place or any place that one or more *Stranded* use as a base of operations for any length of time. Paranoia also grows to affect *Stranded* who have gone native or who have survived the complete destruction of their *Vessel*.

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No matter what kind of astro-political or cultural entity an Alien hails from, most of them desire to find a means to return to it. Even those Stranded who have voluntarily come to dwell among humanity in the guise of extraterrestrial saviors harbor expectations of one day returning to their homelands wreathed in the laurels of success.

### Aged Travelers

Travel takes time.

It frequently takes so much time that the natives measure distance traveled in terms of time traveled. At the interstellar scale linear distances are frequently measured by the time it takes photons to traverse them, i.e., light-minutes (Earth is 8 light-minutes from the Sun), light-hours (Pluto is 5.3 light-hours away), days, and light-years (Alpha Centauri is the closest stellar neighbor to Earth at 4.3 light-years away). Even with the magical seeming technology of superluminal drives, it can take Aliens decades, centuries, and occasionally millennia to bridge the dark voids between stars.

The broadest ranging and most successful intergalactic nations maintain complex networks of star gates, wormholes and similar sub-spatial short cuts to reduce these travel times to the bare minimum. Some Aliens maintain passages through more ephemeral dimensions which some inhabitants of the Chronicles of Darkness setting would instantly recognize as the Astral, the Hedge, the Primordial Dream, the Shadow, and the Underworld, among other places. A very few are capable of taking paths through even more esoteric layers of reality such as the Abyss or the Fractal Realm.

Whatever the root of their travel technology is, Stranded have often lost the means to move their Vessels across the vast tracks of time and space that escape from Earth requires. While they could exploit human technologies to achieve or even break orbit, the primitives of Earth lack any means of traversing to their nearest neighboring planets in a timely matter, let alone traversing the distance to other stars or galaxies. It is this simple sobering fact that drives most Stranded to cultivate a human-like persona.

Extremely long travel times turn out to not be as much of a burden to Aliens as human beings might believe. Since even travel at interstellar distances can still take a daunting length of time, most Taxa and Clades either measure their life-spans in centuries or millennia, or rely on knowledge transfer to cloned replacements or subsequent generations. A few of them rely on technologies that put them into deep hibernations for extended durations or that store them digitally and print them new bodies upon arrival at their destination.

The chances are good that the average Stranded probably began their journey to Earth well before electrical power systems had been invented by the primitives dwelling there. In some cases, they may have begun their journeys well before the first nascent civilizations had begun to coalesce. Regardless of the mechanics, all Aliens have methods for transmitting their knowledge across the intervening centuries.

### Ancient Beyond Reckoning

The Fōrmae in particular are extremely long-lived. While even the oldest of them have only the dimmest of memories of their homeworld, it is not unusual for one of these shapeless Changelings to have survived eons adrift in the trackless void between stars. Their unique

anatomies allow them to cast off their anthropoid forms and assume a pupal form that looks like a small rocky lozenge.

Assuming this state is an act of last resort for most Fōrmae as they must extinguish virtually all of their organs, including their brains, effectively wiping out their memories but at the same time completely arresting all biological processes. Once a Fōrma has transformed themselves into this form, it is nigh-immortal and stories of Fōrmae reviving after hundreds of thousands of years in afloat in deep space are whispered about in the darkened alcoves of libraries in hundreds of galaxies.

What most other Taxa fail to realize is that these stories are literally true. It is in this manner that the Fōrmae have seeded themselves throughout the universe and thereby avoided the cold grasp of extinction. Unfortunately since their neural tissue is abrogated by the transformation, Fōrmae who have turned to this survival method have very little recollection of past events in their lives. Many of them do experience strange visions, non sequitur thoughts, and repeated sensations of déjà vu, which they are quick to attribute to the primeval deities.

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### Ephemeral Bearers of Truth

Since they are usually very sensitive to the presence of ephemeral beings, it is also not unusual for a Fōrma to be accompanied by one or more ephemeral beings that act as repositories for its past experiences. This provides the Fōrmae with an advantage that most other Aliens don't have, memories that don't rely on some physical substrate. A number of different kinds of ephemeral beings may be approached by a Fōrma with the appropriate knowledge and who possesses some form of appropriate payment.

Ghosts and Spirits are the most typical ephemeral beings that Fōrmae seem to exploit for this purpose but the God-Machine's Angels have also been known to be yoked to this task. Whether this is through some agreement that the Fōrmae (as individuals or as a group) have with that universe-spanning mechanical entity or through some means of cooption known only to them remains unknown.

Angels, Ghosts, and Spirits are not the strangest entities that the Fōrmae are known to have contact with. It is not unheard of for Fōrmae to occasionally entrust their memories to the truly strange beings that dwell in blackness of deep space. When calamity is at hand and death seems certain, entrusting its essential essence to one of these insubstantial creatures seems little different than consigning one's body to drift through the void.

Of course, it's not as simple as just bending the ephemeral being to its will or simply giving the being a thorough knowledge of its history. Angels, Ghosts, Spirits and equally insubstantial things are intelligences in their own right. And even when a Fōrma has done everything in its power to appease the entity there's every possibility the trustee might not be forthcoming with the changeling's lost memories.

Even the memories of ephemeral beings are not infallible. Frequently anything they return to Fōrma will be jumbled or may have decayed into the barest of impressions. Sometimes the essential nature of the entity so entrusted makes this decay more likely.

Ephemeral entities can also fail to be forthcoming with memories entrusted to them for any number of other inscrutable reasons. Some may be toying with or playing some kind of cosmic prank on the Fōrma. Some of these entities actively hide from those who gave them their charge.

In the end, while many Fōrmae will have means to survive circumstances that other Aliens can't, there are significant prices that they must pay. Whether or not those prices are worth it is for the individuals to decide.

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### *Generation Ships*

While many Taxa and Clades are relatively long-lived, there are Aliens whose lives are even more fleeting than those of Earthlings. Among these are the Cīmīcēs, whose average lifespan is little more than a score or so of years by human reckoning.

To compensate for this frighteningly short lifespan (or perhaps because of it), the average Cīmex hatches almost fully grown and achieves its adult form in less than a year. As a further advantage, Cīmex brood queens pass on selected bits of knowledge to their offspring. A large amount of this information evinces itself through almost reflex-like physical capabilities and natural acumen for engineering, mathematics, or the sciences. This provides the Cīmīces something of an advantage over other spacefarers – they can proceed across the stars and rest assured that they arrive at their destination with both their knowledge base and their population intact. But this also means that the individual brood members that depart on a voyage are not the same ones that arrive at the destination.

It is the continuity of their genetic line that informs the personality of Aliens like the Cīmīcēs. If a brood were to lose all of its breeding queens, then it would quickly find itself without any means to preserve the experiences, knowledge and culture of its members. Such communities quickly fade away as their short-lived constituents die off during the course of several decades. Conversely, those lone Cīmex who manage to survive the destruction of their broods frequently find technological or occult means by which to extend their lives.

### *Leaping Galaxies*

Aliens use all manner of technological dynamo to crush the gulfs between stars. Among the most preferred methods is the use of dimensional drives, star gates, and wormhole networks. These are preferred because they make intergalactic travel possible on timescales that are better suited to entities whose existence is very fleeting when compared to geological features. Each of these travel methods have drawbacks.

Dimensional drives work by piercing through the semi-permeable barriers that exist between Earth and other realms like the Hedge, the Underworld (among others) or the sub-spaces between realms. Without powerful shielding, Vessels exploiting this kind of motive force can be affected by environmental events that occur in those realms or be vulnerable to accumulating stowaways as they make their transitions between worlds. This can effectively leave their passengers and crews at the mercy of entities even more alien than they are.

Star gates take the form of newly constructed, resource intensive interstellar infrastructure or aged relics abandoned by Taxa or Clades who have long since gone extinct. As they are usually prioritized for heavily populated sectors and because they only operate in pairs, it is very unusual for out of the way backwater worlds like Earth to possess one of the former. While many ancient or unpopulated stellar systems are rumored to have one or more of the latter, they are often also rumored to be cursed or guarded by the most terrible of perils.

Finally the universe is riddled through with vast networks of wormholes. While most are uncharted and many are notoriously unstable, some few can be navigated by knowledgeable parties. With each traversal though there is a chance that the traveler may end up somewhere

other than the destination that they had hoped for. On some occasions the ends of wormholes close leaving the travelers stuck within the network's branches for all eternity or worse the entire network collapses destroying everything and everyone within it.

### Jumping Stars

Most Aliens are not citizens of intergalactic empires or don't have access to such rapid conveyances. These Taxa and Clades are limited to traversing interstellar space. They most typically do this through means of a variety of superluminal or sub-spatial drives.

The latter form of conveyance works similarly to a dimensional drive and has similar risks. Because the distances traveled are much smaller, they spend much less time traversing these other spaces, and thereby have much less exposure to the denizens of these other realms.

Most superluminal drives work by bending or warping the space around them and essentially tricking gravity into slingshooting them long distances. The primary drawback to this kind of conveyance is that Vessels are vulnerable to attack by other Vessels that use this form of propulsion. Similarly, they are at a constant risk of striking uncharted navigational hazards. While powerful shields deployed through the use of titanic electromagnets or more arcane technologies to mitigate these risks, this form of travel remains one of the riskiest.

### Hopping Planets

Most star-faring Aliens take interplanetary travel for granted but, for the Stranded, interplanetary travel is one of the lower hanging fruits that these marooned star-farers can aspire to. Aliens employ variety of sub-luminal drives for traversing local space. These include things like ion engines, nuclear or chemical rockets, and arcjets, among others.

For longer lived Aliens or those who do not mind even slower travel between the planets and other features of a stellar system, solar sails and gravitationally assisted maneuvers (i.e., the gravitational slingshot) are often employed. It can take weeks or even months to travel from one planet to another using these kinds of propulsion and so they are the least favored but, they are also often the ones most easily grasped by a Stranded who simply must get off-world.

### Cast Down from the Heavens

Once grounded, an Alien has access to a fraction of the power that they enjoy in the empty void of space. Upon their landing (or crashing), Stranded find themselves suddenly thrust into an environment quite unlike the nearly pressure-free, microgravity of space. Like a deep sea diver, it takes each Stranded some time to acclimate to the much higher air pressure and the much stronger effect of gravity on the ground.

Even though their bodies do acclimate to their new environment, most Stranded still yearn for the safety of the Vessel cocooned in emptiness deep space. Agoraphobia is a common disorder among Aliens who are newly marooned. The vast tracts of untamed wilderness that still cover much of the Earth's landscape are quite unlike the confined, sterile existences that Aliens have evolved to live in. Unfortunately, the dense congestion of urban areas present too many risks to an Alien, especially for those who have only recently been marooned.

Many Stranded prefer the clutter of rural populated areas where they can hide themselves among abandoned buildings, overgrown fields, and other decaying infrastructure. More experienced Stranded, those that have assimilated with the natives to some extent, can brave the risks and reap the rewards that urban areas bring.



## World of Death

Disease is the greatest threat to an Alien's continued existence. Generations of selecting evolutionary traits optimal to life in space has left the average Stranded's immune system deficient. This is unfortunate because some of the terrestrial hiding places that comfort them the most also gather vast quantities of human refuse increasing their risk of exposure to disease vectors that most the primitive locals never have contact with.

The need to dwell in populated areas inevitably comes with additional exposure risks, which are only grow greater if the Alien has taken up residence in a highly urbanized area. Since the hairless apes surrounding them like to congregate in large groupings for various social events and since physical contact (e.g., through shaking hands, etc.) is an important factor in the interpersonal relationships for many of the natives sub-cultures, any interaction with the natives brings some risk for contracting one of the more common human afflictions.

Physical contact is not the only avenue that a Stranded can contract an infection from. Injury presents a very grave risk to Aliens. When even something as relatively harmless to the natives as their Common Cold can seriously weaken and sometimes kill one of the Stranded, infections from injuries are a serious concern. For this reason Stranded try to avoid physical conflict whenever possible and try to carefully plan evasion and travel routes ahead of time.

Unfortunately conflict is something that Stranded can't always avoid. The Chronicles of Darkness's night hours are filled with dangers, especially for those roaming the more secluded portions of urban areas. In addition to the mundane threats that the natives represent, the Stranded must contend with their own kind, the omnipresent fear that United Technologies agents may be prowling nearby, and even the occasional Visitor.

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## The Other Things That Go Bump in the Night

The Chronicles of Darkness is full of strange cults and weird conspiracies and at the heart of all of these is the presence of other supernatural beings. The Stranded do occasionally have conflicts or dealings with them. This is especially true for the more populous and territorial supernaturals – Vampires, Werewolves, Mages, and Changelings.

Vampires are the most dangerous simply by dint of wielding the most temporal power among the natives. Fortunately for most Stranded, Vampires are cold, calculating, and easily mollified with an acknowledgement of their power and a tribute of some kind. The Stranded are careful in their dealings with these undead creatures for like the Stranded they are long-lived and canny negotiators.

Werewolves are almost as dangerous as Vampires and this is because they can almost never be mollified. Most Werewolves will mistake the average Stranded for something it isn't, one of the Spirit-Claimed. This will quickly devolve into brief and bloody warfare where one side or the other is completely extinguished and often ends in mutual destruction. For this reason Aliens try to avoid Werewolves above all other kinds of supernatural beings, a strategy that is aided by their reticence to explore unpopulated wilderness areas but also hampered by their preference for otherwise rural settings.

In some ways Mages are the least dangerous to Aliens. Curious to a fault, these miracle workers can quickly find themselves overwhelmed by the secrets that otherworldly beings like the Stranded present to them. Mages also bring their own set of unnatural powers and woe betide the Alien that confuses one of the Awakened for just another one of the superstitious primitives.

Even if they aren't the kind of visceral threat that a Werewolf is or monolithic threat that a Vampire is, a Mage can make a Stranded's life quite miserable.

Changelings are the most accepting of Aliens. While some of their number have been known to lump Aliens in with the Gentry, many others realize that the average Stranded's circumstances are not so dissimilar to their own. The Lost are still best dealt with slowly. Many Aliens fail to understand the true nature of Changelings' strange abilities and then find themselves trapped in bargains that cost them more than they would have wished.

From the Aliens' perspective, Demonic powers operate in a manner very similar to those of Changelings. Which is to say that as far as the Stranded are concerned, all such powers are hacks of the fundamental principles of the universe. Demons at least admit this to themselves outright. Making Faustian bargains with Demons can sometimes be advantageous for Aliens because the nature of the agreement is more obvious and they can participate in gaming the system from their end. For those very few foolish enough to sign away their souls, things end as poorly for them as it does for other supernaturals. Unlike other supernaturals, only Taxa and Clades that physically merge with their victims will provide adequate Covers for Demons. Entities that infest their victims, like the Gregēs, interact very strongly with Demonic Cover and while the Alien is annihilated when the Demon assumes possession of the Cover, the Cover instantly burns away as the Demon is not able to exploit the Alien's Camouflage ability. (This is treated as the Demon going loud and gaining a swarm form for their Demonic Form – which persists until they assume a new Cover. The Demon gains the Burned Condition in the process – see *Demon: the Descent* (revised ed.), p. 115.) In most other cases, the Demon gains an unstable cover that is obviously not human (worn skins start to rot, chameleon skin and psychic illusions cease to function, etc.) and they gain the Flagged Condition (see *Demon: the Descent* (revised ed.), p. 120) which persists until they abandon the Cover.

Beasts, like Prometheans and Deviants, are among the rarest of true supernatural creatures. The danger a Beast poses to an Alien is no different than the risk that other supernatural creatures face. They can all be victims that the Beast feasts upon. Like with other supernaturals, the tables can quickly turn against the Beast if she hasn't realized the true nature of her prey. Greater benefits can be reaped by those Beasts who get an Alien to agree to a bond of Kinship. Among the benefits that the Alien can realize is a much improved hiding place for its Vessel in the Primordial Dream, attached to the Beast's Lair exactly as though it were the Lair of another Beast with but a single Chamber.

Aliens interact with Prometheans more often than either of them would care to admit. This is primarily a result of the kind of dwelling places both groups prefer – those with low population densities. Unfortunately this can lead to conflict as the two parties compete for the same living spaces. The presence of both Stranded and Created in one place can also have brutal consequences for the primitives living around them. The effects of Disquiet and Paranoia feed on one another quickly driving the local natives into a frenzied mass that burns, destroys, and kills everything around them, including one another.

All too often Aliens find themselves in the role of the boogeymen that Deviants hold responsible for their twisted existence. On rare occasions this belief actually holds true but, the fact is that most Stranded lack access to the sophisticated technologies and arcane processes that bring Deviants into being. This leads to violent, often brutally violent, encounters between Aliens and Deviants. Fortunately for the Stranded, Deviants are as rare as Prometheans and so, most of the stories they share of these unfortunate beings tend to be from the perspective of a friend of a friend who knew a person.

The Stranded fall prey to Hunters with alarming frequency. For primitives, Hunters show an alarming facility for identifying Aliens' weaknesses and exploiting them. Much like their encounters with Werewolves, Stranded encounters with Hunters tend to end messily with violence. While this often goes in the Aliens' favor, the attention it draws can bring the Stranded to the notice of a number of other factions that operate in the night.

Mummies are rarely a concern for Aliens. They are most likely to encounter one another if they are competing for new initiates for their respective cults. On very rare occasions one of the Judges of Duat identifies an artifact, curiosity, or even an Ornāmentum as a Relic and dispatches one of its undead minions to recover it. Those few times that the Cursed cross paths with the Stranded frequently have wildly unpredictable results. Aliens counsel one another to try to give these unloving ancients wide berths whenever possible.

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When any interaction could devolve into a situation that places an Alien at risk, then all interactions are inherently high risk. Most Stranded will try to stay within easy reach of their Vessels, wherein they have access to medicines and inoculants that can attenuate the many infections they inevitably contract.

For those Aliens with access to Amenities like laboratories, collecting native flora and fauna can significantly boost their survival rate. Aliens can also temper the effects of native disease vectors by purposefully exposing themselves to human culture, adapting to native eating habits, and other steps on the path of Assimilation. Unfortunately this path steadily takes them farther and farther away from their extraterrestrial roots, slowly specializing their form into something that can easily pass for and live among the primitive apes around them but, it also ultimately leaves them ill-suited to life in the sterile enclosed spaces that once conveyed them between stars.

### Among the Ignorant Masses

Life among the natives is a challenging task. The teeming masses of humanity know very little of the wide universe that lies beyond the wispy edges of their atmosphere. Virtually none of them have ever ventured beyond the womblike cocoon of the Earth's atmosphere. Even those very few natives who can see ghosts or spirits in twilight have never ventured to the Underworld or the Shadow.

The scope at which the average Alien used to live their lives is well beyond the ken of the ignorant primitives around them which makes it difficult for even the friendliest of Stranded to relate to the natives. It is far easier for Aliens to treat the natives as children to be saved, obstacles to be overcome, means to an end, or food for subsistence, than it is for any of the Stranded to meet with humans as equals. Assimilation is a slow process for Aliens, who must cope with the fact that they have been stripped of most of their almost god-like powers.

Assimilation is a necessary pursuit that most Stranded undertake. Its benefits include reducing the effect of illnesses, strengthening an Alien's Camouflage, attenuating the effects of Paranoia, and curbing the acuity of Panic. The primary drawback to pursuing Assimilation is an increase in the likelihood that Ornāmenta may malfunction if employed by an Alien. It also comes with its own risks, requiring Stranded who pursue it to grow ever closer in their social dealings with the natives.

Of course the life of the Stranded is rife with risks. They risk capture and vivisection if their Camouflage is penetrated. They risk Exposure or injury if those around them succumb to

Paranoia and, they risk injury or death should Exposure cause one of the natives to become gripped with Panic.

### *Camouflage*

Among other things, most Aliens must prey upon humans in order to establish their Camouflage. This is a dangerous proposition that requires the Stranded to isolate its victim for a lengthy duration. Some Aliens will choose to kidnap their victims and return with them to the safety of their Vessels before assuming their new form, which mitigates the risk of Exposure from discovery.

Camouflage is what allows Aliens to pass as one of the natives. These disguises are delicate and do not hold up to close scrutiny unless the Stranded possessing it has Assimilated into the fabric of the local culture. For those Stranded who are newly marooned or for those who avoid Assimilation, these disguises can be quickly cast away and new ones fashioned but they will fail even the most cursory of close-up encounters. Conversely, older Stranded or those Aliens who have gone native have a much easier time actually passing for one of the humans but cannot discard their disguises and fashion a new one without risking Exposure (as people are going to ask questions about whatever happened to old so-and-so).

### *Paranoia*

Living near Earthlings has a negative impact on their collective mental state. Taking samples of flora and fauna (including the locals) seems ordinary to most Stranded. Similarly, messily hunting, killing, and consuming animals (or plants) for nourishment seems like a necessary survival tactic to the average alien and, really, the primitives would likely be just as quick to act in these ways were their roles reversed.

Earthlings are a high-strung lot. Their lives in the Chronicles of Darkness, where it's often better to forget the strange things that they see, has left the average human a mass of pent-up anxiety. When aliens take up residence nearby or among them, this pent-up anxiety begins to leak out, sometimes with spectacularly violent effects.

Oddly, the Stranded are not affected by the effects of Paranoia but, over time their presence has a decidedly negative impact on the local natives. At first the primitives seem to more perceptive or attendant to their surroundings. This quickly progresses to a state of heightened anxiety, in which the natives are quick to find faults with others. People become increasingly suspicious of one another, noting the smallest of slights and openly confronting anything they find abnormal. In the final stage all of the locals begin to adapt a siege mentality where even those closest to them must be suspect. If this state of affairs persists long enough, the victims begin to act out, succumbing to the violent schizophrenia that grips their minds.

### *Panic*

Exposure to things that are obviously of Alien origin propels the natives into a panicked state wherein they fight, flee, or freeze. This state is usually caused by witnesses seeing an Alien's true form or any of its Ornāmenta being used. Depending on the reaction caused, Panic can be another source of danger to the Stranded. It can just as easily be exploited by Aliens though by providing them the time to overcome a native and begin the process of taking on its visage. Some Taxa also exploit this affect when hunting natives for food or other extraterrestrial purposes.

## Clusters

There is safety in numbers.

One of the best Survival tactics that Stranded adopt is that of gathering together into Clusters. These small groupings tend to represent the best return on investment for the Stranded, as larger groupings are usually too noticeable and lone wolves often lack some resource absolutely vital to their survival.

The Cluster also gives a Stranded the means to overcome obstacles that an individual couldn't possibly hope to surmount. By pooling some of their scanty resources, each Alien can utilize more resources overall. Clusters also afford individual Stranded access to additional minds who see and process their problems differently, allowing them to view their survival challenges from angles they were in no position to otherwise see.

Since there are so few Aliens marooned on Earth, the vast majority of Clusters find that they cannot be too picky about who is allowed to join. Ideally this would mean that individuals from multiple Taxa or Clades come together for some mutual benefit. In practice though, there is often a particular individual or group of like individuals (either because they are all the same Taxa or all share the same Occupãtio) that serves as the driving heart of the Cluster.

## Crews

In addition to the safety offered by numbers, the Aliens of a Cluster can merge their Vessels together providing each of their members with much more power than any of them could realize individually. Clusters that go through this process become Crews of one aggregate spacecraft. One of the primary drawbacks to this strategy is that precious Fuel must be shared equally with all of the Cluster's members. Which means some members benefit more than others. The aggregate spacecraft also has a much greater impact on the environment around it. The effects of Paranoia are much greater and it is much harder to move or shut down if it becomes discovered.

## Colonies

Occasionally Clusters come together to form larger communities of Stranded. These frequently take the form of gated communities, although ghettos, cult compounds, or even specific tenement buildings are not unheard of. Quite often these super-groupings coalesce around particularly charismatic individuals who are able to sell others on their vision of survival. On other occasions multiple Clusters come together to extract a specific resource they all need or to fulfill some particular purpose.

Colonies do not occur very often and when they do, they are usually placed far enough away from native communities to avoid or at least blunt the worst effects of Paranoia. When this is not possible, the individual members of the Colony will physically disperse through a larger native community in an effort to contain Paranoia and reduce overall exposure.

One of the greatest benefits of being a member in a Colony is the much greater protection that members have from the agents of United Technology, Inc. Colonies also afford some level of protection against other Aliens but, many are also rife with infiltrators pursuing agendas that may be contrary to the best interests of their fellow Stranded.

Crews are also welcome additions to Colonies but they tend to be treated as single individuals and, because the reality bending effects of their spacecraft are much greater, they are often forced to live on the Colony's outskirts far away from its movers and shakers.

## Survival of the Fittest

While it is true that conforming to the cultural norms of the primitives around them affords Stranded a level of protection against discovery, it is not the case that very many Aliens ever feel at home amongst the hairless apes that surround them. There is no reason why they should. Every Stranded started its life as the scion of an interstellar civilization. They have every reason to feel superior to the natives, most of whom can barely scabble across the ground in simple combustion-powered glass paneled, steel frames on wheel, let alone vault the empty space between the their planet's surface and its lonely little satellite. It is little wonder that the Stranded put those natives that they can isolate from the herd to a variety of inhumane purposes.

Experimentation is but the most ordinary of these purposes. Through experimentation an Alien can learn about native physiology and psychology. Knowledge of either of these things can often make the difference between life or death, freedom or confinement, and satiation or starvation for an Alien. Information about the narcissistic human psyche can provide a variety of benefits when dealing with natives in larger groups. Familiarity with human physiology can help the Stranded prepare for and treat any indigenous diseases that they contract. Finally, studying natives allows the Stranded to refine their Camouflage, making it both more effective and less likely to be detected.

Experimentation isn't the only purpose that the Stranded have for natives. Taxa like the Cīmicēs, Fōrmae, and Gregēs must directly use humans to establish their Camouflage. Even for a Grex, this usually means the death of the human being infested as the colony trims away unwanted organs to make space for itself. Many other Clades have similar approaches to camouflage and so even an otherwise peaceful Alien will have to prey upon at least one human being in order to conceal its true nature from the locals. Taxa like the Cerebra and the Lacertae, who have more passive means of Camouflage, will still often base their appearance on particular humans, who they have most likely kidnapped, and into whose lives they have usually inserted themselves into.

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## Hybrid Offspring

Reproduction and experiments in interbreeding humans with Aliens are rare occurrences but are not unheard of. Taxa like the Cerebra, Cīmicēs, and Gregēs have the most incentives for this kind of activity. Offspring that survive long enough to be brought to term are sometimes left with their human parent (or a relative in those instances when the human parent didn't survive) to be raised while the Alien parent watches from afar. Almost just as frequently, such crossbreeds are left with an Alien who has gone native (in some cases being plucked from their human parent's arms to make this possible). This is typically done because many Stranded who have interests in these matters hypothesize that a balanced upbringing will affect the best outcome for the Hybrid. Only in the rarest of cases are Hybrids reared by their Alien parent and, usually only after some calamity has claimed all of the other potential parental candidates.

Aliens possess highly advanced technology that allows them splice genes together and grow fetuses through artificial wombs. As such, it is the case that occasionally the human parents may have no idea that they've contributed gametes or genes to a Hybrid. Fortunately no amount of technology seems to make it possible for stranger pairings of supernatural creatures to succeed. Those experiments that don't result in outright failure all produce offspring that favor one side or the other (e.g., they are Hybrids, Fractals, Dhampirs, etc.). The sole pseudo-exception to this is

Werewolves, where successful experiments always produce Hybrids but some are human and some are wolves.

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Food is often a source of concern for most Stranded. Quite often what few supplies they were left with from whatever caused them to be marooned run out quickly. These leaves the Stranded in the unenviable position of having to provide for themselves using nothing but their wits. Many of them take up hunting the local wildlife or grazing on the local flora. These activities can make it more difficult for Aliens to Assimilate into the natives' culture, increasing the effects of Paranoia in turn. Some few Taxa and Clades, most notably Lacertae, and more infrequently Fōrmae, hunt and consume the natives for their sustenance.

Only those very few Stranded who choose to forgo any hope of returning to a life beyond the atmospheric bounds of their prison and abandon the relative safety of their Vessel and its Amenities seem to acclimate to human lifestyles. Among the Stranded, this path is known as "going native" and while it is looked down upon and those extremely rare Aliens who have achieved it are treated with no small amount of scorn. Despite this, such Aliens can provide their fellows with unparalleled insight into the Chronicles of Darkness's diverse native civilizations.

### Walls of Burning Wheels

An Alien's Vessel is its sanctuary fortress. It provides the benefits of safe haven, resting place, medical clinic, and store house. Since even the smallest of spaceships are the size of small buildings, keeping them concealed is a major concern for most Stranded. The greatest risk is run by those Stranded who have been Exposed and is followed back to its ship, whereupon the natives learn of its presence. Once this has occurred, it will only be a matter of time before the dark suited agents of United Technologies, Inc. arrive to either secure the craft and its occupant or erase it from the face of Earth.

Fortunately Vessels are equipped with a large number of stealth technologies. Their extraterrestrial structures absorb most short wavelength electromagnetic waves, which makes them virtually undetectable by primitive technologies such as radar and lidar. They also possess active holography systems that can render them virtually invisible when they are motionless or allow them to blend in with their surroundings.

Most Aliens, marooned or merely intruding, will supplement these systems with additional terrestrial camouflage. They reconfigure the exterior of their Vessel's hull to reinforce the illusion that has been fashioned by the spacecraft's holograms. This provides the camouflage some substance should nosey natives stumble across it. Given time and preparation, those Stranded who have acclimated to native life can use their resources to build even more realistic facades over their spaceships.

### Ships of Heavens

While Vessels come in a vast variety of physical shapes and sizes, like terrestrial naval vessels, they are best classified by their purpose and range. The largest Vessels are transports with intergalactic operating ranges. These range from tankers, container vessels, and passenger ships to the small craft carriers and fleet tenders of the navies of widespread spacefaring civilizations. Somewhat smaller than these behemoths are heavy battleships and dreadnoughts which also often have intergalactic operating ranges. Most of these military ships will actually be heavy cruisers and battlecruisers, designed to operate alone, away from the rest of their fleets.

Most mid-sized Vessels are starcraft designed for interstellar journey. Mining and deep space salvage ships are frequently this size. As are a broad variety of freighters and science vessels. The vast majority ships comprised by Alien star-fleets also fall into this category. This includes gunships, escorts, destroyers, frigates, pocket battleships, and battleships. When these last three are configured or designed to operate on their own they are often referred to as corvettes, light cruisers, and cruisers. Very small civilian sloops and pinnaces are also frequently capable of navigating the distances between stellar systems. Tales of long-range starfighters occasionally make the rounds but no one has actually seen one.

Spacecraft designed solely for transit through local space, interplanetary craft are usually the smallest of all space vessels, although dreadnought-sized monitors are often an exception to this rule. Interplanetary clippers are almost as large but, since they're designed to handle the transportation of local goods among the planets within settled star systems, they are rarely seen in contexts outside of civilized space. The vast majority of these spacecraft are shuttles, fighters, lifeboats, yachts, cutters, and assorted landing ships.

The majority of Vessels that the earthbound Stranded own are these latter kinds. Broken down shuttles and lifeboats are the two most common Vessel types that marooned Aliens possess. On rare occasions, such as when a group of Aliens gets marooned en masse, the Stranded will have access to a corvette or clipper. Stranded who were formerly treasure hunters or privately-funded adventurers often have yachts, cutters, or even sloops and pinnaces (when the catastrophe that struck them was particularly bad).

### Extraterrestrial Materials

Vessels are made of strange extraterrestrial substances that the materials scientists of the Chronicles of Darkness are just barely scratching the doorway to. The light-weight organo-metallic framework of the average Vessel can survive impacts that would liquefy its crew. The skin of most Vessels varies from thick armored resin-like substances to thin, almost permeable compounds reminiscent of plastic or glass. While these durable substance can withstand much of the punishment of space travel, Vessels are hardly indestructible.

Alien Vessels are also riddled with tubes and pipes that transfer various coolants, data, and Fuel throughout the ship. Exposure to the terrestrial atmosphere breaks down the gels and mixtures that make it possible to transmit information from one section of the spacecraft to another. While many of these systems have mechanical backups, these backups are often constructed from the same extraterrestrial materials as the Vessel's framework.

The pressure and chemistry of atmospheric conditions denatures all of these materials over time. The slow decay of their Vessels also acts an additional impetus for Stranded to gather materials and make their repairs as quickly as they can. When or where this isn't possible, Aliens can slow the process even further (or even arrest it altogether) by sealing the Vessel up in a hiding place. This has a similar effect on the Stranded as going native would. They stop using the Amenities their Vessels provide and loose access to it as a source of Fuel for their Ornāmenta. Unfortunately it is no substitute for actual Assimilation, which is the only way to reduce or avoid the effects of Paranoia and Panic on the local primitives.

The process of decay makes Alien Vessels vulnerable to the conventional terrestrial anti-tank and anti-ship munitions. Armor piercing weapons, like missiles, cannon shells, and even shaped-explosive charges can damage and destroy grounded Vessels which rely on potent electromagnetic and gravitic shields to deflect the worst of the detritus that serves as navigational hazards in space.



The residue from these weapons doesn't just damage grounded Vessels and turn them into twisted wreckage. The highly acidic remnants of gunpowder and other accelerants reacts with Alien wreckage, often reducing it to an oily slurry in the space of a few hours. For this reason, those who desire Alien technology, such as United Technologies, Inc. and other more esoteric organizations dwelling in the Chronicles of Darkness's shadows, try to use the minimum amount of force necessary to capture the Stranded and their Vessels.

Evading capture is an important part of each Stranded's lifestyle. Incarceration is a major (and often permanent) impediment to escaping their earthly confinement. Many Stranded go as far as booby-trapping their Vessels to keep them out of human hands. For Malefactōrēs, this state of affairs is the norm de rigueur. When these Vessels are discovered and stormed by native agencies, the end comes about quickly in a fiery explosion or (occasionally) through the implosive devastation of an interdimensional maelstrom or pocket singularity.

Even marooned criminals find they have every reason to assimilate, insofar as they are able, into the locals' cultural norms. Those who don't are often quick to perish but, perhaps that is what those who exiled them intended all along.

### Bastion of Hope

As fragile as downed Vessels seem, they still provide each Alien their single best chance for survival. So long as the Stranded can keep their ship's exact location a secret, it provides them the most secure retreat possible. Among its more mundane uses as a place to rest and recover, an Alien's Vessel also affords them privacy for moments when they are vulnerable, such as when they are constructing new Camouflage.

While it is important that the Stranded keep their spacecraft hidden and secret, they do not have to take this burden wholly onto themselves. Their Vessels will steadily impact the environment around them and slowly co-opt it into additional layers of concealment. Spaceships hidden in junkyards quickly become buried among the other rusting rubbish. Those that ape the appearances of buildings or portions of buildings rapidly integrate into the local water, telecommunication, and electric infrastructures. Even craft that have landed in otherwise empty fields submerge into the landscape and appear as ordinary hillocks after a matter of a few days.

Vessels also serve as both a storage facility for an Alien's Ornāmenta and a reservoir for the Fuel that empowers them. While their spacecraft generate a small amount of Fuel every day by absorbing it from the local environment, Stranded that find themselves under duress can exhaust their supply faster than it replenishes. Securing an alternate source of Fuel that can be amassed relatively quickly is a prime concern for many marooned Aliens.

Among the best sources are Fīnēs – places where the boundaries between the physical realm and the otherworldly realms like N-order Fractal Spaces or the sub-spatial strata that lies between dimensions. Not all Stranded have access to equipment that makes it possible to refine Fuel from such sources though. These unfortunates often have to make do with more mundane sources, such as refining Fuel from plutonium, uranium, radium and other radioactive elements. Stranded that find themselves turning to these unusual substances often find themselves slowly coming into conflict with the natives for whom these radioactive materials are notable and highly controlled substances. Such conflicts in turn raise the risk of discovery that an Alien runs.

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## Other Kinds of Finēs

Loci, Infrastructure, and similar places where the walls between worlds thin can also be exploited by knowledgeable Aliens exactly as though they were Finēs. Essence, Mana, Aether and similar substances that well up in these places can be harvested and refined into Fuel by Aliens that know how to tap into these sources.

Similarly these resources can also be harvested directly from entities that bear them. If the Stranded is equipped to cope with ephemeral entities then Ghosts and Spirits are among the most easily harvested for this purpose but, even Mages and Werewolves can be exsanguinated and their fluids refined into Fuel. Though their source of power is not otherworldly, Vampiric Vitae can also be harvested and turned into Fuel; however, whatever it is that empowers Vitae is a part of whatever happens to it once it enters a Vampire's body. Aliens remain ignorant of what this factor is but the fact remains that they cannot yoke the blood of ordinary human beings for this purpose.

Harvesting any of these potential sources is sure to cause conflict with the aforementioned supernatural beings. However such crossover games can add scope and freshness to your story. The following Merits are provided as tools to facilitate these kinds of cross-pollinations.

### **Merit:** Expanded Spectrum Ornāmenta (2 dots)

All of your Ornāmenta that can detect, pierce, or harvest emanations from extra-dimensional sources like N-Order Fractal Spaces can also detect, pierce, or harvest emanations from one additional extra-dimensional source of your choice (e.g., the Astral Plane, the Hedge, Infrastructure, the Shadow, the Underworld, etc.). This merit allows you to refine Mana, Glamor, Aether, Essence, Plasm, etc. that you collect from appropriate locations (i.e., Avernian Gates, Infrastructure, Loci, etc.). If you have access to the appropriate Ornāmenta, you may also collect Essence from ephemeral beings native to these places for refinement.

### **Merit:** Universal Power Source (3 dots)

You may refine other kinds of energy (e.g., Aether, Mana, Glamor, Plasm, Vitae, etc.) into Fuel. Note that this merit does not in and of itself grant any ability to harvest energy from any particular source; however, the life (or unlife) fluids of physical supernatural beings can be refined in this manner so long as you find a way to collect it. It may be collected voluntarily.

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## Chapter 3: The Extraterrestrial Condition

The previous chapters have provided explanations for Taxa, Clades, Ornāmenta, Occupātiōnēs, Vessels, and Amenities, as well as touching on the notions of Paranoia and Panic. This chapter digs into the rules and mechanics that will make it possible for you to realize your castaway on paper and in the context of the Chronicles of Darkness setting.

Since this is a fan-produced publication many of the following sub-sections will refer you to existing Onyx Path game lines. While Alien is intended to be played as a stand-alone game (like many other Chronicles of Darkness games) it is not the case that you won't need at least one other Onyx Path game to play it (i.e., I won't reproduce published text here). This is a fan-production.

### Making a Monster

Like all Chronicles of Darkness games, players begin by defining an essentially human character with attributes, skills, and skill specialties. In the subsequent sub-sections I'll refer you directly to the appropriate pages which describe how these things are done. Those who are already familiar with the character creation process might wish to skip directly on to Step 5, adding the Stranded template.

#### Step One: Concept

I'm confident that all of you know that developing a core concept for your character is the root from which the character creation process draws its nourishment and inspiration. In addition to your overall concept you will also choose three aspirations representing near and long-term goals that your character possesses (just as you normally would). For those who still like examples I refer you to the following texts – Vampire: the Requiem [2<sup>nd</sup> edition] p 79, Demon: the Descent [Revised (does that make it 2<sup>nd</sup> edition too? probably more like 1.25)] p 76, and Werewolf: the Forsaken [2<sup>nd</sup> edition] p 81, among others.

#### Step Two: Attributes

As you all know Attributes are the brains, glib, and muscle of your character. You have three pools of points (5/4/3) which you prioritize for your choices of Physical, Mental, or Social Attributes. Full details can be found in the following texts – Vampire: the Requiem [2<sup>nd</sup> edition] p 79, Demon: the Descent [Revised] p 76, and Werewolf: the Forsaken [2<sup>nd</sup> edition] p 81, among others.

#### Step Three: Skills

I have no doubt that you all know that Skills work the same way, just with bigger pools of points. Prioritize pools of (11/7/4) to your choices of Physical, Mental, or Social Skills. For details, refer to the following texts – Vampire: the Requiem [2<sup>nd</sup> edition] p 80, Demon: the Descent [Revised] p 77, and Werewolf: the Forsaken [2<sup>nd</sup> edition] p 82, among others.

#### Step Four: Skill Specialties

Similarly, at this point you get a number of Skill Specialties. The full explanation of Skill Specialties can be found by referring to the following texts – Vampire: the Requiem [2<sup>nd</sup> edition]

p 80, *Demon: the Descent* [Revised] p 77, and *Werewolf: the Forsaken* [2<sup>nd</sup> edition] p 82, among others.

### Step Five: Add Stranded Template

Having established how your character is like the primitives around her, it's time to layer on the differences having an extraterrestrial origin causes.

#### *Taxon*

Your first choice is to pick your character's taxon, which might be roughly equivalent to her species. A character's taxon is her primary link to the vast interstellar or intergalactic civilization that gave rise to her ancestors. Once play begins a character cannot change her taxon, but she may evolve towards a clade. Examine the five taxa: *Cerebrum*, *Cīmex*, *Fōrma*, *Greg*, and *Lacerta*.

While each taxon trends towards certain stereotypical archetypes they are more species and cultural markers than they are archetypal forms in and of themselves. How much you want your character to conform to or deviate from archetypal norms will be reflected in the choices that follow from this one.

**Cerebra** are the stereotypical little grey aliens. They are frequently confused with little green aliens (a.k.a. "Martians") and often have psychic abilities. Their most stereotypical appearance is as scientists conducting experiments on local flora and fauna, including unlucky humans.

**Cīmicēs** are the stereotypical humanoid bug aliens. They are usually swift and can often fly. They are frequently confused for humans that have been possessed by terrible spirits or experiments gone horribly wrong. Their most stereotypical appearance is as criminals marooned on Earth by some greater Alien force.

**Fōrmae** are the stereotypical doppelganger aliens. They can usually alter their shape and are rumored to absorb or otherwise consume their victims. They are often despised by other taxa and are rumored to worship primeval forces that date back to the dawn of reality. Their most stereotypical appearance is as aspiring prospectors in search of relics from their distant past.

