

SEEING

RED

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PLAYTESTERS

THANKS TO ALL THE PLAYERS FROM GEN CON
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THE REPUBLIC

*Whenever a person strives, by the help of dialectic,
to start in pursuit of every reality by a simple
process of reason, independent of all sensuous
information-never flinching, until by an act
of the pure intelligence he has grasped
the real nature of good - he arrives at the very end
of the intellectual world*

Plato



ADVENTURE

ABSOLUTE INFORMATION CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY

For the first two nights the creatures, whatever they were, just lurked around the edge of town. No one was sure what they were, but they had begun showing up when the King's Gate began glowing three days ago. They scared some livestock and left some bloodstains, but didn't hurt anyone. But tonight, they were getting braver.

Meg could hear one scratching against the door to the Two Moons Bar as she hid behind the bar, shotgun in hand. When it started testing the door knob, she decided that she wouldn't wait to learn how smart it was or if it had opposable thumbs. She stood up quickly, leveled the shotgun and

fired at the wooden door, hoping that it wasn't as tough as it looked. The gunshot split the previously silent night asunder, put a sizeable hole in the door, and threw the creature on the other side to the ground. "Awww, hell," the creature said in an unmistakably human voice filled with annoyance. It was then Meg realized these were not monsters, merely common beasts that walk upright on two legs and call themselves men. These she could deal with.

But if there just humans, she wondered, what's making the King's Gate glow?



SEEING RED IS AN ADVENTURE FOR 4-8 CHARACTERS OF LEVELS 5-8, AND IT INCLUDES PRE-GENERATED TO FACILITATE ITS USE AS A DEMONSTRATION MODULE. IT IS SET IN THE DAWNING STAR SETTING, SPECIFICALLY IN THE NORTHERN PLAINS OF THE CONTINENT DAWNHOME. THE PLAYER CHARACTERS SHOULD HAVE A VARIETY OF SKILLS, INCLUDING VEHICLE, COM-

BAT, TECHNOLOGY, AND SURVIVAL SKILLS, THOUGH NONE OF THESE SKILLS ARE STRICTLY NECESSARY FOR THE ADVENTURE EXCEPT FOR COMPUTER USE. THE ADVENTURE CAN BE EASILY SCALED UP IN DIFFICULTY FOR HIGHER LEVEL CHARACTERS OR REDUCED IN DIFFICULTY BY ALTERING THE NUMBER OF CREATURES IN EACH ENCOUNTER.

HISTORY REVIEW • • •

The planet of Eos was long ago the capital of an ancient star-spanning nation called the Star Confederation. Made up of six sentient species, it also had a number of ward races that it looked out for and attempted to guide. The Star Confederation developed amazingly advanced technologies, including faster than light gateways connecting the systems within its territory and advanced artificial intelligence computer entities. It was a bastion of scientific and social progress for eons, and the planet Eos served as its capital.

Among the six founding species of the Star Confederation were the dosai, a species of plant-like creatures that were in fact seeds of a massive plant located on their homeworld. The dosai had the unique ability to see past the barriers between dimensions into another parallel dimension they called Red Truth. Red Truth is a dimension of pure information where all the facets of existence are listed, recorded, and available to those who know how to look. Using this dimension, the dosai were able to develop powers that many considered supernatural until they understood the science behind them. In time other species developed the power to access Red Truth, but only with extensive assistance and never to the extent that the dosai were able to.

While the dosai used Red Truth to further the scientific efforts of the Star Confederation, achieving levels of advancement rarely equaled in the history of the galaxy, Red Truth was no mere tool. The exact nature of Red Truth has been debated since its discovery because its original source and purpose are completely unknown. At times it has appeared to act on its own accord, leading some to say Red Truth is itself intelligence. Others spoke of immense creatures of unknown origin hiding in the dark between the stars, consuming or creating vast quantities of information. Whatever the real story behind Red Truth was, two things were known: interacting with Red Truth allowed sentient creatures access to amazing powers and information, but this power came with a price. Even the dosai mind was not completely shielded from the information overload caused by Red Truth, but a less pre-

pared mind could be driven insane in a matter of hours from exposure to Red Truth. This made the study of Red Truth a difficult matter, but it was made all the harder by the fact that Red Truth was infectious. Any time it is accessed in our dimension it spreads a little bit, slowly creating weak spots in the barrier between this dimension and Red Truth. In time these areas can become so infected they will drive those who pass through them insane. Some dosai researchers even claimed the Red Truth wishes to spread into our dimension; that it had some ultimate design it could only reach by beings of this world accessing its power. In the days of the Star Confederation the Red Truth was a widely feared force, though the Star Confederation sought to understand rather than fear its powers. Religions worshipping or condemning Red Truth came and went, but most citizens of the Star Confederation just considered it a force of nature that can be controlled and studied as any other.

The Vaasi Empire knew of Red Truth, but never was able to command its powers in the same way as the dosai. As the Vaasi Empire fought the Star Confederation and invaded its worlds they attempted to use many of the Red Truth technologies they captured, but most of the time these efforts produced more damage to the vaasi than results. By the time the occupation of Eos began, the vaasi had started avoiding Red Truth technologies, not having the troops or resources to spare with such superfluous items. Some of these artifacts remain in the Helios system to this day.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND • • •

On Eos in the northern planes of Dawnhome, the dosai carried out a number of experiments into using Red Truth as a means of transportation. Nothing physical exists in Red Truth; only pure information exists. The dosai had perfected instantaneous communication across any distance through Red Truth since the transmissions set were nothing but information. Based on this concept, it was hoped that the dosai could create a doorway that would turn anything passing through it into pure information, which could then be reformatted into

matter by passing through a gate at the final destination. Supposedly the dosai used such a device in their distant past to escape their original homeworld when it was threatened by black hole, but the dosai had lost whatever ancient secrets they possessed regarding travel through Red Truth. This project began during the war between the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire in the hopes of improving the mobility of the forces of the Star Confederation. The dosai researchers were organized in a project known as Red Gate under the jurisdiction of the Star Confederation military. The Red Gate project built a number of test gates that could open portals into Red Truth and would allow creatures to pass into it, but they never were quite able to make the reformatting procedure work.

When the vaasi fleet invaded the Helios system, Red Gate went into high gear trying to find a way to get their gates to work and made some promising tests using short range gates. Unfortunately they were not able to run any conclusive tests before the vaasi fleet began the invasion of Eos. Hoping for the best, the researchers traveled through the gates designs with the most promise, hoping to reintegrate at a number of tests gates in other stellar systems. These test gates had their own research teams that had been kept up to date with the Red Gate operations on Eos through the use of instantaneous communication through Red Truth. The Red Gate researchers on Eos never reached their destinations, instead becoming lost in the vast expanse between their home gate and their destination gate. The researchers were not prepared for the rigors of long distance travel between stellar systems through Red Truth. The gates on Eos shut behind them in order to seal off the Red Truth from the vaasi invaders, trapping the researchers in Red Truth. Time passed and the researchers remained as beings of pure information within Red Truth, unable to reintegrate into material form or even leave Red Truth since the gate shut behind them.

Eventually humans came to Eos and in time settled near the remains of the Red Gate project, calling their town King's Gulch and the gate the King's Gate. After some initial surveys by archaeologists of the Dawning Star Republic, the locals left the remains of the Red Gate project alone, the murcow ranchers and farmers having little interest in ancient alien artifacts. Recently though a group of relic hunters began picking through the ruins of the Red Gate project, accidentally activating the King's Gate in the process. After eons of inactivity the border between Red Truth and this dimension blurred, and the entities of Red Truth took notice. Now the King's Gate casts an eerie glow over the fields of King's Gulch and the relic hunters work to keep their find. Dressed as monsters they have begun scaring the locals away from the King's Gate, not realizing the strange events surrounding them, from hallucina-

tions to strange voices on the wind, are not just their imagination. The surviving minds of the researchers, insane but still sentient, seek to try and reach out into the material world in the hopes of finding someone who can shut down their creation once and for all.

OVERVIEW • • •

King's Gulch was settled twenty one years ago shortly after the reawakening of the colonists in cryogenic sleep began. It was founded by a small group of farmers and ranchers who wanted to have a life away from Dawning Star City and the other major settlements of the Republic. Independent minded and hard working, they had little interest in the ruins that were scattered across the area, instead concentrating on the day to day needs of survival. Even when the town was well established the locals didn't much bother with the ruins after a the blood blister outbreak of 2231, which started only a few score miles west of King's Gulch. The town remained a quiet, low-profile place that most people never heard of. The locals liked it this way, as did the few folks who moved to the town later. Most of these new comers came to King's Gulch in order to take advantage of the town's lack of renown, in effect hiding from the rest of the world. By 2052 King's Gulch was a town of farmers, ranchers, thieves, and other people on the run from the law, from family, or from other obligations. While the town occasionally has had problems with xenomorphs, they have been relatively rare. More common problems are due to murcow rustlers, flash floods, and unusual weather patterns.

Two months ago a group of relic hunters called the Gray Crow Company moved into the area surrounding King's Gulch in the hope of finding some relics that could fetch a good price with the EFL, or Dawning Star University if the right intermediaries could be set up. The Gray Crows have no permits to be poking around the King's Gulch region, and so have been working covertly to try scout the area without drawing any attention. During one of their trips into the ruins surrounding the King's Gate the Gray Crows managed to accidentally activate the King's Gate, opening a portal to Red Truth. Realizing they had something valuable on their hands but having no capacity hide the thirty foot tall, glowing red gate, the Gray Crows began an organized campaign of spreading fear by scaring livestock, leaving bloodstains around King's Gulch, and lurking around town in monstrous disguises. These activities have had their intended effect and the locals have kept to town and away from the ruins of the Red Gate project, but they have been able to see the gate glowing in the night. The open gate has caused other difficulties, such as jamming all radio frequencies with static and causing the unusual weather patterns in the area to become

even more erratic. The town has unexpectedly been cut off from the outside world, haunted by monsters, and beset by storms, but the worst is yet to come.

The players are members of the populace of King's Gulch or visitors from out of town who have been dealing with these problems for the past few days. As the adventure begins the Gray Crows are stalking around town trying to scare the locals, but at the same time the effects of the opening of the King's Gate have begun to spread through the area. The players deal with the Gray Crow members stalking about town, eventually learning they are just humans just as the vaasi who have been attracted by the glow of the gate launch an attack on the town. Just as this battle reaches its crescendo the strange weather patterns spark a stampede among the animals of the town. While the players try to recover the stampeding murcows without too much damage, the vaasi retreat back to their caves beneath the King's Gate.

The players may then go investigate the King's Gate. They run into a few of the more colorful inhabitants of Eos on the way, but eventually reach it and find the slaughtered remains of the other Gray Crows. They also can investigate the gate itself, but the vaasi in the area take none too kindly to such activities. While dodge the vaasi the players can get a good look at the gate and make contact with the minds of the researchers who still exist in Red Truth, learning that the gate must be shut down before the Red Truth infection spreads. The players receive instructions on how to do this, but to do so they must go down into the ruins of the Red Gate project and find the control mechanism for the gate. Once it is shut down, the gate will close and the threat of the Red Truth infection will end for now, though the vaasi will still pose a threat.

USING THIS ADVENTURE IN OTHER SETTINGS • • •

To use this adventure in other settings the specifics of the Red Gate project and the vaasi roaming the area would need to be adjusted to fit the setting, but the town of King's Gulch and the King's Gate can be placed on any world that was once home to ancient alien ruins. Red Truth may be any parallel dimension other than the very specific concept of a dimension of pure information as long as that dimension could contain disembodied minds and monsters.

THE TOWN OF KING'S GULCH • • •

Leader: Sheriff Elias Kane

Population: 56

Major Exports/Products: Murcow meat, pork, tomatoes

Major Imports: Manufactured goods, building supplies

Progress Level: 5

Purchase DC Limit: 25

Black Market DC: 30

Item Restriction Limit: Res (+3)

Founded twenty one years ago by Elias Kane along with a group of farmers and ranchers, they headed north from Dawning Star City until they found a place they thought suitable to build a town. Named after Elias's home back on Earth, King's County (also known as Brooklyn), King's Gulch was chosen for the prime grazing land located around the gulch the town was built within. While the town originally had some problem with flooding due to their choice of building within a gulch, in time they constructed a series of dikes and ditches to direct water around the town and into the nearby fields, though sometimes these are not enough.