**Gregēs** are the stereotypical parasite aliens. They often take the form of small slug- or centipede-like colony creatures that infest their victims. Intelligent bacteria and viruses are closely related to this taxon and its allied clades. For this reason alone many other taxa look upon *Gregēs* with deep suspicion. Their most stereotypical appearance is that of self-appointed savior.

**Lacertae** are stereotypical reptilian aliens. Often feared to be cannibals, more than one human has ended up on a *Lacerta*'s table as a dinnertime delicacy. Whispers and rumors that they have come to invade Earth abound and in some ways, since their most stereotypical appearance is that of scouts that are lost or have been abandoned by their mothership.

#### *Occupātio*

The next step is to choose your character's *Occupātio*. While every taxon and clade has several that they tend to gravitate towards, don't let those stereotypes dominate your choice. Instead pick the one that best fits your character's concept. You can even choose to cut your character off from her cultural and familial roots by becoming a *Grassātor*, an alien whose home is lost in the depths of space and who now aimlessly drifts through space. These unfortunates make their way from waypoint to waypoint in accord to the warp and weft of the universe's whims.

**Excursōrēs** are aliens who were originally in Earth's vicinity as scouts for some other alien agency. They become marooned for any number of reasons. In some cases their small craft were damaged during combat actions and Earth was simply the nearest safe harbor they could find. In other cases they have been purposefully abandoned on Earth.

**Explōrātōrēs** are aliens who were originally in Earth's vicinity in the capacity of prospectors. Whether they were looking for the ancient treasures of one of the extinct primeval intergalactic civilizations or assessing the Earth's solar system for its appropriateness to act as a waypoint in some vast network of interstellar infrastructure, is a question you will have to answer. They come to be stranded on Earth for all manner of reason, not the least of which are the antediluvian curses that protect the ruins of the universe's primordial civilizations.

**Malefactōrēs** are criminals who have either escaped and are now hiding among Earth's teeming masses or were purposely exiled there by powers greater than themselves. Life for these aliens is one of constant danger. The threat of discovery by either the Earthlings or those of their own kind who hunt them hangs over them like an omnipresent sword of Damocles. While these aliens have less resources than others, the challenge of playing one of them can be quite rewarding.

**Salvātōrēs** are the universe's self-appointed saviors. Many of these aliens arrive on Earth with the intention of making life better for the natives. Some of them try to realize this through doing charity work. Others spread the words of ancient denizens of the great dark, which the oppressed, paranoid, hopeless masses of the Chronicles of Darkness are only too eager to cling to. These aliens are often stranded by their own hand.

**Scīscitātōrēs** have come to the solar system to learn about the planets and life there. Whether they are generalists like biologists and physicists or specialists like microbiologists that examine the bacteria growing in hot spring vents, most of these scientists gravitate to Earth specifically because of its wide bio-diversity. Intra-dimensional researchers also find Earth to be a fertile field area in which to conduct experiments that are banned in other parts of the galaxy. These aliens often become marooned when they underestimate the resourcefulness of their test subjects.

### *Cutis & Cor*

Every human being has a vice and a virtue that distinguishes portions of their idiosyncratic personalities. Aliens have similar mental artifacts. In their case though, these personality quirks express themselves through the opposing tension of their true extraterrestrial self – their Cor – and the native guise that they have clothed themselves in – their Cutis. As they adhere to their Cutis more they slowly begin to Assimilate to the humanity around them. The more they cling to their Cor, the more difficult it is for them to Assimilate and the easier it is for any of the shadowy forces that hunt the night for them to find them.

### *Touchstones*

Every alien has two Touchstones – one that preserves the otherworldly essence and another that represents their idyllic interpretation of what it means to be one of the natives. If they Assimilate too much they risk losing touch with their alien heritage. This is a price that aliens who choose to go native willingly pay. Conversely, if they fail to Assimilate to any extent at all, they lose any putative connection that they have to the natives around them and walk the usually short and violent path of the Intruder.

### *Adaptations, Amenities, and Ornāmenta*

Having selected your alien's genetic heritage, personality, and most recent occupational state, it's time to flesh it out the other things that are unique to extraterrestrials – Adaptations, Amenities, and Ornāmenta. Keep your character's concept, taxon, and occupātio in mind as you select adaptations, amenities, and ornāmenta to bring it to life.

**Adaptations** are the unique evolutionary advantages that set the Stranded apart from the primitives around them. These abilities from simple things like razor-sharp claws and piercing fangs all the way to seemingly magical abilities like shape-changing and telepathy. Every taxon has three that are particularly prevalent among their kind. Most clades frequently evince a fourth common adaptive trait in addition to their altered camouflage ability.

**Amenities** are facilities contained within an alien's spaceship. Every amenity provides a Stranded and his chosen allies with an additional edge. The power of these edges is proportional to the strength of a Stranded's Vessel. While many amenities provide edges that can only be fully exploited within the confines of the vessel itself, several provide aliens with advantages that are similar to merits. When a Vessel's strength is great enough these edges can even simulate ornāmenta. If an alien loses access to their ship, they also lose access to the benefits of its amenities. Only Stranded who go native will do this by choice.

**Ornāmenta** are distinctly alien artifacts and accoutrements that the Stranded carry with them. Many are helpful only in specific circumstances and all of them consume Fuel in order to operate. These objects vary in nature from semi-autonomous robots to suits of powered armor to a variety of simple detectors and scanning apparatuses.

### *Step Six: Add Merits*

At this point, you have more or less defined everything about your character that makes him one of the Stranded. The next thing to do is add a layer of distinguishing characteristics that help define his social standing among other stranded aliens, any peculiar mental traits that he possesses, and physical advantages such as combat training. Select from among merits as normal but keep in mind that your character is likely to be at a disadvantage when employing social merits that are distinctly intended for interacting with the natives (e.g., allies, contacts). This disadvantage can be ameliorated by increasing your character's Assimilation through play. (As a counter balance though, if you raise your character's Assimilation too high, he'll begin to suffer difficulty exploiting social merits that are particular to his interactions with other aliens.)

### *Step Seven: Advantages*

The final step of character creation is to layer on the last few details that will bring her to life. At this time you'll calculate figured statistics like initiative, speed, size, health and willpower. In addition your character begins with 3 dots of Assimilation. This represents the relative newness of her marooned life to her and the first halting efforts she's made to try to blend in with the natives.

She also begins with 1 dot in Vessel. She can purchase up to two additional dots of Vessel for the cost of 5 dots of Merits each. This is the only way a character starting with 0 experiences can begin with a stronger spaceship and more Fuel.

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## House Rules

Starting with extra dots in a power stat is a great advantage for a player's character. Like any advantage though it should be balanced with some detriment. Nominally this detriment is expressed by the loss of merit dots and an inability to purchase any social merits until some experiences have been met.

This is a fair approach but my own storytelling style relies heavily on the logical relationships among players' characters and the NPCs that fill their world. As such I usually mandate that my players spend one or two dots on appropriate status merits (e.g., a Mekhet Vampire must purchase at least one dot of Clan Status, a Bone Gnawer Werewolf must purchase at least one dot of Tribe Status).

This approach effectively limits the most "powerful" characters to starting out as dispossessed characters. I.e., a Werewolf who has chosen to spend her dots in Merits to increase her Primal Urge to 3 must also begin play as a Ghost Wolf. This counter-balances social benefits against the benefits of raw power. It also affords the troupe some interesting opportunities for developing social commitments and connections in-game, during the course of the chapter or story.

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Finally, each character begins play with 5 Fuel (roughly half of the capacity for a Vessel rated at 1). This small amount represents the character's remaining reserve or the tiny amounts she has been able to refine during her time on Earth thus far.

## Character Creation Quick Reference

### Step One: Concept

Choose your character's concept and aspirations as you normally would.

### Step Two: Attributes

Prioritize your character's attribute categories as you normally would.

### Step Three: Skills

Prioritize your character's skill categories as you normally would.

### Step Four: Skill Specialties

Choose your skill specialties as you normally would.

### Step Five: Stranded Traits

Choose a Taxon, Adaptations, an Occupatio, an Amenity, Ornamenta, Cutis, Cor, and Fuel (5).

### Step Six: Merits

Select ten dots of Merits as you normally would.

### Step Seven: Advantages

Calculate Willpower, Health, Speed, Defense and Initiative as you normally would. An Alien's Size is 5 and each Stranded start with an Assimilation of 3 and Vessel of 1. A character cannot start with a Vessel higher than 3.

## Adaptations and Ornamenta

Start with two Adaptations, one of which must be chosen from among those your taxon has an affinity for. Select three dots of Ornamenta. While it is preferable that some or all of these be used to purchase Ornamenta common to your Occupatio, this is not a necessity.





### Experience Costs

Trait	Experience
Attribute	4
Skill	2
Skill Specialty	1
Merit	1
Affinity Adaptation	1
Non-Affinity Adaptation	3
Ornāmenta	4
Vessel	5

### Stranded Template

Taxon	Favored Attribute	Camouflage	Adaptations
Cerebra	Intelligence or Composure	Psychic Illusions	Psychic Feedback, Telekinesis, and Telepathy
Cīmicēs	Dexterity or Stamina	Skin Burrowing	Armored Carapace, Enhanced Senses, and Wings
Fōrmae	Manipulation or Presence	Absorption	Distension, Extra Limbs, and Secretions
Gregēs	Dexterity or Wits	Infestation	Gestalt, Larval Cloud, and Venom
Lacertae	Stamina or Resolve	Mimicry	Chameleon Skin, Claws & Teeth, and Regeneration

Occupātio	Amenities	Common Ornāmenta
Excursōrēs	Armory or Combat Information Center	Jet Packs, Personal Force Fields, and Ray Guns
Explōrātōrēs	Chemistry Lab or Topographical Sensor Array	Earthmover Droids, Portable Extra-Dimensional Extractors, and Tunneling Lasers
Malefactōrēs	Containment Facility or Surveillance Hub	Agony Rods, Sensor Drones, and Sticky Foam Cannons

Salvātōrēs	Communications Array or Fabrication Center	Hypnosis Blasters, Mind Control Beamers and Sonic Multi-Tools
Scīscitātōrēs	High Energy Physics Lab or Medical Bay	Hostile Environment Exo-Suit, Multi-Phase Anomaly Scanners, and Portable Spectro-Analyzers
Grassātōrēs	Teleportation Matrix	None

## Experience

Experience works exactly as it would in other Chronicles of Darkness gamelines.

## Beats

Beats are the important, functional bit for experiences and you can find information on how they work by referring to Vampire: the Requiem p 83, Werewolf: the Forsaken p 85, among others.

## Adaptations and Ornāmenta

Evolving new Adaptations and building or improving Ornāmenta takes Experiences. The cost is 1 Experience for Adaptations that the character's taxon has an affinity for and 3 Experiences for other Adaptations. Aliens begin play with two Adaptations and may purchase one additional one for every three additional dots of Vessel that he or she possesses.

Each Stranded begins play with 3 dots of Ornāmenta. Additional dots for Ornāmenta cost 4 Experiences each. While each Occupātio has Ornāmenta that are commonly associated with it, players receive no discounts for purchasing particular Ornāmenta.

## Vessel

Alien Vessels do not repair themselves. A player may increase his or her character's Vessel at the cost of 5 Experiences per dot. Each expenditure represents the time and effort that a character takes during their down-time between stories to gather materials, effect repairs, and restore their spacecraft to some semblance of the advanced machine that it used to be.

The more powerful an alien's Vessel, the more Fuel is at their disposal. This affects an alien's Ornāmenta in turn, as aliens with more potent Vessels will have Ornāmenta with much greater portable reserves. Dots of Vessel also impact both the utility and strength of the Amenities that an alien can draw upon while within the confines of their Vessel.

A greater Vessel also has a proportionally greater impact on the natives that live nearby. This effect is expressed through deepening Paranoia effects. The areas surrounding particular potent Vessels are grim places where the suspicions of the locals run rampant.

Finally, in the event it is ever necessary, more potent Vessels also exhibit much more durable Structure. Their thicker Armor makes them much more resilient to damage making them excellent shelters for Stranded to ride out local calamities in. These same benefits also make them more desirable acquisitions for United Technologies, Inc.

Vessel Rating	No. of Adaptations	Ornāmentum Capacitance	Fuel Reserve	Paranoia Condition Inflicted
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1	2	5	25	Anxious (Persistent)
2	2	10	50	Anxious (Persistent)
3	2	15	75	Anxious (Persistent)
4	3	20	100	Delusions (Persistent)
5	3	25	125	Delusions (Persistent)
6	3	35	175	Delusions (Persistent)
7	4	45	225	Siege Mentality (Persistent)
8	4	55	275	Siege Mentality (Persistent)
9	4	65	325	Siege Mentality (Persistent)
10	5	75	375	Violent Schizophrenia (Persistent)

## Alien Nature

The Stranded are not a natural part of the Earth. (Although the converse is not true – the Earth that serves as the setting for the Chronicles of Darkness is an extension of an entire Universe of Darkness.) In order to survive being marooned on a world filled with billions of natives, aliens quickly learn to disguise themselves. Camouflage is more than an illusion or affectation on the surface of the skin. Every alien struggles to interact in ways that will increasingly reduce the risk of detection, illness, or injury while at the same time increasing their access to resources that will permit them to eventually return to the stars.

This psychological camouflage is an alien's *Cutis*. It represents their understanding of the norms of the humans around them and helps them to further their Assimilation. As they steadily act more and more human, every alien begins pulling away from its essential extraterrestrial nature, its *Cor*. As their Assimilation increases, it becomes more and more difficult for an alien to command its *Vessel* and employ its *Ornāmenta*.

## Anchors

Aliens have three anchors that keep them in tune with the world around them. These anchors are their *Cutis*, their *Cor*, and their *Touchstones*. Functionally, in game terms, each of these three factors provide a means for Aliens to replenish their reserve of Willpower points.

## *Cutis & Cor*

*Cutis* is the human-like identity that a Stranded builds around its camouflaged appearance. *Cutis* reflects its understanding of the norms of the natives' behaviors and value systems. This is an imperfect understanding though and is heavily influenced by the alien's observations. It is not synonymous with a human being's *Virtues*.

For instance, an alien who regularly observes gang members at work on the streets extorting money from people and selling drugs to kids may come to think that these are both socially acceptable and normal activities. This can easily lead to social faux pas being made, cause the Stranded to risk exposure, or even bring about conflict.

Write down the kinds of natives that your character observes, interacts with, or experiments upon regularly. Which of their behaviors does your characters find normative? For instance, if the aforementioned gang members always beat people who challenge them, is that a normative characteristic that your character works into her camouflage?

Once per scene your character may regain one Willpower by acting in a manner that it believes is a normal one for humans regardless of whether or not it is actually appropriate for the

situation. If this action causes your character to risk exposure then it may regain one additional Willpower.

Cor is the opposite of Cutis. It represents an alien's sense of self. Its taxon and occupatio often figure heavily by adding both the cultural influences of its civilization and that of its former occupational environment.

Things for the player to consider and note down is what are the norms for those cultures. Does the character hail from a homogeneous civilization or is it a pan-species environment where representatives from most taxa and many different clades dwell communally? What is the norm for resolving conflicts in its culture? (While very few species murder one another, violence to establish physical dominance is very common throughout the animal kingdom. What's the norm for the character's people?)

Among things that could be (and often is) normal for aliens is the inability to admit that the natives are even sapient, to say nothing of equality. This could indicate that your character finds nothing morally wrong with experimenting on the primitives around her. It has no qualms about dissecting them. It might even hunt, butcher, and eat them regularly. As the natives are going to think differently about the morality of these activities, characters holding such values will easily come into conflict with the locals.

Once per story your character may regain all of its spent Willpower by acting in a manner that is appropriate for someone of its social standing among its own culture. If this action causes it to be exposed and results in one or more natives succumbing to Panic then the alien also reduces its Assimilation by one dot. This is instead of the normal roll to resist an Assimilation breaking point.

### *Touchstones*

Every Alien has two Touchstones that represent its extraterrestrial heritage and its fundamental understanding of the human condition. They represent the twinned threads of who it was and what it must become to survive. As it acclimates to the primitive culture surrounding it, cocooning itself in that culture's normative safety, its own heritage begins to fall away and it no longer feels the pull of the stars so strongly. If it clings to that heritage too firmly, it risks rejecting the natives around it, thus increasing the ease by which it can fall victim to the Chronicles of Darkness's many, many hazards.

A native Touchstone represents an alien's ideal understanding of humanity. It is the thing which the alien strives to understand and which drives it to acclimate. The Touchstone may be a person, or a place, or a thing, or even a part of the natural world that humanity has seemingly forgotten, like an animal or a topographical feature. By perfecting its understanding of that thing, the Stranded subsumes its own heritage and risks going native.

An extraterrestrial Touchstone represents the alien's idealized sense of self. It is the legacy of the alien's forbears and its achievement represents a return to god-hood in comparison to the paltry existences of the primitives that surround the Stranded. The Touchstone may be a broken ornamentum, the bones of a dead crew mate, an ancient amulet passed down through the generations, or even the disembodied voice of the alien's Vessel. By striving to return to its august stature as a starfarer, the Stranded loses sight of the dangers around it.

### *Touchstones in Play*

As with other Chronicles of Darkness games, Touchstones help to bolster rolls to resist breaking points. As long as the alien has a native Touchstone, it gains +2 to any rolls to resist

Assimilation loss. As long as the alien has an extraterrestrial Touchstone, it gains +2 to any rolls to resist Assimilation gain.

For aliens to achieve their ultimate goal of returning to space, they need to balance the safety represented by acclimating to the necessity of carrying out their supernatural goals (whether those goals be repairing their Vessel or sharing their vast knowledge with the most worthy among the natives or carrying out some other task). If aliens go too far in either direction, they lose the benefits of their Touchstones. Aliens with 8 or more dots of Assimilation can no longer benefit from their extraterrestrial Touchstone (they blend in too well). Those with 2 or less dots of Assimilation can no longer benefit from their native Touchstone (they no longer make much effort to blend in).

Aliens can also lose their Touchstones altogether. People get killed, topographic features get wiped away by landscaping, ornāmenta oxidize and decay, and even Vessels can be destroyed. When this happens the alien's Assimilation changes in the appropriate direction. Should a native Touchstone be lost, the alien loses a dot of Assimilation. Should an extraterrestrial Touchstone be lost, the alien gains a dot of Assimilation. The Stranded can replace a lost Touchstone but doing so is a breaking point in the opposite direction, e.g., a Stranded trying to replace a lost extraterrestrial Touchstone risks a breaking point that will reduce its Assimilation.

In addition to their effects on breaking point rolls, anytime that your character reinforces its bond to a Touchstone, it regains a point of Willpower. If your character risks exposure or life and limb for its relationship to the Touchstone, then it can regain all of its spent Willpower.

### Example Touchstones

Here are four example Touchstones, two native and two extraterrestrial. Like example Touchstones in other books, each one features some form of built-in conflict. As always feel free to use and/or modify these and, of course, invent your own.

**The Teddy Bear (Native Touchstone)** – A keepsake of a small child that fell victim to your early experiments, you've kept it on hand because you still don't understand its significance. The child clung to the fluff-filled anthropomorphic fabric bag even as you vivisected it. It was only afterwards, as you pried the prize possession from its twisted hand that it occurred to you that your approach to understanding this world might be all wrong. Now you return from your jaunts and find the stuffed animal in prominent locations where you're positive that you didn't leave it – unless you're losing your mind. Unbeknownst to you, the child's spirit has lingered on in the form of an angry ghost. Each night as you go out to prowl for new test subjects and new materiel, the ghost moves the bear to a place that it knows you will see it. It toys with your emotions and mental fortitude as it slowly gathers the strength to wreak its revenge.

**The Broken Helmet (Extraterrestrial Touchstone)** – When you first arrived you weren't alone, there were five of you. You were the perfect team until everything went awry and you crashed to the surface. Only two of you survived. Wounded, you were forced to stay behind when your comrade went in search of resources to replace your damaged stores. Days went by and he never returned. When you were finally well enough you went looking for him but all you found were traces of some kind of fight and the shattered remnants of his flight helmet. Alone, you returned with the broken accoutrement, secreting in a place near to your damaged spacecraft. You did not return alone. Having captured your friend, the agents of United Technologies, Inc. are now keeping you under surveillance. They observe you as you observe the natives. Eventually, when they feel that they've learned enough about you, they'll move in.

**The Soup Kitchen (Native Touchstone)** – They didn't ask about your disheveled appearance or your strange mannerisms. They just chalked it up to the idiosyncrasies of a mentally ill street walker and served you up a steaming helping of soup. Now you find yourself coming back whenever you can. But as you've been studying your fellow line goers, so have they watched you. The disappearances among their number haven't gone unnoticed by them and, some among a darkly muttering, rightly or wrongly, that since the disappearances started around the time you started showing up, you must have something to do with them.

**Emergency Lifeboat Virtual Companion [E.L.V.C] (Extraterrestrial Touchstone)** – Each of you received the subcutaneous microchip just prior to your departure for the frontier. You were the only survivor of the ambush and since your escape pod crashed to Earth, ELVC has been your only true companion. Its steady presence has helped you cope with the loss of your comrades and, its constant advice has helped you stay alive thus far. What you don't know is that its advanced artificial intelligence sees you as a lost cause and when you aren't looking, when you're asleep, it sometimes takes your body for a walk. It uses this time to gather its own specimens, as it slowly assesses the viability of transferring itself from your frail form to one of the more robust bodies of the natives.

## Alien Anatomy

While many aliens possess or can assume hominid forms, their anatomies are often radically different than those of Earthlings. In particular, having evolved to survive the harsh microgravity and micro-pressure environment of deep space, Stranded possess many abilities that the natives would call unnatural. In addition to innate evolved abilities, all Stranded possess an innate means of camouflaging their alien appearance. Finally, having been bred to survive in the sterile confines of starcraft, aliens exhibit weakened immune systems and maladaptations that make exposure to natural environments inherently risky.

<Sidebar>

## The Other Stranded

There exist both taxa and clades that actually lack means of camouflaging themselves either because their nature is such that they are rarely detected by mortal eyes or because they are too large or too alien to make it possible. These creatures include both n-fractal phantoms and things that in no manner resemble anthropoids. The former include a broad range of taxa that vary from the angelic *Vīsiōnēs* to the surreal *Lūcēs*. The latter include creatures that are particularly horrific. Those few who survive being marooned on Earth do so by either quickly subverting nearby humans or hiding in the depths of caves, sewers, or other dark places.

Many of these non-anthropoidal aliens are Clades related to the *Fōrmae*. Among their number are the many-limbed *Asterēs* who look like a roundish lump from which a ring of thick pseudopods grow. Another example are the enormous *Līmācēs* which look like garage-sized armored slugs. There are also the *Mōnstra*, which is a catch-all taxon used by the agents of United Technologies, Inc. to describe a number of similarly shaped hulking alien monstrosities.

Since almost all of these beings are a threat to more ordinary aliens who can blend in with the natives (by dint of drawing the unwanted attention of entities that hunt aliens), many of the Stranded actively hunt down and exterminate these creatures as threats. Details on these creatures and their fell powers are discussed in Chapter 5.

</Sidebar>

## Adaptations

Every Stranded begins play with two Adaptations, of least one of which must be drawn from those common to its taxon. Most Adaptations represent abilities that are natural to native Earth creatures that possess them, e.g., chameleon skin, claws & teeth, wings, etc. These Adaptations cost an alien nothing to use and can be used as frequently as they like. Aliens still risk exposure when they use them and in cases where they can be clearly seen by native witnesses, e.g., using wings in broad daylight, they will cause Panic in those witnesses as they realize that the Stranded is not something natural or of their world. Some adaptations, like telekinesis, are clearly supernatural and almost any use of them is likely to cause Panic to mortal witnesses.

Adaptations are two-part abilities. Each one has an initial (in some cases always on) benefit. Each one also has an additional benefit that the alien can realize by expending a point of Willpower. This latter use always appears supernatural or unnatural to native witnesses and will cause Panic even among those that an alien has suborned.

### *Armored Carapace*

Your character possesses a thick outer covering of chitin. This durable substance is composed of flexible cartilage-like plates that provides protection from your character's muscles and inner organs.

**Effect:** An Armored Carapace grants the character with an armor rating of 4/2. By expending a Willpower point the character can also ignore any dice penalties from wounds for the remainder of the scene and regenerates one point of Bashing damage per turn. This effect cannot be used to heal lethal or aggravated wounds.

### *Chameleon Skin*

Your character's skin possesses special cells that allow it to seemingly merge with its environment. The effects of this ability are potent but it comes with a number of drawbacks.

**Effect:** Chameleon Skin grants your character a +3 on all rolls to hide. By expending a Willpower point the ability benefits can be realized even when the character moves (becoming a +3 bonus to all Stealth rolls). Such multi-tasking is exhausting and so the Willpower must be spent each time your character moves.

**Drawbacks:** Your character cannot be clothed or under the effects of its Camouflage, though the effects do extend to any Ornāmenta that it is carrying. This can make the risks of exposure much higher in many situations. Such exposure will always result in Panic as your character's truest form is revealed to mortal onlookers that see through its chameleon facade.

### *Chloroplasts*

Your character's skin cells contain chloroplasts that allow it to absorb energy from sunlight or other sources of ultraviolet light. In dire situations this can mean the difference between life or death as your character's body becomes an emergency Fuel reservoir for her Ornāmenta.

**Effects:** By exposing a portion of your skin to sunlight for several hours you can replenish an internal store of Fuel. For every hour of sun exposure to an amount of skin equivalent to two limbs or a back, your character produces 1 Fuel. Your character's maximum internal capacity is 5 Fuel. This Fuel can be transferred to the power reserves of Ornāmenta by using equipment available in the character's Vessel. This process takes 1 minute per Fuel transferred. By spending

a point of Willpower, the character may expend the Fuel to activate an Ornāmentum directly (i.e., without having first transferred the Fuel to the Ornāmentum's power reserve).

The character can also use the Fuel to overcharge an Ornāmentum with its own power reserve by expending a second point of Willpower. When this is done the Ornāmentum behaves as though it were one dot stronger (to a maximum of 5 dots) than it is. Overcharging Ornāmenta in this way damages them and any Ornāmenta will thereafter behave as though they were 1 dot lower in strength (to a minimum of zero, which is essentially broken and unusable). Ornāmenta that have been damaged in this way can be repaired when the character returns to its Vessel.

This Adaptation works through an alien's Camouflage.

### *Claws & Teeth*

Your character has razor sharp claws and needle like teeth which he may employ using Brawl.

**Effects:** Your character's brawl attacks do +1L damage. By expending a point of Willpower, your character's brawl attacks also gain the armor piercing quality.

**Drawbacks:** While these natural weapons are not enormous or extremely noticeable, they are not easily hidden by your Camouflage. You receive a -1 penalty to all exposure rolls that occur in situations where witnesses have seen your character physically grasp and handle objects.

### *Distension*

Your character's organs and bones are malleable and flexible. The character can alter her shape and apparent size by stretching or otherwise deforming portions or the whole of her body.

**Effects:** Your character can stretch her limbs to a distance of twice her height, granting her access to objects and locations she could not otherwise possibly reach. This effectively doubles her climbing speed. She can also compress her form to fit through holes as narrow as six inches in diameter or spaces as small as four inches wide. By expending a point of Willpower, your character can stretch a distance of up to four times her height (temporarily quadrupling her climbing speed), fit through holes as small as 2 inches in diameter or gaps as small as 1 inch wide.

**Drawbacks:** Travel through cramped spaces while compressed is time consuming and the character's speed factor is reduced to 1 for as long as it takes her to traverse the space (this could mean hours for spaces like small pipes, conduits, or even the narrow gaps between buildings). Distorting one's body for long periods of time can lead to injury (or even death). Should your character spend a point of Willpower to benefit from the improved effect of this ability, she suffers one point of Bashing damage for each turn she continues to use it after the first.

### *Electrocytes*

Like an electric eel, your character has a series of specialized organs just below its dermis. While extremely effective in a liquid medium like water, your character can use this ability to stun others by touch.

**Effects:** On a successful Dexterity + Brawl roll, your character touches an opponent and inflicts Strength + Stamina +0B damage. If the victim takes any damage at all, then they also suffer from the Stunned Tilt for the next turn. By spending a point of Willpower you can upgrade the damage to +0L.



If this adaptation is used in the water, no roll is necessary to hit, it instead automatically affects every living or electronic thing within a radius of five feet. Simply roll Strength + Stamina +0L to determine the amount of damage done. Victims within the area of affect will be affected by the Stunned Tilt whether they suffer damage or not. By spending a point of Willpower the damage effect can be upgraded to +0A.

While your character is immune to its own electrical current, it can be still be affected by electricity from other sources such as broken conduits, exposed wires, and lightning. Use of this power near these hazards will cause your character to suffer damage based upon the current. The first point of damage is still downgraded as explained below in the section on Resistances.

Source	Damage
Lamp or other small source	1L
Average Household Appliance / Car Battery	2L
Household Bus	3L
Large Household or Small Industrial Bus / Small Gas-powered Electric Generator	4L
Transformer / Large Generator	2A
Standard Powerline	4A
High-Voltage Transmission Line / Transformer Sub-station	5A
Power Plant Main Line	8A
Lightning Strike (from a cloud)	1~5A

<Sidebar>

### Electrical / Lightning Damage and Other Supernatural Creatures

Electricity is extremely lethal to living beings and ordinary mortals, Beasts, Demons, Deviants, Claimed, Geists, Hunters, Mages and Werewolves will all suffer damage according to the table above unless they have some means (usually magic of some kind) to avoid or downgrade this damage. Since electricity also causes muscles to contract, living beings may easily find themselves in a position where they cannot escape from the damage source. On a failed Dexterity + Wits + Supernatural Advantage roll, the victim grasps ahold of the damage source and cannot release it without outside intervention, thereby suffering the appropriate damage each turn they remain in contact with the source.

Lightning strikes are of course an exception to this since they only last an instant – apply their damage once, with the amount being proportional to the size of the bolt. Lightning from magical sources, such as a Mage’s spell, is proportionally smaller in comparison to what rains down from the sky and does the amount of damage listed in its appropriate description. Magical lightning may affect things that normally benefit from partial or whole immunity to electricity (e.g., undead creatures).

Undead creatures such as Vampires and Mummies downgrade the damage one level to bashing or lethal respective to the damage source (even their undead flesh cannot escape the thermodynamics of extremely high voltage discharges). They must still test to avoid grasping ahold of the damage source but may also add their Strength to the roll.

Since electricity is so closely related to the Divine Fire, Prometheans do not suffer damage from electricity according to the table above. Refer to Promethean: the Created 2<sup>nd</sup> edition for full details on their interaction with electricity.

</Sidebar>

### *Enhanced Senses*

Your character has inherited the finely honed senses of a hunter evolved across billions of years.

**Effects:** Your character adds +3 to all Perception rolls. By spending a point of Willpower, your character may add +3 to all rolls involving her Wits from the remainder of the scene.

**Drawbacks:** Anytime your character suffers a dramatic failure on a Perception test she gains the Distracted Condition (see Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 302). If your character spent a point of Willpower then any dramatic failure on a roll related to Wits instead causes her to gain the Distracted Condition. If your character is already suffering from the Distracted Condition then she gains the Confused Condition (see Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 302) instead as her mind is overwhelmed from sensory input.

### *Extra Limbs*

Your character has additional limbs. They might be relatively mundane extra arms or legs or they may be prehensile tails, pseudopods, tentacles, or even stranger appendages.

**Effects:** Your character has one or two additional limbs that can be used to carry or grasp things, adding a net +2 to all of his Dexterity rolls. In the event that the limbs are legs or can be used for ambulation (e.g., like pseudopods or tentacles) then they instead increase the characters Species Factor for Speed by two. By expending a Willpower point the character can do an additional action this turn but, he must split his dice pool across the two actions if they are the same (e.g., shooting a gun) or divide each dice pool in half (rounding down) if they are different (e.g., picking a pocket while distracting the target).

**Drawbacks:** Your character cannot benefit from this Adaptation while using his Camouflage. Any mortal witnesses to this Adaptation's use automatically succumb to Panic unless they have been conditioned (e.g., as in the case of an alien's cult followers).

### *Gestalt*

Your character is actually a vast network of minds allowing it to literally be in multiple places at the same time. Relatively simple tasks are easily accomplished but complex tasks like repairing a car, participating in a bar brawl, or having a philosophical debate are much more difficult to accomplish without leaving most of the extended minds in a quiescent state.

**Effects:** Your character controls multiple bodies (anywhere from two up to ten times its dots of Willpower) that work in concert. The character may have the group take actions in aggregate with the following effects:

- **Extended Actions** – One member of the hive mind leads the action. Determine the dice pool as normal and then add +1 for every two additional members (to a maximum of +5 / 10 members) of the hive mind that participate in the action. Any remaining members of the hive mind are only able to take free actions or a single aggregate rote action or stand idly by doing nothing.

- **Common Actions** – The hive mind can take a single common action en masse (e.g., its members all shoot or all carouse, etc.). Determine the dice pool as normal and then add +1 for every member participating in the common action. Next divide the pool evenly across the members participating in the action, rounding fractions down (note that this may result in each member rolling a chance die). Roll once for each member, determine exceptional successes and dramatic failures as normal. Any members of the hive mind that do not participate are only able to take free actions or a single aggregate rote action or stand idly by doing nothing.
- **Advanced Actions** – The hive mind can take a single common advanced action en masse. Determine the dice pool as normal and then divide the dice evenly across the members participating in the advanced action, rounding fractions down (note that this may result in each member rolling a chance die). Next add +1 to each member's dice pool. Roll twice for each member choosing the most beneficial result. Any members of the hive mind that do not participate are only able to take free actions or a single aggregate rote action or stand idly by doing nothing.
- **Rote Actions** – The hive mind can take a single aggregate rote action. Determine the dice pool as normal and then add +1 for each member participating in the rote action (to a maximum of +5, note that there is no limit on how many members can actually participate). Roll once to determine the results. Note that combat-related rote actions (such as firing guns) will be aimed at the same target. Any members that do not participate may take free actions or stand idly by doing nothing. The hive mind may elect to split fire at multiple targets exactly as though it was firing an automatic weapon (but only if it can use firearms as a rote action in the first place).
- **Free Actions** – Each member of the hive mind may always elect to take a free action rather than participate in an aggregate or en masse action. Any members that are not participating in an aggregate or en masse action and do not choose to take a free action simply stand idly by doing nothing.

By spending a point of Willpower, a single member of the hive mind may act independently of it for the duration of the scene. That member still suffers the drawbacks of being a member of the hive mind.

**Drawbacks:** Because the gestalt consciousness's minds are all interlinked, they suffer psychic feedback whenever one of their members is injured. Whenever a member is injured (regardless if the damage is bashing, lethal, or aggravated) all of the other active members suffer one point of bashing damage. Whenever a member is killed all of the other active members suffer one point of lethal damage. Any mind-affecting powers that affect one active member affect them all. Inactive members (i.e., those standing idly by doing nothing) are immune to these drawbacks. Note that the hive mind has no homing sense and so may not be able to find or retrieve members that become lost or separated from the rest of the group (e.g., if for instance one of the members was kidnapped by outside forces).

### *Larval Cloud*

Your character is infested with a brood of gnat-like larva that crawl around on her skin and travel with her. When threatened the larva swarm in a thick cloud around your character making it difficult to see her exact position.

**Effects:** Your character benefits from a +3 bonus to Defense so long as she is not surprised as the larva swarm and mill around her. By spending a point of Willpower, your character can cause

the larva swarm to attack another character for one turn. There is no need to hit, the affected character suffers one point of bashing damage and -2 penalty to all rolls for that turn as the swarm assails her or his air passages, ears, and eyes.

### *Psychic Feedback*

Your character has a limited form of telepathy that allows it to short-circuit the brains of other creatures. This inflicts pain, sometimes injury, and causes mortal victims to succumb to Panic.

**Effects:** Your character nominates a target and rolls Intelligence + Empathy - the target's Vessel. Each success deals one point of bashing damage. Your character may spend a point of Willpower when activating this adaptation to cause lethal damage rather than bashing damage.

### *Regeneration*

Your character heals injuries at an accelerated rate.

**Effects:** Your character recovers from bashing damage at the rate of 1 point per minute, lethal damage at the rate of 1 point per hour, and aggravated damage at the rate of 1 point per day. By expending a point of Willpower, your character can put this ability into overdrive, healing 1 point of bashing damage per turn, 1 point of lethal damage per minute, or 1 point of aggravated per hour. Once activated in this way, the character keeps regenerating at the accelerated rate until his health has been returned to normal. He thereafter gains the Famished condition and must consume one pound of food for every point of aggravated (or equivalent damage) healed.

### *Secretions*

Your character's skin exudes a thin layer of mucous.

**Effects:** This mucous is both slippery and sticky granting your character a +2 bonus to escape or initiate grapples. By spending a point of Willpower, your character's mucous also becomes acidic dealing 2L damage to anyone coming into extensive contact with it (such as during a grapple).

### *Spines*

Your character's skin bristles with tiny, razor sharp spines, like that of a porcupine or hedgehog.

**Effects:** Your character's bare-fisted and bare-footed melee attacks deal +0L rather than +0B damaging. If an opponent successfully grapples your character or she successfully grapples another an opponent, that opponent automatically suffers one point of lethal damage for each turn that the grapple is maintained. By spending a point of Willpower, your character can actually shoot her spines at nearby targets. The spines count as a firearm with a +0L, 5/10/15 Range profile.

### *Stinger*

Your character has a venomous stinger that delivers its poison into its victim's bodies.

**Effects:** Unless your character has the Extra Limbs Adaptation, it must initiate a grapple with the victim. Thereafter a successful touch attack (Dexterity + Brawl) will inflict 1 point of bashing damage and deliver the venom into the victim, causing it to gain the Poisoned (moderate) Tilt. By spending a point of Willpower, your character concentrates its venom into a deadly mixture causing its victim (this turn) to gain the Poisoned (grave) Tilt instead. Your character does not

need to first initiate a grapple if it also has the Extra Limbs Adaptation (as it will be assumed that it possesses a limb, such as a tail, specifically for striking with the stinger). The stinger can also be employed in more intimate situations against the unsuspecting.

### *Telekinesis*

Having evolved to live in the microgravity of deep space where movement is more difficult, your character has evolved specialized neurons that allow her to manipulate her surroundings by force of will alone.

**Effects:** Your character may manipulate anything she would normally be able to lift or otherwise physically manipulate so long as it is within her line of sight. She replaces Strength with Intelligence, Dexterity with Wits, and Stamina with Resolve for all appropriate dice pools. For example, if she telekinetically lifts a small stone and tries to crush a mortal's skull with it, she rolls her Intelligence + Brawl instead of her Strength + Brawl.

By spending a point of Willpower she can treat all of her mental attributes as being two dots higher. This effect lasts for one minute. Mortals that witness this power will fall into Panic (in addition to suffering an Integrity breaking point for witnessing something obviously supernatural) even if they cannot determine its source.

**Drawbacks:** Use of your character's telekinesis in her day to day life is second nature to her. Because of her reliance on it her physical form is not as robust. Subtract one dot from a physical attribute when you select this Adaptation for your character. This lost dot can be restored through expenditure of experiences.

(**Note:** Some players may complain about the attribute loss when they purchase this Adaptation after character creation. Storytellers and players should agree to rationalize the attribute loss in the following manner. Your character was somewhat telekinetic all along but lacked enough confidence to employ it in any settings but the most private ones. She's been practicing the ability more and more over time, but didn't notice that part of her physicality was atrophying as she did so. When she finally became confident enough in the ability to employ frequently, the atrophy also became apparent.)

### *Telepathy*

Your character can use its mind to directly interact with the minds of others.

**Effects:** Your character may speak to others directly through their minds. As this communication ability transcends language, this Adaptation mimics the Language and Multilingual merits (although your character may still benefit from those merits when it vocalizes its speech). Using this ability on mortals who have not been conditioned to it beforehand will cause them to suffer an Integrity breaking point.

By spending a point of Willpower, your character may delve beyond projecting your voice into other character's minds and attempt to gain an understanding of their thoughts. To use this ability, your character rolls its Intelligence + Empathy. On a successful roll, it learns one thing that the target character is prominently thinking of at the time. In the event of an exceptional success, your character also taps into the target's memories around that thought learning enough additional information to full contextualize the knowledge. In the event of a dramatic failure, your character projects a portion of your memories into the target. This will cause mortals to succumb to Panic in addition to suffering an Integrity breaking point.

**Drawbacks:** Your character is used to conversing through telepathy and thereby suffers a -2 penalty to any social rolls that require that it vocalize in order to communicate.

### *Toxic Musk*

Your character can exude a toxic chemical from special glands in his skin.

**Effects:** Anyone coming into physical contact with your character, such as through melee combat or a grapple gets some of the substance on themselves. They are affected by the Sick (moderate) Tilt until they can bathe in a mildly acidic substance (e.g., milk, tomato juice, etc.). By spending a point of Willpower you character can concentrate enough fluid in his glands to spray a single target within 15 feet. Roll Dexterity + Firearms to hit. The victim gains the Sick (Grave) Tilt upon a successful hit.

### *Venom*

Your character has venom glands in its mouth that produce a potent neuro-toxin.

**Effects:** If your character has claws and teeth, then it can use those to deliver its venom to victims on successful hits that inflict damage. Otherwise, your character must spit the venom at its victim – a single target within 5 feet. Roll Dexterity + Firearms to hit. The venomous spittle is sticky and adheres to clothing, hair and skin. On a successful hit (or a hit that does damage for creatures with claws and teeth, spines, or stingers), the victim gains the Drugged Tilt. By spending a point of Willpower, your character can concentrate his venom into a much more potent mixture causing its victims to instead gain the Immobilized Tilt. Your character can also use the venomous spittle to inflict the Blinded or Deafened Tilts by specifically targeting the victim's eyes and ears. The effects of your character's venom last for 1 hour per dot of Stamina that he possesses, making this a great Adaptation for ambushing prey and taking it back to your character's Vessel. This Adaptation (unless combined with another Adaptation) can be easily defeated if the target is wearing clothing that completely covers all of their skin (e.g., hazmat suits, pressurized flight suits, etc.).

### *Wings*

Your character has wings. While they are optimized to propel it in microgravity environments like starships in deep space, your character can also use them to glide short distances in higher gravity environments.

**Effects:** By launching itself from a great height, such as the rooftop of a skyscraper, your character can glide a horizontal distance equal to five feet for every ten feet of vertical height. Its gliding Species Factor is 10 and it receives a +5 bonus to its Speed. By spending a point of Willpower your character can fly for the rest of the scene. When actively flying it has a Species Factor of 8 and receives a +4 bonus to its Speed. Since its wings aren't actually evolved for high gravity environments like a planet's surface, your character take one point of lethal damage at the end of any scene where it has spent Willpower to fly. It cannot use its wings again until this point of damage has been healed. Mortals that witness your characters wings or their use to glide or fly will fall into Panic unless they have been conditioned ahead of time.

### *Camouflage*

Camouflage is an evolutionary adaptation that set the Stranded aside from other Aliens who end up marooned on Earth. It allows them the means visually blend in with the local natives – the mortals who populate the Chronicles of Darkness. While it often makes the difference between life and death, it is an imperfect means of protecting themselves.

Camouflage provides a barrier against detection but the Stranded are still at risk of exposing their true natures to the mortals around them. If they do not manage to assimilate with the natives or if they increase the power of their Vessels too much, then camouflage becomes a brittle thing, all too easily pierced by the paranoid eyes watching them.

**Systems:** Anytime an alien character suffers a breaking point towards her or his extraterrestrial nature and away from her or his human disguise, he or she is also at risk for being exposed as an extraterrestrial. If the breaking point roll is successful the character gains the Exposed Condition as he or she realizes that they nearly exposed their true nature to the natives around them and any humans around her or him roll their Wits + Empathy in an attempt to see through her or his Camouflage (as described below). On a failed roll he or she gains the Exposed Condition and all humans around her or him suffer from Panic. A dramatic failure causes all humans within range to suffer from Panic (as above) and the character gains the Pursued Condition. An exceptional success will cause the character to gain the Informed Condition (see *Demon: the Descent (Revised)* p 309 for details) as the mortals around her or him drop their guard.

In addition to this system, each of the Camouflage Adaptations listed below have their own systems which must be employed to put them in place. It usually takes a scene to establish new Camouflage. During this time the human that the Camouflage is to be based upon must be restrained so that the alien can synthesize their appearance.

Regardless of the specific Camouflage adaptation that an alien possesses, he or she must first inflict the Beaten Down Tilt (see the GMC update, p. 206) or a Tilt or Condition with similar effects (such as Mesmerized – Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 305) or render the victim unconscious. If the victim regains consciousness or resolves the condition before the scene has come to an end, then the mortal will fight back, taking any means necessary to escape from the alien. Natives in this position will not fall into the throes of Panic (having likely fallen into such a state earlier).

In the cases of Mimicry and Psychic Illusions this synthesis requires that the alien thoroughly examine the mortal that will form the basis of her or his disguise. Mortals are not typically willing subjects for this process and any that remain alive during or afterwards suffer an Integrity breaking point. In the other three cases, the mortal's body is either physically invaded, as per Infestation, or consumed.

Once established, Camouflage is not easily penetrated. The primary risk is if the disguised alien encounters someone that her or his human persona actually knew. Such people reflexively roll their Wits + Empathy to determine that something is wrong, gaining the Spooked Condition (see the GMC update, p. 183) on a successful roll. Close acquaintances, such as friends receive a +1 to the roll. Family members receive a +2 bonus to the roll. And people who are very intimately familiar with the alien character's disguise's former persona (e.g., spouses, children, best friends) receive a +3 bonus to the roll. For this reason, most aliens prefer to prey upon homeless people or mortals who will not be missed.

The natives in question make these rolls each time they encounter the alien. After three successive successes (i.e., three cycles of gaining and resolving the Spooked Condition), the human instead gains the Obsession (Persistent) Condition (see the GMC update, p. 183) as a result of a fourth encounter resulting in a successive success on the roll. Note that this must be four different encounters in a row resulting in a successful roll on each encounter.

Mortals with the Unseen Sense merit automatically succeed on the roll, regardless of their affiliation with the human persona that the alien's Camouflage is based upon. If they encounter

the disguised alien multiple times, they automatically make their way through the progression, gaining the Obsession (Persistent) Condition on their fourth encounter with the alien.

Note that neither Condition is automatically cause for the alien's character to be exposed for what he or she truly is. The alien may find her- or himself closely watched, followed and even harassed by the obsessed mortal.

Any of these situations may cause her or him to slip up and reveal her or his true nature. With sufficient evidence, a mortal may attempt to penetrate an alien's disguise through the powers of deductive or inductive reasoning. To accomplish this, the native character makes a contested roll using their Wits + Intelligence against the alien character's Camouflage rating + Vessel. If the mortal is successful then they see the alien for what he or she truly is and both suffer a breaking point and fly into a Panic. If the mortal achieves an exceptional success, they can share their revelation with other mortals in the immediate vicinity, causing all of them to suffer a breaking point and fly into a Panic.

If the alien achieves an exceptional success in this contested roll, then the human has let some critical information slip out regarding their suspicions. The mortal gains the Leveraged Condition (see the GMC update, p. 182), which the alien can exploit to her or his benefit (either through social maneuvering or other means, such as forcing the mortal to act as one dot of Contacts until the condition is resolved).

<Sidebar>

### Supernatural Senses

Other supernatural creatures that encounter disguised aliens reflexively make a contested roll using their Wits + Intelligence + Supernatural Advantage against the alien's Camouflage rating + Vessel. If the supernatural creature succeeds on the roll, then it learns that the alien is some kind of supernatural creature but it doesn't know what kind. If the success is an exceptional one, then the supernatural creature confuses the alien for either one of its own kind or one of its mortal enemies (Game-master's choice). If the alien succeeds on the roll, then he or she senses the unnatural presence of the other supernatural creature and knows that it is not like the other, mortal, natives. If the alien's success is an exceptional one, then he or she intuitively knows the essential nature of the supernatural creature that he or she has encountered (e.g., Vampires register as undead creatures that thirst for blood, Demons are Vis-like beings wearing human cloths but with more weight and substance than actual ephemeral beings, Werewolves are changelings that are at once human and beast, etc.).

</Sidebar>

Most but not all Adaptations work through an alien's Camouflage. Those that don't work directly through Camouflage will not that they either cannot be used while Camouflage is being employed or that using it while Camouflage is being employed causes an exposure roll or penalizes such rolls.

Once they've established their Camouflage, an alien may don or remove a number of times equal to her or his Assimilation. Once this limit has been reached, the alien must find another human to use as a disguise. New Camouflage is crafted based upon the rules particular to its corresponding Adaptation, as described below.



### Absorption

Your character must physically consume a native in order to take on that mortal's likeness. This is an arduous process that requires your character to maintain physical contact with her or his victim for a number of hours.

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Resolve

**Action:** Extended. The base time per roll is one hour. The alien must accumulate a total number of successes equal to the victim's Size + Stamina. Each successful roll inflicts its successes as an equal number of aggravated damage to the victim. Note that this may kill mortals who are already injured. Those who have not succumbed to their injuries and survive a botched absorption attempt may eventually recover but are usually disfigured in some way. By the end of a successful absorption process, the mortal dies with their health track filled by aggravated damage anyway.

Once the absorption process has been completed, the alien establishes a Camouflage rating for her or his disguise. This rating is equal to the character's Resolve + Assimilation + 1 for each exceptional roll on the extended action. In addition to the Camouflage rating, having absorbed her or his victim's memories, the alien may spend a point of Willpower and reproduce any one fact known to the victim when questioned or asked. The alien may use this ability once per scene.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The mortal's flesh rejects the alien's attempt to merge with it, causing the alien to suffer one point of lethal damage and ending the absorption process. Some of the native's memories transfer over and mix with the alien's in such a way as the alien cannot tell them apart. The alien gains the Delusional (Persistent) Condition (see *Vampire: the Requiem* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 302).

**Failure:** The mortal's immune system mounts a strong defense against the alien's flesh. The alien suffers one point of bashing damage and must decide whether to continue the process or accept a condition.

**Success:** The process accumulates successes.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to the large number of successes accumulated, the overall Camouflage rating created at the end of the process increases by +1.

### Infestation

Your character physically invades a native's body, tapping into and over-riding its central nervous system. The invasion process takes a number of hours during which the victim's immune system attempts to destroy the alien invader(s).

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Stamina.

**Action:** Extended. The base time per roll is 30 minutes. It must accumulate a number of successes equal to the victim's Strength + Stamina. Once completed, the disguise's Camouflage rating is calculated as Manipulation + Assimilation +1 per exceptional success. By spending a point of Willpower, the alien may drive the infested native's body beyond its normal limitations inflating its Strength, Dexterity, or Stamina by +2 for the remainder of the scene. The alien suffers one point of lethal damage at the end of a scene in which this ability is used.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The mortal's immune system goes berserk, ending the infestation process and causing one point of lethal damage to the victim and one point of aggravated damage to the alien.

**Failure:** The mortal's immune system fights against the alien invasion. Both the mortal and the alien suffer one point of lethal damage. The alien must choose whether to stop the process or accept a condition and continue. If either character dies, the infestation attempt fails.

**Success:** The process accumulates successes.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to the large number of successes accumulated, the overall Camouflage rating created at the end of the process increases by +1.

## Mimicry

Your character can grow a sheath of fake skin that replicates the appearance of a native that he or she has touched in the last 24 hours. This process requires the character to remain helpless in a cocoon for a number of hours as it grows the skin.

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Stamina

**Action:** Extended. The base time per roll is two hours during which the alien's skin liquefies into a cocoon-like substance. It must accumulate a number of successes equal to the touched person's Presence + Composure. The human does not have to be present during this process but the alien must have made physical contact with the native in the past 24 hours.

Since this ability only replicates the appearance of a mortal, the alien runs the awkward risk of encountering the native that he or she is a doppelganger of. Such encounters result in the mortal, and any intimates who are with them, gaining the Obsession (Persistent) condition. This risk can be mitigated by holding the mortal captive and keeping them away from the eyes of their fellows. Depending on the circumstances of their captivity, the mortal may suffer an Integrity breaking point.

Calculate the alien's Camouflage rating by summing Presence + Assimilation +1 per exception success. Aliens employing this Camouflage Adaptation can freely use Adaptations that they would not normally be able to use, e.g., chameleon skin, while in mortal guise. By spending a point of Willpower, the alien can shed this disguise by spontaneously molting her or his skin. This process heals all lethal and bashing damage that the alien has accrued to that point but leaves her or him exposed. The alien will have to find a safe place to grow a new disguise. Unconditioned mortals that encounter the alien will suffer from Panic.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The process fails as the alien's skin molts away, causing her or him two points of lethal damage. The camouflage adaptation cannot be used again until this damage has been healed.

**Failure:** The process gobbles up the alien's calorie reserves without much benefit. The alien gains the Exhausted Condition (see Werewolf: the Forsaken 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 307). If the alien already has that condition, then he or she suffers two points of bashing damage instead. The alien must also decide whether to stop the process or accept an additional condition and continue.

A failed roll will cause the alien to suffer from the Exhausted Condition, in addition, he or she must accept a second condition or stop the mimicry attempt. A dramatic failure on the roll ends the attempt and causes the alien to suffer two points of lethal damage as her or his skin molts prematurely. The alien cannot attempt to use this ability again until this damage has been healed.

**Success:** The process accumulates successes.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to the large number of successes accumulated, the overall Camouflage rating created at the end of the process increases by +1.

### *Psychic Illusions*

Your character projects an illusion of expected normalcy directly into the minds of the mortals around her or him. The effects of this ability are an outcome of days and weeks of studying the natives.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Wits

**Action:** Extended. The base time per roll is one day during which the alien observes and examines a captive human upon whom the disguise will be based. The alien must accumulate a number of successes equal to the mortal's Resolve + Composure. The Camouflage rating for the resulting disguise is equal to the alien's Intelligence + Assimilation +1 per exceptional success on the roll. By spending a point of Willpower while disguised, the alien can extend the Camouflage to include Ornāmenta or other objects of obviously extraterrestrial origin.

### *Roll Results*

**Dramatic Failure:** The process fails as the mortal manages to escape. This may have additional consequences such as damage to or the revealing of the alien's Vessel.

**Failure:** No successes are gained and the alien must either accept a condition to continue or select a new human upon whom to base their illusionary disguise. If the alien chooses not to continue onwards he or she may either release or dispose of the mortal as he or she sees fit.

**Success:** The process accumulates successes.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to the large number of successes accumulated, the overall Camouflage rating created at the end of the process increases by +1.

### *Skin Burrowing*

This gruesome adaptation requires that the alien either skin a human or burrow into its skin and consume its innards. Your character wears the skins of other beings as a means of disguising her or his extraterrestrial nature. Unfortunately, these skins are easily degraded by injury.

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Resolve

**Action:** Extended. The base time per roll is 15 minutes. The alien must accumulate a number successes equal to the mortal's Size + Stamina. Each success inflicts one point of lethal damage to the victim. The Camouflage rating for the resulting disguise is equal to the alien's Dexterity + Assimilation +1 per exceptional success rolled.

The Camouflage provided by this adaptation degrades if the alien is injured. Every two points of bashing damage causes the loss of one point of Camouflage rating. Similarly the rating is reduced by one for each point of lethal damage suffered and by two for each point of aggravated damage. By spending a point of Willpower the alien may heal damage to this Camouflage as though it were part of her or his own body. The Camouflage rating replenishes at the same rate as he or she heals. Any new damage to the disguise does not heal unless an additional Willpower is spent each time damage is taken. All damage accrued during a single scene counts as a single instance of taking damage for these effects.

For example if Peter's character Jedadiah is injured on the third, fourth, and sixth rounds of combat, accruing a total of 5 points of lethal damage, his character need only spend one point of Willpower to heal the disguise along with his injuries. If later that same night, his character

suffers two additional points of bashing damage, then the character would need to expend an additional point of Willpower to heal that damage to his Camouflage.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The mortal's flesh disagrees with the alien's digestive tract. The process fails and the alien gains the Sick Tilt for the remainder of the scene.

**Failure:** No successes are gained and the alien must either accept a condition to continue or abandon her or his current victim for a new one.

**Success:** The process accumulates successes.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to the large number of successes accumulated, the overall Camouflage rating created at the end of the process increases by +1.

### Resistances & Immunities

Aliens are beings that have evolved to survive the harsh rigors of space. They are resilient to common hazards such as explosive decompression and radiation.

**Systems:** Aliens are immune to the genetic damage caused by radiation exposure and never suffer from the effects of radiation sickness. Neutron bombs are ineffective against them. They do suffer injury from heat and fire and so other nuclear weapons are as highly lethal against them as they are against other living beings.

Alien air passages are resilient against decompression. Fluids and ionized minerals do not leak out of their bodies as rapidly as they do from terrestrial beings. They remain conscious for one full minute (rather than the one turn for terrestrial beings) per dot of Stamina and can be revived for a number of minutes (rather than turns) after they've lost consciousness equal to their dots of Stamina.

### Weaknesses

Aliens dwell in sterile, self-contained environments for much of their existence among the stars. Denied the safety of such an environment, the Stranded find themselves at the mercy of the tiniest denizens of their new environment – worms, viruses, fungi, parasites, and bacteria. Any activity in built spaces carries a great deal of risk because of the possibility of contracting a disease from the natives or their architecture.

Wilderness spaces present even more dangerous environment since they have much high concentrations of disease causing vectors. Soil, rich in microbes and other tiny creatures, is particularly dangerous to the well-being of Aliens but, the flora and fauna of natural spaces can be equally dangerous. Never having encountered aliens before, native predators don't have the same sense of fear that grips them when they confront humans. Many Stranded end up as an unwitting meal for these creatures.

### Disease

Disease is the primary risk factor that leads a Stranded to an early demise. Aliens run the risk of contracting diseases anytime they come into contact with mortals. Despite this risk, most Stranded find that they must interact with the primitives around them or they have little chance of escaping their marooned state.

**Systems:** The player makes an Infection Check by rolling their Alien character's Stamina + Vessel (-1 for each point of damage if the cause of the check is an injury) as a dice pool. An

Infection Check can be made anytime the storyteller feels that it should. The following table provides some examples of instances when Infection Checks are necessary.

## Infection Check

### Always

- Suffered aggravated damage
- Came into contact with natives who are virulently ill (e.g., common cold, ebola, etc.)
- Came into contact with untreated sewage or other hazardous biological waste products

### Assimilation less than 10

- Suffered lethal damage in a wilderness setting
- Came into contact with natives who are seriously ill (e.g., influenza, leprosy, etc.)
- Spent over a month dwelling in a wilderness area

### Assimilation less than 7

- Suffered lethal damage
- Suffered bashing damage in a wilderness setting
- Came into contact with natives with compromised immune systems (e.g., those with HIV or organ transplants or those undergoing treatment for autoimmune diseases or cancer)
- Came into contact with treated sewage or otherwise sterile biological waste products
- Spent over a week dwelling in a wilderness area

### Assimilation less than 4

- Suffered bashing damage
- Came into contact with natives that have poor hygiene (e.g., homeless, abandoned elderly, etc.)
- Consumed uncooked native food (e.g., raw vegetables or fruit)
- Spent more than a day in a wilderness area

### Assimilation less than 1

- Consumed native food
- Came into direct contact with natives

If no successes are rolled on the Infection Check then the character gains the Feverish Condition. If the roll results in a dramatic failure, the character instead gains the Delirious Condition. An exception success on this roll results in no additional benefit beyond avoidance of contracting a disease.

## Feverish [Condition]

Your character has contracted a disease that is making it gravely ill. Any time your character engages in combat, it suffers from the Sick (Grave) Tilt. More-over, when outside of combat, it must roll its Stamina + Resolve every time a number of hours equal to its Stamina have passed. On a failed roll it suffers one point of Bashing Damage.

The character cannot heal damage while it suffers from this condition. If any lethal damage is suffered because of this condition, the character's sickness will worsen (see below).

**Resolution:** This condition may be resolved in one of four ways:

1. Gain a beat and resolve this condition if a point of lethal damage is caused by it. The character gains the Delirious Condition.

2. Gain a beat and resolve this condition after a number of days equal to the character's Stamina. The character gains the Delirious Condition.
3. Gain a beat and resolve this condition if the character rolls an exceptional success on any roll to resist damage caused by the illness. The character gains the Recovering Condition.
4. Gain a (single) beat if the character treats the sickness with medicine or by seeking treatment from a knowledgeable physician of some kind. Treatment requires medicinal substances of some kind which may have to be gathered (at the Storyteller's discretion). The character treating the disease makes an extended roll using Intelligence + Medicine. They must accumulate a number of successes equal to 10 - the sick character's Stamina. A failed roll represents an adverse reaction to the medication causing the sick character to suffer their Stamina in points of bashing damage. Once enough successes have been accumulated the Feverish Condition is resolved and sick character gains the Recovering Condition. In the event of a dramatic failure, the Feverish Condition is resolved and the sick character gains the Delirious Condition.

### Delirious [Condition]

Your character's illness has taken a turn for the worse. The fever it suffers from is steadily dehydrating it, affecting its nervous system. The character suffers from the Beaten Down and Sick [grave] Tilts if forced into combat. Damage caused by the Sick tilt is lethal rather than bashing. Outside of combat situations, the character must roll its Stamina + Resolve every time a number of hours equal to its Stamina have passed. On a failed roll it suffers one point of lethal damage.

The character suffers a -2 penalty to all skill dice rolls. It must spend a point of Willpower to make any physical skill rolls. The character cannot heal damage while it suffers from this condition. If the character's last box of health is filled by lethal damage then it dies from the illness.

**Resolution:** This condition may be resolved in one of four ways.

1. The character dies.
2. Gain a beat and resolve this condition after a number of days equal to 10 - the character's Stamina. The character gains the Recovering Condition.
3. Gain a beat and resolve this condition if the character rolls an exceptional success on any roll to resist damage caused by the illness. The character gains the Recovering Condition.
4. Gain a (single) beat if the character treats the sickness with medicine or by seeking treatment from a knowledgeable physician of some kind. Treatment requires medicinal substances of some kind which may have to be gathered (at the Storyteller's discretion). The character treating the disease makes an extended roll using Intelligence + Medicine. They must accumulate a number of successes equal to 10 - the sick character's Stamina. A failed roll represents an adverse reaction to the medication causing the sick character to suffer their Stamina in points of bashing damage. Once enough successes have been accumulated the Delirious Condition is resolved and sick character gains the Recovering Condition. In the event of a dramatic failure, the character suffers a point of aggravated damage and can no longer be treated (and in all probability will die).

## Recovering [Condition]

Your character has survived a terrible disease and is now on the mend. The ordeal has left it weak and vulnerable. The character heals at half of its normal rate. More-over, if the character is engages in combat then it suffers from the Sick [Moderate] Tilt.

**Resolution:** Gain a beat and resolve this condition after a number of days equal to 10 - the character's Stamina.

## Alien Psychology

Aliens are nocturnal by necessity, not by choice. Because their existence is so closely tied to their spacecraft, they identify less with their physical bodies. They will willingly suffer through conditions and injuries that cause mortals to curl up into catatonic balls and pray for death.

This is because every alien knows that so long as their spacecraft persist, then even the death of their body is little more than an inconvenience. This point of view only serves to highlight the vast divide between them and the natives around them.

## Assimilation

Aliens can learn to bridge this divide by learning about the mortals and their cultures and actively trying to conform to their norms. An alien does this by suppressing portions of their own heritage. The extent to which a Stranded has conformed to mortal ways and suppressed their extraterrestrial birthrights is represented by Assimilation.

Assimilation replaces the Integrity trait and works in a manner very similar to Harmony in Werewolf: the Forsaken 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. It ranges from 0 to 10 with 0 representing an alien so disinterested in the natives that he doesn't bother to Camouflage himself and 10 representing an alien so in tune with the natives that he almost more native than extraterrestrial. The lower a character's Assimilation score is, the closer they are to their culture of origin and the harder it is to interact with humans. The higher a character's Assimilation score is, the closer there are to their idea of native culture and the harder it is to employ the implements of high technology. The following table details the effects of high or low Assimilation scores.

Assimilation Score	Penalties	Paranoia Area Multiplier	Panic Area
10	-4 to all rolls to use Ornāmenta and Vessel Amenities	$\frac{1}{8}$	1 yard
8~9	-2 to all rolls to use Ornāmenta and Vessel Amenities	$\frac{1}{4}$	2 yards
6~7	-1 to all rolls to use Ornāmenta and Vessel Amenities	$\frac{1}{2}$	4 yards
5	None	1	8 yards
3~4	-2 to all social rolls targeting mortals	2	16 yards
1~2	-4 to all social rolls targeting mortals	4	32 yards
0	Can no longer use Camouflage Adaptation; Social rolls targeting mortals reduced to a chance die	8	64 yards

All new characters start with an Assimilation score of 3, representing Stranded who have been on Earth long enough to figure out that they need to try to blend in to survive but who have yet to adapt any truly human mannerisms.

Assimilation represents the struggle an alien faces as they adapt to survive their new environment. Adapt too much and they risk losing touch with their essential nature and ancient birthrights. Adapt too little and they risk standing out from the crowd and becoming the victim of those who hunt extraterrestrials.

Aliens suffer two kinds of breaking points, those towards the native culture around them and those towards their own extraterrestrial heritage. When a character is required to roll for a breaking point, they use their Resolve + Composure. This dice pool can be modified by both Willpower expenditures and by any penalties noted in the sidebar below.

If the breaking point is towards their extraterrestrial nature then the character also subtracts one die from the roll for each point of Assimilation below 5. Similarly, when a breaking point towards native culture is reached, the character subtracts one die from the roll for each point of Assimilation above 5.

As noted in the table above, a character's Assimilation affects their ability to interact with mortals and extraterrestrial artifacts. In addition it can greatly magnify or reduce the area affected by the Paranoia the alien causes and how close mortals can be before Panic sets in.

<Sidebar>

## Breaking Points

### Toward Native Culture

- Destroying an Ornāmentum or damaging another alien's Vessel.
- Staying out of own Vessel for a week.
- Eating native food.
- Mating with a native.
- Staying out of own Vessel for a month (-3).

### Assimilation 3 or Lower

- Staying out of own Vessel for a day.
- Using a Camouflage Adaptation to establish a native disguise.
- Killing another alien.

### Toward Extraterrestrial Heritage

- Staying in own Vessel for a week.
- Killing a native.
- Hunting a native for food (-2).
- Vivisecting live natives.
- Staying in own Vessel for a month (-3).
- Revealing self to natives (-1).

### Assimilation 8 or More

- Staying in your Vessel for a full day.
- Using Ornāmenta or Adaptations on natives.
- Using a Camouflage Adaptation to establish an extraterrestrial disguise.

</Sidebar>



## Alien Phenomena

Just as the natives and their environment impact aliens through the risks that the Stranded face each day, so too does an alien's presence impact the mortals around her. This impact takes the shape of two related psychological effects on the nearby native population. The first is a very direct, visceral reaction when a native sees an alien's true form. Panic take several forms depending on what the affected human's gifts are. The second effect is far more insidious and subtle. Paranoia results from the strange occurrences that accompany aliens wherever they go. While its effects only slightly dangerous to the Stranded themselves, if the effects are great enough, the native culture around them steadily erodes into a state of anxiety-driven bedlam.

### Panic

Humans who come face-to-face with things that are obviously of extraterrestrial origin, e.g., finding a dead alien or a broken Ornāmentum will suffer an Integrity breaking point for encountering something supernatural. When a mortal sees an Ornāmentum actually used, gazes upon an alien's true form, or looks at the otherworldly magnificence of an alien's Vessel, an instinctive response is triggered within them. The precise nature of this response depends on the native character's talents.

**Systems:** As Panic is a function of a mortal's physical proximity to the extraterrestrial, it is effected by an alien's Assimilation trait. A player's starting character only has an Assimilation of 3 and so affects all mortals with 16 yards of her that see her snacking on their neighbor. A character with a much higher Assimilation rating only affects mortals that are nearer to her. See the table in the section on Assimilation above for details on a particular Stranded character's Panic area of effect. Characters witnessing any of the triggers listed below from outside of this area instead suffer an Integrity breaking point for witnessing a supernatural event.

Panic can take one of three shapes depending on which of the affected character's three attribute categories is primary.

If the character's primary category is the mental attribute category, then they gain the Captivated Condition (see *Demon: the Descent* (revised ed.), p. 211) which is resolved when the character chooses to fail an action or relents to an action taken against them. Afterwards the character makes a check for Integrity loss exactly as though they had suffered an Integrity breaking point. The character gains Obsession (Persistent) Condition on a successful or failed roll (they also lose a point of Integrity on a failed roll) rather than any of the Guilty, Shaken, or Spooked Conditions.

If the character's primary category is the physical attribute category, then they gain the Berserk Condition (see *Werewolf: the Forsaken* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 306-307) which is resolved when they lose consciousness, there are no targets left to attack, or the alien leaves the berserk character's presence. Afterwards the character makes a check for Integrity loss exactly as though they had suffered an Integrity breaking point. The character gains Amnesia (Persistent) Condition (see the GMC update, p. 181) on a successful or failed roll (they also lose a point of Integrity on a failed roll) rather than any of the Guilty, Shaken, or Spooked Conditions.

If the character's primary category is the social attribute category, then they gain the Shaken Condition (see the GMC update, p. 183) which is resolved when the character chooses to fail a roll. Afterwards the character makes a check for Integrity loss exactly as though they had suffered an Integrity breaking point. The character gains Mute (Persistent) Condition (see the GMC update, p. 182) on a successful or failed roll (they also lose a point of Integrity on a failed roll) rather than any of the Guilty, Shaken, or Spooked Conditions.

<Sidebar>

## Panic Triggers

### Ordinary Mortals

- Witnessing an Ornāmentum being used.
- Seeing an alien's true form.
- Seeing or coming into direct contact with an alien's Vessel.
- Witnessing the use of certain Adaptations.
- Seeing an ephemeral alien manifest in a visible form.
- Witnessing a portal to another dimension be opened.

### Conditioned Mortals (note that the triggers below also count as triggers for ordinary mortals)

- Having an Ornāmentum used on them.
- Witnessing an alien in its true form kill a human.
- Witnessing an alien using its Camouflage Adaptation on a human.
- Being left alone inside an alien's Vessel for more than a number of hours equal to the character's Resolve.
- Being the victim of or witnessing experimentation on humans.
- Witnessing beings enter the World through an open portal to another dimension.

</Sidebar>

Mortals can be conditioned to dull their visceral panic reaction through repeated contact with the extraterrestrial. Such conditioning can be (and often is) built in as part of a cult initiation. Such cults serve their alien masters readily and willingly so long the alien does nothing to violate their conditioning through panic (or leaves no witnesses alive).

**Systems:** Conditioned Response (see Appendix 1) is a 1 point merit that can be purchased by mortals who are Collaborators or Cultists. In the case of Cultists the cost of the Conditioned Response merit is included in the cost of their Cult Membership merit thereby representing their part in a conspiracy led by the alien. Fōrmæ and Gregēs are the taxa most likely to maintain such cults.

## Paranoia

Life on Earth is stressful, particularly for mortals. While they try to live their days with their heads down, mired in seeming ignorance of the strange, supernatural occurrences taking place all around them. This willful ignorance becomes much more difficult to maintain when once an alien has taken up residence nearby.

Mysterious disappearances and strange phenomena quickly begin to accumulate in quantities that even mortals are forced to notice. Disguised as one of the natives, the aliens are difficult to pick out from among the other neighbors and so the natives begin to suspect one another as being the fell thing behind these bizarre happenings.

**Systems:** An alien's Vessel is the true source of the Paranoia that grips the natives that live near it. The area affected by the Paranoia is very sensitive to the extent to which an alien has assimilated into the local native culture. The base area of effect is a half (0.5) mile radius from the alien's Vessel. This radius assumes that the Stranded has 5 dots of Assimilation. The radius grows or shrinks depending upon the alien's Assimilation trait (see Assimilation above). The Strength of its effect depends upon how strong the alien's Vessel.

Vessel Rating	Paranoia Effects
1~3	All mortals within the area of effect gain the Anxious (Persistent) Condition.
4~6	All mortals within the area of effect gain the Delusional (Persistent) Condition.
7~9	All mortals within the area of effect gain the Siege Mentality (Persistent) Condition.
10	All mortals within the area of effect gain the Violent Schizophrenia (Persistent) Condition.

Paranoia takes effect as word of strange happenstances spread. The local natives first gain the Anxious condition after about a month in the presence of an alien's Vessel, as news of weird occurrences caused by the spaceship's presence spread via gossip and rumors. The full details of the effects of the Paranoia Conditions is explained below.

#### Anxious (Persistent) [Condition]

Your character suffers from anxiety and unease whenever she is exposed to certain stress triggers. The character's player (or the storyteller for non-player characters) should decide what triggers this condition. These triggers could include anything from unknowingly living near an alien's Vessel to living in a high-crime neighborhood. The constant state of anxiety has frayed her nerves making it hard to concentrate on lengthy tasks; it has also left her senses in a hyperaware state. She suffers a -1 die penalty to all rolls involving extended actions, concentration, and precision, but benefits from a +1 die bonus to all perception rolls.

**Possible Sources:** Abusive living situation, dwelling in a high-crime neighborhood, alien Vessel secreted nearby, important test coming up, harassment at work.

**Resolution:** Resolve this condition after a week goes by in which the character does not encounter any of her triggers. Characters that live near to an alien's Vessel cannot resolve this condition unless they move away or take a lengthy vacation (in which case the condition will resume once they've returned). The character resolves this condition, gains a beat and gains the Delusional (Persistent) Condition should she encounter a trigger for the latter condition or after a month of living near a Vessel with a rating of 4 or greater.

**Beat:** Your character chooses to fail a roll due to this condition (no more than one beat can be gained per week this way).

#### Delusional (Persistent) [Condition] (see *Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, p 302 for additional details)

After a prolonged period of stress or after suffering some traumatic event your character has come to believe something that isn't true. He might believe that his neighbors are out to get him, his co-workers are sabotaging his work, or any number of similar paranoid delusions.

**Possible Sources:** Ongoing psychological harassment, unexpected death of a loved one, alien Vessel secreted nearby, post-traumatic stress, encountering a victim of Panic, victim of certain supernatural powers (e.g., a Vampire's Nightmare discipline or a Beast's nightmares).

**Resolution:** Your character is able to disprove his delusion or destroys the source of his paranoia. If this condition was caused by an ongoing source of trauma, it can only be resolved by moving away or by staying away from the source for two weeks (in which case the cycle of

Anxious / Delusional resets once the character returns to the high-stress environment). The character resolves this condition, gains a beat and gains the Siege Mentality (Persistent) Condition should he encounter a trigger for the latter condition or after a month of living near a Vessel with a rating of 7 or more.

**Beat:** See Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 302.

### Siege Mentality (Persistent) [Condition]

While many of your character's neighbors have moved away due to the changes in the area's timbre, your character has steadfastly refused to succumb to the persistent fear that fills them. The experience has left you extremely suspicious of everyone who remains and anyone who is new. Your character suffers a -1 die penalty to all social rolls and interprets events around them in a negative light. The character rarely ventures outside the safety of their own home and they always arm themselves with some kind of weapon (even an improvised weapon) on those occasions that they must leave their sanctuary. In addition to the social penalty, the character cannot take any extended actions outside of the safety of their home and suffers a -1 die penalty to any actions that require concentration and precision.

Being constantly on edge does afford the character some benefits. Should a situation turn violent, your character benefits from a +1 bonus to their initiative. Since the character is constantly scanning their environment for danger, they also gain a +1 bonus die to all perception rolls.

**Possible Sources:** Being a victim of Panic, alien Vessel secreted nearby, victim of obvious supernatural abilities, demographic overturn of neighborhood, nearby terrorist attack, xenophobia.

**Resolution:** Your character has an epiphany and is able to overcome their xenophobia through steady engagement with the source of their fear, i.e., they assimilate into the neighborhood's new culture. For the purposes of the rules, the condition can be resolved if the character loses a point of Integrity and then gains another point of Integrity. If this condition is caused by an ongoing source of trauma, it can only be resolved by moving away or by staying away from the source for a whole month (in which case the cycle of Anxious / Delusional / Siege Mentality resets once the character returns to the high-stress environment). The character resolves this condition, gains a beat and gains the Violent Schizophrenia (Persistent) Condition should he encounter a trigger for the latter condition or after a month of living near a Vessel with a rating of 10.

**Beat:** Anytime your character escalates a situation towards violent confrontation.

### Violent Schizophrenia (Persistent) [Condition]

The stress of repeated trauma and life within an omnipresent atmosphere of total oppression (real or imagined) has driven your character beyond the breaking point. Your character suffers from paranoid delusions, believing that everyone around her is constantly plotting against her, and resorts to violence when confronted by the focus of those delusions (which will typically be a person or persons or an institution composed of people – e.g., her neighbor(s), her classmates, the local government, etc.).

The character is extremely secretive and no longer regularly communicates with other human beings. She suffers from a -2 die penalty to all social rolls. The character also exhibits hyper-aggressive behaviors, benefiting from a +1 bonus to her initiative when in a combat situation.

The character's Integrity is under constant threat and all breaking point rolls suffer a -2 die penalty in addition to any other penalties that they may have (to a maximum penalty of -5).

**Possible Sources:** Ongoing harassment by supernatural beings, influenced by certain supernatural powers, alien Vessel nearby, dramatic failure on a breaking point roll.

**Resolution:** The character has an epiphany and is able to overcome the condition through psychiatric treatment or similar therapy. Resolve the condition when the character loses a point of Integrity and gains another point of Integrity. This condition cannot be resolved if it was caused by an ongoing source of trauma, such as living too close to an extremely powerful alien Vessel or continual harassment from supernatural creatures.

**Beat:** Anytime your character plans and executes a violent reprisal against the source of her paranoia.

## Alien Advantages

While life as one of the Stranded is difficult, aliens have many advantages that set them apart from the natives surrounding them. The next three sections explore advantages that are unique to the Stranded, including Merits specific to them, their Ornāmenta, and their sanctum-like Vessels.

### Merits

Aliens may purchase human Merits; however, the dots that they may invest in such Merits are capped at one-half their Assimilation rating, rounded down. An alien with an Assimilation rating of one cannot purchase new human Merits. So long as the human Merits are not social Merits, the alien does not lose access to them should its Assimilation rating fall below the minimum required to learn the Merit.

Human Social Merits are an exception to this. If the alien's Assimilation rating falls too low then the social merit will be lost should the alien try to benefit from it. Stranded can avoid loss of human social Merits by avoiding their use until they raise their Assimilation rating higher.

### Sanctity of Merits

As with all New WoD games, experiences used to purchase dots of Merits are never really lost. If a Merit is lost for some reason, the experiences may be used to purchase dots in another Merit or may be used to purchase some other advantage.

### General Stranded Merits

The following Merits are designed for use by Stranded characters. Certain Merits identify a particular occupātio as a prerequisite. Characters must have at least one dot of the appropriate Occupātio Status in order to purchase the Merit. If the character changes or abandons their occupātio, they still retain the Merit.

### Additional Amenity (5 dots)

**Effect:** Either because it was a larger spacecraft to start with or because it was less damaged in the catastrophe that marooned your character, her or his Vessel has an additional amenity that he or she can make use of. You may purchase this Merit multiple times.

**Drawbacks:** Your character's Vessel counts as one dot (per time you purchased this Merit) higher for calculating the effects of Paranoia.

### Ancient Heritage (2 dots)

**Effect:** Your character is the descendant of a particularly ancient lineage. She counts the likes of empresses and queens among her ancestors. She hews more closely to her essential extraterrestrial nature and looks down on the primitives around her. Roll an additional die when rolling to resist Assimilation gain. She gains a +1 bonus when using tools of alien origin, like Ornāmenta, while her Assimilation rating is 5 or less.

### Anti-Ship Gun (4 dots)

**Prerequisites:** Occupātio Status (Excursōrēs or Pervāsōrēs)

**Effect:** Your character's spacecraft is equipped with a single anti-ship gun. This powerful weapon may be used to destroy very large objects such as buildings or vehicles (or other spacecraft). To use the weapon (which may be done remotely), your character rolls his Firearms + Intelligence and spends 50 Fuel from his Vessel's reserve. A successful hit inflicts +4 Aggravated damage to the target structure. Anyone exposed on the exterior of the structure also suffers this damage. Beings inside of the structure reduce the damage by the structure's Structural Rating and Durability (if any).

**Drawbacks:** Your character immediately gains the Vessel Discovered Condition whenever this Merit is used. Your character's Vessel rating counts as two dots higher than it actually is for the purposes of calculating Paranoia effects.

### Back-up Vessel (2 dots)

**Prerequisites:** Occupātio Status (Explōrātōrēs or Pervāsōrēs)

**Effect:** Your character has access to a second spacecraft. This ship begins play with a Vessel rating of 1, a single Amenity and no Fuel. The rating may be increased during game play by spending 5 experiences per dot as normal. It may be re-fueled in the normal manner but otherwise remains in a quiescent state (meaning that your character may not draw fuel from it nor make use of its Amenity).

Your character may switch which Vessel rating they are using by first powering down their current Vessel into a quiescent state. This process takes a span of time equal to one hour / dot of Vessel rating. They must then travel to the second Vessel's physical location and power it up – a process that takes a span of time equal to one hour / dot of the second Vessel's rating (plus however long it takes to travel the distance between them). The character is essentially mortal and does not benefit from the Vessel trait at all during the span of time between these events.

Quiescent Vessels still (usually) cause Paranoia. See the section on Vessels for additional details.

### Collaborator (1~5 dots)

**Requirements:** Assimilation 3 or more.

**Effect:** Your character has convinced a native that she is a helpful alien and means them no harm (which might actually be the case). In any case, her Collaborator gains the Conditioned Response merit. The merit works in all ways as the Retainer merit.

**Drawbacks:** Your character must grant use of one of her Ornāmenta to her Collaborator as a sign of her trust. She no longer has access to that Ornāmentum for as long as she has the Collaborator.

### Convincing Camouflage (3 dots)

**Effect:** Your character's Camouflage is particularly convincing even when under duress. Mortals that have reason to be suspicious (because they knew the person that the alien is disguised as) suffer a -1 to any rolls to detect that something is out of place. Additionally, failed breaking point rolls towards her or his extraterrestrial side have no additional affect beyond the Assimilation loss. A dramatic failure on such rolls only causes the alien to gain the Exposed Condition (rather than the Pursued Condition).

### Cultists (2~5 dots)

**Prerequisites:** Occupatio Status (Salvatorēs)

**Effect:** This Merit works exactly like the one of the same name that appears in Demon: the Descent (revised ed.) on p. 121. Simply replace references to demons with aliens and Stigmatics with Conditioned Mortals.

### Cybernetic Enhancements (1~4 dots)

**Effect:** Your character has one or more cybernetic enhancements. These enhancements come in four basic kinds. While it may purchase this Merit multiple times, the character is limited to possessing a maximum number of enhancements equal to its unmodified dots in Stamina. The enhancements count as Ornamenta for the purposes of causing Panic. Cybernetic enhancements can be surgically removed (or even permanently damaged due to aggravated damage), in which case your character loses access to this Merit. Cybernetic enhancements removed this way cannot be replaced. *Note: This Merit cannot be purchased if the character has already purchased either the Extra Adaptation or the Rapid Evolution Merits.*

- *Artificial Adaptations (3 dots each):* Your character possesses an enhancement that mimics the functionality of a biological Adaptation. The character spends Fuel to gain the benefit of the boosted Adaptation effect.
- *Attribute Boosters (4 dots each):* Your character possesses cybernetic enhancements that boost a particular attribute. It may have a social co-processor that allows it better navigate conversations or, it may have additional musculature that allow it super-human feats. This Merit must be purchased for each individual attribute – Intelligence, Wits, Resolve, Strength, Dexterity, Stamina, Presence, Manipulation, Composure, or Speed Factor.
- *Built-In Ornamentum (4 dots each):* Your character possesses a built-in Ornamentum. This device draws Fuel from the character's Fuel capacitor. These Ornamenta are always very small and may never have more than a 1-dot rating.
- *Fuel Capacitor (1 dot):* Your character can store Fuel in its body. The amount is limited to five Fuel per dot of Stamina that it has and unless it also has Chloroplasts, it must fill the capacitor within the confines of its Vessel. Recharging the capacitor is a simple activity that simply requires the alien remain plugged into the Vessel's power source for 3 minutes / point of Fuel stored.
- *Skill Chips (2 dots each):* Your character has a chip port that allows it access to skills it wouldn't otherwise know. Each chip represents a die which may be assigned to any skill in a certain category, e.g., mental skills, physical skills, or social skills. Once assigned, the effects of the chip last for an entire scene, i.e., skill dice may not be reassigned more than once per scene if one assumes that the chip was previously set to some particular skill.