King's Gulch has never been a particularly well off town, and this is evident in every aspect of the town. Buildings are well made but worn, all tools have years of use evident on them, and most folks have lived there for ten or more years. While there is a dirt road that leads to Red Hill and Sheriff Kane has a radio for emergencies, there is little contact with the outside world. Except for a few small bits of advanced technology, such as Doctor Rostov's medical tools or Orson's truck it could almost be a town out of the 18th century American West on old Earth. The buildings are mostly built of wood, pre-fab materials, and salvaged bits of metal, though all the newer buildings are completely wood brought down from the woods far to the north. Because of this fire is a constant worry and electric lights are common inside most homes to reduce the risk of fire. Power is provided by a generator overseen by Morris Lapp, the town tinker. The town's water supply is drawn both from rainwater-filled containers and an underground aquifer reached by a mechanical pump at the center of town.

The town is built along a single road that runs straight into the gulch, making only one real way in and out of the town unless one feels like scaling the walls of the gulch. The town proper is completely contained in the gulch, though some buildings such as storage sheds and Orson's house are located just outside the gulch. The road is little more than hard packed dirt, though the locals work hard to keep any erosion ruts filled in to keep it level. Climbing the walls of the gulch the town is in requires a Climb check (DC 15)

Most of the inhabitants of King's Gulch are simple farmers and ranchers, though on Eos that means they are familiar with the basics of firearms and survival. They know nothing other than rumors when it comes to the King's Gate, darklings, or other such unusual matters. Most consider tales of darklings and such to be nothing but foolishness, but they readily accept tales of other xenomorphs due to the encounters they have had over the years. Most of the locals have visited the King's Gate at some time or another and some have some small fragments of the strange stones that surround it in their homes as curios, but they know nothing of its function or the secrets it holds. In fact other than Professor D'Aldren, none of the locals have been to the gate in weeks. None of the locals have heard of the Gray Crow Company, but most have seen some sign of their activities over the last few days.

The stat blocks for the people of King's Gulch are in APPENDIX A.

CHAPTER 1: GETTING STARTED • • •

In this chapter the players get introduced to the troubles in King's Gulch, either as visiting outsiders if they are using their own characters or as members of the town if they are using the pre-generated characters. In either case the players end up in King's Gulch as the Gray Crow's stalk about the edges of town, but not for long before things turn deadly.

During this chapter the information ghost forms of the researchers of the Red Gate project who have come through the gate will be using the mis-sive psionic power to try and contact the players. This should happen randomly through the first chapter, and it is especially useful in scenes where you want to ratchet up the tension. The information ghosts are in the area around the players, but cannot be seen due to the lack of Red Truth influence in the area. They are invisible, but will try to clue the players into what is going on. Unfortunately the researchers only speak Unispeak and most PCs will not speak that language. Thus to most the mis-sives will just be gibberish, but hopefully it will clue the players in that something is trying to communicate with them. If any of the PCs do speak Unispeak, the following messages are examples of what the information ghosts may say.

- "Close the gate. It is coming. The gate must be closed."
- "We are lost. We tried to cross the stars and failed. We cannot be saved. You can."
- "Evil comes both in this world and in another. Both must be stopped."
- "Do not pass through the gate. It is not for you, as it was not for us."
- "It is spreading. Infecting. Turning. The Red Truth must be stopped."

If no one speaks Unispeak the gamemaster may allow players with the Linguist Smart Hero talent to get the general idea of what is being said with an Intelligence check (DC 15) with a bonus equal to their Smart level.

♦ ENCOUNTER 1a Rounding up a Posse

If the players are using the pre-generated characters included with this adventure use this encounter to get the adventure started. The pre-generated characters are all inhabitants of the town of King's Gulch and thus have a vested interest in its survival. They have already been dealing with odd events since the King's Gate activated three days ago, and things only seem to be getting worse. Now the people of King's Gulch feel they are under siege in their own town, and they don't take well to that. The time is coming to fight back.

To get the players started, read the following text aloud:

It started in the afternoon two days ago. No one knows what caused it, but the King's Gate, one of the old ruins common across Eos, began glowing bright red and continues to do so. Well, everyone has assumed it's the King's Gate since the light is coming from the direction of the King's Gate, but no one has gone to check due to everything else that's been happening. First the animals started acting up, and then the storm clouds started rolling in. But the rain never came, just the lightning. Several fields have been lost to brush fires sparked by the storms, so the folks of King's Gulch have had their hands busy.

During the first night of the red glow, which was even more visible at night time, the other troubles started. The first night it several murcows were brutally killed and their innards strung up in what could only be described as purposeful patterns. Something went through the poor creatures without mercy and left them for all to see. The first night this only happened in some of the outer fields, but the second night the slaughtered creatures were found closer to town. When the morning came, blood stains and organs were found within a stones throw of the buildings of King's Gulch.

There is something out there killing the murcows of King's Gulch, and if it continues it may well come into the town itself this night.

You and the other folks in the town have set up patrols and lookouts on the second stories of the buildings in town so you can keep an eye out for whatever these creatures are. You've brought in the local murcow herds to keep them safe and evacuated the outer buildings in the town. While much of the town has taken up arms this evening, none of them have the experience you do and thus they have been looking to you for guidance. It seems that the survival of King's Gulch and its four dozen inhabitants depends upon you.

The players all begin in the center of town, having gathered together as the folks in town with leadership positions and combat experience. They have five storekeepers, 5 farmers, and 5 ranchers using the stat blocks listed in appendix A who are also on duty that they can arrange as they wish, though they know placing someone on top of the Folsom household is a food idea. The local NPCs are not interested in leaving the town at night due to the murcow mutilations in the area, but do suggest someone go check out the King's Gate once daylight breaks. The players have a few minutes to make plans and gather equipment before encounter 2 begins.

◆ ENCOUNTER 1B

WHEN OUTSIDERS COME TO TOWN

If the PCs are not using the pre-generated characters use this encounter to get them involved in the story. The players can be in King's Gulch for any number of reasons, from picking up a cattle drive to Dawning Star City to investigating the King's Gate to simply passing through the area. In any case as they approach the town, read the following text aloud:

For two days things have been going strange. Well, life on Eos is often strange, but it's gotten stranger. Your radios and sensors have been suffering all manner of malfunctions for the past two days and now are barely capable of operating at all due to some unknown interference. Storm

clouds have formed and dispersed without any rain, though they have liberally sprinkled lightning over the country side in the process. You've seen large herds of wild murcows and other creatures traveling in the opposite direction with more urgency than normal migratory movements. Something strange is going on, and the strange red glow in the direction of King's Gulch is probably the cause of it.

As you approach the small town of King's Gulch you notice something odd: the town is lit up with numerous torches and lanterns all about. It almost looks like the townspeople are running armed patrols around the town. As you travel closer you notice a butchered murcow lying in the field a short distance away, appearing to have been brutally cut up with little thought to harvesting its meat. No farmer or rancher would be so wasteful. In the horizon to the west a red glow can be seen reflecting off the gathering storm clouds. Indeed it seems like strange things are afoot in King's Gulch.

As the players approach they can see the locals have set up patrols and other defenses since the activities of the Gray Crows began two days ago. As the players approach they can see the town is unusually active with many of the adults on watch in some fashion. If the players approach the town openly, without trying to hide their presence or avoid the patrols, read the following text aloud:

As you approach the town the locals see you from a good ways out due to some lookouts on the second stories of several of the buildings. By the time you reach the edges of the town a small group has formed led by an older looking man bearing a shiny sheriff's star on his chest. All are armed and many carry flashlights or torches. All look tired and haggard, like they have received little rest of late.

"As long as you're not looking to cause trouble, you're welcome in King's Gulch, the man with the sheriff's star says, eyeing you warily. "We've had some strange folk

coming through lately, but you don't look a bit like them. If'n your interested, we could use a few more warm bodies to help deal with some problems around here. Seems your own good might be tied in with ours now." The man offers his hand to shake, removing the other from the butt of his pistol. "Names Kane, Sheriff Kane."

If the players approach the town secretly they will be thought to be more Gray Crow Company men causing trouble and will be fired upon without warning. This could obviously lead to a battle against the people of King's Gulch and while the locals will be apologetic for firing on the players, any wounds inflicted on the inhabitants of King's Gulch will not endear the players to them.

After the players have made basic introductions and assuming they have asked what is going on in town or how they can help, read the following text aloud:

"Well, we've had some odd problems of late," Sheriff Kane says with exhaustion filling his voice. "The last two nights something's been crawling up near town, killing livestock, and leaving blood stains all around town. It started about the same time the King's Gate over to the west started glowing. We've been here twenty one years, and it's never done anything before. So we figure the two have got to be connected. We don't know what's stalking around the town, but it definitely doesn't seem friendly." The sheriff stops talking for a few seconds and takes a long drink from a canteen on his belt.

"The long and the short of it is we've got a handful of folks with combat experience and the rest of the town has some experience dealing with Dawson dragons and other critters, but these things seem smart. We need all the help we can get, especially if someone can get out to the King's Gate come daylight and find out what's going on. Maybe even put an end to it." On the edge of town there are a few cries of alarm, a gunshot, and then several yells revealing it was a false alarm. The

sheriff's hand goes to his gun as soon as the disruption begins, and his eyes continue darting around the surroundings after it ends, obviously on edge. "We don't have much in the way of money, but you'll have our gratitude and really, you're in this as much as the rest of us now. So, ever want to be a deputy?"

If the players agree, Sheriff Kane will deputize them and ask their counsel in defending the town, assuming the players have not come off as idiots. From here the players can make their own plans for defending the town and dealing with the King's Gate with the people of the town acting as support when needed. The locals of the town are brave and are more than willing to put themselves in harm's way for the good of King's Gulch, but they are not stupid and will not allow themselves to be sacrificed needlessly. Players who abuse the locals may find themselves being kicked out of town by Sheriff Kane.

From here run the adventure normally. The players have ten minutes to prepare before encounter 2 begins.

♦ ENCOUNTER 2 Monster Hunting

After having five minutes of preparations, the players will have to deal with the activities of the Gray Crow Company. The Gray Crows plan to simply stalk around the edges of town to try and scare the locals, hoping to avoid combat if they can. Unfortunately for them, the local vaasi are not so accommodating.

At the beginning of this encounter the players should be close to the center of town still making plans in order to get things moving quickly. As the players are making their plans, read the follow text aloud:

From outside you hear a number of cries of alarm from the lookouts posted on the top of the Folsom house. Soon others take up the cry as young Ronald Folsom comes running up to you. "My pa says he saw one of the critters out scrawling around of the mouth of the gulch near Dalai's house. He sent me to come get you!" The child stands ready to take you to where the creature was seen.

Assuming the players follow the child, read the following text aloud:

Young Ronald Folsom leads you towards the northern edge of town to the house of Dalai Kai, a retired terraformer who recently moved to town. Several of the locals have gathered around the building holding torches and lanterns. On the ground before them are the shredded remains of a small murcow marked with one of the brands used by the Folsoms. Some bloody marks lead away from the corpse, but don't appear to be any normal foot prints. Whatever was here is gone now, but it has certainly made its presence known.

David Folsom steps forward from the crowd, hunting rifle in hand. "I saw something that looked like a wolf poke its head around the corner, but then I knew it was no wolf because it stood and walked like a man. A bent over man sure, but a man. It dropped the body and ran after I tried to shine my flashlight on it." The farmer wipes his brow with his sleeve, looking worried. "I've seen lots of critters on this planet, but I ain't never seen anything like that."

If a player has the Tracking feat they may make a Survival check to identify the tracks. Check their result against the following table:

Survival Check	Result
10	The tracks were made by a biped creature.
15	The creature had large claws on its feet.
20	The creature weighed about the same as a large human.
25	The creature's feet were actually fake covers worn over size 12 boots.

If the Survival check for investigating the tracks is at least 15, Jessorick (or any velin with levels in Guardian or experience with the vaasi) can make a Survival check (DC 15) to determine the tracks are not vaasi tracks.

After the players have been investigating the tracks for five minutes read the following text aloud:

As you're investigating the tracks another cry comes from the southern side of town. It seems to be coming from near Cestmir's infirmary. The locals look to you for direction.

Assuming the players go to investigate the new cries, read the following aloud:

As you approach Cestmir's infirmary you see two creatures standing near the front of the building menacing two farmers who were on guard. Both the creatures are slightly shorter than men, but equally large. They have wolf-like heads and are covered in matted fur with some sort of spikes sticking through it. They seem to be wearing some sort of bandoleer holding metal tools of some type and a torn cloth over their backs. Their hands and feet end in large claws that they are using to threaten two local farmers, Douglas and Sara Laras, and have gotten too close for the farmers to effectively use their rifles.