### Empath (1 dot)

**Effect:** Your character can sense others' emotional states. He or she can use this ability to turn social situations to her or his advantage. Once per chapter the character may roll her or his Manipulation + Empathy – Target's Composure to sense a person's emotional state. If the roll is successful, the target gains the Leveraged Condition (see the GMC update, p. 182). A failed roll has no effect but counts against the usage limitation of this Merit. In the event of a dramatic failure, your character gains the Spooked Condition as the subject's emotions overwhelm her or him. An exceptional success also removed one of the subject's doors.

### Energy Leech (1 or 3 dots)

**Prerequisites:** Must have the Chloroplasts Adaptation and any one of the Claws & Teeth, Electrocytes, Larval Cloud, Psychic Feedback, Spines, or Stinger Adaptations.

**Effect:** Your character can convert their opponents' life-blood into Fuel. For this ability to work, they must first make a successful attack with one of the Adaptations listed above. Afterwards they drain the victim's life essence away at the rate of 1 Fuel / turn that they remain in contact with the victim. The victim suffers 1 point of lethal damage for each point of Fuel gained this way. If the 3-dot version of this Merit has been taken, then the victim suffers bashing damage instead. In either case, any victim that survives this attack gains the Scarred Condition (see Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 305) afterwards.

### Enormous Form (5 dots)

**Effects:** Your character is much larger than she appears to be while Camouflaged. Her natural form is Size: 7 and she has 2 more Health than average-sized characters. *This merit may only be selected at character creation.*

**Drawbacks:** Replacing her disguise is extremely difficult because she requires a mortal possessing the Giant Merit. Other mortals are simply too small to make realistic disguises. A character taking this merit cannot also purchase the Giant Merit.

### Exotic Trophies (1 dot)

**Prerequisites:** Occupatio Status (Malefactōrēs or Vēnātōrēs)

**Effects:** Your character possesses a myriad of strange souvenirs and knick-knacks accumulated over the centuries from its travels along the interstellar byways. The tattered remnants of otherworldly ghosts still cling to these ancient remnants. While they do not cause mortals to Panic, any mortal that sees them must roll their Resolve + Composure – your character's Vessel rating or gain the Shaken Condition.

### Extra Adaptation (2 dots)

**Effects:** Your character has evolved an additional adaptation beyond the normal quantity that characters begin with. This adaptation does not count against the character's normal limit of adaptations. *This merit may only be selected at character creation.*

### Extraterrestrial Confederate (4 or 5 dots)

**Requirements:** Assimilation 7 or less.

**Effects:** Your character has an extraterrestrial ally. At four dots this Merit represents a physical being that causes panic. It may be another Stranded or it may be one of bizarre creatures



that does not have access to a Camouflage Adaptation. The five dot version of this Merit represents an ephemeral confederate, such as one of the Vīsiōnēs or an Angel or some other n-fractal phantom.

Like Mentors, the confederate relationship is two-way. The confederate is going to expect favors and require services from the character in repayment for similar tasks it carries out on the character's behalf.

### Fast Acclimatization (3 dots)

**Effects:** Your character's mind is more culturally adaptable than others. He picks up new mannerisms quickly and are adept at blending in with those around him. Roll one less die when rolling to avoid Assimilation gain. He gains a +1 die bonus when using tools of terrestrial origin (like cars) when his Assimilation is 8 or more.

### Fīnis (1~5 dots)

**Effects:** Your character has located a verge that separates the Earth from another n-Fractal space. The otherworldly energies that ooze through the verge's membrane can be harvested. A Stranded may recharge their Ornāmenta's Fuel Capicitor (or their own internal cybernetic capacitor if they have one) by leaving it or remaining nearby (within about 5 feet or so) of the Fīnis. Fuel is replenished at the rate of 1 Fuel per dot of the Fīnis per hour.

The character may also bring special equipment from her ship with which to draw Essence directly from the other side of the Fīnis and convert it into Fuel.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult or Science

**Action:** Extended. The base time per roll is 4 hours. The character can accumulate no more than five successes per dot of the Fīnis's rating before the Fīnis becomes inactive. Each success represents five points of Essence that the refining equipment pulls through the verge and converts into an equal amount of Fuel. The Fuel is stored in a large container (about the size of a small trunk or large suitcase). This bulky object is difficult to move but protects the volatile Fuel from the outside world. The character cannot directly recharge Ornāmenta from this container. They must first return to their Vessel and transfer the Fuel to the Vessel's reserves before they can exploit it. Note that they cannot also benefit from the Fīnis's passive effect while they are actively harvesting.

Once the Fīnis has been drained of Essence it must recharge. This takes one week per dot of the Fīnis. Partially replenished Fīnis's may be harvested but their effective rating is only equal to the number of weeks that they have been allowed to replenish. For example if James's character Ibrahim harvests a full 50 Fuel from his Fīnis but he burns through most of it in the ensuing week and must harvest more, then the most he could harvest is 25 Fuel before the Fīnis once again becomes inactive.

**Dramatic Failure:** A dangerous feedback loop develops causing a small explosion. The player chooses from one of the four following effects.

1. *Inconvenienced* – The refining equipment is damaged and all of the Fuel harvested up to that point is lost. The character must return to their Vessel and repair the refining equipment before they can attempt to harvest more Essence from the Fīnis.
2. *Injured* – The character is burnt in the ensuing explosion as the Essence pouring through the verge suddenly ignites. The character takes a beat, suffers three points of lethal damage and checks for infection (see Injuries above).

3. *Portal Breach* – The harvesting equipment has sucked an otherworldly being through the verge. The character takes a beat. The storyteller decides what kind of entity (an ephemeral being with a rank equal to the Fīnis's rating seems pretty appropriate) has entered the Chronicles of Darkness world and whether or not it confronts the player's character immediately.
4. *Lost in Time & Space* – The character takes two beats and (along with everyone and everything within 10 feet per dot of the Fīnis's rating) is sucked through the verge as it implodes. The Fīnis is destroyed and the character (and everyone else) find themselves on the other side with no readily apparent way back.

**Failure:** The essence pouring through the verge slows to a trickle. No Fuel is accumulated and the character must decide whether to accept a Condition and continue harvesting Essence or stop and take what they have back to their Vessel.

**Success:** The character accumulates five Fuel per success.

**Exceptional Success:** The character can accumulate six Fuel per success on this roll. The extra Fuel does not count against the Fīnis's normal limit.

### Off-World Supporters (1~5 dots)

**Prerequisites:** Extraterrestrial Status

**Effects:** Your character has off-world allies. While they're not willing to stick their necks out far enough to help her escape her maroonment, they do occasionally intervene on her behalf. Once per chronicle, the character can call upon her supporters to intervene in the narrative in some major way. This intervention can take the form of something tangible like the receipt of large amounts of Fuel (25 Fuel per dot) or it may be employed as though it were dots of Allies, Contacts, Mentor, or Resources. Like mentors, off-world supporters expect favors in return. Major. Tangible. Favors.

### Psychic Vampire (3 dots)

**Prerequisites:** Must have the Psychic Feedback Adaptation and the Empath Merit.

**Effects:** Your character heals damage each time it uses its Psychic Feedback Adaptation to inflict damage. The damage to be healed must be of the same kind inflicted, e.g., bashing damage is healed when bashing damage is inflicted and lethal damage is healed when lethal damage is inflicted.

### Quickened Clones (3 dots)

**Prerequisites:** Occupatio Status (Explōrātōrēs or Scīscitātōrēs)

**Effects:** Your Vessel quickens clones more quickly than other Vessels. It takes half as much time to replace your dead character (see the section on Clones for more details).

### Rapid Evolution (4 dots)

**Effects:** Your character's Adaptations are unstable. Once per story you may replace one Adaptation for another. This change is permanent (until the next story). The character does not gain back experiences if he or she exchanges a non-affinity Adaptation for an affinity Adaptation. Similarly, the character does not need to pay experiences for exchanging an affinity Adaptation for a non-affinity Adaptation. At least one of the character's Adaptations must always be one her or his taxon has an affinity for. *Note: This Merit cannot be purchased if the*

*character has already purchased either the Cybernetic Enhancements or Extra Adaptation Merits.*

### Resilient Camouflage (2 or 4 dots)

**Prerequisites:** Stamina 3 or Resolve 3

**Effects:** Your character's camouflage actually acts as a barrier against harm. Whether this is because the host's tissues absorb and disperse the damage it takes or there's a bit of substance to the character's illusory appearance, the character downgrades the first point of damage he or she would take (e.g., aggravated becomes lethal, lethal becomes bashing, bashing is ignored). This effect stacks with armor. The four-point version of this Merit allows the character to downgrade the first two points of damage that he or she would normally take instead.

### Simple Automatons (1~5 dots)

**Prerequisites:** Occupatio Status (Sciscitatorēs)

**Effect:** Your character has a small group of simplistic robots that take care of menial chores and aid in some activities. The robots are relatively flexible in that they may be used as a pool of Merit points that can be divided among Retainer, Staff, or tools and equipment requiring a specific amount of Resources to purchase. The allotment of points may be reassigned once per scene as necessary.

**Drawbacks:** The automatons have an obviously extraterrestrial appearance and cause Panic in mortals that see them, limiting their overall utility outside of the character's Vessel. They also consume an amount of Fuel equal to their Merit dots once per month (i.e., across the space of a month).

### Small Craft (3 dots)

**Prerequisites:** Occupatio Status (Exploratorēs or Pervasorēs)

**Effects:** Your character has access to a small shuttle craft. While it is too weak to leave the planet's atmosphere, it does allow the character to travel across relatively vast distances. The ship is unarmed and is limited to a top speed of Mach 5.

**Drawbacks:** Traveling at top speed for anything more than a minute or two will cause the character to gain the Pursued Condition. This will also occur at lower speeds but more slowly. The character can expect to safely travel undetected for up to an hour if traveling at sub-sonic speeds. This all assumes travel at night. If the character travels during the day, then the Pursued Condition is always gained after two minutes. Further, at the storyteller's discretion, she may also gain the Discovered Condition as the humans triangulate the origin of her craft back to her Vessel. The shuttle consumes 25 Fuel from the Vessel's reserves each time it is used. It is assumed that this is enough for a full round trip.

### Stranded Status (1~5 dots)

**Effects:** The Stranded do have a pseudo-society on Earth where experience and intelligence are valued. These hierarchical relationships are represented through Status. Status works exactly as it does for other games. For Stranded characters there are three broad categories that status is recorded for: *Colony Status*, *Extraterrestrial Status*, and *Occupatio Status*.

*Colony Status* is a measure of how connected and how much social capital the character possesses among the other Stranded of its community. *Extraterrestrial Status* is a measure of how important the character was in its old life before it was marooned. Status of this kind varies wildly from Stranded to Stranded because there are so many empires, hegemonies, and republics among the stars. Sometimes entire colonies are centered on aliens from particular stellar fiefs and so this kind of status can make a difference among both inter-colony connections and off-world or other-dimensional connections. Finally *Occupatio Status* represents the status a character has among other practitioners of its profession. Almost all Stranded, except those who are Grassātōrēs, are likely to possess at least one dot of this kind of status. Among other things, this final kind of status can be used to procure or exchange Ornāmenta in a colony's underground markets.

### Tiny (2 dots)

**Effects:** Your character is child-sized. Subtract two from his Size characteristic. Being smaller also means that he has two less health than normal-sized characters. On the beneficial side your character has a +3 bonus to hide from any beings larger than him and a +1 bonus when climbing. *This Merit can only be selected at character creation.*

**Drawbacks:** Your character can only use characters with the Small-Framed Merit or children to establish his Camouflage. Unfortunately the natives become extremely agitated whenever a child goes missing. Storytellers are encouraged to insert some creative complications into the chronicle.

### Universal Compass (3 dots)

**Effects:** Your character has an intuitive sense of what path to take to get to a destination. No matter when or where he or she is, he or she can always navigate to a desired locale like a portal if in another dimension. The character is immune to conditions like Lost. Furthermore, the character can navigate from one place to another using nothing but the seat of her or his pants.

This ability does not make the character aware of any hazards or obstacles that lie on the path nor, does it give her or him an overarching sense of the path's shape. The character simply knows when to go left or right or straight ahead.

Supernatural abilities can be used to interfere with this Merit. The character makes a reflexive perception roll to detect the supernatural tampering. If the character becomes aware of the tampering he or she can choose to either go along with it or ignore it and maintain her or his track to her or his original destination. If the goal of the tampering is to make the character lost, such as with certain Werewolf abilities, then the character automatically becomes aware of the tampering and both ignores its effects and becomes aware of the supernatural being's position in relation to her or his own.

### Ornāmenta

Ornāmenta are high-tech tools that aliens employ. Since relatively few of these objects survive the catastrophes that cause Stranded to become marooned every alien treasures those that they have. They are an extension of an alien's Vessel and thereby are an extension of the alien itself. Ornāmenta come in many shapes and sizes and, their appearances are as varied as the nation-states that Stranded hail from.

Ornāmenta require Fuel to operate. Each Ornāmentum has a capacitor that stores Fuel (see the table above). Every time an Ornāmentum is used, some amount of Fuel is expended from the

capacitor. Once the capacitor is empty, the Ornāmentum can no longer be used until the character returns to its Vessel and recharges the Ornāmentum's capacitor. The exact amount of Fuel expended when an Ornāmentum is used depends on the rating of its effect and is detailed in its description below.

There is a bustling trade among Stranded in broken and damaged Ornāmenta. Given time and resources, a Stranded character can repair a broken or damaged Ornāmentum that it has found or traded for. Any such Ornāmenta must first be attuned to the character's Vessel before they can be recharged. The process for this is represented through the expenditure of experiences.

The Ornāmenta listed below are among the most common but do not form an exhaustive listing. Many more kinds of Ornāmenta exist. Players and storytellers should collaborate to develop additional Ornāmenta as the needs of their stories dictate. As a general rule of thumb or guideline, Ornāmenta can be considered roughly equivalent in power to a Vampire's Disciplines.

Ornāmenta are biologically encoded to their alien owners via DNA and are typically not usable by others even if wrested away from their owners. An alien may overcome this and designate another user for an Ornāmenta by spending a point of Willpower. This effect lasts until the end of the scene. The designee may be an alien or a conditioned mortal (or another supernatural being).

Like other tools and weapons, Ornāmenta may be purposefully targeted and damaged by enemies during the course of combat. Unless listed otherwise (typically because the Ornāmentum is a kind of drone or robot) every Ornāmentum has Durability equal to its Rating and Structure equal to its Size + Rating. The Size of each Ornāmentum is noted in its description.

### Repairing Ornāmenta

The character's Vessel will automatically repair or replace damaged or destroyed Ornāmenta. This process takes a number of days equal to  $10 - \text{Vessel Rating}$  (with a minimum time of 12 hours). The character can try to speed this process by making an extended crafts rolls

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity or Wits + Crafts

**Interval:** 2 hours. The character must accumulate a number of successes equal to 4 times the Ornāmentum's Rating. Success reduced the repair or replacement time by half (to minimum of 6 hours).

**Dramatic Failure:** The character has shorted out her Vessel's repair systems causing a further delay of  $10 - \text{Vessel Rating}$  days (minimum time of 1 day; minimum total time to replace an Ornāmentum is now 36 hours).

**Failure:** No successes are accumulated. The character must accept a condition or stop the attempt to speed the repair process.

**Success:** The character gains successes towards the repair.

**Exceptional Success:** The character gains success towards the repair plus she may reduce the total time needed by a full day (to a minimum of 6 hours).

### Overloading Ornāmenta

An alien may also, a last ditch tactic, employ an Ornāmentum as an improvised bomb. The alien sets the Ornāmentum to overload within a specific period of time. This process shorts out the Ornāmentum's capacitor, detonating all of its remaining Fuel. This is a dangerous task that requires an extended roll by the alien. Note that mortals (or supernatural beings) who have been granted permission to use an Ornāmentum cannot jerry rig it to explode.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts

**Interval:** 1 turn. The character must accumulate a number of successes equal to twice the Ornāmentum's rating. Once completed the Ornāmentum explodes after a specific period of time as desired by the character. The explosion inflicts 1 point of Bashing damage per point of Fuel in its capacitor to the anyone within 5 feet per dot of the Ornāmentum's Rating.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Ornāmentum explodes prematurely inflicting 1 point of Bashing damage per point of Fuel in its capacitor to the alien. Anyone within 1 foot per dot of rating is also caught in the blast and takes half this amount of damage.

**Failure:** No successes are accumulated. The alien must accept a condition to continue the attempt. The Ornāmentum is considered destroyed even if the alien chooses to stop now.

**Success:** Successes are accumulated.

**Exceptional Success:** The overloaded Ornāmentum causes Lethal instead of Bashing damage.

### *Agony Rod*

This simple stick inflicts severe and debilitating pain upon contact. The alien character must first make a successful Dexterity + Weaponry roll to use it. If successful, the device consumes an amount of Fuel proportional to the desired effect. The alien character may choose to use any effect up to his rating for this Ornāmentum. This Ornāmentum is a Size: 2 object.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>Fuel Consumed</b>
1	Victim suffers 1 Bashing damage + Victim affected by the Stunned Tilt	1
2	Victim suffers 1 Bashing damage + Victim affected by the Knocked Down and Stunned Tilts	2
3	Victim suffers 2 Bashing damage + Victim affected by the Knocked Down and Stunned Tilts on the first turn and then the alien's choice of Arm Wrack, Blinded, Deafened, Leg Wrack, or Sick Tilts on the subsequent 2 turns	3
4	Victim suffers 2 Bashing damage + Victim affected by the Knocked Down and Stunned Tilts on the first turn and then the Immobilized Tilt on the subsequent 2 turns	4
5	Victim suffers 3 Bashing damage + Victim affected by the Knocked Down and Stunned Tilts on the first turn and then the Insensate Tilt on the subsequent 2 turns	5

### *Earthmover Droid*

This large robot can dig through earth and stone and carry very large loads. In a pinch, the droid can also be used in combat situations as a brutish bodyguard or crushing assailant. Its rudimentary intelligence is only capable of following the simplest of instructions. It possesses the following statistics.

**Attributes:** Intelligence: 1, Wits: 0, Resolve: 2, Strength: Rating + 5, Dexterity: 1, Stamina: 3, Presence: 2, Manipulation: 0, Composure: 2

**Skills:** Athletics: 4

**Dread Powers:** Burrow (see Werewolf: the Forsaken, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p 210), Juggernaut (see Werewolf: the Forsaken, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p 211)

**Health:** 8

**Initiative:** 3

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** Rating + 12

**Size:** 6

The droid consumes 5 Fuel from its internal capacitor for each hour it operates. Any mortals encountering it will experience Panic as though they had seen an alien's true form. Conditioned mortals will only experience Panic if they get in the droid's way (it will execute its master's commands regardless of any obstacles) or if the droid has been ordered to attack them.

### *Energy Lance*

These weapons come in a variety of shapes and sizes that range from stapler-sized rods to ornate staffs. Regardless of their specific size or shape, every Energy Lance exudes a beam of energy hot enough to cut through most substances when activated and deals aggravated damage to animate beings. The wielder rolls their Dexterity + Weaponry to determine the damage inflicted. A dramatic failure always indicates that the wielder has injured themselves, sustaining the weapon's rating in boxes of aggravated damage. The wielder adds an amount of bonus damage equal to the weapon's rating minus one on successful hits.

This relatively compact but powerful weapon quickly burns through its Fuel supply, consuming an amount of Fuel equal to the rating at which it is being used each turn. The wielder can choose to change the weapon's output as a free action each turn. For instance if an alien with 3 dots in Energy Lance chooses to use it at full power on the first turn of combat (gaining a +2A bonus on any successful hits), the weapon consumes 3 Fuel. If on the next turn the alien reduces the lance's output to 1 dot (reducing the bonus damage to +0A), then the weapon only consumes one Fuel on that turn. Energy Lances ignore an amount of any target's armor or durability equal to their rating.

In addition to their terrifying melee damage potential, the wielder can choose to employ the lance as an improvised ranged weapon by hurling it (Dexterity + Athletics) with range 5/10/15. The weapon remains on and can be wielded by anyone picking it up. If not recovered within a number of minutes equal to its rating, the energy lance self-destructs and the character's Vessel constructs a replacement for it. The character must return to their Vessel to receive the new weapon.

The wielder may also choose to use the Energy Lance as a single-shot beam weapon (the character rolls Dexterity + Firearms when attacking in this way). Doing this depletes the weapon's remaining Fuel in a single shot and damages it (making it useless until the character can repair it). When used this way, Energy Lances inflict +1L damage for every 5 Fuel consumed.

This Ornāmentum is typically a Size 1 object and does not work against Personal Force Fields. At the player's option it may instead be a Size: 2 object but it thereafter also requires two hands to wield and penalizes its user's initiative by -1 but can now also penetrate Personal Force Fields.

### *Hostile Environment Exo-Suit*

This hermetically sealed suit protects its wearer from hostile environments and at sufficient strength, can even grant its user immunity to certain environmental tilts that inflict damage through environmental effects like toxic gases, heat, fire, and cold, among others. It also protects its wearers from extremes of pressure should the wearer delve into the depths of dense fluid environments such as oceans.

The effects of each point of rating is for this Ornāmentum is cumulative with the rating dots below it. In addition to protecting its wearer from the environment, the exo-suit also provides a small amount of protection to its wearer. The table below details the effects gained at each rating dot.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Armor Rating</b>	<b>Effects</b>
1	2/1	Ignore the first penalty die or point of damage caused by an extreme environment or environmental tilt.
2	4/2	Immune to Level 1 extreme environments
3	5/3	Immune to Level 2 extreme environments
4	6/4	Immune to Level 3 extreme environments
5	10/5	Immune to Level 4 extreme environments

This Ornāmentum consumes 5 Fuel for each hour that it is in use. This Ornāmentum is a Size: 5 object.

### *Hypnosis Blaster*

Similar in form to the Mind Control Beamer, the Hypnosis Blaster (rather conveniently) takes the form of a small aerial drone or balloon. Unlike the Mind Control Beamer, the alien can use the Hypnosis Blaster to affect a large mass of intelligent beings. The alien rolls its Presence + Expression or Animal Ken (if the Ornāmentum is used on animals) + Ornāmentum Rating. Potential victims within an area equal to 5 x the Ornāmentum's rating in yards may contest by rolling their Resolve + Vessel (or other Supernatural advantage if they have one). Any victims that fail gain the Mesmerized Condition (see Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p 303). Victims who complete their tasks or who resolve the Enthralled Condition in another way gain the Amnesia (Persistent) Condition; the time period during which they were under the spell of the alien's mind control device becomes missing time for them. This Ornāmentum consumes an amount of Fuel equal to the radius of its effect each time it is used. This Ornāmentum is a Size 2 object.

### *Knuckle Bomber*

This Ornāmentum typically takes the shape of a heavy gauntlet studded with rounded knobs. A combination of advanced force fields and explosives, knuckle bombers act as a portable shaped charge that can be applied with a punch. When activated, a successful hit (Strength + Brawl) inflicts the knocked down tilt to its victim and lethal damage equal to the Ornāmentum's rating +2. Activating the Knuckle Bomber consumes an amount of Fuel equal to the rating at which it is used.

While Knuckle Bombers have obvious combat uses, their real purpose is demolitions. When used on inanimate objects they add twice their rating in bonus damage to any successful hit. In



addition to this damage, a Knuckle Bomber permanently reduces an object's durability by its rating.

Aliens may also use this Ornāmentum as a simple armored gauntlet. When used this way, a Knuckle Bomber counts as a melee weapon with a -1 initiative penalty and deals +4B damage. This Ornāmentum is a Size 2 object and requires a minimum Strength of 3 to wield.

### *Jet Pack*

This Ornāmentum allows its user to fly at a Speed equal to 5 times its rating (e.g., a Jet Pack with a rating 4 allows its user to fly at Speed 20). The Jet Pack consumes 5 Fuel for each full minute of operation. The user of a Jet Pack must be wary of their Fuel consumption. If the Jet Pack runs out of Fuel while its user is still airborne, it ceases operation and the user plummets straight to the ground. This Ornāmentum is a Size: 3 object.

### *Mind Control Beamer*

This non-descript device usually takes the shape of a diadem or other jewelry-like ornament. The alien can use this Ornāmentum to enslave the minds of beings that are close to them. To use this Ornāmentum the character rolls their Intelligence + Persuasion + Ornāmentum Rating. The victims contest this roll using their Resolve + Vessel (or other supernatural advantage if they have one). Those who fail gain the Enthralled Condition (Vampire: the Requiem, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p 305). An amount of Fuel equal to the number of victims (up to a maximum of 5 x the Ornāmentum's rating) to be effected is spent when the Mind Control Beamer is activated. The effects of this Ornāmentum slowly wears off across the space of a month requiring the alien to periodically refresh its control over its hypnotized minions. This Ornāmentum is a Size 0 object.

### *Multi-Phase Anomaly Scanner*

The Multi-Phase Anomaly Scanner is a device that an alien may use to detect any ephemeral beings that are lurking in the twilight. To use the device the alien rolls their Wits + Science + Ornāmentum Rating. One twilight-bound entity lurking within the detection radius is revealed for each success on the roll. The device uses an amount of Fuel equal to the rating dots at which it was employed. At a rating of 1 its radius is limited to 10 feet, or about the area of a single room. At a rating of 2 it can detect ephemeral entities lurking in twilight within a small building or a single wing of a large building. At rating 3 it can detect such beings within a large building or a small complex of buildings like a city block. (Note that skyscrapers are themselves usually larger than the blocks they are on and so the effect only scans through about 25 to 30 floors.) At rating 4 it can scan an entire massive building or has an effective radius of about half a mile. At rating 5, it can be used to detect any twilight-bound beings within 1 mile of its user. This Ornāmentum is a Size: 2 object.

### *Personal Combat Drone*

Also sometimes called Orbitals, Extensions, or Bits, Personal Combat Drones are small guns that hover near their user and track on her or his targets. Each dot of rating in this Ornāmentum represents one additional drone that the alien can employ. When not in use, these handgun-sized robots either cling directly to their user or nest in a special rig worn by the user for the specific purpose of carrying combat drones. Fuel capacitance is divided evenly across the total number of

drones with any excess amounts being divided by the player as evenly as possible across the drones. Each Personal Combat Drone has the following statistics:

**Attributes:** Intelligence: 1, Wits: 3, Resolve: 2, Strength: 1, Dexterity: 4, Stamina: 2, Presence: 1, Manipulation: 0, Composure: 2

**Skills:** Firearms: 4

**Dread Powers:** Armored Hide: 1 (see Werewolf: the Forsaken, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p 210), Flight (the Drones fly rather than walk and slowly consume Fuel at the rate of 1 Fuel per hour of flight time), Ranged Weapons (the Drones attack with a small but powerful beam weapon that may be set to stun or kill; providing +1B for no Fuel expenditure or +1L for 1 Fuel expenditure), Swift (see Werewolf: the Forsaken, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p 211; note that the Drone expends Fuel rather than Essence)

**Health:** 4

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 20

**Size:** 2

### *Personal Force Field*

A Personal Force Field provides temporary protection from ranged attacks for a brief period of time. Each dot of rating provides the force field's user with an increasing amount of protection from ballistic attacks but, each dot also increases the amount of Fuel that the force field consumes. The table below details the amount of protection the force field provides in relation to its rating dots and the amount of Fuel it consumes each minute of operation.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Armor Rating</b>	<b>Fuel Consumed</b>
1	2/4	3
2	2/6	4
3	4/8	6
4	4/10	7
5	6/12	9

Activating or deactivating a force field counts as a reflexive action. This Ornāmentum is a Size 1 object.

### *Pheromone Tracker*

Very similar in nature to the Multi-Phase Anomaly Scanner, Pheromone Trackers allow aliens to track corporeal biological entities across vast distances. In order to use the device the alien, must have something that belongs to the entity to be tracked. This could be a scrap of clothing, tuft of fur, a hair clipping, or even a small amount of saliva. The alien places the sample material into the tracking instrument and then rolls their Wits + Science + Ornāmentum Rating. A successful roll indicates whether or not the subject is within the device's range and their general direction from the instrument.

The device uses an amount of Fuel equal to the rating dots at which it was employed. At a rating of 1 its radius is limited to 1000 feet, or about the area of a small complex of buildings like

a city block. At rating 2 the radius increases to 1 mile. Rating 3 provides a radius of 10 miles. Rating 4 extends the radius to 100 miles and, at rating 5, the radius grows to 1000 miles.

The instrument does not work across hermetic or mystical barriers such as the sealed environment of a submarine or if the entity being tracked has entered the twilight. The device can find traces of the entity (which provide a direction but not a location) and so may be used to track an individual who is currently beyond its radius of effect. (All that is required is that some portion of their trail fall within the Ornāmentum’s detection area.)

Pheromone Trackers also have a passive mode that allow their users to follow trails that have already been identified. When used this way add the Ornāmentum’s rating as a dice bonus to any tracking rolls that the character makes. This Ornāmentum is a Size 1 object.

### *Portable Extra-Dimensional Extractor*

More of an industrial tool than weapon or accessory, a Portable Extra-Dimensional Extractor allows an alien to draw ephemeral things, like entities, out of their Twilight states. The user rolls their Intelligence + Crafts + Ornāmentum Rating. A successful allows the user to choose one of two effects. Either one empheral entity in Twilight with a Rank equal to the Ornāmentum’s Rating + 1 that is lurking within a number of yards equal to the Ornāmentum’s Rating is forced to manifest itself or all of the ephemeral entities in Twilight with Ranks equal to the Ornāmentum’s Rating – 1 that are lurking within a number of yards equal to the Ornāmentum’s Rating x 100 are forced to manifest themselves.

The ephemeral beings can make a contested roll using their Resistance + Rank to avoid manifesting. Note that the beings manifest regardless of whether or not they have the Manifest Numen. Many ephemeral beings do not take kindly to being forced from their Twilight states. This Ornāmentum uses an amount of Fuel equal to its rating each time it is employed and can be used to make portals to other dimensions (e.g., a Fīnis, a Locus, etc.) visible for a number of minutes equal to its rating. Objects hidden in Twilight that are within the area of effect are also rendered visible. This Ornāmentum is a Size 4 object.

### *Portable Mass Driver*

Highly lethal devices, Portable Mass Drivers usually take the shape of extremely bulky rifles. These weapons consume very large amounts of Fuel but can fire ballistic projectiles across extremely long ranges where the impact with vast amounts of kinetic energy. A mass driver’s bulk is proportional to its power. As such, this Ornāmentum penalizes its user’s initiative by its rating dots. Additionally, the weapon’s bulk requires that its user possess a certain minimum amount of Strength and prevents its user from taking any free actions on a turn in which it is used. If the wielder has already taken a free action on a particular turn, then he or she cannot use the Portable Mass Driver on that turn. The table below summarizes this effects of this Ornāmentum. This Ornāmentum is a Size: 2 object.

<b>Ratin g</b>	<b>Damage Bonus</b>	<b>Minimum Strength</b>	<b>Initiative Penalty</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Fuel Used</b>
0	+0L	2	-1	100/200/300	1
1	+0L	2	-1	150/300/450	2
2	+1L	3	-2	300/600/900	4
3	+2L	4	-3	500/1000/1500	8

4	+3L	5	-4	700/1400/2100	16
5	+4L	6	-5	950/1900/2850	32

The user rolls their Dexterity + Firearms to determine a hit. Successful hits have the Armor Piercing quality in addition to doing damage.

The Portable Mass Driver also has a low-power mode (rating 0 in the table above). When used in this mode, the mass driver uses very little Fuel but is only equivalent in potency to a low-powered rifle (like a .22 with a low-power BB round, or a high-powered air rifle). Shots fired from a mass driver in low-power mode do not have the Armor Piercing quality.

### *Portable Spectro-Analyzer*

The Portable Spectro-Analyzer works like the Multi-Phase Anomaly Scanner, except that it detects chemical materials as specified by its user. To use the device the alien specifies an element or compound that they are searching for and rolls their Wits + Science + Ornāmentum Rating. All masses of the named substance within the Ornāmentum's radius that are greater in weight than a quarter of an ounce are detected. At a rating of 1 its radius is limited to 10 feet, or about the area of a single room. At a rating of 2 it can detect ephemeral entities lurking in twilight within a small building or a single wing of a large building. At rating 3 it can detect such beings within a large building or a small complex of buildings like a city block. (Note that skyscrapers are themselves usually larger than the blocks they are on and so the effect only scans through about 25 to 30 floors.) At rating 4 it can scan an entire massive building or has an effective radius of about half a mile. At rating 5, it can be used to detect any twilight-bound beings within 1 mile of its user.

Radioactive isotopes and compounds that use them are easier to detect and the alien receives a +2 to the roll when looking things like depleted uranium or enriched plutonium. The alien receives a -2 to the roll to detect substances that are naturally gaseous and occur in very low densities, such as trace amounts of xenon or argon. This Ornāmentum is a Size 1 object.

### *Ray Gun*

This small weapon usually appears as a wand or pistol. Light weight and easily concealed ray guns run a gamut of functionality from mostly harmless to highly lethal. The wielder rolls their Dexterity + Firearms and modifies it according to the table below.

As always, the wielder may choose to employ the Ornāmentum at a strength below its maximum if, for instance they only wanted to render their victim unconscious or wanted to conserve Fuel. This Ornāmentum is a Size 1 object.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Damage Bonus</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Fuel Used</b>
1	+2B	50/100/150	1
2	+3B	75/150/225	2
3	+2L	100/200/300	3
4	+3L	150/300/450	4
5	+2A	200/400/600	5

<Sidebar>

### The Undead and Unnatural

Ray guns work by primarily disrupting the functioning of living tissues. They are much less effective when used against creatures who are no longer alive or were never alive to begin with. Vampires, Prometheans, and Mummies downgrade all damage taken from Ray Guns by one level (which means Ray Guns with a rating of 1 or 2 dots are harmless to them). Similarly, a Demon who has assumed her natural (Demonic) form (possibly by going loud) is no longer treated as a living being and so also downgrades Ray Gun damage. Demons who remain in their mortal Covers take damage as though they were mortals. As living entities, Werewolves, Mages, Changelings, Hunters, and Beasts are all affected by Ray Guns as though they were mortals.

</Sidebar>

### Sensor Drone

Ranging in size from a medium dog to a small pony, sensor drones all an alien to monitor her surroundings. Easily disguised as a terrestrial balloon or aerial drone, the sensor drone provides a constant stream of telemetry to its user granting them +1 bonus die to her perception rolls for each dot of rating in this Ornāmentum.

In addition the drone can detect and monitor communications on across a broad range of mediums allowing its users to eavesdrop on radio transmissions, cell phone calls, and email (or other internet data packets). The drone has a large array of cryptography subroutines that it can call upon to help its user understand the content of any monitored communications.

It is a physical entity, distinct from the alien and has the following statistics:

**Attributes:** Intelligence: 1 + Rating, Wits: 1 + Rating, Resolve: 3, Strength: 1, Dexterity: 2, Stamina: 1, Presence: 1, Manipulation: 0, Composure: 2

**Skills:** Computer: 2 + Rating

**Dread Powers:** Flight (the Drones fly rather than walk and slowly consume Fuel at the rate of 1 Fuel per hour of flight time), Swift (see Werewolf: the Forsaken, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p 211; note that the Drone expends Fuel rather than Essence)

**Health:** 2 + Rating

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 1 + Rating

**Perception:** 3 + Rating

**Speed:** 12

**Size:** 1 + Rating

### Sonic Multi-Tool

An alien with a Sonic Multi-Tool is never without an advantage. The tool also provides its user +1 tool die per dot of rating for any extended rolls that can benefit from tools. It consumes Fuel at the rate of 1 Fuel per minute and benefits greatly from access to a larger Vessel rating. This Ornāmentum is compact and easily concealed and its user gains a +4 bonus on any rolls to hide it on her or his person. This Ornāmentum is a Size: 1 object.

The multi-tool may also be used to damage objects. The multi-tool is at risk of damage when used this way. It takes a full minute of time for the wielder to employ the multi-tool in this fashion, during which time the user loses both, her or his Defense and Actions.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts

**Dramatic Failure:** The multi-tool is damaged instead of the object. The character must return to her or his Vessel and repair the Ornāmentum before it can be used again.

**Failure:** The object was not damaged.

**Success:** The object's Structure is reduced by Successes + Rating – Durability.

**Exceptional Success:** The object's Structure is reduced by Successes + Rating – Durability with a minimum effect of 1.

### *Sticky Foam Cannon*

This bulky non-lethal firearm launches a thick, viscous gelatin that expands on contact. The user rolls Dexterity + Firearms + Ornāmentum Rating. Victims are considered to be grappled. On their next turn they must make a successful Strength + Brawl roll contested by the user with the Ornamentum's Rating + the alien's Vessel Rating. Success indicates that the victim has managed to scrape the foam off of themselves. If the victim fails then they are considered to be held in place. On the subsequent turn the victim has one last opportunity to free themselves by rolling their Strength + Brawl contested by the Ornāmentum's Rating + the alien's Vessel Rating. If successful the victim takes 1 point of lethal damage as they scrape the sticky foam off of themselves along with several layers of skin. A failed roll indicates that the victim has been successfully restrained and can no longer participate in the battle. This Ornāmentum uses 5 Fuel each time it is fired. This Ornāmentum is a Size: 3 object.

### *Tactical Power Armor*

This lightweight armor provides a number of benefits to its user depending upon the amount of Fuel expended each turn. Each turn the wearer may choose to benefit from a number of bonus dice which may be applied to any or all of Strength, Dexterity, Presence, Defense, Initiative, Perception, or Speed. The user may not benefit from more bonus dice in any of the categories than the Ornāmentum's rating but may boost as many categories as they have available Fuel. The user also benefits from the passive effect of the Ornāmentum's armor. Its protective abilities are summarized in the table below. This Ornāmentum is a Size: 5 object.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Armor</b>	<b>Max Bonus</b>
1	1/1	1
2	2/2	2
3	4/2	3
4	5/3	4
5	6/4	5

### *Tunneling Laser*

This Ornāmentum allows the alien to bore through earth, stone, and even metal. It creates a tunnel-like structure, fusing and melting substances into a rounded, glass-like surface. Each 10 foot section of tunnel has Structure: 15 and Durability: 5. The Tunneling Laser is extremely powerful and is capable of burrowing through 5 feet of earth, 1 foot of stone, or 1 inch of hard metal (like steel or titanium) per dot of rating that it has for each minute that it operates. It expends 1 Fuel for each dot of its rating per minute of use.

The Tunneling Laser can also be employed as an improvised firearm that inflicts bashing damage equal to its rating. If used against immobile victims, it inflicts lethal damage instead.

This damage counts as fire damage for those things that are resistant or vulnerable to damage of that nature. The laser expends 1 Fuel for each turn that it is operated in this way. This Ornāmentum is a Size: 4 object.

## Vessels

An alien's Vessel is a strange combination of home, mother, and protector. Each Vessel was once a powerful spacecraft capable of gulping the vast distances between stars. Regardless of how an alien came to be marooned, all Stranded have one thing in common, their Vessels are but a hollow reminder of former glory.

Every Stranded's Vessel provides them at least one advantage designed to help them survive. This advantage takes the form of an Amenity. Unless he pools his resources with other aliens, forming a cluster, a Stranded is only likely to have access to single Amenity which provides some relatively specialized benefits (fully described below).

Stranded Vessel's also provide a number of Auxiliaries. These are baked-in benefits such as Safe Place, Flight, Structure and Durability. They are the things that give the Vessel its essential form.

Vessels are aware of their surroundings and, since the Stranded remain in a symbiotic relationship with their Vessels knowledge of the Vessel's state of being is a part of their own self-awareness. Aliens can exploit this connection to perceive a portion of what is happening in and around their Vessels.

In addition to these functions, every Vessel maintains a limited repository of cloned tissue from which new bodies can be grown in the event that a Stranded dies. It takes time for these clones to be matured, and the Stranded usually see death as a major, though not insurmountable, inconvenience. As such they take measures to protect themselves and tend not to rely on their Vessel's clone repository.

Sometimes death is inevitable or unavoidable. At times like these mortal (or supernatural) enemies of aliens find that the Stranded are very difficult to entirely eliminate. Even after one has been killed it isn't unusual for him to resurface months later wearing a new disguise. The only way to truly kill an alien is to destroy his Vessel.

Fortunately for the Stranded, their Vessels are as adept at blending in as the aliens are themselves. As noted earlier, a Vessel will conceal itself within the local terrain. So long as the alien keeps his comings and goings secret, the greater majority of the natives will have no reason to suspect that the origin of their neighborhood's scourge is extraterrestrial in nature.

The use of certain merits or causing Panic too frequently within the Vessel's vicinity can draw attention. Vessels with a high rating can also garner the attention of those like the agents of United Technologies, Inc. who can recognize the increasingly violent and antisocial behaviors of natives that live too close to such concentrations of otherworldly energies.

Finally, each Vessel serves the all-important role of storehouse for the energies that power an alien's Ornāmenta. Vessels store Fuel in vast reservoirs that the Stranded employ to charge their Ornamenta and to power various Auxiliaries. Fuel is a necessity for the Stranded. Without it, they have little chance of ever returning to their places of origin.