In the far distance you suddenly hear the report of firearms dozens of times over. It sounds like some ferocious firefight is afoot to the west, in the direction of the King's Gate, but then suddenly they stop. A single anguished scream follows.

These two members of the Gray Crow Company, Privates Tolliver and Yangte, are trying to scare the locals but have gotten further into the town than they were ordered in the hopes of maybe stealing something. They scaled down the sides of the gulch using ropes, which are still hanging over the edge, and now they are trying to scare the inhabitants. They hadn't intended on actually getting in a fight, especially since the claws on their costumes aren't actually functional. Now they're hoping they can scare the locals enough to get back to the rope without getting shot, and they are more willing to surrender than risk getting killed.

As the players approach, have them make a Spot check (DC 15). If successful the player can see the seams on the outfits and tell they are just men in suits. If the Spot check beats a DC of 30 they also notice another man hiding in the shadows above at the top of the Gulch next to a rope hanging down

into the Gulch. The two members of the Gray Crows will not initiate combat; instead they will attempt to look scary and try to back up to the ropes behind them. Climbing the face with the rope is a Climb check (DC 10). If at any time the two Gray Crows are attacked they will draw their guns and open fire, retreating back to the rope in the process. If this happens, a third Gray Crow, Private Fauji, on the top of the gulch thirty feet above and receiving half concealment due to darkness, opens fire with his pistol as well. They will try to escape as best they can, but if any of them are disabled any Gray Crows remaining in the Gulch will surrender while those on the rope or on top of the Gulch will try to escape.

The Gray Crows can be talked into surrendering with a Diplomacy or Intimidation check (DC 20) if they are not attacked. If this is successful they will drop their weapons and surrender, sharing all they know about the recent events in the Gulch. Unfortunately they won't have time to say much before things get more dangerous.

After the players have dealt with the Gray Crows go on to encounter 3. It's best to move on after giving the players a cursory chance at interrogating any possible captives. In the long term the players could lock the Gray Crow privates up in the jail, confine them elsewhere, interrogate them at length, etc. Ultimately the Gray Crow privates want to live and avoid jail, though the former is more important than the later.

◆ NPCs

Stat blocks for both the locals and privates in the Gray Crow Company are listed in Appendix A.

◆ ENCOUNTER 3 Unexpected Guests

Unfortunately for the Gray Crows, there are more vicious creatures than them about this day. The vaasi hiding in the underground ruins around the Red Gate project have come forth into the night to hunt and find out what is going on with the King's Gate. To that end, they attacked the camp of the Gray Crows, scattering them to the wind. Several of the Gray Crows ran to King's Gulch hoping to find their fellows with the vaasi in close pursuit. As the players finish up dealing with the Gray Crows at the southern end of town, several more come barreling in from the north with the vaasi close on their heels. This encounter should take place on the road into town so the players are smack dab in the middle of the road for encounter 4.

After the players have dealt with encounter 2, read the following text aloud:

From the northern end of town you hear the sound of distant gunfire and screams coming closer. You can see the occasional muzzle flash out in the plains beyond the gulch, but you can't see much more than that. You don't hear any ricochets or whistling so it seems whoever is shooting, they're not doing it at you. Overhead a storm cloud roils and rumbles, a spike of lighting reaching from sky to ground less than a mile away. It's going to be one heck of a storm.

After the players head to the north end of town to investigate, read the following text aloud:

From the darkness of the night three men, two wearing monster costumes similar to the fellows you encountered earlier, come barreling out of the darkness, firearms in hand. They are all wounded and are not pointing their weapons at you, seeming more intent at running away from whatever is behind them. They begin to scream "Help us!" as they sprint towards you and the storm clouds above unleash their fury, drenching everything below.

Unless the players specify otherwise, assume that two ranchers and two farmers are with the players at the beginning of this encounter. The players may have brought other NPC members of the town with them from other encounters. This encounter involves creatures running out of the darkness at the players so PCs with low-light vision will have a marked advantage here.

The players have five rounds of action before the vaasi chasing the three Gray Crow privates reach the outer radius of the player's light sources, which is assumed to be 50 feet. Assuming they are not attacked, which will cause them to flee away from the players and the vaasi if possible, the Gray Crow privates will immediately surrender and throw themselves at the feet of the PCs. The three, named Dana Jui, Parson Massi, and Nikolai Diaz, will immediately begin babbling about their camp being attacked by monsters that came out of the darkness and slaughtered their fellows. All three have lost nine hit points and are all considered exhausted from their run. They will not help fight in this encounter, instead running as soon as combat begins again unless forcibly restrained.

Five rounds after the three Gray Crows come into sight six vaasi warhounds come after them. They will stop for one round at the edge of the player's lights due to their aversion to light, giving the players one round of ranged fire before the warhounds charge. After this round of indecision the warhounds will charge into melee combat, attacking the Gray Crows first if they are available as targets. If they cannot reach the Gray Crows they will attack whoever else is present. The warhounds will fight until the death.

Five rounds after the warhounds arrive four vaasi soldiers arrive as well armed with crossbows. They will also attack, but will concentrate their fire on whoever is inflicting the most damage on the warhounds. The vaasi soldiers will remain just out of the range of the light at a range of 60 feet, gaining half concealment from the darkness. The soldiers will fight until all but one of their number are dead, at which point it flees to return to its master.

As the players fight one NPC from town, most likely a shopkeeper or rancher shows up every other round to help until there are eight NPCs present.

◆ NPCs

Vaasi warhound (6) ◆ CR 3

Small aberration; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; MAS 17; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size); BAB +2; Grap -1; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; blindsight 60 ft., improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +7, Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +9.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Vaasi Soldier (4) ◆ CR 5

Medium aberration; HD 5d8+15; hp 37; MAS 19; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +2 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Drive +5, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Repair +1, Spot +3, Survival +4.

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

Advancement: By character class.

Equipment: Machete, leather armor, crossbow.

◆ ENCOUNTER 4 **Stampede!**

After the players have defeated the vaasi they have nary a few seconds to catch their breath before they have to dodge a stampede. Read the following text aloud after the last vaasi is defeated.

As the last of the creatures is dealt with you hear a powerful explosion from behind you and are nearly thrown from your feet as lightning strikes not one hundred feet away, hitting a light post near the murcow pen, which is currently filled with murcows! Some murcows fall from the shock, but the rest are scared now and quickly break open the gate to the pen in an attempt to get away from the lightning. Within seconds it becomes apparent, this stampede has only one way out of town: through you.

The players currently have over one hundred angry murcows barreling down on them while they are standing in rain soaked mud. The players have two rounds to get clear before the stampede fills the entire road. The murcows will fill the entire space between the buildings along the main road of the town, and once they leave the town they will form into a mob one hundred feet wide and sixty feet in length. Any creature caught in the path of the stampede must make a Reflex save (DC 14) or suffer 4d12 damage. In short the players have to move fast to get themselves and any wounded out of the way. Townsfolk will move themselves out of the way and try to help with wounded, but won't risk themselves to save the Gray Crow privates in town, who may be too injured or exhausted to move themselves.

The players can try to stop the stampede instead of avoiding it. Killing at least five murcows, which is not a popular option, will cause the stampede to falter and break up into two smaller stampedes that will run away from the new source of danger. Anyone with the Wild Empathy talent may try to calm the animals as if they were hostile and changing their attitude to Indifferent will stop the stampede. Alternately if a character can get to a horse or other vehicle that can stop the stampede they can try to direct and control it, requiring a Drive or Ride check (DC 15) and a Handle Animal check (DC 20), allowing them to direct the stampede around folks.

If the stampede runs out of town the ranchers will be annoyed, but have no interest in going after the animals tonight after everything else that has happened. They plan to go after the herd at first light tomorrow.

◆ NPCs

Murcow (107) ◆ CR 2

Large animal; HD 7d8+14; hp 45; MAS 18; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+6 natural, -1 size); BAB +5; Grap +10; Atk +5 melee (1d4+1, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+1, bite); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ good nature, stampede; AL none; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5.

Skills: Climb +2, Listen +6, Spot +5.

Feats: Improved Damage Threshold.

Advancement: 5-8 HD (Large).

◆ ENCOUNTER 5

Voices on the Wind

After the stampede runs its way out of town the information ghosts who were once researchers at Red Gate make a concerted effort to reach out to the players. If the players have someone among their number who speaks Unispeak that player will be bombarded with missives from the information ghosts, most of which are the same types of statements as described earlier. If the players do not have anyone who speaks Unispeak, they will only receive unintelligible gibberish. Assuming one of the players can understand Unispeak read the following text aloud:

While the noises of the stampede fade away and the people of King's Gulch survey the damage, you all suddenly hear something in the back of your mind. What starts as a quiet murmuring quickly turns in the full on roar of a screaming crowd as disembodied voices fill your skulls. They speak on tongues you cannot understand, sounding like nothing but gibberish; gibberish, to everyone but you (indicating the player who speaks Unispeak).

You can hear the cries of dozens of voices crying out for you to close the door, stop the arrival, end the truth, cure the infection, and other unusual demands. Finally they all silence and a single voice calls to you. "Will you open your mind to me?"

If the player agrees the information ghost uses lesser mindlink on the player, which requires a willing target. Assuming the player agrees read the following text to him.

A voice fills your head, this time speaking in concepts and ideas that transcend word and language. It is a voice that has the tinges of manic energy, possibly madness in it, but it is also a voice that is as serious as the grave.

"We were once alive as you are. Now we are not. We have been changed. We sought to escape the vaasi, but we doomed ourselves instead. Now we wait in Red Truth, on the other side of the gate. The Red Gate. The Red Gate has opened. Your kind has opened it. It must be closed. The information it produces has attracted attention. Now creatures come that will do you great harm. The vaasi that survive seek to understand it. And all the while the Red Truth spreads to infect this reality. The Red Gate must be closed. The Red Gate must be closed."

The voice stops abruptly and you suddenly feel very alone and small, as if some greater portion of existence lies just outside your perception. A hard rain begins to fall around you, sounding almost like static in your mind.

The rain is the first in weeks and is extremely heavy cutting the radius of light sources by half until daylight.

CHAPTER 2: THE KING'S GATE • • •

Now the player's must reach the King's Gate to shut it down. If they do not heed the voices of the researchers from the Red Gate project, or cannot understand them, they will probably want to investigate where the vaasi came from. If you are using the pre-generated characters Jesserick should certainly be interested in doing so. If the players still do not seem interested the locals will ask them to find out what's going on with the King's Gate since everything has gone strange around town since the Gate started glowing.

The following encounters assume the players wait until morning to go investigate. If they chose to go at night, which Jesserick would realize is a bad idea since the vaasi are at their strongest at night, they can do so but it is raining very very dark due to the clouds. The folks in town will all suggest they wait until morning so hopefully the players will get the clue. If the players get into a firefight or make

any significant noise in the area of the King's Gate during the night they will likely attract the attention of the vaasi.

In addition to any vehicles the players may have, such as Sheriff Kane's S-15 Ground Transport and Subodai's S-10E Scout Bike, the Dalai Kai has a G-3 Survey Vehicle they can borrow.

◆ ENCOUNTER 1 Reaching the Gate

The players can set out at any point the next day, though the locals will suggest heading out at first light in order to get things settled as soon as possible. The locals know it's about five miles to the King's Gate, though there is no real road to get there. Thus the players will have to take a round about path that will take them upwards of half an to complete. The mud and continuing rain does not help the situation any.

When the players get about eight hundred feet from the King's Gate read the following text aloud, though if the players approach at night the text should be altered as the players can only really see the hill and the gate when they get right up on it.

Finding the King's Gate has been pretty easy. On a clear day it's probably visible for miles, but with the constant drizzle of today it can only be seen a few thousand feet away. Placed on the top of a small hill, it stretches against the sky, casting a red light on everything from ground to sky. The gate itself is at least thirty feet tall and twenty feet wide with wide supports that speak of ages of wear and weather. On the hill around it are piles of rubble that hint of other ancient structures that once stood here which have now toppled. Whatever was stood here was far larger than just the King's Gate.

The hill is to rubble filled and to be reached by vehicle so to approach the King's Gate you must dismount a good eight hundred feet away. Nothing moves on the barren hill beneath the gate except the red light coming from the gate, which seems to pulsate, grow, and ebb in random patterns.

All the players should make Spot checks (DC 20) at this point. If successful they spot the camp of the Gray Crows on the edge of the hill hidden under

camouflage netting among the rocks. The players can choose to go investigate the gate itself or go investigate the camp. The vaasi are staying indoors during the day and so will not be visible, though any PC with tracking can make a Survival check (DC 15) to find their tracks all over the hill and surrounding area. If the players come at night there will be warhounds and vaasi soldiers on patrol in the area in groups of four.

If the players investigate the camp go to encounter 2. If they investigate the King's Gate go to encounter 3.

◆ ENCOUNTER 2 A Murder of Gray Crows

The camp of the Gray Crows was decimated the night before by the vaasi and now is ransacked with no sign of its inhabitants. The vaasi left at daylight, but if the players arrive at the camp at night there will be four warhounds and two soldiers still in the camp.

As the PCs approach the camp read the following text aloud:

The only sound you hear as you approach the campsite is the flapping of a tarp that has become untied and is being tossed about by the wind, occasionally striking nearby stones. The entire camp is hidden beneath a camouflaged tarp secured with stakes driven into the ground, though it seems half of these stakes have been torn up or the ropes attached to them cut. Beneath the tarp are the remains of several sleeping bags, backpacks, boxes, and people all broken and mashed together. Mixed among the wreckage are pelts, furs, and animals skulls. Blood is splashed all over the camp and mangled limbs are scattered throughout. You can't see anything approaching even half an intact body in the camp. Whatever came through here did so with violence rarely matched by humans.

A short distance away another tarp is visible hiding a wheeled ground transport that also seems to have suffered some damage.

This camp was previously home to the nineteen members of the Gray Crow Company, but while most of them were out last night terrorizing King's Gulch the vaasi stormed the camp and scattered

the Gray Crows. Only a handful escaped and the entire camp was ransacked. A few surviving Gray Crows are now hiding in the underground Red Gate facility, having barricaded themselves inside, and the vaasi have turned their camp upside down.

There are seven corpses in the Gray Crow camp, assuming the players are able to match up all the body parts correctly. With a Survival check (DC 15) a PC with Tracking can determine that a group of vaasi attacked the camp last night and the inhabitants of the camp fled up the hill or towards King's Gulch.

For each minute the players spent inspecting the camp they may make a Search check (DC 5). Success finds one of the following items: a whipstick, and EDF-9 Auto-Pistol with 2 clips, a canteen, a compass, a sleeping bag, an EDF-12 Submachinegun with 3 clips, a GP-02 Gyro-Jet Pistol with 2 clips, a Brase Arms Combat Shotgun with 9 shells, a Brase Arms Hunting Rifle with 6 shells, 2 universal communicators, a Tangier Grenade Launcher with 2 fragmentation grenades, 2 high explosive grenades, 2 smoke grenades, a suit or rough outs, 100 feet of duracable, low-light goggles, 2 tangler grenades. All the light sources in the camp have been destroyed.

The ground transport is a knockoff of an S-15 Ground Transport. It currently has two slashed tires and lots of cosmetic damage, but is drivable. Any attempts to drive the vehicle suffer a -4 penalty on Drive skill checks.

◆ ENCOUNTER 3 Surveying the King's Gate

If the players go investigate the King's Gate, read the following text aloud:

The King's Gate towers over all the other rubble on the hill it crowns, standing as the highest point for miles in every direction. Made of a shiny, chrome-like metal, it retains its shine despite countless years in the elements. The entire structure has no obvious seams or joints as if it were cast out of one massive piece of metal. The interior of the gate glows a sometimes muted, sometimes bright red light. It seems as if a plane of red light existed within the doorway, casting out a crimson glow and everything for thousands of feet. This glow grows, ebbs, changes color, and moves about in what appears to be random movements, but the longer you look at it the more you have a feeling there is some terrible pattern to its movements.

As you get closer to the gate you begin to feel a pain in your head akin to the worse migraine you have ever had. It's easy to see from the look on the faces of your comrades they feel the same. Something is not right here.

As soon as the players get within 100 feet of the King's Gate they are in an area infected with Red Truth. Each hour they remain in this area they must make a Will save (DC 15+1 per hour spent in the infected area) or take 1 point of Wisdom and Intelligence damage, but also gain a cumulative +1 bonus to Wisdom and Intelligence skill checks. The players do not notice this damage until they leave the area. Characters with psionics are immune to this danger. Such is the effect of Red Truth on the minds of the unprepared. See Appendix B for more information.

There are no controls or access points on the gate itself, making it impossible to shut down from here without destroying it. The players can do little more than examine the gate currently, but if any try to enter the information ghosts of the Red Gate researchers will use their manifest ability to appear and try to warn the player off. They will go to any lengths to stop anyone from entering the King's Gate. If a PC insists on stepping in he receives a Will save (DC 15) to keep his mind and body together each round, failure meaning he becomes an information ghost. Each round that the PC succeeds at this save is another chance to leave, and the PC has a very bad feeling about staying in the Gate.

If the players try to make contact with the information ghosts here, the information ghosts may respond since they can manifest here and can more easily interact with material beings. The information ghosts are still not sane and thus will have trouble communicating anything to the players. In general they will prefer to remain out of sight unless the players try to enter the gate. They will give the following messages to the players through missive while they are at the King's Gate, specifically targeting characters known to speak Unispeak.

"Do not tarry. Danger comes here."

"To close the gate you must go under."

"Your mind is in danger."

A player with Tracking may make a Survival check (DC 15) to notice a large number of vaasi and human tracks around the gate. The vaasi tracks lead both to the entrance to the underground Red Gate facility and to the camp of the Gray Crows, while the human tracks just lead to the camp of the Gray Crows.

◆ ENCOUNTER 4

Beneath the Gate

By following tracks from the King's Gate or the Grey Crow camp the players can find the entrance to the underground facilities used by the Red Gate project long ago. The cave is located on the side of the hill, about one hundred and fifty feet from the King's Gate and two hundred and fifty feet from the camp of the Gray Crow Company.

It was previously concealed by a number of boulders until the Gray Crows managed to find the opening. They entered shortly thereafter and accidentally activated the gate, in addition to giving the vaasi who hide in the halls below another way to the surface. There are other entrances to the underground facilities beneath the King's Gate, but they are all a good distance from the King's Gate and have been concealed by the vaasi who lurk below.

If the players approach the entrance during the night the entrance is guarded by four vaasi soldiers.

As the players approach the entrance read the following text aloud:

Up ahead what appears to be a cave entrance breaks up the rubble and earth of the hill below the King's Gate. A large number of smaller rocks are cast about the area in front of the cave entrance, making it look as if the cave was recently cleared from a previous cave-in. Some of the rocks bear scorch marks and fine dust covers the area, giving the appearance that explosives were used in opening the cave. It is obvious by looking at the ground, much of which is mud several inches deep, that a large amount of traffic has come through this area recently. Some of the tracks are obviously boot prints, but others are those of strange three-toed creatures.

The cave itself is completely dark with murky sunlight of the cloud shrouded sun only penetrating a few feet into the cave. The passage beyond the entrance seems to slope down as it leads directly into the hill. The walls do not appear to be made of stone but metal, though this metal has long ago grown dull and tarnished from years of exposure to the elements. Whatever this tunnel is, it is no natural formation. A slight, cool breeze comes up from below, followed by the echoes of gunshots.

Characters with Tracking may make a Survival check (DC 5) to discern vaasi tracks and human tracks in the area. At least a dozen humans and two dozen vaasi have passed through the area in the last 24 hours. Also there are bloodstained drag marks leading down into the cave that appear to have been made by vaasi dragging injured humans down into the tunnels.

Assuming the players go into the tunnel, continue to chapter 4. If they refuse to go down into the cave, the information ghosts will barrage them with another round of missives to try and make it clear the only way to turn off the gate is to go into the tunnels, and the gate must be closed to avoid great danger. They could conceivably just call it a day and go home here, but if they do a large swarm of vaasi should attack King's Gulch the next night, leading to the death of many.

CHAPTER 3: THE RED GATE • • •

The players have now entered the underground tunnel that leads to the underground facilities once used by the researchers of the Red Gate project before they tried to use the Red Gate to escape the vaasi. The players probably are not sure what they are looking for, but luckily there are a handful of NPCs who may actually help them inside the Red Gate facility. The players must fight their way to the control room, hold off the vaasi while they turn off the King's Gate, and then make it to the surface with the vaasi hot on their heels.

◆ ENCOUNTER 1

The Halls of the Red Gate Project

This encounter serves to describe the primary rooms in the Red Gate facility. Throughout the entire structure the ceilings are fifteen feet high and the walls are made out of metal with a hardness of 30 and 60 hit points per cubic foot. All the hallways are twenty feet wide unless otherwise stated. All the doors in the base have been forced open and can no longer close without a Repair check (DC 15) and one minute of work, and even then they must be opened and closed by hand. The base still does have some power thanks to the Gray Crows accidentally powering up some emergency generators, though most of the systems in the facility have suffered so much damage they are no longer functional. There are no functional lights anywhere in the Red Gate facility and all the elevators, previously gravity based devices called grav lifts, are no longer functional.

◆ ENTRYWAY

This is the tunnel that leads to the surface that the players use to access the facility. After they step inside read the following text aloud:

This tunnel slopes down at a fifteen degree angle, switching back on itself several times in lengths of roughly fifty feet. The floor is smooth, but has some sort of machinery built into it that seems to no longer be functional. Likewise there are numerous objects that appear to be light sources in the walls and ceilings of the tunnel, but all of them have been broken. There are a few rocks and other debris near the mouth of the tunnel and muddy foot prints stretch through its entirety. Red blood is mixed in with the blood in long drag marks. Some of the walls have some sort of writing on them that appears to have been in murcow blood.

The blood writing is merely vaasi graffiti and the players have no way to translate it. If Identify Alien Technology is used on the floor of the chamber the player can discern that the devices in the floor are some sort of gravity projector that would allow heavy objects to be slid up and down the hall with minimal effort. Now that power is back on this device could conceivably be repaired, though doing so would take at least six hours and a Repair check (DC 30), plus the device is PL 8 technology.

♦ SECURITY CHECKPOINT

This room at the bottom of the ramp is where the security officers assigned to the Red Gate project kept unwanted visitors out, and where they began their last stand during the vaasi invasion. When the players approach this room read the following text aloud:

As you reach the end of the slanting tunnel you hear movement up ahead. The passage opens up into some sort of room, but seeing specifics is hard at this distance. It almost sounds like someone is digging.

There are two vaasi soldiers and two vaasi warhounds in this room attempting to get through the barricade the surviving Gray Crows have erected to block the Survey Equipment and Suit Storage room. These vaasi will notice any light radius coming down the tunnel and will assume anyone bringing light into the passages or anyone speaking anything other than vaasi are enemies. If the players immediately douse their lights in hearing the noises below they may remain undetected, but to get closer they will have to succeed a Move Silently skill

checks (DC 10). If they are able to approach without being detected they can surprise the vaasi, but if they do not do so the vaasi will take cover and set an ambush of their own.

Once the vaasi are dealt with and the players bring light into the room, read the following text aloud.

This room is covered in a different type of metal than the hallway behind you and all the doors, or what remains of them, are extremely thick. Several stations that look like they were once weapon emplacements are on the far side of the room, though any weapons left there have long ago fallen apart. On the far side of the room are a pair of human bodies dressed in gray fatigues that appear to have been gnawed on and partially eaten, their blood scattered over much of the room.

The room itself is small and has only two doors besides the one you just came in through; one on the eastern wall and one on the southern wall. While the one on the southern wall is open, the one on the eastern wall is partially closed and the rest of the doorway has been blocked with all manner of debris and refuse. From the other side of this debris some movement can be heard.

On the other side of the debris barrier are several of the surviving members of the Gray Crow Company. That doorway leads to the Survey Equipment and Suit Storage room, while the door to the south leads to the Circle Hall.

♦ NPCs

Vaasi Warhound (2) ♦ CR 3

Small aberration; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; MAS 17; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size); BAB +2; Grap -1; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; blindsight 60 ft., improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +7, Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +9.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Vaasi Soldier (2) ♦ CR 5

Medium aberration; HD 5d8+15; hp 37; MAS 19; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +2 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Drive +5, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Repair +1, Spot +3, Survival +4.

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

Advancement: By character class.

Equipment: Machete, leather armor, crossbow.