## Amenities

Amenities are the remnants of a Vessel's primary systems. They are the most prominent feature of the Vessel's remains and provide their Stranded owners with a significant advantage

over the primitives they are forced to live among. Vessels typically have but a single Amenity but large Vessels have been known to have several. This is particularly true of warships.

Each Amenity provides its alien owner with resources or facilities that can be shared with a larger group of people. In most cases this is represented in game through bonus dice for certain kinds of extended actions. In some cases the Amenity also provides the Stranded with tools, such as simple weapons, that can be shared with others.

The Amenities listed here are among the most common. Storytellers and players are encouraged to develop their own Amenities as the needs of their stories dictate.

### Armory

Your character's Vessel was a troop transport. While the damage to the ship was so significant that the other crewmembers were killed or cannot be revived, your character still has access to the Vessel's collection of small arms.

**Systems:** This Amenity provides its owner with access to any weapon that it could purchase with Resources equal to its dots in Vessel (as detailed in the table below). Additionally, the Armory provides weapons (equivalent to what could be purchased with Resources equivalent to one half (rounded up) of the alien's dots in Vessel) for a number of individuals equal to ten times the alien's dots in Vessel. For example an alien with 3 dots in Vessel could equip itself with a sub-machine gun and up to 30 other people with rifles.

Vessel Rating	Equivalent Resources	Example Weapon
1	1	Sap, Brass Knuckles, Spear
2	2	Sword, Shield, Revolver, Rifle, Shotgun
3	3	Semi-automatic Pistol, Sub-machine Gun, Assault Rifle
4	4	Light Machine Gun, Grenades, Battle Rifle
5	5	Heavy Machine Gun, Anti-Tank Rifle, Rocket-Propelled Grenade
6	6	Minigun, Anti-Air Missile, Mortar, Multiple Grenade Launcher
7	7	Anti-Tank Missile, Automatic Grenade Launcher
8	8	Anti-Tank Gun, Heavy Mortar
9	9	Light Field Artillery, Gatling Cannon
10	10	Heavy Artillery, Rocket Artillery, Surface-to-Air Missile

While the actual weapons supplied by the Vessel's Armory may not physically resemble those produced by the natives, they are physically equivalent. Weapons that are lost are replaced by the Armory after a month's time.

### Communications Array

Your character's Vessel was equipped with an array of powerful transmitters and antenna. Among other things, this can give the alien a means for communicating with others off-planet.



**Systems:** This Amenity provides its owner with a powerful transceiver capable of broadcasting and receiving signals across vast distances (as noted in the table below). Unfortunately the array itself does not guarantee that the intended recipient actually receives a transmission. An alien with a specialty in cryptography can take some steps at encoding transmissions so that they are garbled if not received by the intended audience.

Vessel Rating	Range
1	100 miles
2	1000 miles
3	10,000 miles
4	100,000 miles
5	1 million miles
6	Any inter-planetary distance (up to 100 AUs)
7	Local inter-stellar distances (up to 100 light years)
8	Any inter-stellar distances (up to 100,000 light years)
9	Inter-galactic distances (via sub-space relays)
10	Inter-dimensional communications

Note that the array uses the subspaces between n-fractal dimensions as a medium through which the transmission propagates. This allows for faster-than-light communications, which are often nearly instantaneous, across vast distances. The primary limitation is the Vessel's power. Even though the Stranded's transmissions move at such high speeds, it can still take hours, days, weeks, months, or even years for them to reach their destinations.

This Amenity provides the alien with the side benefit of being able to receive any and all wireless transmissions that take place within the range indicated by her Vessel's rating. Encrypted transmissions, such as network packets or scrambled radio broadcasts, must first be decrypted. The Vessel also has access to any wireless data networks (e.g., cell phone network) that the local natives have in place which permits the alien to easily access the natives' common knowledge store (i.e. the Web). A character with access to this Amenity may act as though she had access to the Library merit with dots equal to one half (rounded up) of her dots in Vessel.

### Chemistry Laboratory

Your character's Vessel has a sophisticated chemistry complex allowing him to analyze and synthesize a number of raw materials (summarized on the table below). Among other things, this can give the character the ability to turn almost any substance into Fuel.

**Systems:** The character makes an extended roll to produce one substance from another. The character's Vessel maintains a stock of common reagents and other substances used in small quantities but it is not capable of producing any particular substance in mass quantities, this often requires that the character gather a certain amount of raw materials. While it is suggested that troupes role-play the interactions necessary to gather materials (especially those that will be used to make Fuel) the following can be used as a quick and dirty method for gather raw materials.

### Gathering Raw Materials

Rather than role-play out or use extended rolls to gather relatively minor substances, the following simple method can be used. Note that Allies, Contacts, Resources, or the appropriate

Status can also be used to get the needed materials, should the alien have one or more of these Merits.

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Streetwise or Survival

**Dramatic Failure:** Your character has slipped up in his interaction with the humans around him. Though you were able quickly flee before Panic set in, they remember the horror of what they saw. Your character gains the Exposed Condition.

**Failure:** Your character was unable to procure the desired materials in useful quantities. He may try again tomorrow.

**Success:** Your character has procured enough raw materials to produce a quantity of some desired substance.

**Exceptional Success:** Your character has procured enough raw materials to produce a quantity of some desired substance twice.

### Producing Fuel

Fīnēs are extremely difficult to come by but Fuel is an omnipresent need. Without Fuel a Stranded can find themselves helpless before the masses of natives around them. Having access to a Chemistry Laboratory Amenity allows the Stranded to convert various materials into Fuel.

This is never a very efficient process. It takes very large quantities of raw materials to produce relatively small amounts of Fuel. While access to a Fīnis is a much more efficient way of harvesting Fuel, refining Fuel in the lab has the added benefit that any Fuel created is added directly to the Vessel's reserve. The kinds of materials that can be used to produce Fuel varies according to the alien's dots in Vessel and are listed in the table below.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Science

**Action:** Extended. The interval for each roll is one hour and the alien must accumulate a total of 25 successes.

**Dramatic Failure:** The alien has made an error while mixing reagents causing an explosion in the lab. The alien suffers one point of lethal damage and the lab cannot be used for a span of one week. Any Fuel that had been accrued to this point are lost.

**Failure:** A fault has developed in the process. The alien can stop the process, keeping any Fuel already produced, or accept a condition to continue.

**Success:** The alien accumulates successes during the process, and adds 1 Fuel to his Vessel's reserve for each success.

**Exceptional Success:** The alien's process is particularly effective for a time, producing more Fuel than normal. The alien adds 2 Fuel per success to his Vessel's reserve.

Vessel Rating	Tool Bonus	Producible Substances	Substances Required to Produce Fuel
1	1	Simple Elements (e.g., hydrogen)	Complex Extraterrestrial Materials
2	1	Mixtures (e.g., alloys, etc.)	Simple Extraterrestrial Materials
3	2	Simple Compounds (e.g., alcohol, acids, bases, etc.)	Smart Materials (e.g., buckyballs, carbon nanotubes, etc.)
4	2	Complex Compounds (e.g., ammonia, cyanide, complex acids)	Enriched Radioactive Isotopes (e.g., enriched plutonium, etc.)
5	3	Radioactive Isotopes (e.g., Uranium, Radium, Plutonium, etc.)	Polymers (e.g., proteins, synthetic rubber, plastics, etc.)
6	3	Polymers (e.g., proteins, synthetic	Radioactive Isotopes (e.g.,

		rubber, plastics, etc.)	Uranium, Radium, Plutonium, etc.)
7	4	Enriched Radioactive Isotopes (e.g., enriched plutonium, etc.)	Complex Compounds (e.g., ammonia, cyanide, complex acids)
8	4	Smart Materials (e.g., buckyballs, carbon nanotubes, etc.)	Simple Compounds (e.g., salts, acids, bases, etc.)
9	5	Simple Extraterrestrial Materials	Mixtures (e.g., alloys, etc.)
10	5	Complex Extraterrestrial Materials	Simple Elements (e.g., hydrogen)

In addition to its chemical production function, the Chemistry Laboratory provides the character with a tool bonus to any Science rolls involving chemistry. This bonus is equal to one half (rounded up) of the character's dots in Vessel.

### Combat Information Center

Your character's Vessel possesses a battle command center that can identify hostile organisms and dangerous natural phenomena. It also has a broad transmission capability, allowing it manage a large number of battlefield operatives all at once. While no soldiers remain for you to manage, you can use it to coordinate the activities of a number of terrestrial agents that you have suborned to do your bidding. Note that this Amenity does not in and of itself, provide a means for suborning natives, it merely provides a number of interlinked communications devices that can be distributed amongst them so that their activities can be managed from a central location.

**Systems:** This amenity operates by launching a vast number of tiny drones which monitor the battlezone and relay transmissions among friendlies. Functionally the player using may add dice to teamwork rolls that take place on the battlefield. The alien receives a pool of dice equal to twice their Vessel's rating which they may divide across a number of friendly groups on the battlefield as an action. No team can receive more dice than half of the alien's Vessel rating (rounded up). Operating the Combat Information Center (CIC) is taxing on the Vessel's Fuel reserve. Each teamwork die granted to friendly teams expends 1 Fuel from the Vessel's reserve.

Vessel Rating	Max. No. of Combatants	Total Teamwork Dice Pool	Maximum Teamwork Bonus	Maximum Battlefield Area
1	10	2	1	100 yards
2	20	4	1	1000 yards
3	40	6	2	5 miles
4	80	8	2	10 miles
5	150	10	3	100 miles
6	300	12	3	1000 miles
7	600	14	4	10,000 miles
8	1000	16	4	Entire planet
9	5000	18	5	Planet and local space
10	10,000	20	5	Entire star system

For example, Sean's character (Vessel 2) has deployed its cultists in an attempt to ambush several agents from United Technologies, Inc. The ambush takes place at an abandoned warehouse. Sean's character commands its 8 cultists to split up into two teams of 3 and one team of two to take out the four agents who have split into two two-person teams. With 2 dots of Vessel, Sean has a total of 4 dice that he can divide among his character's cultist soldiers. Unfortunately, he can only assign 1 teamwork die to each of the fire teams, so he will have one leftover die that goes unused at the end of the turn. If he had directed his character's cultists to divide into four teams of two, then he could have used all of the dice; however, he's gambling on the two larger groups being able to take out one of the pairs of agents while the smaller group acts as a decoy for the other pair. At the end of the turn he marks off 3 Fuel, one for each die assigned, from his Vessel's reserve.

### Threat Assessment & Analysis

In addition to managing the battlefield the CIC can be used to assess the threat level of the combatants in the area. The player may use this ability once per turn.

**Dice Pool:** Perception + Vessel

**Action:** Free

**Dramatic Failure:** The enemy has detected the signals emanating from the CIC's drone network and traced it back to its source. The alien gains the Vessel Discovered Condition.

**Failure:** The battle is too fluid for the analysis to complete in a timely manner. The alien may roll again next turn.

**Success:** The CIC's drone network reports which enemy combatants are the most dangerous. The storyteller should provide the player with a general sense of the relative power levels among the enemy combatants.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to the relative power levels among the enemy combatants, the storyteller should provide the player with information regarding the most dangerous armaments on the battlefield, e.g., the hulking mercenary outflanking the cultists is carrying a shaped charge in her backpack, the approaching jets are armed with nuclear bombs, etc.

### Containment Facility

Your character's Vessel was formerly a penal ship. Since he or she was marooned, he or she has been able to turn this Amenity into an asset for her or his own benefit.

**Systems:** Your character has access to a large block of cells, which may be used to contain living entities against their will. Simple beings such as the native mortals may be kept indefinitely with no cost in Fuel or real effort on the alien's part. The Vessel feeds and maintains the prisoners for whom escape is not really possible.

Your character may also imprison other aliens or ephemeral beings from other N-Fractal spaces. Keeping such entities imprisoned is a non-trivial effort and causes the Vessel to expend Fuel on a daily basis. In the case of other aliens, the amount of Fuel spent each day is equal to the higher of their Intelligence or Strength + Vessel. In the case of ephemeral entities, the amount of Fuel spent each day is equal to their Power + Rank. As long as Fuel remains, an entity may be kept imprisoned, regardless of its overall power level. Note that many entities, especially ephemeral ones, have means to temporarily inflate their attributes. One additional Fuel is spent for every dot they boost the attribute by each time they do this during a day.

Note that this Amenity does not actually aid the character in subduing the entity to be imprisoned. It only keeps subdued entities imprisoned. The character must take such an entity to their Vessel and physically place it in one of the cells. Should the Vessel run out of Fuel or if

power should be disrupted for any reason, the imprisoned entities immediately escape and the alien character gains the Vessel Discovered Condition.

<b>Vessel Rating</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>No. of Cells</b>	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

<Sidebar>

### Imprisoning other Supernatural Entities

Other supernatural beings can be imprisoned. The Vessel spends an amount of Fuel equal to the higher of their Intelligence or Strength + Supernatural Advantage. One additional Fuel is spent for every dot they increase their attribute by, each time they boost their attributes. Note that some entities have powers that make their Strength effectively greater, e.g., a Vampire's Vigor Discipline. Such abilities should be counted against the amount of Fuel expended to keep the entity imprisoned.

</Sidebar>

Entities do not enjoy being imprisoned and, those that gain their freedom (usually because of the interference of outside forces) are likely to take revenge. In the case of particularly potent entities, this revenge may take unusual forms or play itself out slowly over time. Storytellers are encouraged to be creative. Entire chronicles can easily be fashioned around this Amenity.

### Fabrication Center

Your character's ship has an entire manufacturing complex within it. They can use it to manufacture a number of tools and devices (summarized on the table below).

**Systems:** The Fabrication Center works in a similar manner to the Chemistry Laboratory Amenity. Like the Chemistry Laboratory, the alien must first gather an amount of raw materials before manufacturing can take place. While troupes are encouraged to roleplay out the interactions necessary to acquire raw materials, the simple quick and dirty method presented below can be used to speed gameplay.

#### Gathering Raw Materials

Rather than role-play out or use extended rolls to gather relatively minor substances, the following simple method can be used. Note that Allies, Contacts, Resources, or the appropriate Status can also be used to get the needed materials, should the alien have one or more of these Merits.

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Streetwise or Survival

**Dramatic Failure:** Your character has slipped up in his interaction with the humans around him. Though you were able quickly flee before Panic set in, they remember the horror of what they saw. Your character gains the Exposed Condition.

**Failure:** Your character was unable to procure the desired implements in useful quantities. He may try again tomorrow.

**Success:** Your character has procured enough raw materials to produce a quantity of some desired implement.

**Exceptional Success:** Your character has procured enough raw materials to produce a quantity of some desired implement twice.

## Manufacturing Goods

The primary purpose of the Fabrication Center is to use raw materials to produce a finite quantity of manufactured goods. Depending on the alien's Vessel rating these good might range from simple items crafted from glass or metal to complex machines like computers and automobiles.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts

**Action:** Extended. The interval for each roll is six hours and the alien must accumulate a total of 25 successes.

**Dramatic Failure:** There is a massive fault in the manufacturing process. The raw materials are consumed but the goods produced are unusable junk.

**Failure:** A fault has developed in the process. The alien can stop the process, keeping any goods already manufactured, or accept a condition to continue.

**Success:** The alien accumulates successes during the process, and produces 1 manufactured good for each success.

**Exceptional Success:** The alien's manufacturing line is particularly effective for a time, producing more goods than normal. The alien produces two goods per success.

Vessel Rating	Tool Bonus	Required Raw Materials	Items Produced
1	1	Simple Elements (e.g., silver, iron, carbon)	Simple Manufactured Goods (e.g., silverware, porcelain dishes, etc.)
2	1	Simple Manufactured Goods (e.g., metal parts, processed lumber, etc.)	Multi-Part Manufactured Goods (e.g., furniture, woven textiles, etc.)
3	2	Multi-Part Manufactured Goods (e.g., rope, nylon thread, etc.)	Simple Machines (e.g., windmills, furniture with moving parts, bows, wheel and axel, hand drill, etc.)
4	2	Simple Machines (wheel barrels, slingshots, etc.)	Complex Machines (e.g., spring-wound clocks, cranes, block and tackle, etc.)
5	3	Complex Machines (e.g., batteries, elevators, etc.)	Simple Chemically Powered Machines (e.g., flashlights, batteries, etc.)
6	3	Simple Chemically Powered Machines (e.g. steam-powered cars, steam locomotives, etc.)	Complex Chemically Powered Machines (e.g., combustion powered aircraft, rockets, etc.)
7	4	Complex Chemically Powered Machines (e.g., computers, hi-fi stereos, televisions, etc.)	Simple Advanced Machines (e.g., contemporary automobile, computer, digital clocks, etc.)
8	4	Simple Advanced Machines (digital calculator,	Complex Advanced Machines (e.g., satellite, missile, jet aircraft, etc.)
9	5	Complex Advanced Machines (satellites, drones, etc.)	Basic Extraterrestrial Machines (e.g. ornāmenta, short-range spacecraft, etc.)
10	5	Basic Extraterrestrial Machines (e.g., ornāmenta, ion engines, etc.)	Advanced Extraterrestrial Machines (e.g., hyperdrives, star gates, inertial dampeners, artificial gravity, etc.)

In addition to its manufacturing function, the Fabrication Center provides the character with a tool bonus to any Crafts rolls to make or repair things. This bonus is equal to one half (rounded up) of the character's dots in Vessel.

### High Energy Physics Laboratory

Your character's Vessel possesses a small but high-powered particle accelerator allowing her to explore the very fabric of space-time. Among other things, she can cause temporary Fīnēs to form.

**Systems:** The High Energy Physics Laboratory allows the alien to build a map of other N-Fractal spaces that are congruent to Earth. It does this by piercing the barrier between dimensions and recording the otherworldly energies that emanate from the portal. Depending on the power of the alien's Vessel, these portals can be extremely fleeting (Vessel rating 1) or last for months (Vessel rating 8).

Once established the alien beings that dwell on the other side of the portal can enter the mortal world that the alien inhabits. These creatures cannot venture far; they are trapped within the lab's containment system. However, they can communicate with the alien, bargaining for release into the wider world.

These ephemeral beings require essence for sustenance, which they can acquire by feeding on the portal's energies. Once free of the containment system's environment they can feed from other sources of essence (e.g., angels, ghosts, spirits, etc.).

Once the containment has been breached, the alien may also harvest essence from the portal and refine it into Fuel. This is a dangerous gamble for the alien though as the harvesting process can be a dangerous one leaving the alien vulnerable to catastrophic damage to her Vessel but also leaving the portal wide-open for ephemeral entities to cross back and forth between worlds.

The table below provides details regarding the size, duration, and rating of the portal (Fīnis) made. It also notes the maximum rank of ephemeral entity that can pass through the portal along with the area of N-Fractal space affected by the portal's presence.

### Piercing Subspace

Piercing through subspace to create a temporary Finis requires that the alien undertake the following procedure.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Science + Vessel

**Action:** Extended. The interval for each roll is four hours and the alien must accumulate a total of 25 successes. The Vessel consumes 15 Fuel from its reserve for each roll that is made.

**Dramatic Failure:** Something has gone horribly awry and a singularity is created. The alien's Vessel is badly damaged and it enters a quiescent state for a number of days equal to 25 – number of successes already accumulated. The alien is effectively mortal for the duration of this period. She gains no benefit from dots in Vessel (i.e., she temporarily loses her supernatural advantage) and cannot make Fuel even if she has access to a Fīnis outside of her Vessel. She cannot use this or any other Amenity of her Vessel until the number of quiescent days have elapsed nor, can she recharge any of her Ornāmenta.

She can continue to use her Ornamenta, so long as they have Fuel in their capacitors. She can also still benefit from her adaptations but, certain Merits that depend on Fuel may also be effected.

**Failure:** The particle accelerator has failed to generate the requisite energies to pierce the barriers between worlds. No successes are accumulated. The alien can stop the attempt or accept a condition to continue.

**Success:** The alien accumulates successes towards opening a F̄inis.

**Exceptional Success:** The particle accelerator is operating particularly efficiently. The alien accumulates one addition success beyond those indicated by the dice.

### Scanning N-Fractal Space

Once the barriers between worlds have been pierced, the alien may begin to accumulate data regarding conditions on the other side. Among other things the alien may identify beings that dwell within the affected area on the other side and gain a sense of their behavior.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Science or Empathy

**Action:** Extended. The interval for each roll is 30 minutes and the alien must accumulate a total of 5 successes if gather basic information or 10 successes if trying to gather information helpful towards negotiations. In this latter case, the entity in question gains the Leveraged Condition (see GMC update p 182) with regards to the alien. The Vessel consumes 1 Fuel from its reserve for each roll made.

**Dramatic Failure:** The ephemeral being on the other side makes its own study of the alien, turning the tables on her. The alien misidentifies the entity being analyzed or gains the Leveraged Condition instead (according to the result being pursued).

**Failure:** No successes are accumulated. The alien can stop the attempt or accept a condition to continue. Note that the analysis fails if the requisite amount of successes cannot be gathered during the time the portal is open.

**Success:** The alien accumulates successes towards the desired result.

**Exceptional Success:** The alien's analysis is particularly prescient. The alien accumulates one addition success beyond those indicated by the dice.

Vessel Rating	Tool Bonus	F̄inis Diameter	F̄inis Duration	F̄inis Rating	Maximum Rank	N-Fractal Space Area Affected
1	1	1 inch	30 minutes	1	1	25 yards
2	1	6 inches	1 hour	2	2	50 yards
3	2	1 foot	3 hours	3	3	100 yards
4	2	1 yard	6 hours	4	4	250 yards
5	3	2 yards	12 hours	5	5	500 yards
6	3	5 yards	1 day	6	6	1000 yards
7	4	10 yards	3 days	7	7	1 mile
8	4	50 yards	1 week	8	8	2 miles
9	5	100 yards	2 weeks	9	9	5 miles
10	5	200 yards	1 month	10	10	10 miles

In addition to its extra-dimensional function, the High Energy Physics Laboratory provides a tool bonus to the alien equal to one half (rounded up) of her dots in Vessel. This bonus can be applied to any science rolls involving physics.



## Inertial Navigation System

Your character's Vessel possesses a vast array of computers that make it possible to navigate across the vast distances between stars. Among other things, the alien can use this system to navigate large tracks of uncharted wilderness.

**Systems:** The alien does not need a particular destination in mind although it is helpful. This Amenity does not provide maps of planetary, lunar, or stellar features and so cannot be used to arrive at fine-grained destinations by itself. So long as the alien has some existing knowledge of where it wants to go and a direction, then it can exploit this Amenity to prevent it from getting lost.

The system's accuracy is limited by the character's total dots in Vessel. This does not mean that navigation across longer distances is impossible at lower Vessel ratings. The alien simply has to stop and take its bearings more frequently. The distances that are navigable between bearing checks are listed in the table below.

Vessel Rating	Navigable Areas
1	Large Towns, Small Cities, State Parks (100 square miles)
2	Large Cities, Small Provinces, National Parks (1000 square miles)
3	Provinces, Small Countries, Inland Seas (10,000 square miles)
4	Countries, Small Continents, Vast Tracks of Wilderness (100,000 square miles)
5	Continents, Oceans, Small Lunar or Asteroid Bodies (1,000,000 square miles)
6	Interplanetary Distances (10 cubic light years)
7	Interstellar Distances (1000 cubic light years)
8	Galactic Distances (1,000,000 cubic light years)
9	Intergalactic Distances (1,000,000,000,000 cubic light years)
10	Interdimensional Navigation (via subspace or dark matter strands)

The alien rolls to navigate as it normally would, adding its dots in Vessel to the roll. Since the system exploits very fine differentials in gravity, it does account for the presence of large topographical features and even makes use of them in its navigational instructions (e.g., turn left at the large structure on the corner, etc.).

Despite this exploitation, the system is not truly aware of the alien's surroundings and only large landmarks like towering buildings, mountains, enormous trees, and large bodies of water will be used in local navigational instructions. Since the navigation system selects the shortest possible route for the character, exploiting very large topographical features, it does not account for any obstacles or hazards that may exist. The alien is likely to have to make additional navigation rolls to bypass such hazards.

## Medical Bay

Your character's Vessel possesses a large medical facility which it can use for a number of applications.

**Systems:** The Medical Bay is the equivalent to a fully functioning hospital. Its advanced life support devices can be employed to maintain the life-functions of a number of living entities equal to the character's dots in Vessel. It also provides a tool bonus equal to one half (rounded

up) of the alien's dots in Vessel for any rolls to repair injuries, treat poisoning or disease, and conduct autopsies or complex diagnostics.

Sufficiently powerful Vessel's allow this Amenity to be used to treat maladies of supernatural origin. These abilities are summarized in the table below. The Medical Bay can also be used to cause supernatural or apparently supernatural maladies.

Vessel Rating	Tool Bonus	Maximum Camouflage Bonus	Example Maladies (Cause/Cure)
1	1	(1) 1	Chemical Poisoning
2	1	(1) 2	Heavy Metal Poisoning
3	2	(2) 3	Radiation Poisoning
4	2	(2) 4	Cancers
5	3	(3) 5	Auto-immune Disorders
6	3	(3) 6	Supernatural Disorders (e.g., Soul Loss)
7	4	(4) 7	Summon/Exorcise a Possessing Entity
8	4	(4) 8	Add/Remove a Minor Template
9	5	(5) 9	Create/Uncreate a Claimed
10	5	(5) 10	Add/Remove a Supernatural Template*

In addition to providing a tool bonus for any rolls to treat injuries or disease, the medical bay can be used to analyze both terrestrial and extraterrestrial life-forms and to support the Camouflage process.

\* Designer's Note: Unless the storyteller (and the troupe) is running a cross-over game, then this ability can be used by the alien to make more of its kind (by transforming hapless humans).

### Bio-Analysis

To analyze a creature, it must first be restrained (unless it is already dead). The alien then spends a number of days probing the creature and conducting tests. If the creature was dead, successful testing can reveal how it died (if the causes are not obvious). If the Vessel is powerful enough, i.e., if the character possesses enough dots in Vessel, then it can detect and determine the nature of supernatural maladies.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Academics, Medicine, Occult, or Science

**Action:** Extended. The interval for each roll is 1 day and the alien must accumulate a total of 10 successes. If the alien is using this process as a means to improve its Camouflage, then it may add its Vessel rating to its Camouflage rating upon success.

**Dramatic Failure:** If the specimen was living, it dies. If it was dead, it is destroyed and no information is gained.

**Failure:** No successes are accumulated. The alien can stop the attempt or accept a condition to continue. If the alien stops and one or more successes had already been gained, then it may add one half (rounded up) of its dots in Vessel to its Camouflage rating.

**Success:** The alien accumulates successes towards the desired result.

**Exceptional Success:** The alien's analysis is particularly prescient. The alien accumulates one addition success beyond those indicated by the dice.

## Bio-Engineering

The alien can use the Medical Bay to alter the specimen by introducing foreign substances into its biology. If the alien has sufficient dots in Vessel, this ability can even be used to inflict supernatural maladies on the specimen or transform it into a supernatural entity.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Academics, Medicine, Occult, or Science + Vessel

**Action:** Extended. The interval for each roll is 1 week and the alien must accumulate a total of 25 successes. At the end of this process, the alien either adds or removes the Feverish Condition from the specimen (if the end goal was an ordinary one). If the process was designed to bring about or resolve some supernatural state of affairs then that state of affairs comes into being or is resolved.

**Dramatic Failure:** If the specimen was living, it dies. If it was dead, it is destroyed and no information is gained. If the process was intended to have a supernatural result then, at the storyteller's discretion, the specimen may be raised as the most hostile form of its intended entity type. Even if the end goal was to return the specimen to a mortal state, whatever it was still becomes twisted. For example, a being with Soul Loss might die during the process only to come back as a ravenous zombie that tries to eat the alien.

**Failure:** No successes are accumulated. The alien can stop the attempt or accept a condition to continue.

**Success:** The alien accumulates successes towards the desired result.

**Exceptional Success:** The process proceeds particularly smoothly. The alien accumulates one additional success beyond those indicated by the dice.

## Small Craft Hangar

Your character's Vessel contains a hangar full of short-range craft. These craft may be shuttles or they may be fighters (or other small attack craft).

**Systems:** The number of available craft is equal to the character's dots of Vessel. While the alien may know how to pilot one of the craft itself, the other craft cannot be utilized unless suitable pilots are available.

While the specific game statistics of these small craft are left to the storyteller to decide, each small craft is generally no more powerful than contemporary jet fighter aircraft. Being extraterrestrial in origin, these craft do enjoy advantages with regards to sensor range, missile evasion, operational range (which is extra-atmospheric but not inter-planetary).

Each craft has its own Fuel reserve that can hold up to 25 Fuel. They consume 1 Fuel per hour at cruising speed and 1 Fuel per minute when maneuvering for combat. Any weapons systems that they have should be equivalent to an appropriate type of Ornāmentum (chosen by the storyteller or agreed upon by the storyteller and the player in the case noted below). Unlike normal Ornāmenta, these weapons do not have Fuel capacitors. Instead, each time the weapons are used, Fuel is expended from the craft's reserve.

Should combat arise, Small Craft have a base Structure of 15 (Size 10) and Durability of 3. A number of dots equal to the alien's dots in Vessel may be split among Structure and Durability. No craft may have more than 1 point of Durability for every 3 points of Structure. Craft that are damaged for any reason are repaired by the Hangar's automatic systems at the rate of one point of lost structure replaced per day. Craft that are destroyed are replaced after a number of weeks equal to their total Structure.

\* Designer’s Note: This Amenity is intended for NPC aliens that the storyteller might use as antagonists against the players. Special consideration for game balance should be taken into account if the player(s) and storyteller agree that this Amenity can be purchased.

### Surveillance Hub

Your character’s Vessel has a vast army of extremely tiny drones that it can deploy to monitor a chosen area.

**Systems:** Each individual drone is so small that it effectively has no Health and so no game statistics are recorded for the drones. Instead, the drones provide the alien with clairvoyance throughout an area proportional to the strength of her dots in Vessel (summarized in the table below). The drone’s coverage is imperfect but anytime the character needs to produce a fact or learn some information that involves the area being monitored, she is entitled to roll her Wits + Streetwise + Vessel to see if it is something that her surveillance network has picked up.

At any time, the alien may also focus on a small area within the overall area and observe goings on as though she were physically present. This latter ability requires the drones to enter a more active state, which makes them vulnerable to being spotted by other surveillance drone networks (in the case of overlapping areas). Note that the drone network can only sense things in the mortal world and cannot perceive beings in twilight states.

The drone’s sophistication can leave the alien vulnerable to supernatural abilities that affect perceptions when she employs them in the clairvoyant mode. Supernatural abilities that conceal, cloak or otherwise obfuscate a being from view, e.g., an alien’s chameleon skin, trigger a clash of wills.

Vessel Rating	Surveillance Area	Viewing Area
1	A small neighborhood (1 sq block)	A room (~400 sq feet)
2	A small village (1 sq mile)	Two rooms (~800 sq feet)
3	A village (2 sq miles)	Apartment or one floor of a house (~1200 sq feet)
4	A small town (5 sq miles)	Floor of an apartment building, an entire house, etc. (~2400 sq feet)
5	A town (10 sq miles)	Wing of a large building, 2 whole floors of a building (~4000 sq feet)
6	A large town (50 sq miles)	A small neighborhood (1 sq block)
7	A small city (100 sq miles)	A small village (1 sq mile)
8	A city (200 sq miles)	A village (2 sq miles)
9	A large city (400 sq miles)	A small town (5 sq miles)
10	A metropolis (1000 sq miles)	A town (10 sq miles)

### Teleportation Matrix

Your character’s Vessel has a quantum entanglement engine that allows it to beam matter across vast distances instantaneously.

**Systems:** The alien can be teleported to or from its Vessel at its command. While the overall range of the matrix is limited by the character’s dots in Vessel (summarized in the table below),

the alien may teleport itself or any of its associates continuously so long as Fuel remains in its Vessel's reserve.

Teleportation consumes an amount of Fuel from the Vessel's reserve each time it is done. The alien may target other beings but it must either have conditioned them (if they are mortals) or have given them some token that speaks to its essential extraterrestrial nature. Such tokens might be Ornāmenta or they could be as simple as a fragment of metal from one of the Vessel's bulkheads. In any event, teleportation always moves the alien and/or its confederates from an empty space to an empty space inside the Vessel or vice versa. It cannot be used to make creatures materialize inside of foreign substances.

Vessel Rating	Range	Maximum of Teleported	Number of Entities	Fuel Used
1	1 mile	1		1
2	100 miles	3		3
3	10,000 miles	5		6
4	1 million miles	7		10
5	Inter-planetary distances (up to 1 AU)	9		15
6	Intra-stellar distances (up to 100 AUs)	11		21
7	Inter-stellar distances (up to 100 light years)	13		28
8	Intra-galactic distances (up to 10,000 light years)	15		36
9	Inter-galactic distances (up to 10 million light years)	17		45
10	Inter-dimensional travel	19		55

### Topographical Sensor Array

Your character's Vessel has a sophisticated suite of sensors that allow it produce highly detailed maps of large areas. Among other things, these sensors can detect various materials deposits and, should the Vessel be sufficiently powerful, it can even detect supernatural substances.

**Systems:** To employ the array, the alien makes an Intelligence + Science + Vessel roll to locate nearby quantities of a desired resource. The array's abilities are limited by the number of dots the character has in Vessel and, strange substances cannot be found unless the character's Vessel is sufficiently powerful enough. The capabilities of the Topographical Sensor Array are summarized in the table below.

Vessel Rating	Tool Bonus	Detectable Substances	Mapping Area
1	1	Simple Substances (e.g., water)	10 sq. miles
2	1	Common Minerals (e.g., hematite)	100 sq. miles
3	2	Uncommon Minerals (e.g., manganite)	1000 sq. miles
4	2	Rare Minerals (e.g., gold)	10,000 sq. miles
5	3	Radioactive Minerals (e.g., uranium)	100,000 sq. miles
6	3	Rare Earth Minerals (e.g., palladium)	1 million sq. miles
7	4	Artificial Materials (e.g., enriched uranium)	10 million sq. miles

8	4	Smart Materials (e.g., carbon nanotubes)	100 million sq. miles
9	5	Simple Extraterrestrial Materials (e.g., dark matter)	1 billion sq. miles
10	5	Complex Extraterrestrial Materials (e.g., dark matter alloys)	10 billion sq. miles

The alien can only employ the array while physically present within his Vessel. Once a map has been produced though, it may always be accessed. The map provides a tool bonus equal to one half (rounded up) of the alien's dots in Vessel towards any subsequent rolls needed to navigate to one of the resources denoted on it. The map may be rendered into a physical format such as a metal tablet, plastic film, or paper-like substance or it may exist entirely within a digital environment, accessible through extraterrestrial equipment equivalent to a cell phone.

### Trophy Hall

Your character's Vessel has an impressive Trophy Hall filled with the remains of their victims. Among other things, this Amenity provides its owner with an easy means to intimidate or impress their guests and prisoners.

**System:** The Trophy Hall provides a tool bonus equal to one half (rounded up) of the character's dots in Vessel to any rolls, including social maneuvering, that rely upon intimidation or overwhelming presence while in their Vessel. Similarly, the trophies stain the alien's soul providing it with a means of asserting its dominance over any ephemeral beings, such as n-fractal phantoms, that might be nearby. They may add their dots in Vessel to their Presence for any social interactions with ephemeral beings that take place within the Vessel's confines.

By physically wearing one of the trophies, the alien can channel some of the trophy's spiritual might. The alien adds their dots in Vessel to one of their traits (the player chooses but may not, thereafter make a different choice unless their character returns to their Vessel and selects a different trophy) for any interactions with ephemeral beings, entities possessed by such beings, or Claimed beings. The extra dots in the trait have no effect on mortals or entities that are wholly corporeal, such as other Stranded.

The alien may not wear more trophies at once than one half (rounded down) their dots in Vessel. The table below summarizes the effects of this Amenity.

The trophy room may also be used as an occult shrine through which ephemeral beings can be summoned into the physical world (allowing them to cross the barrier between the Earth and other N-Fractal Spaces).

Vessel Rating	Tool Bonus	Trait Bonus	Total Number of Trophies	Number of Wearable Trophies
1	1	1	2	0
2	1	2	4	1
3	2	3	6	1
4	2	4	8	2
5	3	5	10	2
6	3	6	12	3
7	4	7	14	3
8	4	8	16	4

9	5	9	18	4
10	5	10	20	5

### Summoning N-Fractal Phantoms

The alien may use the Trophy Hall as an occult power center capable of drawing the ephemeral beings of other N-Fractal spaces onto Earth through distinctly supernatural means rather than through the employment of the hallmarks of high technology like particle accelerators. Summoning phantoms from other N-Fractal spaces is a risky proposition, and other than the totemic properties of the alien's trophies themselves, the summoner has no particular means of restraining or forcing their will upon the phantom.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult

**Action:** Extended. The interval for each roll is 1 hour and the alien must accumulate a total of number of successes equal to three times the ephemeral being's rank (e.g., 3 successes for a rank 1 phantom, 6 for rank 2, 9 for rank 3, etc.). At the end of this process, a phantom of the proper rank appears. The storyteller may use their discretion when determining the precise nature of the phantom.

**Dramatic Failure:** The summoning succeeds without the alien's knowledge. The phantom is free to escape into the greater World or to harass (or otherwise make life miserable for) the alien that summoned it. If the phantom is of a sufficiently high rank, the consequences for dramatic failure may be dire.

**Failure:** No successes are accumulated. The alien can stop the attempt or accept a condition to continue.

**Success:** The alien accumulates successes towards the desired result.

**Exceptional Success:** The process proceeds particularly smoothly. The alien accumulates one addition success beyond those indicated by the dice.

### Weapon Battery

Your character's Vessel has an array of anti-ship weapons. While these can be extremely useful when confronted with other extraterrestrial battleships, it has limited utility when employed against terrestrial agencies.

\* Designer's Note: This Amenity is intended for NPC aliens that the storyteller might use as antagonists against the players. Special consideration for game balance should be taken into account if the player(s) and storyteller agree that this Amenity can be purchased by player characters. Ideally ship-to-ship actions should take place far away from populated areas (unless the storyteller and troupe agree to make some radical changes to their chronicle's setting).

**System:** The alien's Vessel has a number of weapons determined by the storyteller (or optionally by the storyteller and player – see note above). The quantity and types of weapons are limited by the character's dots in Vessel and are summarized in the table below.

Vessel Rating	No. of Main Guns	Main Gun Type	No. of Secondary Weapons	Secondary Weapon Type
1	0	n/a	2	Projectile
2	1	Projectile	4	Projectile
3	1	Projectile	6	Projectile

4	2	Projectile	8	Projectile
5	2	Missile	10	Projectile
6	3	Missile	12	Missile
7	3	Missile	14	Missile
8	4	Beam	16	Missile
9	4	Beam	18	Missile
10	5	Dark Energy	20	Beam

Projectile weapons tend to be based on kinetic energy kill weapons like mass drivers, railguns, and coil guns. Missiles tend to deliver low to high-yield fission and fusion warheads and, beam weapons tend to be particle beams or very high powered lasers. Main guns provide bonus aggravated damage equal to one half (round down) of the character's dots in Vessel, while secondary weapons provide bonus lethal damage equal to one half (round up) the character's dots in Vessel. Each weapon consumes an amount of Fuel dependent upon its type (see additional table below). The maximum damage of the guns is limited by type.

Main Gun Type	Fuel Used	Max. Bonus Damage	Secondary Gun Type	Fuel Used	Max. Bonus Damage
Projectile	20	+2A	Projectile	5	+3L
Missile	35	+3A	Missile	9	+5L
Beam	45	+4A	Beam	10	+5L
Dark Energy	50	+5A	n/a	n/a	n/a

The storyteller (and optionally the player) can opt to mix up the weapon types in order to create multiple tiers of guns. For example, Sarah decides that the epic ending for her chronicle will involve a ship-to-ship battle between two opposing forces that have been using the player's characters like cats-paws. She decides the principle Vessel in the confrontation is commanded by an alien with 8 dots of Vessel. She chooses to give it only a single beam weapon as a main gun, representing the other three main guns as two rail guns (projectile weapons) and one missile battery. She also chooses to give it a mix of secondary weapons – 8 projectile and 8 missile batteries.

The sophisticated automation possessed by Vessel's allow them to target multiple target's independently (simply divide a pool of dice equal to twice the character's dots in Vessel among the various primary and secondary weapons to represent). The character may choose to control one of the guns, substituting his Dexterity + Firearms for the Vessel's dice pool. This reduces the dice pool that can be split among the other guns by one. Similarly, the alien may permit a number of additional characters equal to his dots in Vessel to assume control of various guns (substituting their Dexterity + Firearms for the Vessel's dice pool). The dice pool that can be split among the remaining guns is reduced by one for each additional character permitted to do this.

The alien gains the Vessel Discovered Condition if this Amenity is used within a number of miles equal to the alien's dots in Vessel x 100 of mortal witnesses (regardless of whether or not they are conditioned mortals). Note that a Vessels weaponry is of a large enough caliber to damage. Damage from a successful hit should be resolved as though it were a bomb or similar explosion.



## Clones

A Vessel's crew is an extension of its essential functionality. Even when badly damaged, a grounded Vessel will try to rebuild at least one of its crew members (typically the player's character). It does this by cloning an alien's tissue.

This makes a Stranded's life something of a purgatory, as their Vessel may bring them back from the dead against their wishes. At the same time, it can act as a useful backup feature if an alien's confederates turn against him.

**Systems:** The time it takes a Vessel to quicken a new clone depends upon the strength of the Vessel (summarized in the table below). The most powerful Vessels can return a dead alien back to the living within a matter of hours. Normally though the process takes years or even decades (and it is not unusual for an alien to have been killed during the crash to awaken and find itself marooned years later) and so the Stranded look upon death as one of greatest inconveniences.

Vessel Rating	1	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10
Quickening Time	1 decade per box of Health	1 year per box of Health	1 month per box of Health	1 week per box of Health	1 day per box of Health	1 hour per box of Health

Since the Vessel regularly updates its stores of genetic material for making clones, most of a clone's memories will remain intact. However, memories formed at the time of death, especially if the alien suffers sudden death due to mishap or violence, are not preserved. And so the character may have to piece together exactly what happened to its older self.

Because the clones are based on the alien's genetic state, it is possible for aliens to age out of the system. Aliens that die from age-related natural causes cannot be replaced. Occasionally Vessels have additional crew members that they can resurrect to carry on repair work, replacing Stranded who aged out of the process. It is also possible for the Stranded to retard their aging process by using stasis pods to sleep for hours, days, months, or even years without biological wear and tear.

## Concealment

Like the Stranded themselves, an alien's Vessel has a number of systems that allow to blend in with its surroundings.

**Systems:** Any character who is either obsessed with the alien (i.e., possesses the Obsession Condition) or who is aware of the alien's true nature may attempt to locate its space craft. The procedure for this follows the Investigation rules that appear in *Chronicles of Darkness* (pp 77-81). The alien's Vessel rating acts as a penalty against any successful investigation rolls.

The effectiveness of this penalty is reduced by one for each step away from the end reveal it is. This makes it easier for investigators to discover clues early on but makes solving the mystery of where the alien's spacecraft is more difficult.

### First Aid

Every Vessel provides a modicum of health facilities for its Stranded owner to use. While they aren't helpful to cure illnesses or counteract poisoning, 3D tissue printers can be used to repair mechanical damage done to an Alien.

**Systems:** The Alien spends 1 Fuel to downgrade 2 Lethal into 2 Bashing damage or 1 Aggravated damage into 1 Lethal damage. This can be done multiple times as long as Fuel remains in the Vessel's reserve. The Alien cannot benefit from this ability if it is suffering from illness (i.e., if it has either the Feverish or Delirious Condition).

### Flight

While none of the Stranded's Vessels are spaceworthy anymore, almost all of them can still move when necessary. Moving one's Vessel from one location to another location is a particularly risky proposition that no alien takes lightly.

Because native technology has reached a point where large swaths of the planet's surface are covered by radio transmissions, the amount of time that a Vessel may remain hidden while moving is dependent upon both its strength and the population density of the area.

**Systems:** The table below summarizes how quickly flight consumes fuel and for how long a Vessel may move before being detected by native agencies. Stranded whose Vessels are detected gain the Vessel Detected Condition.

Vessel Rating	Fuel Consumption (per hour)	Maximum Speed	Wilderness Detection Time	Rural Detection Time	Suburban Detection Time	Urban Detection Time
1	5 Fuel	100 mph	24 hours	3 hours	15 minutes	30 seconds
2	10 Fuel	200 mph	18 hours	2 hours	10 minutes	20 seconds
3	15 Fuel	400 mph	13 hours	1 hour	5 minutes	15 seconds
4	20 Fuel	800 mph	9 hours	45 minutes	2 minutes	10 seconds
5	25 Fuel	1600 mph	6 hours	30 minutes	1 minute	5 seconds
6	30 Fuel	3000 mph	4 hours	20 minutes	45 seconds	2 seconds
7	35 Fuel	4500 mph	3 hours	15 minutes	30 seconds	1 second
8	40 Fuel	8000 mph	1 hour	10 minutes	20 seconds	.75 seconds
9	45 Fuel	14,000 mph	45 minutes	5 minutes	15 seconds	.5 seconds
10	50 Fuel	20,000 mph	30 minutes	2 minutes	10 seconds	.3 seconds

Often, Stranded move their Vessels because they have been detected while on the ground. If the alien already has the Vessel Detected Condition and they would gain it a second time because they elapsed the safe flight time, then they are simply unable to resolve the condition until they land and wait for a full fifteen minutes to pass.

The alien may always choose to move their Vessel through a body of water more than 25 feet deep. This prevents the Vessel's movement from being detected (and allows the Vessel Detected Condition to be resolved) but decreases the Vessel's maximum speed by 10 times the character's dots in Vessel. For example, an alien who possesses 4 dots in Vessel would be limited to 20 mph when moving the Vessel through a body of water.

Mortals who spot a Vessel flying experience a breaking point for being exposed to something supernatural but do not otherwise experience Panic. The spacecraft is too far away at this point.

Exceptionally powerful Vessels can produce enough speed to achieve sub-orbital flight, briefly leaving the boundaries of the planet's atmosphere before plunging back down. Despite the great speed at which they can then traverse the surface of Earth, they still cannot manage true spaceflight.

### *Fuel*

Fuel is the lifeblood of a Stranded's Vessel. While the Stranded themselves might have some personal biological superiority to the natives in the form of their Adaptations, their Ornāmenta, Vessel, and other assorted advantages rely on Fuel. Unlike ephemeral beings, the vast majority of Stranded have no ability to store Fuel within themselves. Instead, their Vessels maintain a reserve from which Ornāmenta capacitors are charged and the Vessel powers its Amenities and other functions.

**Systems:** Vessels cannot refine their own Fuel and rely on their alien crew to find, gather, and produce it for them. The systems for these activities can be found in the sections above (see especially the Merit – Fīnis). The following table summarizes how a Vessel's strength relates to the size of its Fuel reservoir.

<b>Vessel Rating</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Fuel Reserve</b>	25	50	75	100	125	175	225	275	325	375

### *Quiescent State*

Even though Vessels are difficult to track when moved, it is still possible for pursuers to put together enough clues to determine where an alien may have been going. In instances where simply moving her Vessel was not enough to resolve the Vessel Detected Condition, a Stranded may choose to power her Vessel down after moving it to a new location.

**Systems:** To place the Vessel in a Quiescent State, the alien simply spends one point of Willpower. To wake the Vessel from a Quiescent State, the alien spends another point of Willpower and one point of Fuel from the Vessel's reserve.

By putting her Vessel into a Quiescent State, the alien effectively resolves the Vessel Detected Condition. The Vessel must remain in this state for one day for each dot of Vessel that the character possesses. If the alien reactivates the Vessel during this time, she regains the Vessel Detected Condition. In either event, the alien does not gain the beat for resolving the condition until the required amount of time in a quiescent state has elapsed.

A side effect of the Quiescent State is that the character's dots in Vessel are considered to be one less than normal for the purposes of determining the effects of Paranoia on the surrounding natives. A character with an effective Vessel rating of 0 does not generate Paranoia in the surrounding natives. Aliens sometimes put their Vessel's into this state simply to reduce the amount of Paranoia affecting the surrounding natives.

**Drawbacks:** Like so many choices that the Stranded are faced with, putting their Vessel into a Quiescent State is a difficult one and this particular choice has some serious drawbacks for the alien. While her Vessel is in a Quiescent State an alien can no longer use her dots in Vessel as a supernatural advantage in rolls in that normally allow it. She can also no longer recharge her

Ornāmenta's capacitors (even if there is Fuel available, none can be transferred while the Vessel remains quiescent). She still causes Panic and can employ her Adaptations and Ornāmenta (so long as they still have Fuel in their capacitors). However, she also loses any benefits from her Vessel's Amenity until such a time as she reactivates it. Finally, at most precariously, no clones can be quickened while the Vessel is quiescent, so she must take extra care to avoid infections and injury.

### *Safe Place*

In some ways an alien's Vessel is the ultimate form of the Safe Place merit. Part home, part fortress, and part factory, every Vessel acts as the central base of operations for its crew.

**Systems:** Like Safe Place, an alien receives an initiative bonus equal to its dots of Vessel while within the spacecraft's confines. Natives or other intruders seeking to breach the Vessel suffer a penalty equal to the character's dots in Vessel. The Vessel also possesses automated defenses that can inflict lethal damage equal to one half (rounded up) of the character's dots in Vessel to intruders. Intruders can avoid the defenses by making a successful Dexterity + Larceny or Stealth roll, penalized by the alien's dots in Vessel. Alternatively they can disable an automated defense by inflicting amount of damage to it equal to the alien's dots in Vessel. Defenses are durable and have a durability rating equal to one-half (rounded up) of the character's dots in Vessel. Stranded with particularly powerful Vessels live in veritable fortresses.

Stranded can join their Vessels together but unlike the Safe Place merit, only the highest Vessel rating applies. Such joinings allow Stranded to benefit from pooled resources like access to additional Amenities and larger Fuel reserves.

### *Stasis Sleep*

For short-lived Taxa like the Fōrmae, Vessels have high-tech means for extending life by retarding the aging process. This is accomplished through Stasis Sleep Pods.

**Systems:** Stasis Sleep Pods have two modes: 1) short duration (2~40 hours) and 2) long duration (1 week ~ 1 century). The alien chooses the duration. The alien stops aging for the duration specified. Particularly powerful Stranded have used their sleep pods to persist for centuries while on Earth, skipping through time like ancient gods.

While in stasis the alien is effectively dead and cannot be effected by mind-affecting powers. Short-duration stasis provides no additional benefits. However, long duration stasis makes the alien virtually indestructible. It costs 10 Fuel to employ long-duration stasis.

The alien may use the stasis pod on others but cannot benefit from it until the selected duration elapses.

**Drawbacks:** The alien is essentially helpless while in stasis-sleep. It cannot be reawakened before the set duration elapses, regardless of what is happening around it. Should its Vessel be destroyed somehow while it sleeps, the alien also perishes if it were in stasis for a short duration. When long duration stasis sleep has been selected, the stasis pod becomes an indestructible lifeboat.

Aliens who lose their Vessel in this manner survive and can potentially return to their original standing among the other Stranded by finding a quiescent Vessel whose owner has perished. (Simulated by the alien character repurchasing the first dot of Vessel using their experiences. Storytellers are encouraged to build entire stories or chronicles around this.)

The stasis pods can themselves be removed from an alien's Vessel should an intruder overcome any automated defenses. (And of course the intruder has to find the Vessel's location and potentially overcome any confederates, native or otherwise, that the alien may have.) These pods cannot be reactivated once their inhabitant awakens.

## Chapter 4: Rules of the Marooned

In a normal Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook this is the chapter where you would find information regarding your characters traits and how to use them. Since this is a fan-production, I'll be referring you to relevant sections of existing Chronicles of Darkness Rulebooks.

### Traits

Traits describe your character's innate talents (attributes) and learned abilities (skills and skill specialties). A full discussion of them can be found in Chronicles of Darkness (pp 30-43), Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp 163-169), Werewolf: the Forsaken 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp 153-159), and Beast: the Primordial (pp 149-154).

### Rolling Dice

In order to accomplish most things during the course of a chapter, you'll have to roll dice to see if your character was able to adequately employ its talents and abilities to overcome obstacles. Full discussions of the mechanics of rolling dice can be found in Chronicles of Darkness (pp 68-73), Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp 169-173), Demon: the Descent (revised ed.; pp 313-314), Werewolf: the Forsaken 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp 159-162), and Beast: the Primordial (pp 156-160).

### Time

Information on how the game is divided into dramatic events can be found in Chronicles of Darkness (p 73), Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (p 173), Werewolf: the Forsaken 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp 162-163), and Beast: the Primordial (p. 161).

### Investigation

Rules for investigating mysteries are found in Chronicles of Darkness (pp 77-81).

### Social Maneuvering

Rules for persuading people that your character encounters to do things for her can be found in Chronicles of Darkness (pp 81-84), Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp 173-175), Demon: the Descent (revised ed.; pp 314-317), Werewolf: the Forsaken 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp 163-165), and Beast: the Primordial (pp 161-163).

### Chases

Rules for dramatic chase scenes are found in Chronicles of Darkness (pp 84-86).

### Combat

Rules of resolving physical conflicts can be found in Chronicles of Darkness (pp 86-98), Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp 175-184), Demon: the Descent (revised ed.; pp 317-328; 335-336), Werewolf: the Forsaken 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp 165-173), and Beast: the Primordial (pp 161-172).

## Vehicles

Rules describing vehicles are found in *Chronicles of Darkness* (pp 98-100).

## Equipment

Characters often have access to tools (like cell phones) that make life much easier. Equipment is detailed in *Chronicles of Darkness* (pp 100-103), *Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (pp 184-192), *Werewolf: the Forsaken 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (pp 173-177), and *Beast: the Primordial* (pp 172-181).

## Conditions & Tilts

Several new Conditions particular to *Alien: the Stranded* are detailed in the appendix at the end. General rules describing other Conditions and Tilts can be found in *Chronicles of Darkness* (pp 75-76), *Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (pp 193), *Demon: the Descent* (revised ed.; pp 328-335), *Werewolf: the Forsaken* (pp 178), and *Beast: the Primordial* (pp 181-182).

## N-Fractal Spaces, Horrors and Phantoms

The universe in which the *Chronicles of Darkness* takes place is just one of many in a vast Multiverse of Darkness. N-Fractal Spaces are alternate universes that surround the one in which the *Chronicles of Darkness* takes place. Because various universal constants vary, the natural laws in these universes behave differently than they do in the *Chronicles of Darkness*.

There exist throughout all of the multiverse places where the barriers between universes become thin. Stranded refer to such places as a *Fīnēs* (or using any of the thousands of different words employed in their native tongues). Strange energies (Essence) emanate from these *Fīnēs*. Over the millennia alien civilizations have learned how to exploit these energies in a rote manner, refining Essence into Fuel.

Essence isn't the only thing that bleeds into the world from a *Fīnis*. Sometimes entities cross back and forth between the worlds by accident or by design. Some of these entities are physical beings, not too dissimilar to aliens or the natives of Earth. Other beings are ephemeral in nature. The Stranded divide them into two categories along those lines – Extraterrestrial Horrors and N-Fractal Phantoms.

Unlike the Stranded, most extraterrestrial horrors lack a means to blend in with the natives and often have freakish appearances. These exotic beings sometimes have arcane equipment similar to the *Ornāmenta* that aliens employ and sometimes have more arcane abilities.

N-fractal phantoms are extremely similar to other ephemeral beings. They consume and employ Essence and possess Numen with which to affect their environment. Unlike ghosts which have anchors and angels and spirits which have influences, n-fractal phantoms bend and warp the space around them causing paranoia in the natives that dwell near their hiding places.

Just as extraterrestrial horrors and n-fractal phantoms can cross into the world of the *Chronicles of Darkness*, so to can aliens and their confederates cross into n-fractal space. The geography of n-fractal spaces can range from the nearly normal to completely surreal. Things that natives take for granted, like linear spaces, may disappear altogether.

## Traversing N-Fractal Spaces

The environments of other n-fractal spaces are even more varied than the kinds of planetary terrains that one can find spread throughout the universe. For aliens though there are two primary

distinctions that can be made among n-fractal spaces – there are those that are corporal zones and those that are phantom zones.

Corporal zones obey physical rules that are relatively similar to the universe that the Chronicles of Darkness takes place in. Living beings circadian rhythms and biochemical cycles are not disrupted. This does not mean that aliens and their confederates can just safely come and go as they please. Corporal zones come with a host of hazards in the form of hostile environments, civilizations, and interdimensional nexuses.

### *Corporal Zones*

Any hostile environment may occur in a corporal zone and in some cases a corporal zone is wholly composed of a hostile environment. More ordinary environments might be vast and deep oceans or seemingly endless tracks of forlorn wasteland. More esoteric (and dangerous) environments include airless voids, floating rocks, looped space, sprawling seas of magma, and carpets of festering undead creatures. Aliens must rely on their Ornāmenta and similar advantages to survive such places.

Hostile environments are not the only potential dangers that Stranded traveling into n-fractal spaces face. Civilization or the ruins thereof can present their own set of problems for extra-dimensional travelers. Many corporal zones are the withered remnants of universes in the process of dying. These haunted places are often filled with the ghosts of their former inhabitants or the ancient beings that those inhabitants looked to for protection.

Even when a corporal zone is populated by living entities the risks faced by the alien and its confederates are often no less (and indeed are sometimes greater) than if they had to contend with a hostile environment. The language barrier alone can cause significant problems and even when that can be overcome differences in cultural norms can easily lead the Stranded into finding themselves as sacrifices to deities even darker than their own.

Finally, it is not unusual to find interdimensional nexuses that lead to yet other n-fractal spaces. Essence freely flows from these spaces affording Stranded who have ventured far into the corporal zone a means to recharge their Ornāmenta. Stranded who have become lost or who entered a corporal zone on accident can sometimes use a nexus as a means to return home.

<Sidebar>

### *Ephemeral Realms*

For the purposes of cross-over friendly game play, places such as the Shadow, the Underworld, the Primordial Dream, the Hive, a Beast's Lair, the Astral Plane, and the Hedge (among others) are all Corporal Realms that living entities can enter if they have the means.

Storytellers and troupes that agree to this kind of play should shuffle these realms into the mix with other n-fractal spaces while also keeping in mind that these places are different from normal n-fractal spaces. Specifically they are all extensions of the Chronicles of Darkness universe. Ephemeral beings are ephemeral regardless of which side of the barrier they are on, i.e., ghosts remain ephemeral regardless of whether or not they are roaming the Earth or chained in the Underworld.

The sole possible exception to this is the alien realm from which the Stryx hail. Vampire scholars who have met the extraterrestrial Stranded and gleaned a modicum of understanding of the latter's cosmology theorize that the Stryx hail from a phantom zone and in their own realm possess a great substance not evidenced by the smoky forms they take in the world of the Chronicles of Darkness.



</Sidebar>

### *Phantom Zones*

Phantom zones are n-fractal spaces in which life as aliens (and the natives of Earth) know it is impossible. This does not prevent beings from moving between the phantom zone and the world of the Chronicles of Darkness. It simply means that such entities are compacted into an ephemeral form. For beings native to the phantom zone, this means that they enter the Chronicles of Darkness as n-fractal phantoms. For aliens and their confederates, this means that their physical form is compressed into an ephemeral form called Phantasmal Form.

The alien and anyone traveling with it remain in this form until they return to the world of the Chronicles of Darkness. While in phantasmal form, the alien is very limited in how it interacts with its new environment. It can still employ its Ornāmenta in this form and thereby can be a threat to the phantom zone's inhabitants.

Unlike corporal zones, the environment of phantom zones does not interact with entities in phantasmal form (unless they use their Ornāmenta or Adaptations). The entities native to a phantom zone can pose some risk to phantasmal travelers but for the most part are likely to ignore the vaporous travelers. Like corporal zones, locating an interdimensional nexus is going to be the best way for the alien to return to its own world if it doesn't have access to a Fīnis.

### *Phantasmal Form*

Corporeal entities entering phantom zones find their forms compressed into an ephemeral state. They take on the appearance of a roiling anthropoidal cloud, which in the case of aliens, glows from the inside with bright yellow light.

The character temporarily replaces her attributes with Power, Finesse, and Resistance. Use the highest of her Intelligence, Strength, or Presence to determine her Power. Use the highest of her Wits, Dexterity, or Manipulation to determine her Finesse and, use the highest of her Resolve, Stamina, or Composure to determine her Resistance. Aliens (and other supernatural entities) retain their Supernatural Tolerance (Vessel) and may add it to certain rolls as necessary.

Instead of Health, entities in phantasmal form have Corpora. Corpora can be damaged by the entities (N-Fractal Phantoms) of the phantom zone which are also made of Corpora. Corpora does not normally heal. An alien may use Fuel from her Ornāmenta or her personal store if she has one (regardless if it's an Adaptation or a Merit-based source) to heal her own Corpora. She can also use Fuel to heal the Corpora of her confederates by spending a point of Willpower.

The character may use her Ornāmenta to affect the phantom zone around her just as though it were the world of the Chronicles of Darkness. She may also use her Adaptations, excluding her Camouflage Adaptation, to affect the phantom zone around her as normal.

Native confederates of the alien who are in phantasmal form may also interact with the phantom zone's environment as they normally would. For all intents and purposes they count as ephemeral beings who have manifested. Complex tools that rely on electricity or chemistry will not work though and so an alien's native confederates gain no benefit from equipment like guns or cell phones while in the phantom zone. Native confederates that possess supernatural merits may employ them as normal.

### *Interdimensional Navigation*

An alien who finds himself stuck in an n-fractal space may attempt to use an interdimensional nexus to navigate home. The procedure is relatively simple. They simply focus on a feature or landmark (such as the clock-tower at the center of the town they dwell near) they are familiar with and step through the portal.

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Expression + Vessel (-2 for each confederate traveling with him)

**Action:** Instant

**Dramatic Failure:** A stray thought occurs to the alien, causing him to become lost in time and space. He travels to some new n-fractal space and the nexus closes behind him.

**Failure:** A stray thought occurs to the alien causing him to lose his way. He returns to the world of the Chronicles of Darkness but is hundreds of miles away from his spacecraft.

**Success:** The character returns to the world of the Chronicles of Darkness and is within one mile of his spacecraft.

**Exceptional Success:** As above, except the character emerges within his spacecraft.

## Chapter 5: Dangerous Fauna

This chapter contains the many antagonists that populate the Chronicles of Darkness. Among these are the dark suited agents of United Technologies, Inc., the otherworldly terrors that comprise both Taxa that lack Camouflage Adaptations and the Extraterrestrial Horrors that dwell in corporal zones and the N-Fractal Phantoms that populate phantom zones. How these entities are built using variations of the Chronicles of Darkness's normal ephemera and horror rules is discussed. Several examples are provided that storytellers can drop directly into their chronicles.

### Savage Natives

The natives of the Chronicles of Darkness are often the first and most frequent antagonists that the Stranded are confronted by. From people looking for relatives who have disappeared to those affected by the intangible patina of paranoia caused by the mere presence of one of the Stranded can make life unnecessarily difficult for it. The following examples showcase just a few of the Earthly obstacles that confront aliens as they struggle to survive.

### Obsessed Relative

**Description:** You didn't realize it at first but she was someone extremely familiar with the face you wear to disguise yourself. You keep thinking that you should change your disguise before she unmask you but every time you encounter her, you learn more valuable information that both improves your knowledge of the natives around you and helps you to invisibly move through their society. You know that something needs to be done soon or she'll bring things to a crux. You'd take her and use her to fashion a new disguise but unlike her brother, she has too many connections around her.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

**General Dice Pools:** Making Small Talk 8, Cooking for the Family 5, Gossiping about the Neighbors 7, Rumor Mongering 7

**Combat Dice Pools:** Handguns 3, Knives 3

**Initiative Modifier:** +4

**Defense:** 2

**Health:** 8

**Willpower:** 1

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 8

**Condition:** Obsessed (Persistent)

**Doubles As:** Nosy neighbor, local conspiracy theorist, crazed homeless person

### Paranoid Rioter

**Description:** Maybe you've revealed your true nature one time too many or maybe one of the natives living near you went stir-crazy. Whatever the case may be something has lit the powder keg of paranoid locals turning them into a frenzied mass of crazies. You keep thinking that you should do something to stop the violence but the fact is you'll be lucky to get back to your spacecraft intact. To make matters worse, local media will be reporting on the "incident" all too

soon. All too soon all manner of hunter will be hot on your trail. That's a problem for another time though. First you have to survive the hysterical natives destroying everything in their path.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 1

**General Dice Pools:** Wrecking Stuff 6, Scapegoating 4, Creeping 4, Inciting Others 5, Running 6

**Combat Dice Pools:** Handguns 4, Knives 5, Baseball Bats 5, Molotov Cocktails 6

**Initiative Modifier:** +4

**Defense:** 4

**Health:** 7

**Willpower:** 1

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 11

**Condition:** Violent Schizophrenia (Persistent)

**Doubles As:** Troubled teen, mental patient, burned-out druggie, broken combat veteran

<Sidebar>

### New Environmental Tilt: Rioters

While the example above provides the traits for one or more rioters, if the riot is of prodigious size (usually because the alien dwells in an urban setting) then the *Zombies!* Environmental Tilt (see *Chronicles of Darkness*, p 150) can be used to represent the effects of the rioters instead.

</Sidebar>

### United Technologies, Inc.

United Technologies, Inc. has a long history of dealing with extraterrestrial artifacts. Founded in 1872 by Aldus Riemann, the then Riemann Industries was a modest manufacturer of tooled factory line parts. In 1872 it was still a new company that, to its competitors, seemed to come from nowhere, but in fact had secretly risen from the ashes of Riemann's previous business venture.

Aldus had originally immigrated to the United States in 1862 where he was quickly drafted into the Union Army. He served through the Civil War as part of Grant's army. Afterwards he moved west to Kansas and became a successful cattle baron.

In the spring of 1872 Aldus's fate changed. In response to the string of mutilations on his ranch he hired a large band of cowhands and drifters and over the subsequent months hunted down the culprit behind the destruction of his herds. Late in June his men made a discovery which was to forever change the course of human history.

They had discovered a being of extraterrestrial origin and its crashed spaceship. The spacecraft itself was badly damaged and its occupant had been injured during the conflict with Riemann's ranch-hands. Together, Riemann and his men overpowered the creature and seized its spacecraft. Precisely what happened to both alien and spaceship remains unknown. There are rumors that circulate among those Stranded who have looked into United Technologies, Inc. Some say that Riemann killed the alien and destroyed much of the spacecraft, in the end salvaging just enough otherworldly technology to found his company. Others say that he captured the alien and imprisoned it in a stasis sleep pod. Still others say that the alien killed all of them and took on Aldus's identity.

Whatever the truth may be, in the 143 years since then, Riemann Industries slowly gobbled up its competitors and grew into the sprawling international conglomerate that it is today. With great regularity it sends agents in dark business suits to the corners of civilization worldwide in search of celestial intruders and their technology. No one knows what becomes of those it captures but one thing is certain, its agents are in possession of technology that is not native to Earth.

**Systems:** United Technologies, Inc. has access to some of the powerful technologies that the Stranded have brought to Earth with them. In addition to the normal range of Merits that a mortal character may choose to purchase, the agents of United Technologies, Inc. may also purchase dots in the Cybernetic Enhancements Merit (see Chapter 3).

### Corporate Man in Black

**Description:** Either you haven't been circumspect enough or too many spooky occurrences have been going on around you. Regardless the black-suited agents of United Technologies, Inc. are prowling around the neighborhoods you frequent. You know you need to move your Vessel to a new place where you can make a fresh start but you worry that the inevitable attention it brings will allow the agents to track you wherever you go. You can feel them closing in like a rope around your neck as you continuously debate with yourself – flee or hope they pass you by?

**Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2(4), Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

**General Dice Pools:** Canvassing 5, Making Small Talk 3, Finding Clues 6, Exploring Dark Places 5

**Combat Dice Pools:** Handguns 6, Restraining Suspects 5

**Initiative Modifier:** +5

**Defense:** 5

**Health:** 7(9)

**Willpower:** 2

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 11

**Merits:** Cybernetic Enhancements (Fuel Capacitor (10), Ray Gun 1, Stamina Booster 2)

**Doubles As:** Cyborg collaborator, mad science experiment

### Exotic Taxa

While the Camouflage Adaptation aids many taxa to blend in with the unsuspecting mass of humanity around them there are some taxa that lack a Camouflage Adaptation altogether. These beings, called Exotics by their fellow Stranded, are truly alien. Unable to blend in with the natives, these creatures make no attempt to assimilate with the mortal masses of the Chronicles of Darkness.

Like the Stranded themselves, United Technologies, Inc. groups Exotics into their own taxa and clades. Because these groupings are based upon the configuration of biological structures there is almost an infinite variety of exotic taxa. Three particularly common (if any aliens can truly be called common) exotics that the Stranded have dealings with are described below.

**Systems:** Storyteller's wishing to create their own exotic taxa should start with the Stranded template. Like the Stranded themselves exotic taxa have a Vessel that possesses an Amenity. They also employ Ornāmenta and have evolved Adaptations. They even have extraterrestrial

merits. The primary difference between the Stranded and Exotics is that the latter do not have a Camouflage Adaptation. Instead they choose a single Dread Power. They may also be given an additional Dread Power instead of an Adaptation anytime they would normally be allowed to purchase an Adaptation. Additionally, these beings are so alien to the normal human condition that they lack an Integrity analog (i.e., they do not use Assimilation) and they do not use the Cutis and Cor anchors but instead have an alien Virtue and Vice. Listings of Dread Powers can be found in *Chronicles of Darkness* (pp 144-148) and *Werewolf: the Forsaken* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp 210-212).

### Astēr Exile

**Description:** The Asterēs look like vaguely star shaped mass of ropey muscles. Their alien anatomies possess a specialized air sac, similar to that of fish, which allows them to float just off the ground. A number of other clades exist that range in appearance for toothy orbs to tentacled octopoids. The one feature all of them have in common are the air sacs that let them float through the air.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 3, Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Skills:** Academics 1, Crafts 2, Occult 1, Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Firearms 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Empathy 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 1, Subterfuge 2

**Skill Specialties:** Dark alley muggings, Protection racketeering, Shootouts

**Vessel:** 2

**Aspirations:** Take out frustrations on an innocent local, Find dinner, Escape exile

**Virtue:** Brutal reaver

**Vice:** Respect stronger thugs

**Adaptations:** Distension, Electrocytes

**Dread Powers:** Reality Stutter

**Occupatio:** Malefactor

**Amenity:** Containment Facility

**Ornāmenta:** Agony Rod 2, Personal Force Field 1

**Initiative Modifier:** +6

**Defense:** 3

**Health:** 7

**Willpower:** 6

**Size:** 4

**Speed:** 8

**Merits:** Contacts 2, Extra Adaptation (Spines), Occupatio Status 1, Small Frame

**Banes:** In addition to the normal alien weakness to disease, lethal or aggravated injuries caused by piercing weapons reduce an Astēr's speed on a 1 to 1 basis.

### Līmāx Scientist

**Description:** Līmācēs resemble massive armored slugs with a pair of limbs by their mouths. A truly ancient species of extraterrestrial, some Stranded believe that their point of origin may actually rival the Fōrmae's primeval origins. Little is known about their purposes but since they have been known to capture and experiment upon other alien taxa most Stranded try to give them a wide berth.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 5, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Strength 3, Dexterity 1, Stamina 4, Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Skills:** Academics 3, Computer 2, Investigation 1, Medicine 3, Science 4, Athletics 2, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Empathy 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 2

**Skill Specialties:** Vivisections, Disease diagnostics, Biochemistry, Extraterrestrial Anatomy, Botany, Pharmaceuticals

**Vessel:** 4

**Aspirations:** Find next experimental subject, Collect a dozen samples of local flora, Uncover the root genetics of the natives

**Virtue:** Methodical

**Vice:** Curious

**Adaptations:** Telepathy, Venom

**Dread Powers:** Armored Hide 2

**Occupātio:** Scīscitātor

**Amenity:** Medical Bay

**Ornāmenta:** Hypnosis Blaster 4

**Initiative Modifier:** +5

**Defense:** 3

**Health:** 11

**Willpower:** 5

**Size:** 7

**Speed:** 4

**Merits:** Enormous Form, Extraterrestrial Confederate 4, Occupātio Status 1

**Banes:** In addition to the normal alien vulnerability to disease, salt is very caustic to Līmācēs and causes 1 point of aggravated damage for each turn the Līmāx remains in contact with it.

### Stola Scout

**Description:** Stolae are a recent phenomenon on Earth. These man-sized beings look like a lumpy pyramid topped by a writhing knot of cable-like appendages. The Stolae are an aggressive taxon that seem to be engaged in some kind of warfare with a number of n-fractal phantoms which has frequently drawn the attentions of the agents of United Technologies, Inc. Many aliens try to avoid the Stolae but these bizarre aliens also deal in much needed parts that the Stranded desire for their Vessel repairs. For this reason, the Stranded often find themselves tempted into bargaining with these creatures.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

**Skills:** Computer 1, Crafts 2, Investigation 3, Politics 1, Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Firearms 4, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Weaponry 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

**Skill Specialties:** Aircraft piloting, Force reconnaissance, Hiding in dark places, Sabotage

**Vessel:** 1

**Aspirations:** Assess local defenses, Make contact with terrestrial collaborators, Control local area

**Virtue:** Indifferent

**Vice:** Glory of violence

**Adaptations:** Armored Carapace, Extra Limbs

**Dread Powers:** Interface

**Occupatio:** Excursor

**Amenity:** Armory

**Ornamenta:** Ray Gun 3, Sensor Drones 1

**Initiative Modifier:** +6

**Defense:** 5

**Health:** 8

**Willpower:** 6

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 5

**Merits:** Extraterrestrial Status 1, Finis 2, Occupatio Status 2, Off-World Supporters 1, Resources 1, Small Craft

**Banes:** In addition to being vulnerable to disease, Stolae are sensitive to flashing lights and exposure to strobing lights causes them to suffer 1 point of Bashing damage for every minute of exposure.

## Extraterrestrial Horrors

Extraterrestrial Horror is a catchall term for the strange beings that hail from corporal zones. Unlike the ephemera that exist in most otherworldly dimensions (like the Underworld), the creatures that populate corporal zones are physical in every manner.

Extraterrestrial Horrors are made in the same manner as their more eldritch counterparts (see *Chronicles of Darkness*, pp 140-148). Storytellers may select alien Adaptations and alien Merits for them in addition to Dread Powers and normal Merits. While Extraterrestrial Horrors do not have Vessels and so do not cause Paranoia, they do cause Panic on sight. Additional Dread Powers can be found in *Werewolf: the Forsaken* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp 210-212).

The following five Horrors are provided as examples of beings that are relatively common to n-fractal space.

## Amoeba

**Description:** Amoebae appear as amorphous blobs that slowly ooze across surfaces. These terrifying creatures hunger for organic materials and feed continuously on whatever is around them. Seemingly invulnerable to heat or cold, they are notoriously difficult to kill unless one knows the vulnerability of their acid-coated skin.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 1, Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 3, Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 1

**Skills:** Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Stealth 5

**Potency:** 2

**Aspirations:** Cause hysteria in intelligent beings

**Virtue:** Gourmand

**Vice:** Waste nothing

**Adaptations:** Distension

**Dread Powers:** Acidic Skin, Invulnerability (Cold, Heat), Snare

**Willpower:** 4



**Size:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Initiative Modifier:** +7

**Defense:** 7

**Merits:** Grappling 3, Safe Place 2

**Banes:** Lye causes aggravated damage to Amoebae at the rate of 1 point of aggravated damage for every handful (or 2~3 ounces).

## Mōnstrum

**Description:** Mōnstra are mammoth bear-like horrors with six limbs. They tend to be reclusive once they enter the world of the Chronicles of Darkness. While they are naturally vegetarians, the Panic that they cause can sometimes cause humans to come into conflict with them. Once injured, they become brutal beings capable of incredible savagery.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Strength 8, Dexterity 2, Stamina 6, Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Skills:** Athletics 7, Brawl 8, Larceny 1, Stealth 2, Survival 3, Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 3

**Potency:** 4

**Aspirations:** Return home

**Virtue:** Gentle

**Vice:** Wrathful

**Adaptations:** Extra Limbs

**Dread Powers:** Monstrous Resilience, Natural Weapons 2

**Willpower:** 9

**Size:** 7

**Speed:** 15

**Health:** 13

**Initiative Modifier:** +5

**Defense:** 9

**Merits:** Demolisher 2, Hardy 2, Iron Stamina 3, Relentless, Safe Place 1

**Bans:** Mōnstra cannot attack until they have suffered at least one point of lethal damage. They may only attack those that have caused lethal or aggravated damage to them.

## Serpēns

**Description:** The Serpentēs are a snake-like race that are very similar to the Lacertae. Little is known about them other than they have been found in corporal zones since time immemorial. Inter-dimensional travelers often boast of the sweeping majesty and ornate greatness of the primordial cities. Some scholars believe that they may be an off-shoot of Lacertae explorers that became stranded in coroporal space. Other scholars believe that the Lacertae are their descendants; the evidence of a successful inter-dimensional invasion. Whatever the case, the Serpentes seem like primitive throwbacks compared to the Stranded.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 4, Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4, Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

**Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Stealth 2, Weaponry 3, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 1

**Potency:** 1

**Aspirations:** Find the lost amulet of Daj'rnn

**Virtue:** Cold-blooded

**Vice:** Cruel

**Adaptations:** Venom

**Dread Powers:** Chameleon Horror, Natural Weapons 1

**Willpower:** 6

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 9

**Initiative Modifier:** +7

**Defense:** 3

**Merits:** Contacts 1, Resources 2

**Banes:** Not unlike the old legends of faerie creatures, cold forged iron (i.e., high-carbon steel quenched in ice, ice water, or snow) inflicts aggravated damage to Serpentēs.

## Tripūs

**Description:** Tripodēs are enormous three legged things that are worshipped (and summoned into the world) by a variety of antediluvian cults. Rumored to be the offspring of some nearly forgotten fertility goddess, the terrible creatures constantly work towards mysterious and unknown objectives. One thing that the Stranded know for certain, when one of these entities makes an appearance terrible things begin to occur.

**Attributes:** Intelligence: 3, Wits: 2, Resolve: 3, Strength: 8, Dexterity: 2, Stamina: 8, Presence: 5, Manipulation: 1, Composure: 2

**Skills:** Academics: 2, Occult: 5, Athletics: 4, Brawl: 5, Larceny: 2, Stealth: 1, Survival: 4, Animal Ken: 1, Intimidation: 4, Subterfuge: 2

**Potency:** 5

**Aspirations:** Awaken the Dark Mother

**Virtue:** Manipulative

**Vice:** Proud mentor

**Adaptations:** Extra Limbs

**Dread Powers:** Madness and Terror, Regenerate 1, Unbreakable

**Willpower:** 10

**Size:** 9

**Speed:** 24

**Health:** 17

**Initiative Modifier:** +4

**Defense:** 5

**Merits:** Indomitable, Demolisher 2, Cultists 5 (see Demon: the Descent (revised ed., p 121))

**Banes:** Weapons made from star metal (meteoric iron) cause aggravated damage to Tripodēs.

<Sidebar>

## Dark Mother's Children

In a cross-over game with Beast: the Primordial, Beasts will realize that they have automatic kinship with Tripodēs and can feed anytime a Tripūs tempts a mortal into undertaking some dark activity in exchange for greater occult powers. These alien entities will often bargain with unwitting Beasts to enter their Lairs and from there gain access to the Primordial Dream.

Once in the Primordial Dream the Tripūs begins to evolve into an ephemeral being with the Beast as its anchor. This process takes a number of days equal to the Tripūs's Potency. Once it has established itself in this form the Beast gains the Open Condition. Over the next few days and weeks the ephemeral Tripūs will attempt to Possess, Control and eventually Claim the Beast.

Like Vampires before a Strix, Beasts have few defenses against this process. If they can find some helpful mortals or other supernaturals willing to perform an exorcism then the Open Condition resolves causing the Tripūs to be lost in the Primordial Dream. Alternately they can enter their Horrors and attempt to hunt down and kill the Tripūs in the Primordial Dream. But this is an arduous process that may end in failure, causing the process to accelerate or the Beast's death.

A third, even more dangerous option exists. Should the Beast realize or learn of the danger that the Tripūs poses, it can invite a Hero bearing a weapon forged from meteoric iron into its Lair any time before the entity escapes into the wider Primordial Dream to slay it. The weapon borne by this Hero counts as a Bane for the Beast for the duration of invitation and so Beast's taking this option will have to be on guard for the almost inevitable double-cross.

Canny Beasts who aware of the Tripodēs existence have begun to theorize that this process occurs because Beasts may be off-message with regards to the Dark Mother's desires. Unfortunately the minds of Tripodēs are so alien that no one will ever probably know the truth.

</Sidebar>

## Vermis

**Description:** Vermēs are massive cthonic worms that burrow through the earth below the mortal worlds feet. Once they have gained entry into the world of the Chronicles of Darkness with will typically suborn a group of collaborators and cultists to worship them as deities. These megalomaniacal creatures live for adulation. They also grow over time, and those who are able to maintain their cults sometimes grow so large that they can crush entire neighborhoods.

**Attributes:** Intelligence: 2, Wits: 3, Resolve: 4, Strength: 9, Dexterity: 1, Stamina: 10, Presence: 7, Manipulation: 2, Composure: 5

**Skills:** Academics: 4, Occult: 2, Athletics: 4, Brawl: 5, Larceny: 5, Stealth: 3, Survival: 5, Weaponry: 4, Animal Ken: 5, Empathy: 2, Intimidation: 4, Subterfuge: 2

**Potency:** 8

**Aspirations:** Receive their adulations

**Virtue:** Wanton

**Vice:** Pride

**Adaptations:** Extra Limbs

**Dread Powers:** Armored Hide 2, Burrow, Juggernaut, Snare

**Willpower:** 17

**Size:** 25

**Speed:** 10

**Burrow:** 9

**Health:** 35

**Initiative Modifier:** +6

**Defense:** 7

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 3, Indomitable, Multilingual, Demolisher 3, Hardy 3, Cultists 3 (see *Demon: the Descent* (revised ed., p 121))

**Banes:** Weapons forged from dark matter in the heart of a star both ignore all of the Vermis's armor and defenses and also inflict aggravated damage.

## N-Fractal Phantoms

N-Fractal Phantoms hail from phantom zones. These creatures obey the normal rules for ephemera found in *Chronicles of Darkness* (pp 122-140) and *Werewolf: the Forsaken* (pp 178-193). For the most part they work exactly like other ephemeral beings. The ephemera their bodies are made from does not interact with that of angels, ghosts, or spirits unless otherwise noted.

The four n-fractal phantoms presented below are the most common kinds that aliens and mortals encounter. *Vīsiōnēs* are especially common and are easily confused for angels. N-fractal phantoms are sometimes found dwelling in the world of the *Chronicles of Darkness* without explanation. It is not known if these are cases where mortal cultists summoned an entity that got away from them or if they were somehow enter the world from n-fractal space on their own. *Scarabaeī* and, especially, *Vīsiōnēs* frequently seem to occur in places and with a commonality that suggest that they may have means of opening and traversing through interdimensional nexuses on their own.

**Systems:** While n-fractal phantoms use the same systems as other ephemeral entities they possess subtle differences. Instead of anchors, resonant objects, or infrastructure, n-fractal phantoms have curiosities which draw their attentions. These are represented by the Drawn Condition (below). The vast majority of these creatures are drawn to aliens and then objects around them. A few are drawn to mortals in particular.

In addition to this unique condition, some n-fractal phantoms are able to open doorways from their own phantasmal worlds onto ours. This is represented through a new manifestation ability *Interdimensional Gateway* and its attendant condition. Such beings can be bargained with to provide means open gateways to both phantom and corporal zones or, if the alien and its confederates have become lost in such a place, these phantoms can sometimes be persuaded to open gateways onto the mortal world of the *Chronicles of Darkness*.