♦ SURVEY EQUIPMENT AND SUIT STORAGE

This room was once used to store various hostile environment suits and surveying equipment that the researchers at Red Truth made common use of and thus wanted in easy reach within the facility. Most of this equipment has been destroyed over time and the shelves that contained it fallen to rubble. Now this room serves as the hiding place of the surviving members of the Gray Crow Company. They have managed to half close the door and fill the rest of the doorway in with rubble and other debris. The Gray Crows are badly wounded and are borderline hysterical now, so getting them out of the room will be a challenge.

Moving the debris in the door requires a Strength check (DC 20) and ten minutes of work. Alternately a character can try and disable the half closed door with a Disable Device check (DC 15), causing all the rubble to fall out of place.

If the players try to yell through the rubble they can hear mumbling and noise from the other side, but can't make out enough to have much of a conversation. If the players open the doorway read the following text aloud:

As the rubble falls free you hear movement on the other side and several curse words. As your lights pour into the room you see four people on the other side, one woman and three men, all in gray rough outs and covered in dirt and blood. Several look to be severely injured, but they all hold guns and try to point them in your direction, but two of the men are so weak they can barely lift their arms. The woman points her pistol

at you without any wavering, staring at you with steel gray eyes. "We just want out," she says evenly.

The rest of the room is filled with rubble, broken metal shelves, and blood stains with a closed door in the northern wall.

The four in the room are Sergeant Tasker Bossq, Captain Anne Dalar, Muktar O'Brien, and one of the Gray Crow Privates, Morgan Thomas. Private Thomas and Muktar have each lost ten hit points, while the other two have lost five. They are low on ammunition (1 clip each) and desperately want out of the Red Gate facility. Despite this, they do not want to go into captivity or jail and will fight for their freedom. If the players let them be, they will slink out the tunnel and reequip at their camp, eventually laying an ambush for the players as they leave the tunnel. If the players force the issue of arresting or in other way capturing the Gray Crows they will open fire, though with a successful Intimidate or Diplomacy check (DC 25) they can be talked into surrendering temporarily.

The Gray Crows will share their tale if asked. They found the entrance tunnel three days ago and came down to investigate. While investigating they accidentally activated the King's Gate at the main control room, which they can draw a map to. They have spent the time since trying to scare everyone away from the King's Gate, figuring out what it is, and how they can make money from it. Then last night the vaasi boiled up from the lower levels of the Red Gate Facility. These four were in the control room at the time along with four other Gray Crow privates and they survived by hiding and barricading themselves in this room. They are not interested in fighting the vaasi further, thinking that is a battle for the military. They also received missives from the information ghosts as well, but none of them speak Unispeak so they assumed it was some sort of interference from the King's Gate. They are merely interested in their own survival, but once that is secured they will return to thinking of how to profit from this situation.

♦ NPCs

The stat blocks for the Gray Crow Company are listed in APPENDIX A.

♦ CHARGING STATION

The door to this room is sealed shut and has been since the fall of the Red Gate facility. One of the researchers who did not go through the gate barricaded himself in here and the door never opened again. Opening the door requires a Disable Device check (DC 25) and the door is a PL 7

device. If the players are able to get the door open, read the following text aloud:

This small room is oddly bereft of dust and debris like everything else. The air smells old and stale. The door makes a popping sound of a seal being broken as it slides open. It seems this door has not been opened for a very long time.

Inside the door are a pair of large devices that look like large cylinders with a single control pad surrounded by a variety of ports and plugs. The purpose of the machine is not easily evident and none of it appears to be functioning currently. On the floor before you is a humanoid shaped pile of dust that was probably a corpse long ago. Now only a few scraps of cloth, some dust, and single circular, metal device about four inches across covered with the symbol of six stars on a black field on one side.

The two devices were once used to recharge equipment used to examine or explore the King's Gate, but they have long ago run out of power and are not on the same power grid as the emergency generators the Gray Crows activated. The remains are that of a dosai researcher, but learning anything of dosai physiology is nigh impossible from the piles of dust that remain. The circular device is a personal force field (the DR 5/- variety) but it only has eight minutes of power left.

◆ 5: CIRCLE HALL BATTLE REMNANTS

This large hallway wraps around the main control room and provides access to the main control room, meeting room, and gravity lifts. Read the following text when the players enter:

This hallway wraps around in what appears to be a circle, curving out of sight a short distance away. The floors, walls, and ceilings are all covered with a mixture of blood stains, blast marks, and rents. It seems like an immense battle took place here long ago, but the remains of any combatants have turned to dust many lifetimes ago. Now only a few scattered piles of dust and scrap metal chunks litter the floor.

If the players have been particularly noisy, such as using lots of automatic weapons and explosives, since they came into the Red Gate facility a pair of vaasi soldiers will be here trying to find the source of the noise.

◆ NPCs

Vaasi Soldier (2) ◆ CR 5

Medium aberration; HD 5d8+15; hp 37; MAS 19; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +2 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Drive +5, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Repair +1, Spot +3, Survival +4.

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

Advancement: By character class.

Equipment: Machete, leather armor, crossbow.

◆ 6: GRAVITY LIFT 1

Once providing access to different levels of the Red Gate facility, these machines are now little more than large, ornate holes in the ground. As the players approach, read the following text aloud. If they have been particularly quiet since they arrived in the Red Gate Facility, skip the last two sentences.

This doorway in the outer wall of the circular hall has been ripped from its moorings and is nowhere in sight. On the other side of the doorway is a massive hole that reaches far out of sight. Other floors are visible below this one with similar doorways with crude ropes strung up between them to provide access. Most likely this once served as some sort of elevator shaft, but whatever machinery was used to traverse it seems long gone now. From the countless levels below you, you can hear movement that seems to be coming closer. It seems something is coming, and it has friends.

The noise is the vaasi climbing up the shaft to investigate whose making all the noise in the hope of finding some tasty snacks or at least some sport.

Climbing down the shaft using the ropes requires a Climb check (DC 10), but if the players seek to do so the vaasi should attack from below, hopefully urging them away from getting too deep into the facility.

◆ 7: GRAVITY LIFT 2

This room is identical to Gravity Lift 1, including the vaasi coming up from below to attack.

◆ 8: MEETING ROOM

The doors to this room are half open and will not move without repairs.

This square room served as a place for the scientists to meet and discuss their ideas close to the surface so they could return to the surface and carry out new tests with relative speed. It was once equipped with a bank of computers and holographic projectors, but now it is little more than a few battered desks and a single functioning information retrieval system. When the players enter this room read the following text aloud:

This moderate sized room is filled with overturned metal tables and a few chairs, most of which have been thrown up against the sides of the room and are covered in blood splatter. There are three relatively intact tables, each approximately five feet long and four feet high, that seem like they were used for a barricade at some point. At the far end of the room a single table stands upright with some sort of glass half-sphere on its surface. Light plays across the surface of the sphere, casting strange shadows across the room.

The tables may be moved easily as they only weigh 20 pounds each. They may be used to build a barricade and have a hardness of 15 and 50 hit points.

The device at the far center of the room is an information retrieval system with a holographic display the researchers used to get information from the facility's database and to run simulations. It has been reactivated since emergency power was restored, though it only has access to a fraction of the total information once stored in the facility. Any player who speaks Unispeak can issue verbal orders to the device, but its programming is sufficiently damaged to the point it can only answer questions about topics in the database. The game master can use this to give out whatever information he desires about Red Truth, the facility in gen-

eral, or the Star Confederation while answering any unwanted queries with silence from the machine due to its limitations. The machine answers queries with an audio and video presentation, using holograms to show any images necessary. The device can tell the players how to shut down the King's Gate, granting them a +8 bonus to Computer Use skill checks to shut down the King's Gate in the next encounter.

◆ 9: MAIN CONTROL ROOM

This room was the main control center for the King's Gate and is where the Gray Crow Company accidentally activated the gate three days ago. The doors to this room were blown apart by explosives long ago and cannot be repaired without extensive work.

Read the following text to the players when they enter the room:

Unlike the rest of this structure, the walls of this room are covered in a reflective, silvery substance that seems to flow around the surfaces of the room. The floor is littered with rubble and piles of dust along with a few broken bits of machinery. The entire place is softly illuminated by a number of glowing blue spheres built into the ceiling. As you enter the room the walls begin to move, flowing in tendrils into the center of the room. After a few seconds the tendrils solidify into what appear to be chairs, one for each of you, and some manner of control device layered with buttons, touch pads, and other input devices. In front of each chair the wall turns into a massive picture of the King's Gate above, still glowing brightly.

The walls of this room are covered in nanites, which reactivated when emergency power was restored. Now the nanites are responding to the players since they have the same DNA as the Star Confederation, spawning a control pod for each player. The computer controls form in such a way that they are comfortable for the players to use, but all the control pods are labeled in Unispeak, so it may not be very useful for some of the players. When the players begin using the control pods, go to the next encounter.

If any of the players make a Search check (DC 15) to look through the items at the center of the room they can find a Star Confederation plasma

carbine with 16 charges left in its power pack.

Any vaasi that enter this room suffer a -1 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws due to the specially calibrated lights.

◆ ENCOUNTER 2 The Reins of the Red Gate

Now that the players have reached the control room for the Red Gate they have to find a way to shut it down. If they have already accessed the holographic information terminal in the meeting room they know how to accomplish this, but otherwise it will take some trial and error. After the players begin experimenting with the control pods read the following text aloud:

As you sit down in the chair it conforms to your body and rearranges the controls in front of you in what appears to be an attempt to maximize your comfort. The screen in front of you changes to dull gray begins to show a pattern of ripples across its surface. As you work to figure out what this means, you all begin to hear the sounds of movement outside. Echoing down the halls you begin to hear battle cries and the sound of dozens of feet. It seems you'd best figure this out quickly.

The players have several options as to how to shut down the King's Gate.

- 1 If the player successfully uses the Utilize Alien Technology talent they may shut down the King's Gate with ten Computer Use checks (DC 25), each taking one round to make.
- 2 If the player can make a Knowledge (Technology) check (DC 30), the player can shut down the gate with twelve Computer Use checks (DC 25).
- 3 If the players used the holographic information unit in the meeting room to get information on shutting down the King's Gate the player must make eight Computer Use checks (DC 25).

Any Computer Use checks suffer a -8 penalty if the PC cannot read Unispeak.

Five rounds after the players begin using the control pod the vaasi reach the top of the gravity lifts and begin attacking. Unless the players make a stand on the gravity lifts, the vaasi will reach the control room six rounds after the players begin using the control pods. During the first round four soldier vaasi and two warhounds reach the control room. Every round either an additional soldier vaasi

or warhound arrives and join the fight. If the fight lasts more than fifteen rounds there is a lull for ten rounds as the vaasi regroup.

Once the players shut down the King's Gate, go to the next encounter.

◆ NPCs Vaasi Warhound ◆ CR 3

Small aberration; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; MAS 17; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size); BAB +2; Grap -1; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; blindsight 60 ft., improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +7, Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +9.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Vaasi Soldier ◆ CR 5

Medium aberration; HD 5d8+15; hp 37; MAS 19; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +2 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Drive +5, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Repair +1, Spot +3, Survival +4.

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

Advancement: By character class.

Equipment: Machete, leather armor, crossbow.

◆ ENCOUNTER 3

Escaping the Red Gate

Now the players have successfully accessed the controls to the King's Gate and shut it down, they have to get out of the Red Gate Facility alive. Once the players are successful at shutting down the gate read the following text aloud:

On the screen ahead of you the visual of the King's Gate returns, only now bluish-white energy sparkles across the structure of the gate. The energy quickly intensifies, and as it does so the red light emanating from the gate begins to randomly blink in and out of existence. Within a few seconds the light is gone entirely and the King's Gate goes to sleep again.

Now the players just have to get out. They can either force the vaasi back or take advantage of the lull in the vaasi attack after round 15. The players can then make a run for it, though the vaasi will pursue them if possible with one soldier or warhound giving chase each round. This pursuit will end as soon as the players reach daylight.

If the players have had an easy time of the adventure so far, the surviving Gray Crows can lay an ambush for them outside the facility, assuming they survived and escaped. They will have healed using medkits left at their camp, if any, and rearmed themselves. They will give the players one chance to surrender before opening fire.

◆ NPCs

The stat blocks for the Gray Crows are listed in APPENDIX A.

Vaasi Warhound ◆ CR 3

Small aberration; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; MAS 17; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size); BAB +2; Grap -1; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; blindsight 60 ft., improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +7, Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +9.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Vaasi Soldier ◆ CR 5

Medium aberration; HD 5d8+15; hp 37; MAS 19; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +2 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Drive +5, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Repair +1, Spot +3, Survival +4.