### *Drawn (Condition)*

**Description:** The location, object, or subject of this condition is within the sphere of influence of the n-fractal phantom.

**Causing the Condition:** The condition occurs naturally as n-fractal phantoms follow their own innate curiousness and attractions. Typically the simplest n-fractal phantoms are attracted to anything which contains *Essence* or *Fuel* or is a source of either. This includes *Fīnēs*, *Ornāmenta*, *Vessels*, and occasionally *Aliens*. More complex n-fractal phantoms are attracted the natives, relics of power, or those who possess arcane knowledges of occult matters. High ranked n-fractal phantoms can use the *Create Influence* to cause the prerequisites for the condition.

**Ending the Condition:** The condition ends when the phenomenon causing it ends. One example, the alien depletes her *Vessel* and *Ornāmenta* of all of their *Fuel*. Because what draws n-fractal phantoms is their curiosity, the condition is not easily resolved without some form of

abjuration when it is centered upon mortals and mortal activities. Although cultists could certainly take an oath to no longer practice occult teachings and if they stay true thereby deprive a phantom of the source of its curiosity.

### *Interdimensional Gateway (Manifestation)*

**Systems:** (N-fractal phantoms only – Requires Open Condition) By spending 3 Essence, the entity opens a nearby gateway to N-Fractal Space, and applies the Interdimensional Gate Condition to the location. This gate may open onto the entity's native phantom zone, another phantom zone, or onto a corporal zone. The entity chooses when it opens the gate.

### *Interdimensional Gate (Condition)*

**Description:** The location has an open gateway that leads into n-fractal space. The gate may lead to a phantom zone or a corporal zone. N-fractal phantoms regain 1 Essence per scene that they are in the gateway's presence so long as it opens onto a phantom zone. If the gateway opens onto a corporal zone then they gain 1 Essence per chapter (or day if that is a shorter period of time).

**Causing the Condition:** This condition can be created using the Interdimensional Gateway Manifestation effect. Aliens can also cause a gate to appear by the purposeful use of high-energy particle accelerators in a laboratory setting or accidentally through a refining mishap at a Finis. Rarely, summoning rituals employed by alien or mortal occultists will create a gate.

**Ending the Condition:** The gate fades away at the end of the scene. An exorcism directed at the gate can end the Condition early.

### *Hirūdō*

**Description:** Hirūdinēs are extremely simplistic n-fractal phantoms. Incapable of coherent thought, these entities appear as winged bat-like lampreys to anyone that can see their twilight forms. Constantly in search of essence, they are attracted to anything that contains Fuel so that they can siphon it off, converting it back to essence with which to sustain themselves.

**Virtue:** Hungry

**Vice:** Stupid

**Rank:** 1

**Attributes:** Power: 1, Finesse: 3, Resistance 1

**Influence:** Fuel 1

**Corpus:** 3

**Essence:** 10

**Willpower:** 4

**Initiative Modifier:** +4

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 8

**Size:** 2

**Manifestation:** Twilight Form

**Numina:** Drain

**Ban:** Hirūdinēs cannot move once they've established the Drawn Condition. They are helpless while they feed.

**Banes:** Fire

## Lūx

**Description:** Lūcēs are insidious beings that escape into the world through a variety of means. These powerful ephemeral beings take great joy in driving intelligent corporeal beings insane. What exactly attracts them to a particular victim is unknown. Once they've been drawn to a victim though only an exorcism has any chance of saving them and, even then, the poor soul is likely to remain scarred by the continuous barrage of surreal imagery that a Lūx can fill the victim's world with.

**Virtue:** Sadistic

**Vice:** Playful

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power: 12, Finesse: 12, Resistance 6

**Influence:** Occult knowledge 4

**Corpus:** 10

**Essence:** 25

**Willpower:** 10

**Initiative Modifier:** +18

**Defense:** 6

**Speed:** 32

**Size:** 4

**Manifestation:** Twilight Form, Image, Possess, Claim

**Numina:** Aggressive Meme, Dement, Drain, Emotional Aura, Hallucination, Left-Handed Spanner, Rapture, Seek, Sign

**Ban:** Lūcēs cannot resist the sound of choral music. They are attracted to any form of choral or chanted melodies even when it leads them far from the things they are actually drawn to.

**Banes:** An energy lance from the most sacred and lost order of Ven'tillithun.

## Scarabaeus

**Description:** Scarabaeī are beetle-like intruders from an undocumented phantom zone. While little is known about them, they seem to have an interest in the natives that is not unlike the one possessed by the Stranded. They have been known to kidnap mortals, bearing them into nightmare realms for unfathomable procedures before returning them to their beds seemingly none the wiser. Scarabaeī have also been known to stalk aliens and ambush them for their Ornāmenta. While the Ornāmenta usually end up little more than melted masses of metal, the Scarabaeī return home with these treasures while their Stranded victim suffers the inconvenience of rebuilding the lost tool.

**Virtue:** Inscrutable

**Vice:** Whimsical

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power: 3, Finesse: 7, Resistance 5

**Influence:** Ornāmenta 3

**Corpus:** 10

**Essence:** 20

**Willpower:** 10

**Initiative Modifier:** +12

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 15

**Fly:** 20

**Size:** 5

**Manifestation:** Twilight Form, Manifest, Discorporate, Interdimensional Gateway

**Numina:** Awe, Blast, Mortal Mask, Regenerate, Stalwart

**Ban:** Scarabaeī cannot cross the threshold of any door that is closed but not locked.

**Banes:** Objects crafted from depleted uranium (i.e., steel made from an alloy of iron and uranium).

## Vīsiō

**Description:** Vīsiōnēs are among the most common of n-fractal phantoms that visit the world in which the Chronicles of Darkness take place. They are so common that some scholarly aliens believe that, like angels, Vīsiōnēs are natives of the real world. This is untrue but because these energy beings can sustain themselves on even dim sunlight, they can persist for centuries or even millennia without returning to their home phantom zone.

When manifested these entities take on the form of winged humanoids. While they typically wear human faces, some have been known to appear with the heads of animals resting on their shoulders. Vīsiōnēs are a dangerous variable in the Stranded's struggles. Sometimes they work to aid aliens and sometimes they stand in opposition to them. The Stranded have been able to detect no obvious pattern to this interference. Regardless, Vīsiōnēs are the n-fractal phantoms that Stranded are most likely to encounter.

**Virtue:** Balanced

**Vice:** Merciful

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power: 12, Finesse: 12, Resistance 11

**Influence:** Light 4

**Corpus:** 16

**Essence:** 25

**Willpower:** 10

**Initiative Modifier:** +23

**Defense:** 11

**Speed:** 29

**Fly:** 34

**Size:** 5

**Manifestation:** Twilight Form, Manifest, Discorporate, Interdimensional Gateway

**Numina:** Awe, Blast, Essence Thief, Implant Mission, Mortal Mask, Omen Trance, Resurrection

**Ban:** Vīsiōnēs require a source of light in which to act. They are unable to move, use numina, or employ manifestations when within total darkness and will not be willing to move into such places. They can use their influence to change the conditions so that entry is possible (e.g., by creating a source of light).

**Banes:** Weapons forged from dark matter in the center of a black hole will slay a *Vīsiō* outright.



## Chapter 6: Crash Sites

### Haunted Sands

The Great Basin has long been a center of alien activity. Encompassing a sizable portion of the states of Nevada and Utah, this vast collection of salt flats, dried up river beds, and desiccated wasteland is one of the more inhospitable places on Earth. Compared to the bustling, crowded cities that dot its coasts and populate the river valleys that feed its great plains, relatively few human beings dwell in this part of North America.

It is perhaps no surprise that aliens who find themselves marooned within the continental United States waste no time in gathering up the shattered remnants of their spacecraft and making their way to the wilderness areas of the basins. Some of them trek for thousands of miles in search of the rumored sanctuary of the area's colonies.

Lacertae and similar Clades especially find the region's environment agreeable to their lizard-like metabolisms. The region's colonies also sport more than a few Cerebra, especially closer to the nuclear test ranges in southernmost parts of the basin. While Cīmicēs and Gregēs and related Clades are somewhat rarer a few of them can be found scattered across the various colonies and clusters or sometimes living solitary existences in the deep wilderness.

It is the desert's Fōrmae which remain something of a curiosity to their fellow Stranded. By all estimates deserts are not environments that the formless changelings find very welcoming. They run great risks, especially in the summer months, if they are caught out in the merciless daytime sun. Nevertheless more than a few Fōrmae eke out an existence on the fringes of human or alien settlements.

None among the Stranded really know why this is but theories abound. Some speculate that the Fōrmae are driven there by the long forgotten deities that they are rumored to still serve. More suspicious Stranded venture that they are, in fact, attracted to large gatherings of other aliens and that their steadily accumulating numbers is evidence of some pending inter-taxa conflict. Still others guess that they might be searching for something. Whatever the case may be, all Stranded agree, there seem to be a lot of Fōrmae roaming the expanse of the Great Basin.

### Grey Lady Down

The low population density and overall climate of the Great Basin aren't the only reasons that so many of the Stranded have gathered into a single geological region. For as long as there have been Stranded on Earth there have also been rumors that the bones of a starcruiser of the most primeval providence are buried somewhere among the sagebrush, salt flats, and canyons.

The first clusters coalesced from treasure hunters who wasted their lifespans hunting for artifacts from the most ancient of alien species. This all but forgotten species is so old that they have no name among the various taxa and clades that find themselves marooned on Earth today. The black suited agents of United Technologies, Inc. are also aware of the distinction that the Stranded make between themselves and these entities that have been lost in the sands of time and, they refer to them and anything associated with them by the same term – rēliquiae.

There can be little doubt that the Fōrmae have gathered in the Great Basin because of these rumors and the kinship they feel for these primordial beings from which they believe they are descended. None of the other aliens have realized the truth of this secret. The Fōrmae themselves believe that much of this primordial Vessel remains intact and that if they can only find it then

they might be able to awaken their ancient progenitor or at least establish a firmer contact with the antediluvian deities that drive them onwards.

Many of the other Stranded also look for this fabled starship from another time. While the odd one of their number periodically finds an aged relic that might be from the ghost ship, many of them find that they must confront the more pressing matters of survival. They group together into clusters and their clusters merged into colonies. As it always is with such social entities, more practical matters trumped dreams of discovery and accolades but the starcruiser's legend survives.

## Survivors

Lacertae and clades associated with them are particularly common in the region. Two of the region's five colonies consist solely of this alien taxon. The larger of the two can be found in Sugar House neighborhood of Salt Lake City where it contends with the other Salt Lake City based colony hidden below Temple Square. The other Lacertae colony controls the centermost portion of the Humboldt River and is dispersed throughout the mining communities surrounding Battle Mountain.

In addition to the colony below Temple Square, the other two alien colonies are based around Groom Lake and Reno in Nevada. The majority of these mixed colonies are comprised by Cerebra and Cīmicēs with a smattering of Fōrmae, Gregēs, and Lacertae sprinkled throughout. There is a slightly higher proportion of Gregēs in the Salt Lake City colony and their taxon is rumored to have had a hand in the design and construction of both temple and tabernacle.

A number of clusters and extraterrestrial cults operate throughout the region. The most prominent of these operate in and around Mercury, Rachel and similar communities with relative proximity to the Nellis Air Force Range and places of interest within it like the Nevada Test Site and Area 51. While the radioactive sands and other contaminated materials provide a real hazard that prevents humans from exercising too much curiosity, centuries of evolution in the merciless reaches of deep space have left aliens with constitutions that are better suited to overcome this particular toxic hazard.

While Las Vegas is also relatively close to this region relatively few Stranded dwell there. It's highly urbanized nature combined with the fact that United Technologies, Inc. maintains its corporate headquarters there serves as a significant barrier against the survival of the secretive extraterrestrials.

## Invaders

A smattering of exotic taxa can be found throughout the Great Basin Desert. Its many wilderness areas and federally restricted lands make it the perfect place for these creatures to avoid too many entanglements with the natives. Rumors abound that the Salt Lake City colony below Temple Square has also provided refuge for several exotics.

A number of alien bounty hunters also operate throughout the region, dispensing cruel justice in the name of faceless beings residing on far-flung worlds galaxies away. Lacertae colonists dwelling in the Humboldt River's valley whisper that an escaped war criminal from Cn'tenn Proclamation has been seen in the region. Local gossips speculate that he may be searching for the mythical ship buried beneath the basin's sands or briny waters. While some venture that the rumors along lend credence to the starship's existence most agree that the off-world attention the area seems to be accumulating is undesirable.

Unknown to all but a very select few – the survivors of an ill-fated invasion force dwell among the local Stranded. These grizzled war veterans keep mute about the horrors of Areas 2, 3 and 9. Each year they gather together in Mercury's local VFW to whisper among themselves. There they recall comrades lost to the savage natives who so willingly scorched their own world and debate when or whether relief will ever arrive. It's been almost 60 years now and with each passing year their hope for rescue grows ever dimmer. And so they remain aloof, avoiding the safety of the regions colonies or even the comfort of one another's company in favor of standing a lonely vigil as they guard the fractured remnants of their warships.

The black-suited agents of United Technologies, Inc. also abound throughout the area. Aldus Riemann, still alive after almost two centuries, is well aware of both the rumors of the lost starcruiser and the massive interstellar battle that took place on earth scarcely six decades ago. With each passing day his dark suited agents troll the country-side looking for the clues to the former's whereabouts even has his army of top-flight lawyers badger and bargain with the federal government for more contractor access. Thus far his people have turned up few clues and have caught only two aliens while the government continues to stonewall his agents access to Nellis Air Force Range's top secret areas.

### Masterminds

**K'lthaan d'i** is one of a growing number of Jagh'den who have been born on Earth, the inheritors of diminished spacecraft their forbearers had no chance of repairing. A member of the Lacertae colony at Sugar Mill, d'i has lived her entire life in and around Salt Lake City. Not satisfied with being just another scaley face among the colonies members she adopted some of the local native's penchant for occultism and founded what amounts to a new age religious movement among her brethren.

Centered on the simple act of omen reading, her Pythian Society has garnered some small attention in both Stranded and native counter-cultures. At first the attention brought about by doing something new was thrilling. It both fulfilled her need for attention and provided a niche for her in both the colony's society and within the native civilization around her. But lately her dreams have been filled with visions of shadowed beings from a distant past begging for release from their otherworldly prison.

With the visions as her guide she has gathered her junior priestesses to her and begun to plan for an incursion into the depths of their neighboring colony where the myriad omens have indicated a means to cross between worlds can be found. Everything is moving as planned and the auspicious day draws ever nearer. At long last one of her visions is about to come to pass.

**Xxerxxer**, or The Huntsman as the Stranded eking out a living along the Humboldt River call it, is the latest in a long lineage of C̄mex bounty hunters. Hailing from the far off Seridian Collective, Xxerxxer has come to Earth in search of an escaped Astēr war criminal named N'lan.

Unfortunately for The Huntsman, N'lan got the better of it. Suffering from the indignities of having his Vessel's stardrive and primary thruster systems disabled, The Huntsman trolls the desert wilderness of the Great Basin's northern reaches in search of his prey who seems to have vanished into the endless tracks of rubble, sagebrush, and briny creek beds.

If Xxerxxer tried it might be a simple matter to repair its damaged Vessel but it has yet to take such actions. Truth be told, it revels in the challenge of surviving on uncivilized worlds such as Earth. But moreover, hunting down N'lan and putting him in one of the many holding cells lining its Vessel's corridors has taken on a singular priority. Repairs will simply have to wait.

The Huntsman is convinced that it still has more than enough power at its disposal to bring its quarry to heel.

**If Widi** (pronounced eef weedee) was once a ranking commander in the Grand Rgylian Armada. His squadron of destroyers was the pride of the sector and, he led them to victory in three separate campaigns. He oversaw the blockade of Antenden Confederation's homeworld. In short If Widi was a military commander of some skill and acumen. Despite such a long a meritorious history, If Widi suffered a particularly devastating defeat at the hands of the natives of Earth some 64 years ago.

The orders had been simple enough. An extremely ancient starship had been discovered on Earth – the *Krel m'ntaan*. The squadron was to make planetfall, fight off any other extraterrestrial powers and retrieve the ancient ruin. If their opposition had only been a handful of marooned extraterrestrials with broken-down spacecraft, things would have unfolded smoothly and victory would have been achieved.

They had severely underestimated the natives' response to the situation. What followed was a devastatingly one-sided atomic extermination that went on for the better part of a decade. Only a handful of the squadron's complement survived and most of those did so in smaller reconnaissance or tender vessels. Of the warships themselves, only If Widi's Vessel survived, if the hollowed out wreck that it is could be called surviving.

Abandoned by the admirals who dispatched him to Earth, and with the *Krel m'ntaan* in mortal hands, If Widi has managed to build a quaint, native-like life, hiding in plain sight amongst his enemies. As the tired Cerebrum grows ever older he begins to wonder if there is any actual merit in trying to get off-world, or even of continuing to carry on. Even if did return to the Armada, he'd be a disgraced commander. Perhaps abandoning all hope and going native wouldn't be so bad, or so he speculates. Or perhaps the time has come for an old soldier to just lay down and die. If only he didn't have other survivors that he was responsible for...

**Aldus Riemann** furtively watches the entire Great Basin from his squat corporate offices in Las Vegas's small but bustling business center. The hundred and forty-eight year old scarcely looks a day over seventy. Powerful muscles still grip his broad shoulders and age hasn't slowed him down a bit.

He knows it's out there. He can sense its presence. By rights, the *Krel m'taan* should be his, afterall, he found it first. But governments and extraterrestrials have blocked him from taking it at every turn for more than half a century. After having come so far, it infuriates him that his minions aren't out scouring the radioactive sands of the Nevada Test Site day and night looking for the primeval hulk. But generals, lawyers, and politicians have balked at granting access and so all he can really do is stare out the window and fume.

Occasionally the people working for him wonder how he is related to founder of their company, little realizing that the man staring out the window and the old cattle rancher are one and the same.

The truth is that Aldus Riemann is dead. And he has been for a long time. He got too close to the Fōrma whose ship had crashed onto his ranch and the old alien had consumed him and been wearing the man's form ever since. Sort of. Truthfully that old Fōrma is also more or less dead – a victim of an intrepid Lūx with a keen interest in restoring the ancient starship.

Now the man who appears as Aldus isn't really a Lūx and isn't really a Fōrma and definitely isn't human but, he still wields a great deal of power. And day-by-day his army of minions grows stronger and stronger. Sooner or later, the *Krel m'ntaan* will fall into his hands. It is inevitable. That doesn't mean he enjoys the delays.

**General Sean N. Abernathy** is keenly aware that there are extraterrestrials living on Earth. He's also keenly aware that more of them have an interest in both the shattered fragments of alien warships that his predecessors blew to kingdom come in the '50s and the rotted out derelict that he discovered in the process of doing that.

The commander of the Nellis Air Force Range keeps a close eye on any suspicious goings on, especially those of people in the employ of United Technologies, Inc. While the corporation's employees and products had both served to propel the United States onto a firm path of technological innovation, something about the company's miserly owner rubbed the general the wrong way. The hairs on the back of his neck stood on end anytime he was even near the man.

There was no way he was going to let the man's employees help with environmental clean-up in any of the old nuclear test site's contaminated areas. He couldn't afford to have them snooping around and finding out about the Have Finger program. If it got out that the military was actually in possession of alien technology like the pot-smoking crackheads and cranks scurrying around the desert opined daily it would probably only be a matter of time before another alien fleet tried to make planetfall. The nukes might have been effective but, they weren't exactly good for the environment. Nobody wanted to glow in the dark from eating beef after all.

## Places

The Great Basin Desert forms a roughly triangular bowl with **Salt Lake City** at its northeast corner. Within the city proper **Temple Square** is the most important landmark for aliens. It isn't hard to find Cerebra, Cīmicēs, or even the odd Grex living nearby and the upper echelons of the Church of Latter Day Saints is riddled with extraterrestrials. With so many Vessels in one place it's easy to see why so many of the church's mortal members consider themselves constantly persecuted.

The **Sugar House** neighborhood is also a hot bed for alien activities. Here several dozen Lacertae have built a secret home for themselves right beneath the sprawling malls and capitalist development that is slowly gentrifying the neighborhood. They sneak about at night, skulking in the darkened corners of abandoned construction sites or watching the natives from shadowed alleys. Occasionally one gets hungry, forgets the local customs and snacks on one of the hapless natives.

In an effort to avoid complete social chaos, the most powerful of the local Stranded do not actually dwell within the confines of the city itself. Rather most of the leading colonists maintain cabins scattered across the shores of the **Great Salt Lake**. The lake itself harbors more than a few rotting hulks. Recent years have seen the great lake's water levels steadily shrink and, now the owners of those hulks cast nervous eyes to the ever encroaching shoreline as they silently wonder when they'll be forced to move on.

Opposite from Salt Lake City, sits the city of **Reno** at the far northwest corner of the Great Basin. Here the colonists wage a silent war against an ever increasing tide of extraterrestrial horrors. Thus far no one has been able to stem the tide even though the source has been traced back to the nearby **Pyramid Lake**. Those who have ventured to the lake have yet to return.

Stretching across the northern border region of the Great Basin is the **Humboldt River**. A colony based at **Battle Mountain** near the river's center watches over the entire northern half of the Great Basin. The aliens here are a motley collection of treasure hunters, exiles, bounty hunters, and other assorted scum waging their own little war on one another as they fight over scraps and clues that point towards the whereabouts of the fabled *Krel m'ntaan*.

Almost the entire southern half of the Great Basin is federal land. Widely known as **Nellis Air Force Range**, only the few scattered alien survivors of the '50s atomic war know that the **Nevada Test Site** is the graveyard for an entire extraterrestrial battle squadron. Even fewer realize that the radioactive sands are haunted by hundreds of ghosts – the forlorn spirits of extraterrestrials that died at the hands of native savagery. Almost none of them realize that the United States Air Force salvaged a great deal of alien technology and is hiding it on site at **Area 51** or that a vast assortment of what the natives considered to be unsalvageable junk now rests at the bottom of **Groom Lake**.

## The Crash of '47

### Survivors

Roswell is an infamous town among the natives. Despite efforts to suppress the truth, most natives know about the *crash of '47*. Most of them don't realize the complete truth that a space craft *did* crash and the bodies of its crew *were* recovered. Despite the overall success of a government cover-up at all levels, Roswell is home to a disproportionately large number of UFO cults. While many of these cults consist solely of mortals more than a few follow the beck and call of an alien master.

A large cluster of Cerebra operate within Roswell itself. Brethren to those that died in the crash of '47, they are seeking clues regarding what happened to the remains of both starship and crew. Unfortunately the trail is more than 50 years cold and none remain in town that actually witnessed the events of 8 July 1947.

Only a small handful of other taxa operate around the area. Most notably, several of the local cults serve as minions to Fōrmae and at least one enterprising Grex. Very few Cīmicēs or Lacertae operate in the area. Despite its small local population, there is a bustling flux of Stranded visiting from nearby communities such as Santa Fe and Los Alamos.

### Invaders

Large numbers of exotic taxa have been sighted operating out on the high plains surrounding the town. Whether or not these taxa represent an influx of off-world refugees who won't be able to easily blend in with the natives or a small reconnaissance task force for a pending military exercise is a hotly debated topic among the town's collection of Cerebra.

Several of the local cults serve more ephemeral task masters than aliens. Vīsiōnēs oversee at least three cults operating on Roswell's rural outskirts. In at least one of these cases, the Vīsiō operates through a Fōrma lieutenant. It is rumored that a couple of the cults are overseen by other angelic beings and answer to a machine-like alien presence deeply interwoven with the very layers of reality.

Given the history of Roswell, United Technologies, Inc. operates a branch office in the town. There they have had some success in hunting down the aliens who are visiting or who dwell in the area. First established in 1956, the branch touts the highest success rate of any of the corporation's offices – having captured one live alien, having recovered the bodies of six more, and having collected almost a full two dozen artifacts of various kinds.

### Masterminds

**G'n d'Naan** originally crashed far north in the Canadian province of Manitoba. The young Cerebrum has rashly come to Earth in search of its parent. An incident with a native animal

getting loose in his Vessel has left its navigation systems damaged and incapable of interplanetary flight. Despite this miscalculation, G'n d'Naan has continued searching for clues to its parent's whereabouts. In the decades since its crash it's steadily followed a string of rumors that ultimately led it to Roswell.

**Eldred**, as the ancient Fōrma calls itself, is an alien that is most pleased with itself. Eldred has served Rajenjendra on countless worlds over the millennia and like before it has successfully made contact with its god's agents. It has, through the ministrations of the mortal cultists it's gathered around it, even managed to bring one of Rajenjendra's elite minions into the world.

**Sibilance** is a Vīsiō who has spent centuries interfering with the sinister machinations of the vast inter-dimensional machine-being that infects the universe at its most basic levels. Masquerading as an agent of Rajenjendra, he has employed his faithful alien slave to build him an army and even gain him access to this world. Now all that remains is to throw a monkey-wrench into the fell machine's local goals.

**Emiel** has been tasked by the God-Machine to confront and eliminate the threat presented by Sibilance to the Its great plans. The infrastructure in and around Roswell has been layered into an intricate trap with one purpose, to summon, control, and subsequently banish the ancient and powerful n-fractal phantom known as Rajenjendra. After all, it isn't enough to eliminate Sibilance's mortal and alien confederates, it can always find new confederates. Discrediting it for all time is Emiel's assignment and if an entire town of mortals must be fed to some antediluvian phantom, well, Emiel will carry out her task at the appointed hour.

**Bralk** is an aged Līmax drifter who has recently come to rest on the outskirts of Roswell. Abandoned by his own kind centuries ago, the mad genius has set up shop in the abandoned facilities of Walker Air Force Base on the southern edge of town. There he has begun the arduous task of gathering other exotics who have crashed in or fled to the area to him in the hopes of founding the first colony of exotics, for exotics.

## Places

Roswell may be a large town, but it is still a town. The local Cerebra cluster try to keep it relatively free from other aliens and their Vessels, justifiably believing that anything more than five Vessels within the town's area will create too much chaos. This hasn't prevented the town from being something of a tourist attraction among the Stranded and a fair number of aliens come and go from the halls of **International UFO Museum**.

Large numbers of exotics have been gathering for months at the abandoned **Walker Air Force Base**. Their hopes of founding a colony have left the other local Stranded in a state of consternation. The Cerebra especially don't believe that the area can sustain so many aliens in one place and, the issue is becoming a flashpoint.

**The Old Baker Ranch**, situated about five miles outside of town, has become one of several cult compounds in the area. The cult's ranks swell with each passing day and Sibilance knows that the time to employ his minions is almost nigh. He has identified the arcane pavers lining the **North Spring River** as being the lynchpin to the God-Machine's local infrastructure. Not content to simply destroy the Infrastructure, Sibilance's plan is to realign the pavers and cause Its plans to backfire.

Emiel and her cultists keep a close watch on the river and the town from the old work-camp at **Orchard Park**. Disguised as squatters and homeless people, the angel and her mortal minions await the signs indicating that they should start the rituals necessary to rouse Rajenjendra from the sleep of eons and bring it forth into the world.

## Anger of the Earth God

### Survivors

The town of Eureka and its surrounding areas are home to a diverse handful of Stranded. Initially attracted to the whispers that a sizable colony had coalesced in the relatively small region, only a few Stranded still remain in the area today. The truth is that a sizable colony of a dozen or so aliens had established themselves in Eureka back in the 1880s but the mood in the town quickly turned sour and the colony was disbanded by the 1890s.

The dispersal seems to have been rapid and incomplete and rumors of buried treasures abound attracting a trickle of newcomers. There are number of additional mysteries that the Stranded, both local and new, face. The region is geologically hyperactive with earthquakes happening on almost a daily basis. Many of the local Victorian style houses are said to be haunted by bug-like apparitions.

### Invaders

Eureka is a hot-bed of n-fractal space activity. There are more Fīnēs in its relatively small geographic area than in any other that the Stranded know of. This has led to two major incursions, neither of which the area's Stranded know much about.

Completely unknown to everyone but a tiny handful of mortal cultists, but a massive Vermis has been burrowing through the earth below Eureka for more than a century. Many of the region's earthquakes can actually be attributed to it. Its untimely escape was also the cause for the local colony's quick demise.

More commonly known, the "hauntings" of the older Victorian districts of Eureka are an ongoing invasion by a substantial number of Scarabaeī. The region's few Stranded have yet to investigate what exactly these beings want but their continued terrorizing of the local natives is beginning to make the aliens' lives more difficult. If something isn't done soon, the area may again collapse into chaos.

### Masterminds

**Suls Thhaa** is ancient Cthonian from an outer corporal zone. It tricked the aliens of Eureka's initial colony into letting it escape from the confines of the particle accelerator that pierced a pathway into its world. Since that time it has caused nothing but misery and chaos. Times have grown harder for Suls though, its ranks of its cult grow thin and the number of sacrifices made to it have lessened to an unacceptable degree. Though currently vacillating, it is leaning more and more towards creating a great catastrophe in order to bend the locals to its will.

**Fwend kal'Tak** is a Scarabaeus on a mission. The area's alien-caused geological activity has weakened the space between the world of the Chronicles of Darkness and Fwend's phantom zone. The troop captain has been assigned to make a force reconnaissance of the area and determine its suitability for exploitation. To that end Fwend and her soldiers have been venturing through the gateway between worlds in a more and more brazen fashion with each passing week, returning with more and more mortal artifacts. It is only a matter of time before they begin kidnapping the local residents.



## Places

A particularly large Fīnis has coalesced in the sewers below **Hill Street**. This interdimensional nexus leads directly to **Tak den'Terhii** a large Scarabaeī city. It is from this nexus that Fwend kal'Tak and her company make their forays into Eureka. Thus far their activities have been limited to mostly observing the natives and taking a few small samples back to their home.

Nearer to the waterfront lies the **Carson Mansion** beneath which dwells Suls Thhaa. The seemingly immortal worm's few aging minions still find the time to pick off the odd lone traveler with whom to feed the ancient monstrosity's endless appetite. While Suls threatens them with the doom of sinking the entire waterfront into the ocean nearly every day, its cultists haven't had very much luck expanding their numbers in recent years.

**The Springs** and **Jacoby Creek Forest** areas are riddled with dozens of small Fīnēs. While the local Stranded frequently refine Fuel from these plentiful sites, recent rumors of a particularly large black bear roaming the region have made the local aliens more reticent in their travels. They fear both the unwanted attention the creature is drawing and the odds that they might encounter in some wilderness area far from the safety of their Vessels.

## Colonial Aspirations

### Survivors

Havana is the seventh oldest colonial city in North America. Founded in 1515, it is no mistake that it is a city of diverse faces and peoples. In addition to being one of the oldest colonial settlements, Havana also boasts the oldest Stranded colonies in North America.

The first Cīmicēs to take up dwelling among the municipality's mortals arrived in the late 1700s. Ever since then Stranded have flocked there, arriving in waves. It is easy for them to hide among the city's decaying infrastructure and multi-ethnic masses and, today it hosts large contingents of Lacertae, Cerebra, and Gregēs in addition to its Cīmicēs inhabitants.

A relatively huge concentration of marooned aliens inhabit Havana and the countryside around it. With so many Stranded dwelling in close proximity to one another and to the natives it is no wonder that massive waves of violence have periodically gripped both city and nation. Some of the largest events of mass hysteria caused by the presence of aliens include the Year of the Lash in 1844, the revolution of 1895, and the communist revolution of the 1950s.

### Invaders

Through careful management of their Vessels the Havana colony's alien constituents have managed to avoid any major outbreaks of violence and chaos among the natives for several decades. All is not well in the city though.

The constant pressure to provide more space for the colony's ever-burgeoning population has led its leaders to conduct a program of digging and delving deeper and deeper through the bedrock upon which the human city rests. Several of these tunnels have become unstable and been blocked off.

At least, that's the story the colony's leadership is promulgating. In actuality one of the tunnels seems to have pierced an interdimensional nexus. Despite round-the-clock observation by automatons and gang-pressed aliens, a steady trickle of Serpentēs has been making their way from their corporal zone, up through the twisting tunnels, and into the city's underbelly.

There, their indiscriminate predation on the local natives has begun to draw the attentions of the mortal authorities. In a bid to avoid another revolution, the colony's leaders have launched a full-scale suppression of the interdimensional incursion.

### Masterminds

The colony's current leader, **Thibuld yuup'Lhi** is a Grex hive struggling to keep a lid on the situation. Even with more than a dozen bodies and a full platoon of automatons at their disposal, the Thibuld hive hasn't been able to either prevent the odd Serpēns from slipping by or the rumors from spreading through both Stranded and native populations alike.

**Findis Ep** is the 12<sup>th</sup> in a long line of Cīmicēs that have inherited their broken down old Vessel through the generations. Short lived in comparison to the other taxa, Findis Ep 12 is burning with ambition. He can't help but feel as though the current crisis is his Cluster's chance to reestablish their long-running dominance of the colony.

**Dr. Sandalio Cienfuegos** is a Cerebrum who has managed to operate in and around Havana for the better part of a century. While he used to have a hard time finding test subjects for his experiments the advent of medical tourism over the past 30 years has provided the inhuman doctor with access to a steady stream of clients. Many of his experiments leave Cuba none the wiser to the radical changes he's made to their biology.

### Places

Besides the **colony's subsurface tunnel network** many of Havana's Stranded can be found in and around any of the city's many **shanty towns**. The socially awkward aliens are able to blend in with the regions enormous mass of poor. These areas have the additional advantage that no one misses the odd native that goes missing. Similarly, **Old Havana** and **Centro Habana** also provide the Stranded with ample opportunities for interacting with natives and, very occasionally, trading for used electronics or other goods that might be used towards repairing their individual Vessels.

**Havana Hospital** has also become a major interface between a tiny sub-faction of Stranded scientists and the mortal denizens of Earth. There unscrupulous alien doctors secretly conduct experiments on natives who have come from afar seeking medical procedures that are either too expensive or are outlawed in their own countries. Many of these unfortunates fall prey to alien experimentation, those few who survive returning home the unknown bearers of spliced in alien DNA or other, more exotic, modifications.

### Northern Lights

#### Survivors

The Stranded dwelling in and around Helsinki are mainly Cerebra and related clades. There they have managed to infiltrate into every part of Finnish government. Their purpose isn't control. The aliens are observing an ongoing conflict between two groups of n-fractal phantoms from different phantom zones.

While they haven't been able to employ their mortal collaborators in any significant manner – the interdimensional nexuses the two warring parties are using to gain access to the world of the Chronicles of Darkness have yet to be located – the aliens have managed to explain away the eerie lights that flash through the night-time sky. Despite managing to shield the native population from much of the conflict, the Cerebra have suffered a number of casualties beyond

just damage to their Vessels as both sides seek both confederates and minions to employ against the other. This has led to a dangerous game of cat and mouse as the local Stranded no longer know who is in their right mind and who is being ridden by one or another of the phantoms.

### Invaders

Twinned interdimensional nexuses have opened high in the atmosphere above the seas on either side of Helsinki's peninsular downtown. Competing groups of Lūcēs and Vīsiōnēs are engaged in a brutal battle for supremacy over who has the rights to all the succulent human minds far below. Deadlocked, both sides have begun to invade the city proper.

Through several luckless (on the part of the local Stranded) interactions both groups of phantoms have become aware of the more than mortal creatures who have been watching the conflict unfold. Not satisfied with possessing Helsinki's mortal population, the two groups have begun to infiltrate and divide the Stranded population as well.

### Masterminds

**Telig Ghaal** is a Cerebrum under siege. Ostensibly the leader of Helsinki's Stranded she has begun to succumb to the same kind of paranoia that the mortals around her so often evince. Both collaborators and confederates had been acting strange for several months but, she was only able to confirm that one or another of the phantoms were influencing them a few short weeks ago. Now she finds herself constantly watching everyone and everything around her, hoping beyond hope that the phantoms weren't able to infiltrate her entire colony.

**Salience** has watched the mortals below with some amount of mirth for millennia but it was only when it realized that someone was watching back that it told others like it that the Earth had become ripe. Now it is consumed with the task of wreaking as much havoc as possible. The mortals and more than mortals below might wonder what it wants and why it has set out to interfere with their way of life. If they knew the simple answer it would drive them mad with fear. Salience simply enjoys seeing intelligent beings tear each other apart. Physically, verbally, psychologically – it really doesn't matter to Salience.

**Decian** has also been watching the mortals toiling upon the Finnish coast for eons. She knows that given enough time and nurturing, the mortals below might one day evolve into the beings of light similar in nature to herself and her siblings. That day will never come if the Lūcēs have their way. For this reason she and her siblings have decided to intervene on the mortals' behalf. Even if they must stoop to some of the same tactics as the other interlopers, Decian has decided that the Lūcēs must not be allowed to have their way, regardless of the cost.

### Places

While most of the conflict between the two groups of n-fractal phantoms is limited to the **night sky** above Helsinki, much of the city and national government has been infiltrated by the three groups. The **military academy** at **Santahamina** has become a particular focal point for the silent battle over human souls. The Stranded who once thought they were observing a once-in-an-eon phenomenon now find themselves swept up in its midst.

As confederates and collaborators stalk one another, the greater mass of mortals remains blissfully unaware of the conflict unfolding above them and in the shadows around them. The conflict is slowly beginning to spill out into the **alleyways** of **Punavuori**, **Ullanlinna**, and **Eira**. Telig Ghaal fears that it is only a matter of time before the whole city becomes involved.

## Fire from the Sky

### Survivors

The Tunguska Explosion is a relatively famous event among the natives. Occuring in 1908, it is believed (and the mortal accounts widely report) that the explosion was caused by a meteor impact. The truth is far stranger.

The explosion's actual cause was ship-to-ship combat within the Earth's atmosphere. While both of the Vessels involved were badly damaged, they both also survived. Their inhabitants – a Grex hive and a Cīmex mercenary – have been playing a game of cat and mouse with one another throughout the wilderness region. In the century since they have seldom managed to cross paths but they have terrorized, killed, and consumed more than a dozen mortals.

### Invaders

If the two warring aliens were the area's only problem, mortal agencies might have sorted things out long ago. The fact is that the force of the 1908 explosion ripped a rent in the fabric between worlds allowing a malevolent entity to spill out into the world of the Chronicles of Darkness. This Tripūs has been suborning the local natives for more than a century now, slowly building a cult following that will allow it to summon more of its kind from the other side.

### Masterminds

**Widder Fig** is a hulking Cīmex of ill-disposition. He enjoys changing skins often and rumors of his existence has become nightmare fuel among the local natives. Formerly a mercenary in the employ of the Wisterian Votive, Fig blames the Grex hive he's hunting for the deaths of his entire brood of ten thousand.

**Caal'ex** is one of the most cunning and brutal warlords in the galaxy. Now a hunted war criminal, the hive only ended up on Earth by accident. Their servitor humanoid long since gone, the hive plays a dangerous game of cat and mouse with the Cīmex pursuing them. Caal'ex hopes is slowly building an understanding with the locals in an attempt to set a trap for their pursuer and free themselves to repair their damaged Vessel.

**Zen'lek** is an ancient denizen of a corporal zone far removed from the Chronicles of Darkness. The offspring of an unspeakable horror, Zen'lak has been busy suborning local mortals with promises of freedom from the far away government that demands their fealty. While she has taught them an occult trick or two, she's only just scratched the surface of the true depths of her knowledge. The rampant predation of her minions by the two warring aliens is beginning to become tiresome to her. If they don't kill one another soon she knows that she'll have to arrange a permanent resolution to their petty squabble. The dark mother's teachings must be spread after all.

### Places

Zen'lek has made her home in the **southern swamp** that sits at the hypocenter of the Tunguska Blast site. While it remains something of a haunted area, more and more locals are finding reasons to spend time there so that they may learn of the Dark Mother (or Temno-mat' as the locals call her) and her ways.

Widder Fig's spacecraft came to rest at the bottom of nearby **Lake Cheko**. The deadly Cīmex prowls the entire area north of the swamp. Sooner or later he figures that his opponent will show themselves.

In contrast Caal'ex has taken up residence in the **forested valleys** south of the blast site. There the hive works tirelessly to blend in with the natives and prepare a trap for their dedicated foe.

## Chapter 7: Storytelling

### General Advice

As this is a fan game I plan on forgoing the general advice and information regarding storytelling in the Chronicles of Darkness. The most essential information can be found in Chronicles of Darkness (pp 106-117). The storytelling chapters in Vampire: the Requiem (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Demon: the Descent (revised ed.), Werewolf: the Forsaken (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), and Beast: the Primordial also contain valuable information that while particular to those games is also easily repurposed for a game of Alien: the Stranded.

### Survival Storytelling

#### Marooned

The core tenet around which a game of Alien: the Stranded revolves is that while the players' characters may have at one time intended to visit the world of the Chronicles of Darkness, now they are stuck there. They only have access to a fraction of their former might and they are confronted by a cruel, uncaring world for which their highly evolved states are poorly fit to survive in.

Overcoming the squalor of being a refugee is one of several primary obstacles that players must confront. While it isn't necessarily difficult for a Stranded to strip parts of their own spacecraft that the locals will find valuable (which can be simulated using the Resources Merit), playing up the difficulties of interacting with the natives, especially those affected by Paranoia, can be a very rewarding part of the game.

All Stranded need two things to survive – a source of food and a source of Fuel. You might consider setting an entire chapter aside to establish how the players deal with meeting the first need and thereafter revisit the issue using the occasional scene. Addressing the second problem can easily become the central theme for an entire story or a recurring theme through your chronicle. It's important to establish that while Fuel issues can be addressed, the players shouldn't feel overly comfortable with relying on a single source. Fuel must always be refined from other things and there's no telling when a source of those things might dry up. (Fīnēs come with their own built-in risk factors.)

Disease and sickness is another primary obstacle that Stranded must face. While becoming ill off the cuff from interactions with the natives, consuming native foods, or suffering hunting mishaps can make for interesting complications in a story or chronicle, storytellers might want to limit how often they employ this particular factor. This isn't because it doesn't make for an interesting story-complication but, it can easily become an overused trope if the player's characters are getting food poisoning every chapter.

It's not a bad idea to hand wave away some of the risks as aliens are intelligent enough to maintain some sense of hygiene and safe food preparation practices. On the other hand, if some strange malady or virulent epidemic is making its way through the native population, it wouldn't be inappropriate for the players' characters to be exposed and thereby suffer the much graver consequences.

It's also important to remember that aliens run a high risk of infection from injuries incurred during combat. For this reason alone, a storyteller might want to reserve most disease risks to just conflict situations. In nature conflict is usually a high risk, moderate reward system which is

why most predators employ some strategy while hunting. The players should always be consider the consequences before the resort to violence.

Storytellers should remember that while a character revealing itself and threatening violence can resolve some situations, such a revelation also has the chance of backfiring spectacularly and escalating a threatening situation into a full-blown berserk melee. Surviving a shipwreck is very much about limiting risk factors and avoiding physical confrontations whenever possible. Of course, avoidance isn't always possible and the Stranded are as dangerous to one another as they and the natives are to each other.

Deprivation and a sense of besiegement by the Chronicles of Darkness's very environment are very thematic aspects to work into an Alien chronicle. The players should face puzzles, problems, and mysteries to solve. These puzzles, problems and mysteries should be varied but, being strangers to local culture, fish out of water social obstacles can make a game very interesting, especially when a character is confronted by an obsessed storyteller character and needs to use the chase rules to avoid being the object of some mortal's hunt.

Finally, character death provides another obstacle for players to overcome. In this case, the obstacle is a matter of inconvenience. As long as an alien's Vessel is active their earthly environment is more like a purgatory than a true death sentence. This is not to say that aliens cannot die. Many of them grow too old for proper clones to be produced. And some few fall victim to some calamity while their Vessels are in quiescent states. But so long as a character's Vessel remains undiscovered there is hope for her continued survival.

### Wolf in Sheep's Clothes

Wearing a mortal mask is an important survival strategy for aliens. They don't adopt such disguises to hide from the agents of some reality-spanning faceless machine or escape the notice of other-dimensional beings who employ mortals for their own ends. Aliens wear mortal miens in order to blend in with the local natives around them. They very literally hide among the very beings that they are hiding from.

Mortals seeing through a character's disguise provide often provide an instantaneous threat in the form of natives succumbing to the violent urges caused by Panic. Fortunately Stranded are often well equipped to deal with violence once their mortal guise has been pierced. It is the mortals who do not become violent that can cause the most long-term problems for one of the Stranded.

Natives who have become obsessed with finding out the truth or proving the truth about an alien can easily be used as a recurring obstacle for one or more of the characters during a story or chronicle. Such mortals can also be used as "the big bad."

In a story an obsessed mortal might be a particularly persistent family member that simply won't accept the change in behavior of the person the alien is masquerading as. As the native digs through the evidence not only might the alien in question be exposed but the other members of the cluster might have their own camouflage threatened.

An obsessed mortal can also be the primary foe the players face in a chronicle. Focused on exposing the aliens for what they are, the native might turn the entire local community against the players' characters by preying on the Paranoia caused by the characters' Vessels. Or the native might turn to outside forces and bring in interested third parties such as the dark-suited agents of United Technologies, Inc., federal military forces, or even other aliens.

Even with all of their evolutionary advantages, high technology, and otherworldly spiritual practices, aliens cannot always prevent humans from finding out about them. Sometimes the sheep are aware that a wolf lurks just below their neighbor's skin.

Of course the natives are not the only subjects that can be used as a disguise by crafty Stranded. It is not unheard of for Stranded to appear in the guise of some other taxon than their own. Fōrmae and Gregēs are especially suspected of such practices but any and all taxa can employ their Camouflage Adaptations in such a matter. This opens the possibility for the troupe to tell fifth column and alien interloper stories.

### Table Scraps

Salvage is a key long-term strategy that aliens adapt in order to survive in the world of the Chronicles of Darkness for any significant amount of time. They skulk through junkyards, landfills, and even ghettos by night, always on the prowl for anything that might provide them with some advantage for surviving, some resource to squirrel away for a rainy day, or some means for affecting repairs to their spacecraft.

Many Stranded have found that other aliens provide a consistent asset that can be exploited to improve their circumstances. Word of abandoned wrecks spreads quickly through Stranded communities and it isn't unusual for marooned aliens to flock to sites purported to be the resting place for such things. There they contend with natives, each other, and even the ghosts of a spacecraft's late crew to recover anything of use.

A bustling trade in unrefined Fuel sources, broken Ornāmenta, corroded ship parts, and other alien paraphernalia can be found in colonies worldwide. This trade provides aliens with an important social outlet and resource circuit among themselves, giving them an incentive to interact with one another in larger group settings.

Survival is a brutal game and only the fittest survive. One drawback to the commodification of alien paraphernalia among aliens themselves is that other Stranded are often the best source for things of value, especially Ornāmenta. This can make the wilderness and rural areas around colonies dangerous places for lone aliens to venture through.

### The Extraterrestrial Market

To that end there is a very steady trade in broken bits and pieces of Alien Vessels and Ornāmenta. Fuel is typically the commodity upon which trade is brokered. Those who have access to Fīnēs, Chemical Labs, or other means of producing Fuel drive the market. Only the comparative difficulty in locating and salvaging extraterrestrial artifacts as kept the creation of dozens of petty Fuel barons at bay.

### Getting Off-World

The ultimate goal of almost every alien is to repair their spacecraft and get off-world. Whether they plan to return to their place of origin or to resume some previous mission, the story told by this game essentially ends once they've achieved the goal of getting their Vessel off-planet. This should be a very difficult task and unlike the quest to become more human, it is not one that is fully encapsulated by an alien's Vessel trait.

It is best left to the individual players and storytellers to determine the exact goals necessary for the task to be accomplished. Some basic rules of thumb that troupes wanting to focus on this aspect of the game might want to employ are listed below:



1. An alien's Vessel trait must be raised to 6 or more.
2. A number of mysteries should be solved and quests should be completed. This number can vary according to the desires of the troupe but a suggested minimum is two whole stories representing the finding and salvaging of engine and thruster parts from other wrecked hulks.
3. The players should be confronted with a range of complications including native alien (artifact) hunters, other Stranded, n-fractal phantoms (and/or extraterrestrial horrors), and (optionally) ghosts (or spirits or angels).
4. Human technology is wholly inadequate for this particular alien purposes.
5. The troupe should accept (and encourage) that the storyteller will throw in numerous opportunities for side stories and distractions from the repair path.

Ultimately, while getting off-world is an aspirational element to the average game of Alien: the Stranded, it isn't meant to be obtainable unless the troupe wants it to be. The primary focus of Alien is on survival, overcoming adversity, and losing one's sense of self. Escape should only be truly possible if that's a story that the troupe wants to tell.

That being said, Stranded society is rife with stories about aliens that made it off-world and are living the good life somewhere else now (even if that probably isn't the case). The nigh-impossible quest to get off-world is a part and parcel of the Stranded's extraterrestrial origins.

### Going Native

The flip side of escaping their marooned state, is abandoning all hope of going home and accepting the new reality of living among humans. This also represents something of an end state for an alien character, although it is one more easily achieved and on some level, a temporary state of affairs. Stranded who wish to "go native" must have an Assimilation trait score of 8 or more.

Once that requirement has been met the process is relatively simple. They simply move their Vessel to relatively inaccessible place and put it into a quiescent state. (Placing it into a quiescent state and then sinking it to the bottom of a deep lake or burying it under tons of concrete are recommended.)

It's important to note that the Vessel still causes some amount of Paranoia among natives that live close to its resting place. The alien is no longer tied to it (not that aliens are necessarily tied to their Vessel's vicinity per se) and many move far, far away in order to better live a "human" life. Particularly long-lived aliens will often take up hermitic existences in rustic settings, lest the locals begin asking questions.

Such "natives" remain in possession of all of their Adaptations and Ornāmenta and can employ both whenever they normally could. Unless the character has certain Adaptations, the character will be limited to whatever Fuel is remains in its Ornāmenta's capacitors. They no longer benefit from having a supernatural advantage trait and are more or less mortal for as long as they maintain their "mortal" life.

It's important to note that this is a decision that an alien can change their mind about. At any time, they can simply go back to their Vessel and reactivate it. The character must sacrifice a dot of Assimilation in order begin the undertaking and suffers a breaking point towards its extraterrestrial side upon success.

Aliens who decide to rejoin the game can be at a great deal of risk. Other Stranded who knew them might take exception to their change of heart and seek to interfere with their attempt to reactivate their Vessel. This can lead to some opportunities for very high-level play by troupes that want to pursue them.

## Self-Identity

### Cutis and Cor

The struggle between adhering to expected social behaviors of the society in which one dwells and maintaining one's own traditions passed down through the generations is another core tenet of Alien: the Stranded. In heterogeneous cultures like the United States this struggle goes largely unseen even when its pressures make themselves known through episodes of police violence or the subtleties of movie casting. This struggle is much easier to notice in nations with relatively homogeneous cultures like Korea or Japan and plays out to its fullest extent in rural villages and hamlets.

For aliens, their very survival depends upon their ability to successfully blend in to the native culture around them. At the same time, their ultimate escape, however improbable it may be, depends upon them not forgetting themselves and where they come from. It can be a difficult balancing act and it may be all too easy for them to favor one side over the other. Stories that feature choices whose outcome pushes the characters in one direction or the other will heighten this aspect of the game.

### Camouflage

Maintaining one's self-identity is more difficult if the face looking back from the mirror is not one's one. An alien's Camouflage Adaptation might be her first line of defense against the fearful masses of humanity surrounding her but, it is also a salient that steadily erodes her sense of self. Making use of the adaptation to assume a new disguise may reaffirm her extraterrestrial nature for a time. However, the more time she spends in her human skin, the more accepted among humans that she becomes, the more human she is.

Storytellers can play these aspects up by remembering that using a Camouflage Adaptation to assume a new disguise is a breaking point towards the alien's extraterrestrial side, while maintaining a disguise for more weeks than the characters dots in Assimilation is a breaking point towards the alien's human guise.

It's also important to remember that an alien's disguise is literally only skin deep and that it can be easily pierced if the alien isn't making a strong attempt to act as she perceives humans to. Outsiders are always suspicious to small communities, whether that be a suburban neighborhood, a tiny farming thorp, or a small apartment building. Attracting undue attention is probably going to diminish an alien's chances for survival or at least make her life a hell for a while.

### Hulks

Both home and sanctuary, an alien's Vessel is the source of much of her otherworldly power. In addition providing an Amenity and storing an alien's reservoir of Fuel, Vessels protect their owners by virtue of their very existence. So long as a Vessel is active an alien can rely upon it as a kind of supernatural advantage. No matter how far away he is from it, so long as both survive the Vessel's otherworldly energies provide a layer of protection for the alien against the environment surrounding him.

Impossible as it may seem by the native's standards, an alien's Vessel actually warps and twists the reality around both the alien and itself. This phenomenon cannot be explained by the presence of advanced technology alone. The spacecraft are not attempting to terraform their localities through the employment of some kind of nanomachines.

It may be that the dark energy that Vessels manipulate to move vast distances through space may be the root cause or, it may be the case some more arcane process is the explanation. Either way aliens are not themselves aware of the phenomenon beyond noticing a perceptible increase in vulnerability when their Vessels are in quiescent states. Whatever the cause of this reality distortion, the distortion itself is the root of the Paranoia that affects native beings who dwell nearby.

In stark contrast to Paranoia is Panic. Panic is a base, instinctual reaction that natives suffer when confronted with an otherworldly *thing* that simply doesn't belong. The nature of their instinctive reaction depends upon the native's own essential nature. Most animals and mortals who rely on their physical traits will lash out with violence. Intellectuals will be consumed by their curiosity, often throwing caution to the wind. And socialites, so adept and focused with interacting with their own kind, will be overcome by the simple truth that they are suddenly in a situation in which they have no idea how they should behave.

## Communities

A Stranded's existence can often be something of a solitary one. Because of the paranoia caused by their Vessels most areas can only support the presence of a few of the broken down spacecraft. Despite this there are many reasons for Stranded to come together and interact with one another. There is a modicum of safety that can be derived from membership in a larger group.

Aliens coalesce into both small groups – Clusters and Crews – and larger community groups – Colonies. In either case the logistics of the Paranoia induced by the individual group members' Vessels must be managed somehow. One solution is to disperse the Vessels and thereby disperse both the risk and the operational area of the community. This approach works very well for Clusters and can work reasonably well for Colonies that sprawl over dozens of miles of rural countryside and wilderness. This is not a reasonable approach for Colonies that exist in more urbanized settings.

Care must be taken with regards to the disposition of colony members' Vessels in urban settings. Another approach is to designate some central area where the spacecraft are parked. This limits the impact of Paranoia to just the strongest spacecraft (i.e., the character with the most dots in their Vessel trait). It is not unusual for such communities to ask newcomers and visitors who have brought their spacecraft with them to power them down into quiescent states or leave them in nearby wilderness areas until they have figured out exactly how much of an impact a newcomer's spacecraft will have on the local Paranoia level.

## Aggregating a Crew

Aliens may also choose to physically link their spacecraft together. This has no practical effect on a character's Vessel trait itself unless the members of the Cluster also decide merge their spacecraft (and their fates) into a single cooperative bid to make it off world. The main impact is that the character's Vessel traits are added together to form one much larger communal Vessel trait. Every member of the Crew benefits from the higher Vessel trait. Additional benefits

include access one another's Amenities and a merged Fuel reservoir to draw from. This can be both a strength and a weakness as it places characters in a position where they can take advantage of one another or the group as a whole. It takes one day per dot of cumulative Vessel rating to interlink the spacecraft.

Cobbled together Vessels are much harder to move. Use the aggregated Vessel Trait when determining how long it takes to detect the Vessel when it is moving. Aggregate Vessels whose cumulative rating is higher than 10 can always be tracked. This usually means that some characters will have to place their parts of the cobbled together spacecraft into a quiescent state before it can be moved. Alternately the aliens can choose to uncouple their spacecraft from one another. This process takes one hour per dot of cumulative Vessel rating.

The other primary drawback to merging Vessels in this way is the combined impact they have on the natives who live nearby. The aggregate Vessel rating is used to determine the Paranoia level during this time. If the total rating is higher than 10 then a riot instantly breaks out in the area immediately surrounding the aggregated spacecraft. The rioting area is 100 yards for each dot the cumulative Vessel rating exceeds 10 by.

## Manifold Worlds – N-Fractal Space

### Interdimensional Nexuses

The default Chronicle for Alien: the Stranded is the Fractured Space Chronicle. It focuses on the innumerable permutations of other dimensional spaces which contain things even more alien in nature than the Stranded themselves. Arguably a game with spaceships, advanced technologies, and extraterrestrials is already full of opportunities for good storytelling. And in almost every way exotic taxa can be used to represent an alien menace that is simply not relatable to the human condition.

Similarly, with the right Amenity, an alien can turn almost any substance into a source of valuable Fuel. Refining the other-dimensional energies that emanate from a F̄inis is not necessary. Even when they lack the proper Amenity and Ornamenta an alien can always refine Fuel from something as relatively mundane as uranium.

The purpose of the Fractured Space Chronicle is to add a layer of mystery and wonderment to the game. It introduces factors and antagonists that are as unknowable to the alien characters as they are to the natives around them.

The very fabric of the universe seems to be fraying in the Fractured Space Chronicle and no one in the setting really knows why. It might be that centuries of intergalactic warfare is finally eroding the barriers between worlds or, it could be a side effect of the reality warping powers of alien spacecraft. Or there could be a thousand other explanations. What matters is that the phenomenon is occurring.

In the Fractured Space Chronicle, it is vital for the storyteller (and wise players) to remember that every F̄inis is a door to another dimensional space. Unlike the doors we're accustomed to in our houses, a F̄inis is a door that swings both ways. It can admit things into the world of the Chronicles of Darkness just as easily as it can consume things from it.

The Fractured Space Chronicle allows the setting to admit one final thing – some aliens are also occultists. Some of the Stranded worship and obey the teachings of ancient and exotic gods. And like the mortals native to the Chronicles of darkness, when an alien dies, sometimes traces of its spirit remain and coalesce into a ghost.

Possession of high technology and eons of evolutionary success are no barriers to spirituality.

<Sidebar>

## Other Explanations

In cross-over chronicles there are two additional theories for what corporal and phantom zones are. One explanation is that they are pocket universes created by rifts rent into the very fabric of reality by the God-Machine's gears. A competing explanation is that they are expressions of the Primordial Dream given substance as the Dark Mother stirs in her eternal slumber. Whatever the case may be, occult scholars (mortal or supernatural) have yet to articulate a satisfactory explanation.

</Sidebar>

## Corporal Zones

Intended more of a place to (accidentally) visit, corporal zones more or less obey the normal rules of physicality that the players will be used to. That doesn't mean that everything performs as predictably as one would hope. In some corporal zones gravity might be a highly localized or space itself might be twisted in a non-linear manner giving characters the experience of dwelling within an Escher painting.

The entities that dwell in corporal zones or that cross over from them also provide a more tangible threat that it is easier for the players' characters to interact with. No specialized equipment is needed to combat or parley with a corporal zone's denizens.

It is not unusual for such creatures to develop their own relationships with the natives. These relationships can be as simple as exploiting them as a food source. Or the relationship's scope could be mysterious; the extraterrestrial horrors kidnap mortals and take them back to their corporal zone. The horror's purpose might even be an arcane one requiring it to gather cult-like followers to hear its occult teachings.

## Phantom Zones

Phantom zones are designed to provide the players with much more arcane challenges as aliens are relatively poorly equipped to cope with ephemeral beings. This makes n-fractal phantoms a good foil for the players and also lets the storyteller prepare an invasion story as the ephemeral hordes boil forth into the world of the Chronicles of Darkness.

N-fractal phantoms can be employed in the same manner as their more corporeal counterparts, extraterrestrial horrors, above. Additionally storytellers can use some of the simpler n-fractal phantoms as a mundane means to alert the players' characters that there's an open rift between worlds and that ephemeral beings are leaking through. A character might not be aware of ephemeral beings around it but it will surely notice that Fuel seems to be mysteriously draining away from its Vessel's reservoir. Among other things this provides an opportunity for the characters to exercise their extraterrestrial-to-native social skills (along with all of the risks that such interactions provoke) as they suddenly find themselves in a position where they have to rely on the expertise of a "primitive."

## Hybrids and Offspring

While interspecies breeding isn't impossible it is extremely difficult. Aliens sometimes perceive that experimentation with the local genome or crossbreeding genomic exemplars with their own DNA can give them an edge in the survival game. This makes a certain amount of sense since terrestrial life-forms are engaged in a perpetual game of evolutionary cat and mouse.

It isn't unreasonable for an alien to observe the effects of various terrestrial diseases in order to derive treatments for their own extraterrestrial biologies.

Very rarely aliens enter into sexual relationships with humans (and the aliens who do are often purposefully conducting experiments or are going native). In some cases these couplings produce offspring. If the child-bearing parent is a human then the pregnancy proceeds more or less as normal.

Things are much simpler if the parent is an alien. Pregnancies have long become a highly mediated process for the highly evolved Stranded and fetuses are quickly decanted after the space of a few weeks, during which the character suffers from the First Trimester Condition (see *Werewolf: the Forsaken*, pp 294-295). After that time the character either expels the fetus in the form of an egg or uses equipment on her Vessel to decant it into a gestation tube where it takes anywhere from 15 to 60 weeks to mature into an infant.

Such offspring usually resemble their human parent and are often left with their human parent, human collaborators, or a highly assimilated Stranded for rearing. Maturation rates differ and hybrids of this nature can grow to adulthood in as little as four years. Or they may grow very slowly and age at an incredibly slow rate taking as many as 28 years to reach full maturity.

### Experimentation on the Natives

Aliens equipped with medical labs and in possession of extremely potent Vessels can actually create hybrids out of adult humans. This process usually involves physical modification of the patient with highly advanced machines or splicing the victim's DNA with some of the alien's DNA. Functionally, these can both be represented in-game through the use of minor (mortal) templates.

### Cyborgs

Cyborgs have had alien technology added to their body. Functionally the player makes a mortal character as normal but receives 5 extra merit dots which must be used to purchase the Cybernetic Enhancements merit for her character. It is important to note that if the player purchases a built-in Ornāmentum for her character then she should probably also purchase a Fuel Capacitor to power it. It is also important to note that unless the player also purchases the Artificial Adaptation – Chloroplasts, then her only means of recharging her Ornāmentum is going to be an alien and its Vessel. In this case the player may also want to purchase the Conditioned Response merit (see Appendix 1) for her character making it a mixture of Cyborg and Collaborator.

### Splices

Splices have had alien DNA added to their body. Like with the Cyborg above, the player makes a mortal character as normal but can purchase the Extra Adaptation merit. In addition the character gets the Unseen Sense (Aliens) merit for free. The player may also purchase the Conditioned Response merit if they wish for the character to be a Collaborator as well but, it will probably make more sense for the story if the character is a victim and the aliens are the menace.

### Passing the Torch

While extremely long lived, aliens are not immortal (and some taxa like the Cīmicēs have vanishingly short lives). Sometimes a Stranded can see that the light at the end of the tunnel –

getting off planet – is not obtainable within its own life space. The alien will have to pass the struggle to survive on to the next generation.

### *Accidental Immigrants*

Producing offspring to carry on after death is a common practice among the Cīmicēs, who even with access to stasis-sleep are not likely to live much longer than a human in particularly poor health. Alien offspring are created using the Alien template as normal except that they begin with an Assimilation of 7 rather than 3.

### *True Hybrids*

The term “Hybrid” refers to the offspring produced from human-alien couplings. A full treatment of them in their very own minor template format is coming down the road but, I’m not fleshing it out here. These kind of beings should be extremely rare and require some special rules that are all their own. If this fan-game proves even a little popular then I’ll probably write a supplement that covers them.

## Appendix 1: Collaborators

### The Fifth Column

Because of the risk of discovery and causing undue panic among the natives, socially-focused aliens will often attempt to win over a small number of locals. Once an alien has established amount of trust with a native it can begin the slow process of conditioning the mortal to accept the truth of its extraterrestrial nature. Over time the human becomes inured to the visceral biological responses of their body when confronted with an alien's true visage.

For the mortal's part collaboration with an extraterrestrial may come about for a number or reasons. First and foremost among these is that the alien may provide the collaborator with a means to gain temporal power. A second potential reason is that the alien may provide tutelage in esoteric occult secrets. The third possibility is that human has feels some emotional link to the alien (a link which is likely very one-sided).

Whatever the case may be, a Collaborator is not one of the weak-minded thralls that have succumbed to an alien's mind control powers (if the alien even has such powers). A collaborator is a human vassal that the alien has chosen to share some of its power with. This power usually comes in the form of an Ornāmentum.

The gifted Ornāmentum is a means of tying the Collaborator to the alien. It acts as both a symbol of the alien's trust and a badge of its authority. It can also mark a human as a target for other extraterrestrials who wish to interfere in their fellow Stranded's business. Fortunately because alien technology isn't easily detected off-hand Collaborators are only at risk of detection when they make use of the Ornāmentum that they have been entrusted with.

The gifted Ornāmentum also indelibly links the Collaborator to the alien. The alien device requires Fuel to operate and the alien is the only source for that precious substance. Without Fuel the bit of extraterrestrial technology will not operate. Thus Collaborators must regularly pay their masters a visit and pay them due homage.

Most Collaborators employ the power entrusted to them by their alien masters sparingly as interacting with the extraterrestrial beings is still taxing on their nerves. What most Collaborators don't realize at first is that an alien can revoke their access to the technology their bear with them at a moment's notice. Some who are tempted to misuse the power they've been granted learn the hard way that it isn't something that they can use according to their own whims.

For those who persist in misusing their master's powers the end is probably close at hand. After all, such Collaborators know too much about the alien's existence. Collaborators who misuse Ornāmenta draw the wrongs kind of attention.

### Revoked Authority (Persistent) [Condition]

Your character has committed some faux pas and angered his extraterrestrial overlord. As a consequence, the Ornāmentum your character bears no longer works. (If the offense is great enough the Ornāmentum can be taken away or caused to explode. Mortal Collaborators who suffer this level of punishment usually don't live for very much longer.)

**Possible Sources:** Angered alien overlord

**Resolution:** Resolve this condition once the character has paid penance or made amends for his offense. Storytellers are encouraged to focus a chapter around whatever activity the overlord demands as compensation.



**Beat:** Take a beat anytime the character suffers a significant setback (such as an injury, loss of a large amount of money, etc.) that could have been avoided through the Ornāmentum's use.

## Making a Traitor

Collaborators are made in the same fashion as other mortal characters. Once attributes and skills have been determined apply the Collaborator template. The character chooses an Ornāmentum and gains it at one dot. The character may purchase additional dots in the Ornāmentum using experiences at the rate of 4 experiences each. The character's overlord is assumed to have a Vessel rating of one for the purposes of determining the Ornāmentum's Fuel capacitance.

Collaborators also gain the Conditioned Response merit (see below) for free and may purchase merits specific to Collaborators. A list of additional mortal merits related to their extraterrestrial experiences can be found below. Note that the Conditioned Response merit can be purchased by any mortal whose back story or game play story provides an explanation (e.g., the victims of alien experiments will can purchase the Conditioned Response merit if the experimentation went on for a long enough period of time).

Collaborators who use up all of their Ornāmentum's Fuel must recharge it by returning it to their overlord. Depending on the overlord's personal characteristics, this may or may not provide them access to the overlord's spacecraft.

## Additional Mortal Merits

### *Conditioned Response (1 dot)*

**Effect:** Through a course of continued exposure to aliens and their technology, your character has slowly built up a tolerance for their presence. Your character only suffers Panic under certain conditions (see the table under Panic in Chapter 3). The character still suffers breaking points from exposure to supernatural occurrences (other than that would normally be caused by Panic).

This merit can be purchased for survivors of alien experimentation, brainwashing, or who have been held captive so that the alien could masquerade as them. It takes a great deal of time to build up such a tolerance for extraterrestrials and their paraphernalia. No mortal that hasn't spent the longer of one month's time or one full story in the alien's revealed presence (or conscious in its spacecraft) should be permitted to purchase this merit. *Note: Characters with this merit are effected by Paranoia as normal.*

### *Extraterrestrial Heritage (5 dots)*

**Effect:** One of your character's distant ancestors was a Hybrid or a Splice. Some of the extraterrestrial DNA still lies dormant in his genes. The character gains all the benefits of the Conditioned Response merit. Furthermore, the character is immune to the effects of Paranoia. Additionally, for whatever reason, his alien heritage allows him to safely handle and occasionally operate alien equipment. Any time your character gains access to an alien's Vessel or its Ornāmenta you may spend 1 Willpower to operate it as though you were its alien owner. This effect persists for a whole scene.

As a side effect, your character can bear and wield Ornāmenta regardless of whether an alien has given him permission or not. He can also operate a Vessel's Amenities and other systems, even putting it into a quiescent state. The ability works on an instinctual level rather than one of learned skill and so the character frequently can't explain how he got something to work. *Note:*

*This Merit can only be purchased at character creation and is lost if the character gains the Cyborg or Splice minor templates.*

**Drawbacks:** Having an unnatural aptitude for using alien technology draws a great deal of attention. Aliens and mortals alike are likely to hunt anyone rumored to be able operate extraterrestrial technology with alarming alacrity. *Designer's note: This merit is intended for rare mortal alien hunters that operate on their own or with other mortals. Their heritage provides a level of protection from aliens and their spacecraft but it also makes them into a threat. Mortals like this can make for interesting one-off foils for a story but the dark-suited agents of United Technologies, Inc. are also likely to be hunting for the character. Storytellers and players should talk out what the end game will be for a character with this merit as if he falls into the hands of either mystery agencies or marooned extraterrestrials then vivisection to discover why he's able to do what he can do seems pretty likely.*

### *Hacked Biology (3 dots)*

**Effect:** An alien has hacked your character's biology, making minor modifications to it. While she isn't yet a true Splice she does benefit from an additional dot in one of her attributes.

**Drawbacks:** The alien who did the hacking is monitoring your character, carefully observing how its science experiment is working. The alien always benefits from the Informed Condition (see Chronicles of Darknes, p 289) in regards to your character.

### *Infectious (2 dots)*

**Prerequisites:** Stamina 2 or less

**Effect:** Your character has a weak immune system and constantly suffers from fits of coughing, a runny nose, oozing sores, and/or itchy irritated eyes. While these are mostly cosmetic issues aliens find her to be a regular Typhoid Mary. Any alien who engages in a social interaction with her must check for infection afterwards with a -1 to the roll.

**Drawbacks:** Other people find your character's benign symptoms to be unsettling. She suffers a -1 to all social rolls.

### *Innocuous Ornāmentum (3 dots)*

**Prerequisites:** Collaborator

**Effects:** The Ornāmentum your character's overlord has entrusted her with has been refashioned to resemble something normal to human experiences. Neither the sight of it nor its use will inflict Panic in other mortals.

### *Oblivious Personality (2 dots)*

**Prerequisites:** Wits 2 or less

**Effect:** Your character lives in a world that is all his own. He is often unaware of strange goings on around him. He counts the Vessel trait of any alien dwelling near him to be two less than it is for the purposes of inflicting him with Paranoia.

**Drawbacks:** With his head in the sky so often, your character is easily surprised and suffers a -2 penalty to any Perception rolls to avoid being surprised in a combat situation.

### *Potent Adrenaline (2 dots)*

**Effect:** When startled or angered your character flies into a rage. Regardless of what set of attributes were prioritized at character creation, whenever your character falls victim to Panic, she gains the Berserk Condition exactly as though she had her physical attributes as her primary attributes. *Note: This merit can only be chosen at character creation.*

### *Powerful Overlord (1-5 dots)*

**Prerequisites:** Collaborator

**Effect:** Your character's overlord has a more potent Vessel. For the purposes of determining the Fuel capacitance of the Ornāmentum that he's been gifted with, treat the overlord's Vessel trait as one higher for each dot of this merit.

**Drawbacks:** More powerful overlords are more likely to be more demanding.

### *Protective Overlord (4 dots)*

**Prerequisites:** Collaborator

**Effect:** Your character's overlord sees her as an extremely valuable tool for its survival. Once per story, the overlord can intervene to protect its minion.

**Drawbacks:** Protective overlords tend to spy on the collaborators they protect. They may be harboring darker designs for the character's future.

### *Trusting Overlord (5 dots)*

**Prerequisites:** Collaborator

**Effect:** Your character has established a very close working relationship with his overlord and not only knows where the overlord's Vessel is but has cart blanche to come and go. The primary advantage is that he may recharge the Ornāmentum that he's been entrusted with whenever he needs to. When necessary the player may also use this merit to simulate the Safe Place merit (equivalent to 5 dots). However, doing so provides a free clue to anyone investigating the whereabouts of the alien's spacecraft.

**Drawbacks:** Trust can be lost as easily as it is gained. Collaborators drawing too much Fuel from their overlord's reservoir had better have a good reason. Betrayal of this level of trust won't be taken lightly by the overlord and is likely to result in some dire consequences.

Dire. Consequences.

## Appendix 2: Conditions

### Anxious (Persistent) [Condition]

Your character suffers from anxiety and unease whenever she is exposed to certain stress triggers. The character's player (or the storyteller for non-player characters) should decide what triggers this condition. These triggers could include anything from unknowingly living near an alien's Vessel to living in a high-crime neighborhood. The constant state of anxiety has frayed her nerves making it hard to concentrate on lengthy tasks; it has also left her senses in a hyperaware state. She suffers a -1 die penalty to all rolls involving extended actions, concentration, and precision, but benefits from a +1 die bonus to all perception rolls.

**Possible Sources:** Abusive living situation, dwelling in a high-crime neighborhood, alien Vessel secreted nearby, important test coming up, harassment at work.

**Resolution:** Resolve this condition after a week goes by in which the character does not encounter any of her triggers. Characters that live near to an alien's Vessel cannot resolve this condition unless they move away or take a lengthy vacation (in which case the condition will resume once they've returned). The character resolves this condition, gains a beat and gains the Delusional (Persistent) Condition should she encounter a trigger for the latter condition or after a month of living near a Vessel with a rating of 4 or greater.

**Beat:** Your character chooses to fail a roll due to this condition (no more than one beat can be gained per week this way).

### Delirious [Condition]

Your character's illness has taken a turn for the worse. The fever it suffers from is steadily dehydrating it, affecting its nervous system. The character suffers from the Beaten Down and Sick [grave] Tilts if forced into combat. Damage caused by the Sick tilt is lethal rather than bashing. Outside of combat situations, the character must roll its Stamina + Resolve every time a number of hours equal to its Stamina have passed. On a failed roll it suffers one point of lethal damage.

The character suffers a -2 penalty to all skill dice rolls. It must spend a point of Willpower to make any physical skill rolls. The character cannot heal damage while it suffers from this condition. If the character's last box of health is filled by lethal damage then it dies from the illness.

**Resolution:** This condition may be resolved in one of four ways.

1. The character dies.
2. Gain a beat and resolve this condition after a number of days equal to 10 - the character's Stamina. The character gains the Recovering Condition.
3. Gain a beat and resolve this condition if the character rolls an exceptional success on any roll to resist damage caused by the illness. The character gains the Recovering Condition.
4. Gain a (single) beat if the character treats the sickness with medicine or by seeking treatment from a knowledgeable physician of some kind. Treatment requires medicinal substances of some kind which may have to be gathered (at the Storyteller's discretion). The character treating the disease makes an extended roll using Intelligence + Medicine. They must accumulate a number of successes equal to 10 - the sick character's Stamina. A failed roll represents an adverse reaction to the medication causing the sick character to suffer their Stamina in points of bashing damage. Once enough successes have been accumulated the Delirious Condition is resolved and sick character gains the Recovering

Condition. In the event of a dramatic failure, the character suffers a point of aggravated damage and can no longer be treated (and in all probability will die).

**Delusional (Persistent) [Condition]** (see *Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, p 302 for additional details)

After a prolonged period of stress or after suffering some traumatic event your character has come to believe something that isn't true. He might believe that his neighbors are out to get him, his co-workers are sabotaging his work, or any number of similar paranoid delusions.

**Possible Sources:** Ongoing psychological harassment, unexpected death of a loved one, alien Vessel secreted nearby, post-traumatic stress, encountering a victim of Panic, victim of certain supernatural powers (e.g., a Vampire's Nightmare discipline or a Beast's nightmares).

**Resolution:** Your character is able to disprove his delusion or destroys the source of his paranoia. If this condition was caused by an ongoing source of trauma, it can only be resolved by moving away or by staying away from the source for two weeks (in which case the cycle of Anxious / Delusional resets once the character returns to the high-stress environment). The character resolves this condition, gains a beat and gains the Siege Mentality (Persistent) Condition should he encounter a trigger for the latter condition or after a month of living near a Vessel with a rating of 7 or more.

**Beat:** See *Vampire: the Requiem 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, p. 302.

**Exposed [Condition]**

Your character has made a slip in her charade and one or more humans have glimpsed her true nature. She suffers a -5 penalty to her Camouflage rating until this condition is resolved.

**Resolution:** Convince at least one other human that you are also human.

**Famished [Condition]**

Your character has overexerted their body and is now ravenously hungry. He suffers a -2 penalty to all Mental and Social rolls until he consumes one pound of food for every point of aggravated damage (or equivalent, i.e., every two lethal damage or four bashing damage) that he healed.

**Resolution:** Consume a massive quantity of food.

**Feverish [Condition]**

Your character has contracted a disease that is making it gravely ill. Any time your character engages in combat, it suffers from the Sick (Grave) Tilt. More-over, when outside of combat, it must roll its Stamina + Resolve every time a number of hours equal to its Stamina have passed. On a failed roll it suffers one point of Bashing Damage.

The character cannot heal damage while it suffers from this condition. If any lethal damage is suffered because of this condition, the character's sickness will worsen (see below).

**Resolution:** This condition may be resolved in one of four ways:

1. Gain a beat and resolve this condition if a point of lethal damage is caused by it. The character gains the Delirious Condition.
2. Gain a beat and resolve this condition after a number of days equal to the character's Stamina. The character gains the Delirious Condition.

3. Gain a beat and resolve this condition if the character rolls an exceptional success on any roll to resist damage caused by the illness. The character gains the Recovering Condition.
4. Gain a (single) beat if the character treats the sickness with medicine or by seeking treatment from a knowledgeable physician of some kind. Treatment requires medicinal substances of some kind which may have to be gathered (at the Storyteller's discretion). The character treating the disease makes an extended roll using Intelligence + Medicine. They must accumulate a number of successes equal to 10 - the sick character's Stamina. A failed roll represents an adverse reaction to the medication causing the sick character to suffer their Stamina in points of bashing damage. Once enough successes have been accumulated the Feverish Condition is resolved and sick character gains the Recovering Condition. In the event of a dramatic failure, the Feverish Condition is resolved and the sick character gains the Delirious Condition.

### Pursued (Persistent) [Condition]

Your character has come to the attention of mortal agencies who hunt aliens and they have sent their agents to collect him. The storyteller chooses either two cyborgs employed by a native corporation (probably United Technologies, Inc.) or government, six special forces soldiers, or 10~14 regular soldiers. These antagonists know where he was when his camouflage was compromised. Their sole motivation is to hunt him down and capture him, probably so that they can conduct experiments on him.

**Resolution:** Kill the pursuers or permanently evade them. Evasion is likely to require an extended roll and/or your character placing her Vessel in a quiescent state.

**Beat:** The pursuers find and attack your character.

### Recovering [Condition]

Your character has survived a terrible disease and is now on the mend. The ordeal has left it weak and vulnerable. The character heals at half of its normal rate. More-over, if the character engages in combat then it suffers from the Sick [Moderate] Tilt.

**Resolution:** Gain a beat and resolve this condition after a number of days equal to 10 - the character's Stamina.

### Revoked Authority (Persistent) [Condition]

Your character has committed some faux pas and angered his extraterrestrial overlord. As a consequence, the Ornāmentum your character bears no longer works. (If the offense is great enough the Ornāmentum can be taken away or caused to explode. Mortal Collaborators who suffer this level of punishment usually don't live for very much longer.)

**Possible Sources:** Angered alien overlord

**Resolution:** Resolve this condition once the character has paid penance or made amends for his offense. Storytellers are encouraged to focus a chapter around whatever activity the overlord demands as compensation.

**Beat:** Take a beat anytime the character suffers a significant setback (such as an injury, loss of a large amount of money, etc.) that could have been avoided through the Ornāmentum's use.

### Siege Mentality (Persistent) [Condition]

While many of your character's neighbors have moved away due to the changes in the area's timbre, your character has steadfastly refused to succumb to the persistent fear that fills them. The experience has left you extremely suspicious of everyone who remains and anyone who is new. Your character suffers a -1 die penalty to all social rolls and interprets events around them in a negative light. The character rarely ventures outside the safety of their own home and they always arm themselves with some kind of weapon (even an improvised weapon) on those occasions that they must leave their sanctuary. In addition to the social penalty, the character cannot take any extended actions outside of the safety of their home and suffers a -1 die penalty to any actions that require concentration and precision.

Being constantly on edge does afford the character some benefits. Should a situation turn violent, your character benefits from a +1 bonus to their initiative. Since the character is constantly scanning their environment for danger, they also gain a +1 bonus die to all perception rolls.

**Possible Sources:** Being a victim of Panic, alien Vessel secreted nearby, victim of obvious supernatural abilities, demographic overturn of neighborhood, nearby terrorist attack, xenophobia.

**Resolution:** Your character has an epiphany and is able to overcome their xenophobia through steady engagement with the source of their fear, i.e., they assimilate into the neighborhood's new culture. For the purposes of the rules, the condition can be resolved if the character loses a point of Integrity and then gains another point of Integrity. If this condition is caused by an ongoing source of trauma, it can only be resolved by moving away or by staying away from the source for a whole month (in which case the cycle of Anxious / Delusional / Siege Mentality resets once the character returns to the high-stress environment). The character resolves this condition, gains a beat and gains the Violent Schizophrenia (Persistent) Condition should he encounter a trigger for the latter condition or after a month of living near a Vessel with a rating of 10.

**Beat:** Anytime your character escalates a situation towards violent confrontation.

### Vessel Discovered [Condition]

The natives have pinpointed the location in which your spacecraft was hidden. Their military forces are en route to lay siege to it and seize it if possible. The storyteller chooses either five cyborgs employed by a native corporation (probably United Technologies, Inc.) or government, 12~18 special forces soldiers supported by a helicopter gunship, or 30~40 regular soldiers supported by two tanks and one fighter-bomber or interceptor.

**Resolution:** These antagonists lay siege to your Vessel and capture or destroy it (capturing or killing your character in the process) or your character moves its Vessel to a new location.

### Violent Schizophrenia (Persistent) [Condition]

The stress of repeated trauma and life within an omnipresent atmosphere of total oppression (real or imagined) has driven your character beyond the breaking point. Your character suffers from paranoid delusions, believing that everyone around her is constantly plotting against her, and resorts to violence when confronted by the focus of those delusions (which will typically be a person or persons or an institution composed of people – e.g., her neighbor(s), her classmates, the local government, etc.).

The character is extremely secretive and no longer regularly communicates with other human beings. She suffers from a -2 die penalty to all social rolls. The character also exhibits hyper-aggressive behaviors, benefiting from a +1 bonus to her initiative when in a combat situation. The character's Integrity is under constant threat and all breaking point rolls suffer a -2 die penalty in addition to any other penalties that they may have (to a maximum penalty of -5).

**Possible Sources:** Ongoing harassment by supernatural beings, influenced by certain supernatural powers, alien Vessel nearby, dramatic failure on a breaking point roll.

**Resolution:** The character has an epiphany and is able to overcome the condition through psychiatric treatment or similar therapy. Resolve the condition when the character loses a point of Integrity and gains another point of Integrity. This condition cannot be resolved if it was caused by an ongoing source of trauma, such as living too close to an extremely powerful alien Vessel or continual harassment from supernatural creatures.

**Beat:** Anytime your character plans and executes a violent reprisal against the source of her paranoia.