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

Advancement: By character class.

Equipment: Machete, leather armor, crossbow.

CHAPTER 5: WRAP UP • • •

Once the PCs escape the Red Gate facility and the possibility of an ambush from the Gray Crows, they may return to King's Gulch without further incident. With the shutting down of the King's Gate the weather returns to normal and the players can easily call for assistance from the Republic, which will arrive in a few hours. While the players were out at the King's Gate, the ranchers of King's Gate retrieved the murews from the stampede last night and the town returns to its normal, calm day to day life.

The vaasi do not cause any more problems for King's Gulch for now, having suffered serious casualties between the Gray Crows and the PCs. They may cause trouble for small groups of humans in the area in the future, but the Republic will try and deal with the problem considering this is the first real proof of vaasi activity in the Republic.

The Republic will pay the players for their efforts assuming they shut down the King's Gate and report the presence of the Red Gate facility. The reward will increase the Wealth bonus of the players by +6. The Republic will want to investigate the ruins under the King's Gate further, and will likely involve the players in doing so if they are willing. There are dozens of floors in the Red Gate facility and hundreds of vaasi, allowing plenty of room for future adventures.

APPENDIX A: IMPORTANT NPCS • • •

The People of King's Gulch

Most of the inhabitants of the town have the following statistics.

Farmer

(Tough Ord. 2 / Dedicated Ord. 1) ♦ CR 2

Medium Humanoid; HD 2d10+1d6+6; hp 25; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 class, +1 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +1; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+2, survival knife) or +2 ranged (2d10, Brase Arms shotgun); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+2, survival knife) or +2 ranged (2d10, Brase Arms shotgun); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Rural

Skills: Drive +3, Handle Animal +2, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +3, Profession (Farmer) +7, Read/Write Language (English), Spot +3, Speak Language (English), Survival +5.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Endurance, Great Fortitude, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Possessions: Rough outs, Brase Arms shotgun, 12 shells, hat, survival knife.

Rancher

(Tough Ord. 2 / Fast Ord. 1) ♦ CR 2

Medium Humanoid; HD 2d10+1d8+6; hp 26; Mas 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 17, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +5 class, +3 armor); BAB +1; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, survival knife), +3 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, survival knife), +3 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Dawning Star; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Ranch-Hand

Skills: Handle Animal +7, Navigate +5, Read/Write Language (English), Profession (Rancher) +3, Ride +10, Speak Language (English), Survival +6.

Feats: Animal Affinity, Armor Proficiency (Light), Guide, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Possessions: Rough outs, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol with 3 clips, survival knife, compass, murcow jerky.

Storeowner

(Charismatic Ord. 2 / Tough Ord. 1) ♦ CR 2

Medium Humanoid; HD 1d10+2d6+6; hp 23; Mas 15; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense , touch ,

flat-footed (-1 Dex, +1 class, +3 armor); BAB +1; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (1d3, nonlethal), +0 ranged (2d6, EDF_9 Auto-Pistol); Full Atk +1 melee (1d3, nonlethal), +0 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 14.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Rural

Skills: Barter +7, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +9, Handle Animal +3, Knowledge (Current Events) +6, Profession (Storeowner) +8, Repair +7, Ride +5, Survival +2.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Trustworthy, Windfall.

Possessions: Rough outs, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol with 2 clips, ledger, keys, calculator.

Dalai Kai

(Smart Ord. 4) ♦ CR 3

Medium Humanoid; HD 3d6+3; hp 16; Mas 12; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10 (-1 Dex, +1 class); BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +1 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch), +0 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol); Full Atk +1 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch), +0 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 13.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Terraformer

Skills: Computer Use +10, Craft (Chemistry) +10, Investigate +10, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +14, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +12, Knowledge (Technology) +10, Profession (Terraformer) +11, Navigate +10, Repair +10, Research +10, Search +10, Terraforming +12.

Feats: Educated, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Terraformer Training, Windfall

Possessions: EDF-9 Auto-Pistol with 2 clips, info comp, work clothes, hat, compass, music player.

The Gray Crow Company

The Gray Crow Company was formed five years ago by Dane Zeller, a researcher and scholar who was very influential in the relic markets of Hapeville, so he could get relics straight from the source instead of having to hire relic hunters and others as intermediaries. For the first three years of its existence the Gray Crow Company functioned as bodyguards and manual labor for Zeller while he handled all the scientific work, including selling the

relics they recovered. The Gray Crow Company was reasonably successful in its operations due to the extensive knowledge and experience of Zeller, but over time most of the Gray Crows came to resent taking orders from the pudgy, scholarly, and at times obnoxious man. After three years of service the leader of The Gray Crows, Captain Dalar, killed Zeller in an "accident" while in some ruins and assumed command of the team. Despite some short term gains using the last of Zeller's notes and plans, Captain Dalar did not have Zeller's knowledge of relics and ruins. Within a few months the success of the Gray Crow's disappeared and they became more brigands and mercenaries than relic hunters. They once used science and research to find their profits, but now they use brute strength, often attacking other more successful groups of relic hunters to take their finds.

The Gray Crows have stuck together for the last two years due to Captain Dalar's ironfisted leadership and occasional successes, but the group is growing more desperate with each passing day. They have come to the King's Gate area after hearing that Dawning Star University sent a researcher, Professor D'Aldren, to the area; something Captain Dalar thought indicated something of value in the area. The Gray Crows hoped to cut off Professor D'Aldren, but arrived too late. They began picking through the ruins surrounding the King's Gate, avoiding Professor D'Aldren while doing so, but found little of value. Eventually these explorations found the subterranean levels of the old Red Gate research center, and while trying to salvage an ancient control panel the Gray Crows activated the King's Gate. They have been working ever sense to scare the locals away from the King's Gate in the hopes they can understand it or at least find a way to make a profit from it before the locals can call for help. So far the Gray Crows have had little luck due to their lack of scientific expertise.

The Gray Crow Company used to simply be bodyguards and relic hunters, but now they are desperate men and women looking for a good way to make a quick credit. They are willing to kill when necessary, but would prefer to avoid that when possible since it brings in so many legal entanglements (hence their plan of scaring the locals instead of killing them). If attacked with deadly force they will respond in kind, but generally would rather avoid getting shot when they can avoid it. If faced with losing a fight, they will likely surrender in the hopes of living another day.

Captain Anne Dalar

Leader of the Gray Crow Company after the "accidental" death of Dane Zeller, Captain Dalar is the child of two of the security officers assigned to the Dawning Star. Her parents were among those that felt the military government that controlled the

colony in its earliest days should remain in control instead of passing authority to the Dawning Star Republic, and in time these beliefs led them to leave Dawning Star City and move to Hapeville. Captain Dalar grew up among the relic hunters, scientists, and thugs of Hapeville, learning early on she had the same talents for combat that her parents had. She spent much of her teenage years learning about weapons and tactics from her parents and their friends, eventually earning a living as a bodyguard in Hapeville. Despite her military talents, Captain Dalar has no interest in the EDF and their opposition to the Republic, thinking them even less disciplined and less worthy to lead than the Republic. Instead she has kept herself independent of political affiliation, instead allying herself with whoever could pay her at the time.

A pragmatic woman, Captain Dalar often lets her ego and greed interfere with her getting things done the easy way. Captain Dalar always believes she is due more than she receives, and thus is always pushing for a bigger cut of whatever operation she is involved in. This behavior is what ultimately led to the death of Dane Zeller and led the Gray Crows to their current predicament. Captain Dalar does not respond to criticism well and has blamed everyone but herself for the Gray Crow Company's situation. This has done little to help morale in the Company, and if the King's Gate had not shown such promise Captain Dalar could very well be dealing with a mutiny currently. Because of this lack of loyalty many of the Gray Crows are more than willing to surrender than face serious injury.

Captain Dalar is a woman of Hispanic ancestry with dark skin and hair, though her hair is now graying at the edges. Several years ago she would have been considered quite attractive, but now age has begun to take its toll on her. She nearly always wears rough outs and an EDF-9 Auto-Pistol is always within arm's reach.

Captain Anne Dalar

(Fast Hero 4 / Soldier 2) ♦ CR 6

Medium-size human; HD 4d8+2d10+12; hp 44; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 22, touch 19, flat-footed 19 (+6 class, +3 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +4; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4+1, survival knife) or +8 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+1, survival knife) or +8 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL none; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +0; AP 9; Rep +1; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Military

Skills: Demolitions +5, Drive +10, Hide +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (tactics) +7, Move Silently +8, Read/Write Language (English), Speak Language (English), Spot +4.

Talents: Evasion, Uncanny Dodge I

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Defensive Marital Arts, Heroic Surge, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: EDF-9 Auto Pistol with six clips, survival knife, rough-outs, info-comp, universal communicator, 2 days of rations, canteen, cards, fragmentation grenade.

Muktar O'Brien

The right hand man of Captain Dalar, Muktar O'Brien is one of the recent additions to the Gray Crow Company. Muktar O'Brien joined the group one year ago after Captain Dalar decided the group needed someone with more knowledge of science than the group currently possessed if they hoped to make a profit again. Thus she recruited Muktar O'Brien, a freelance relic hunter who had been operating out of Sunder Ridge for the last few years, due to his success rate and self professed scientific training. Unfortunately for the Gray Crows, Muktar is not that knowledgeable about archaeology, history, or any of the other disciplines useful in going after relics and instead is simply good at getting others to do the work for him. Muktar O'Brien has become instrumental in finding other relic hunting operations for the Gray Crows to raid, earning his keep by gathering intelligence and information instead of scientific expertise. While Muktar O'Brien has helped the Gray Crows, both he and Captain Dalar find the arrangement barely tolerable. Captain Dalar thinks Muktar O'Brien is near useless since he only provides leads every few months, while Muktar O'Brien feels he is underappreciated since it is mostly his work that has kept the Gray Crows making any money in the last year. Muktar O'Brien feels he should be leading the Gray Crows, and if given the right situation may even turn on Captain Dalar if he thinks he can come out on top.

Muktar is originally from Dawning Star City, where he ran a number of small time confidence scams before the police caught up with him. Hoping to avoid prison, Muktar fled to the faction camps where he learned that many relic hunters are more than willing to brag about their finds to anyone who would listen. Using this information he would then raid the operations of relic hunters to steal what they had already unearthed, usually doing so without the original owners noticing his passing.

A man of mixed descent, Muktar O'Brien has pale skin with freckles but jet black hair. He sports a carefully groomed beard and keeps his hair cut short to hide the fact it is thinning rather quickly. Muktar is handsome in face and his body has grown hard over his year with the Gray Crows.

Muktar O'Brien

(Charismatic Hero 2 / Fast Hero 2 / Infiltrator 2) ♦ CR 6

Medium Humanoid; HD 2d6+4d8+4; hp 32; Mas 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 22, touch 19, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +3 armor, +7 class); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4, survival knife), +5 ranged (2d6, EDF-12 Submachinegun); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4, survival knife), +5 ranged (2d6, EDF-12 Submachinegun); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; AL none; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will -1; AP 9; Rep +3; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 15.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Criminal

Skills: Climb +4, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +9, Disable Device +8, Disguise +9, Drive +7, Escape Artist +7, Gather Information +9, Hide +13, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (current events) +7, Move Silently +13, Read/Write Language (English), Search +7, Speak Language (English).

Talents: Charm, Evasion.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Deceptive, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy, Trustworthy.

Special Abilities: Sweep, Improvised Implements.

Possessions: Rough outs, EDF-12 Submachinegun with 3 clips, portable glow lamp, universal communicator, infocomp.

Sergeant Tasker Bossq

The second in command of the Gray Crow Company, Sergeant Bossq is a career military man who served in the EDF during its earliest days before getting court-martialed for striking a superior officer. After leaving the EDF he served in the EFLSF for a time, but eventually grew tired of the politics between the faction-camps and faked his own death while on a mission so he could safely go freelance. He spent a few years slumming around with various bandit groups in southern Dawnhome, earning something of a reputation for himself, but eventually Tasker found the law enforcement attention he was attracting to dangerous. Three years ago he traveled north to where no one had heard of him and joined up with the Gray Crows. He has been serving as their second in command ever since. A capable commander, soldier, and tactician, the men of the Gray Crow Company are actually more loyal to Sergeant Bossq than they are to Captain Dalar since they perceive the Sergeant as being one of them. Luckily for Captain Dalar, Sergeant Bossq has no interest in leading the group, feeling he is not smart enough for such a position.

Despite years of military discipline, Sergeant Bossq has an explosive temper that has a way of getting him, and his men, into trouble. Never one to look past an insult or challenge, he has gotten the Gray Crows involved in more than one scrape because his ego would not let him back down. So far they have managed to weather these encounters well, but if the Gray Crow Company suffers any casualties while trying to scare the people of King's Gulch Sergeant Bossq will more than likely react very badly and insist in wiping out the town.

Sergeant Tasker Bossq is a man of African descent in his forties who has obviously lived a hard life. His body is covered in scars and burn marks and much of it has a texture similar to that of leather. Sergeant Bossq keeps his head clean shaven, though in the field he rarely is able to keep it up and thus gray fuzz often sprouts from the crown of his head.

Sergeant Tasker Bossq
(Strong Hero 2 / Charismatic Hero 2 /
Field Officer 2) ♦ CR 6

Medium-size human; HD 4d8+2d6+12; hp 40; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+4 class, +1 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +5; Grap +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+2, brawl) or +6 ranged (2d8, EDF-15 Assault Rifle); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+2, brawl) or +6 ranged (2d8, EDF-15 Assault Rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Gray Crows; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; AP 9; Rep +3; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Military

Skills: Climb +5, Demolitions +3, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (tactics) +5, Read/Write Language (English), Speak Language (English).

Talents: Coordinate, Strong Rage

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Brawl, Improved Brawl, Power Attack, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point-Blank Shot, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Special Abilities: Leadership, Uncanny Survival.

Possessions: EDF-15 Assault Rifle with 2 clips, brass knuckles, rough-outs, survival knife, universal communicator, 50 feet of duracable, canteen, flare, 2 fragmentation grenades, smoke grenade.

Gray Crow Private

The Gray Crow Company has sixteen privates in its ranks, all of which have been recruited from the thugs, laborers, bodyguards, and other violent sorts found in the southern faction-camps of Dawnhome. Most have little military training or schooling of any sort, instead learning the trade of violence through hard experience. Not the brightest bulbs in the bunch, they are dedicated to getting a paycheck and hurting whoever they need to do so. Their loyalty to Captain Dalar has been waning over the last year as their fortunes have continued to worsen, but this current operation on King's Gulch has brightened their spirits. Still they aren't interested in getting killed for Captain Dalar or so their fellows can get paid. In the end they all want to collect their money and live to see another day.

Gray Crow Private
(Strong Ord. 1 / Tough Ord. 3) ♦ CR 3

Medium Humanoid; HD 3d10+1d8+8; hp 33; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +3 class, +3 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, baton), +5 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol) or +4 ranged (2d8, Brase Hunting Rifle); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, baton), +4 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol) or +3 ranged (2d8, Brase Hunting Rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Gray Crow Company; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Criminal

Skills: Drive +3, Intimidate +5, Hide +5, Knowledge (streetwise) +1, Knowledge (tactics) +1, Move Silently +5, Spot +3, Survival +4.

Feats: Brawl, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Stealthy.

Possessions: Rough outs, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol or Brase Hunting Rifle, baton, radio, flare, 1 day of rations, 50 feet of duracable, backpack.

APPENDIX B: RELICS • • •

♦ THE KING'S GATE

A massive structure that is the only surviving gate constructed by the Red Gate project, it has the power to open a portal to Red Truth. Currently traveling through the portal will turn whatever passes through into pure information with no way to return to physical form by passing back through, so going through the gate is essentially a death sentence. The gate itself is thirty feet tall and twenty feet wide on the outside with the actual structure of the gate being a seamless metal rectangular structure four feet thick. The King's Gate has no door; if it were not activated it would just look like a metal rectan-

STAR CONFEDERATION PLASMA CARBINE

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Plasma Carbine	8	4D10	20	Fire	80 feet.	S, A	SF plasma power pack	Med	7 lb.	33	Mil (+3)

gle sticking out of the ground. Now that it is active, the interior space of the gate has become a translucent space with a strong red tint. If one looks through the gate the objects on the other side are visible, but are slightly blurred and have a strong red tint to them. There are no controls on the King's Gate and it can only be controlled at the underground facility located nearby.

The gate has a hardness of 40 and 50 hit points per cubic foot. The entire structure has 2,000 hit points. If is destroyed while active it will explode, inflicting 100d6 on everything with 5,000 feet, Reflex save (DC 16) for half damage. The gate may be passed through safely while inactive, but while active anyone passing through in any direction must make a Will save (DC 15). Those who fail the save are transformed into an information ghost. Those who make the save survive for one round but must make another save if they do not pass back through immediately. (see Appendix C).

With the opening of the King's Gate the area around it has created a weak point in the barriers between Red Truth and this dimension. Any non-yaom creature without psionic powers that stays within 100 feet of the King's Gate must make a Will save (DC 15+1 per hour spent in the affected area) each hour they are in the area affected by the Red Truth. Failure means the creature takes 1 point of Wisdom damage, but also gains a cumulative +1 bonus to Intelligence and Wisdom-based skills. This is due to the information overload that those within the Red Truth area undergo, which causes mental damage and instability. Any person reduced to 0 Wisdom is rendered temporarily insane and the bonuses to Intelligence and Wisdom-based skills are lost. For each hour spent in the area after a character's Wisdom has reached 0, one point of Wisdom damage becomes permanent. If the character's Wisdom is reduced to 0 permanently they die. Non-yaom characters do not notice this Wisdom damage as it occurs, but instead suffer terrible headaches, feel paranoid, confused, and see things that may or may not be there. The GM should only inform them of the Wisdom damage after they leave the area. Assuming the Wisdom damage has not become permanent, it may be recovered normally.

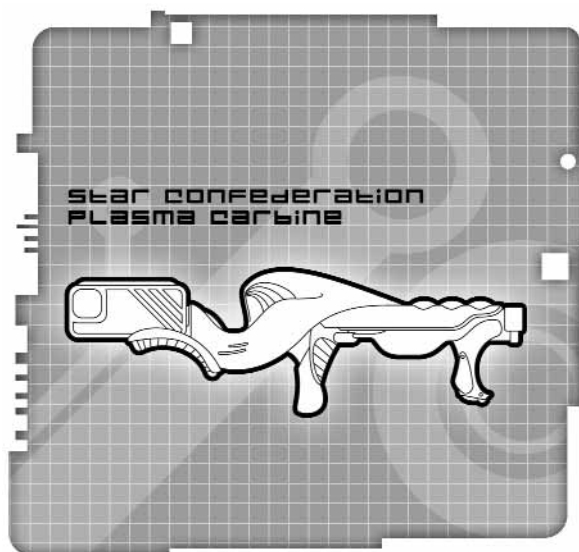
Yaom and psionics in the vicinity of the King's Gate do not suffer Wisdom damage unless they open themselves to Red Truth or use psionic pow-

ers. When they do so they must make a Will save (DC 15 + the number of times they have opened themselves to the Red Truth or used a psionic power in the affected area during the last 24 hours). Failing this save inflicts one point of Wisdom damage on the yaom or psionics. Within the area affected by the Red Truth the bonuses to Intelligence and Wisdom-based skills gained from a yaom opening up to the Red Truth are doubled and the power point costs of psionic powers are reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 1). If the yaom's or psionics's Wisdom is reduced to zero, even by temporary Wisdom damage, it becomes an information ghost. A yaom or psionics is aware of the Wisdom damage he suffers and can warn his non-psionic allies about the danger.

If the King's Gate is closed within two days of the beginning of the adventure the barriers between dimensions will eventually heal, but if it is not the influence of Red Truth becomes permanent and will spread 10 feet for each day the King's Gate is left open.

♦ STAR CONFEDERATION PLASMA CARBINE

A short barreled version of the Star Confederation plasma rifle that once served as the standard long arm of the Star Confederation army, a number of plasma carbines were assigned to science installations in the days before the vaasi invasion of Eos. A plasma carbine consumes 2 charges per shot.



APPENDIX C: PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS • • •

The following eight characters are provided for demonstration purposes so new players can easily play the adventure.

♦ CESTMIR ROSTOV KING'S GULCH SAWBONES

History

Cestmir Rostov is the children of faction-camp terraformers from Delhi, but after attending medical school at Dawning Star University he found he believed more in the ideals of the Republic than the faction-camps. After being disowned by his parents for these beliefs, Cestmir completed medical school and joined the Rural Doctor program run by the Republic which set up doctors on scheduled, regular visits to towns without doctors. In his five years in the Rural Doctor program Cestmir learned not just about frontier medicine but combat, survival, and how to deal with people. Eventually though things went sour after Cestmir accidentally killed an innocent man, Wilbur Brimly, while helping a posse hunt down a bandit by the name of Tasker Bossq who had taken Brimly hostage. While Cestmir was legally cleared of charges, he has not forgiven himself for taking the life of an innocent man and to this day seeks forgiveness that he can never actually achieve.

After the investigation into Wilfred Brimly's death Cestmir left the Rural Doctor program and traveled north to King's Gulch where no one had heard of him. He set up shop as the town doctor as the old one had died recently of blood blisters and has been treating the local populace ever since.

Personality

Quiet and thoughtful, Cestmir usually advises caution in any situation. He has learned not to jump to conclusions, and avoids violence where he can. This does not mean Cestmir is stupid and when faced with violence will defend himself, but he prefers settling conflicts through other means. You help not only heal bodies but minds, and have become something of a counselor for the locals.

Goals

Make sure no one dies, even the people who oppose you if possible.

Find redemption.

What You Think of the Others:

Professor Christopher D'Aldren, Dawning Star University Researcher: An out-of-towner, he came from Dawning Star University six months ago to study the King's Gate ruin and the other ruins in the area. Since then he's been digging up every strange looking rock for miles, but other than his rampant enthusiasm has done little to bother the locals. He does sometime put on airs since he's all educated in city learning, but he usually manages to step in a murrow pie shortly there after and deflate his own ego. You actually went to school with Christopher back at the University and while you didn't interact too much, you have become the primary person in King's Gulch he spends his spare time with. He is a good fellow, but he gets a bit rash when it comes to knowledge.

Elias Kane, King's Gulch Sheriff: One of the more influential members of the population of King's Gulch, he keeps the peace not so much with a fast gun as a calm voice and a stern stare. According to local legend he named the town King's Gulch after his home back on Earth, King's County (better known as Brooklyn, New York). Sheriff Kane actually remembers old Earth, and he has the wrinkles to show for it. While this has slowed down his gun hand, his mind is as keen as ever. He's not some gun-happy macho man like some sheriffs and he's become one of your better friends in town.

Jesserick, velin Guide: Of the local Black Hawk Tribe of velin, Jesserick spends much of her time in King's Gulch helping the locals learn about their velin neighbors. While a bit odd by human standards, she makes an active effort to understand humans and share her culture in return, though her interest in mysticism and hoobejoo has spooked some of the locals. She keeps telling everyone they are under threat by darklings that live near the King's Gate, but the lack of any proof has made most folks ignore these claims. While you don't believe her claims outright, you give them more of an ear than most folks just in case.

Garret Crase, Hunter: He was here before King's Gulch, and it seems he'll be here long after. Garret got fed up with city life years ago and come to live in the area around King's Gulch long before anyone thought of settling it. He knows more about its ins and outs than anyone but the velin, but his social skills have suffered a bit from all those in the wild. He's a bit off his rocker.

Meg McMillian, King's Gulch Bartender: The owner and proprietor of the local watering hole, the Two Moons Tavern, Meg has been running the tavern for four years after buying it from its founder. She's an open and friendly sort, but she always seems worried or like she has something to hide. Some folks gossip she got the money to buy the Two Moons as a burglar in Dawning Star City.

Orson "Saunglier" Geun, Rancher: Orson Geun has the unusual distinction of having several flocks of pigs under his care, part of a program being carried out by the Republic to introduce more terran livestock to the Eotian environment. Most would call Orson crude, and his nickname of Saunglier (or boar in French) is evidence of this. He is well known for being the dirtiest man in town, but also willing to lend his strong back to any worthy cause.

Subodai Kwan, Gunhand: A newcomer to town, having only been around for a few weeks, Subodai has been working odd jobs since his arrival. His manner and well used guns speak of a dangerous past, but so far he has yet to cause any trouble and has actually served as a deputy with distinction. Subi, as he has come to be known, is still looked at askance by most folks but the Sheriff vouches for him, and that's enough for most people.

Cestmir Rostov (Dedicated Hero 3 / Field Medic 4) ♦ CR 7

Medium-size human; HD 3d6+4d8+14; hp 55; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +4 class, +1 Dex); BAB +4; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4-1, survival knife) or +5 ranged (2d10, Brase Arms shotgun); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4-1, survival knife) or +5 ranged (2d10, Brase Arms

shotgun); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +7; AP 9; Rep +3; Wealth +6; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 13.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Emergency Services

Skills: Computer Use +3, Craft (pharmaceuticals) +5, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +3, Knowledge (behavioral sciences) +6, Listen +7, Profession (doctor) +12, Read/Write Language, (English), Sense Motive +8, Speak Language (English), Spot +10, Treat Injury +18.

Talents: Empathy, Healing Knack, Healing Touch 1, Intuition.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Dedicated Plus, Medical Expert, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Surgery, Trustworthy.

Special Abilities: Expert Healer, Medical Mastery.

Possessions: Brase Arms shotgun with 30 shells, rough-outs, survival knife, fast-use medkit, advanced medkit surgery kit, info-comp, portable glow lamp.

◆ PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER D'ALDREN, DAWNING STAR UNIVERSITY RESEARCHER History

The child of two miners from Iron Scar, Christopher D'Aldren spent his early life trying to get away from the miner's life his parent's wanted for him. He ended up earning an academic scholarship to Dawning Star University and eventually earned his doctorate in archaeology from the University. Christopher has spent the five years since as a research assistant at the University, helping other faculty members catalog and examine relics and other objects back to the University. All this time Christopher longed to get out into the field, despite the dangers involved in doing so because he felt that field researchers were the ones who got all the glory and tenure. To that end he wormed his way into his first field assignment six months ago and was sent up to investigate the King's Gate in the hopes of finding relics or other structures in the area. Christopher has spent the last six months doing his best to try and impress the folks back at the University, but has thus far had little luck. With no relics or other interesting finds to show for his efforts, Christopher is quickly becoming concerned his first field assignment will be his last. Unfortunately Christopher's habit of putting on airs and his general nature as an outsider has made it difficult for him to get much help from the locals.

In addition to being skilled in archaeology, Christopher is an excellent linguist, even learning some of the Unispeak tongue that the tentaari have shared with the humans.

Personality

A scholarly fellow with nigh boundless energy, Christopher is friendly but often overeager and a bit egotistical. Christopher values education over experience and tends to have little patience with folks without much schooling. When stressed or excited he tends to put these ideas aside, but when given time to relax Christopher tends to be at his most annoying. Christopher avoids violence when possible, preferring to think his way out of situations rather than fight.

Goals

Find something interesting to prove your worth to the University.

Prove your superior intellect.

What You Think of the Others:

Cestmir Rostov, King's Gulch Sawbones: A quite man, he is a relative newcomer to King's Gulch, having only arrived a year ago. Not only concerned with the bodies he treats, he also works extensively to try and help people with their personal problems, varying from marriage counseling to helping teach at the town school. While he pitches in when the town needs assistance, he avoids posse and militia duty when he can. Some folks say he's a pacifist, but the well-used shotgun that hangs in his office seems to indicate otherwise. You went to the University with him and while at the time you didn't spend much time together, since arriving in King's Gulch he has been the local you have spent the most time with.

Elias Kane, King's Gulch Sheriff: One of the more influential members of the population of King's Gulch, he keeps the peace not so much with a fast gun as a calm voice and a stern stare. According to local legend he named the town King's Gulch after his home back on Earth, King's County (better known as Brooklyn, New York). Sheriff Kane actually remembers old Earth, and he has the wrinkles to show for it. While this has slowed down his gun hand, his mind is as keen as ever.

Jesserick, velin Guide: Of the local Black Hawk Tribe of velin, Jesserick spends much of her time in King's Gulch helping the locals learn about their velin neighbors. While a bit odd by human standards, she makes an active effort to understand humans and share her culture in return, though her interest in mysticism and hoobejoo has spooked some of the locals. She keeps telling everyone they are under threat by darklings that live near the King's Gate, but the lack of any proof has made most folks ignore these claims.

Garret Crase, Hunter: He was here before King's Gulch, and it seems he'll be here long after. Garret got fed up with city life years ago and came to live in the area around King's Gulch long before anyone thought of settling it. He knows more about its ins and outs than anyone but the velin, but his social skills have suffered a bit from all those in the wild. He's a bit off his rocker.

Meg McMillian, King's Gulch Bartender: The owner and proprietor of the local watering hole, the Two Moons Tavern, Meg has been running the tavern for four years after buying it from its founder. She's an open and friendly sort, but she always seems worried or like she has something to hide. Some folks gossip she got the money to buy the Two Moons as a burglar in Dawning Star City.

Orson "Saunglier" Geun, Rancher: Orson Geun has the unusual distinction of having several flocks of pigs under his care, part of a program being carried out by the Republic to introduce more terran livestock to the Eotian environment. Most would call Orson crude, and his nickname of Saunglier (or boar in French) is evidence of this. He is well known for being the dirtiest man in town, but also willing to lend his strong back to any worthy cause.

Subodai Kwan, Gunhand: A newcomer to town, having only been around for a few weeks,

Subodai has been working odd jobs since his arrival. His manner and well used guns speak of a dangerous past, but so far he has yet to cause any trouble and has actually served as a deputy with distinction. Subi, as he has come to be known, is still looked at askance by most folks but the Sheriff vouches for him, and that's enough for most people.

Christopher D'Aldren

(Smart Hero 3 / Field Scientist 4) ♦ CR 7

Medium-size human; HD 3d6+4d8+7; hp 45; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 17, flat-footed 15 (+2 class, +2 Dex, +3 Int, +3 armor); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed) or +5 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol); Full Atk +3 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed) or +5 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +4; AP 9; Rep +2; Wealth +7; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 14.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Academic

Skills: Computer Use +12, Decipher Script +15, Disable Device +4, Drive +5, Investigate +13, Knowledge (earth and life sciences) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (technology) +18, Knowledge (physical sciences) +10, Profession (professor) +10, Repair +10, Research +15, Read/Write Language (English, Tentaarima, Unispeak), Search +13, Speak Language (English, Tentaarima, Unispeak, Velin).

Talents: Savant (Knowledge [technology]), Identify Alien Technology, Plan, Utilize Alien Technology.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Educated, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Smart Plus, Studios.

Special Abilities: Scientific Improvisation, Skill Mastery (Computer Use, Decipher Script, Investigate, Research, Search), Smart Defense.

Possessions: EDF-9 Auto-Pistol with 3 clips, digital camera, info-comp, evidence kit, universal communicator, rough outs, backpack, basic electrical tool kit, basic mechanical tool kit, portable glow lamp.

♦ ELIAS KANE, KING'S GULCH SHERIFF History

Elias Kane is one of the original settlers in King's Gulch and was responsible for naming the town after his old home on Earth, King's County (better known as Brooklyn). Elias joined the United Nations Space Marines on Old Earth and ended up as part of the security detachment on the Dawning Star. He was in cryogenic sleep for most of the trip to Eos and for two decades after landfall, eventually being awoken to serve during the transition from military to civilian authority. Elias served out the rest of his tour on the Sadler Orbital Facility before leaving the service to try and explore Eos. He spent a few years as a relic hunter, bounty hunter, and body guard before ending up with the settlers that founded King's Gulch. For the last twenty one years Elias has served tirelessly as the town's sheriff, dealing with xenomorphs, natural disasters, and the occasional group of bandits. Age has tempered the fiery anger and pride of Elias's youth, and now he keeps the peace more often with a stern word than a drawn gun.

Personality

A man past his prime, Sheriff Kane still has the anger and quick temper of his youth but age has given him the wisdom to control it. Sheriff Kane has a strong sense of right and wrong, though these beliefs don't always line up with the letter of the law. Sheriff Kane prefers living by the spirit of the law as opposed to the letter. He considers all the people in King's Gulch his responsibility and he does not take this lightly. Sheriff Kane is more than willing to sacrifice himself to save the town and he has the capacity to make hard decisions, such as sacrificing a few people to save the town, quickly.

Goals

Keep the peace and keep the people of King's Gulch safe.

Find out what's going on with the King's Gate.

What You Think of the Others:

Cestmir Rostov, King's Gulch Sawbones: A quite man, he is a relative newcomer to King's Gulch, having only arrived a year ago. Not only concerned with the bodies he treats, he also works extensively to try and help people with their personal problems, varying from marriage counseling to helping teach at the town school. While he pitches in when the town needs assistance, he avoids posse and militia duty when he can. Some folks say he's a pacifist, but the well used shotgun that hangs in his office seems to indicate otherwise. He's become a good friend of yours since his arrival, his cautious outlook helping you keep a balanced point of view.

Professor Christopher D'Aldren, Dawning Star University Researcher: An out-of-towner, he came from Dawning Star University six months ago to study the King's Gate ruin and the other ruins in the area. Since then he's been digging up every strange looking rock for miles, but other than his rampant enthusiasm has done little to bother the locals. He does sometime put on airs since he's all educated in city learning, but he usually manages to step in a murrow pie shortly there after and deflate his own ego. You think his mucking around has gotten you into the current predicament, but since you don't have any proof you're giving him the benefit of the doubt.

Jesserick, velin Guide: Of the local Black Hawk Tribe of velin, Jesserick spends much of her time in King's Gulch helping the locals learn about their velin neighbors. While a bit odd by human standards, she makes an active effort to understand humans and share her culture in return, though her interest in mysticism and hoobejoo has spooked some of the locals. She keeps telling everyone they are under threat by darklings that live near the King's Gate, but the lack of any proof has made most folks ignore these claims.

Garret Crase, Hunter: He was here before King's Gulch, and it seems he'll be here long after. Garret got fed up with city life years ago and come to live in the area around King's Gulch long before anyone thought of settling it. He knows more about its ins and outs than anyone but the velin, but his social skills have suffered a bit from all those in the wild. He's a bit off his rocker, but he's useful for dealing with local xenomorphs.

Meg McMillian, King's Gulch Bartender: The owner and proprietor of the local watering hole, the Two Moons Tavern, Meg has been running the tavern

for four years after buying it from its founder. She's an open and friendly sort, but she always seems worried or like she has something to hide. Some folks gossip she got the money to buy the Two Moons as a burglar in Dawning Star City. You think she's got some sort of under the table business going on, but you've never been able to prove it and you're pretty sure she's never gotten into anything too serious.

Orson "Saunglier" Geun, Rancher: Orson Geun has the unusual distinction of having several flocks of pigs under his care, part of a program being carried out by the Republic to introduce more terran livestock to the Eotian environment. Most would call Orson crude, and his nickname of Saunglier (or boar in French) is evidence of this. He is well known for being the dirtiest man in town, but also willing to lend his strong back to any worthy cause.

Subodai Kwan, Gunhand: A newcomer to town, having only been around for a few weeks, Subodai has been working odd jobs since his arrival. His manner and well used guns speak of a dangerous past, but so far he has yet to cause any trouble and has actually served as a deputy with distinction. Subi, as he has come to be known, is still looked at askance by most folks but after he helped you bring down a group of criminals you've given him some slack. He's become your number one deputy in town, and you hope he chooses to stay, but you think eventually he'll chose to move on.

Elias Kane

(Dedicated Hero 4 / Lawman 3) ♦ CR 7

Medium-size human; HD 4d6+3d8+14; hp 47; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30ft.; Defense 20, touch 17, flat-footed 19 (+6 class, +1 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +5; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, brawl) or +7 ranged (2d6+2, Beretta 92F) or +6 ranged (2d8, Beretta M3P); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+1, brawl) or +7 ranged (2d6+2, Beretta 92F) or +6 ranged (2d8, Beretta M3P); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL King's Gulch residents; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +6; AP 9; Rep +2; Wealth +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 9.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Law Enforcement

Skills: Bluff +4, Drive +5, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +10, Investigate +2, Knowledge (street-wise) +9, Listen +4, Read/Write Language (English), Research +2, Sense Motive +8, Speak Language (English, Velin), Spot +11, Survival +9.

Talents: Skill Emphasis (Intimidate), Aware.

Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Light), Blind-fight, Brawl, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point-Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Special Abilities: Force of Law, Legwork, Weapon Focus (Beretta 92F), Weapon Specialization (Beretta 92F).

Possessions: Beretta 92F pistol with 5 clips, Beretta M3P shotgun with 30 rounds, survival knife, rough outs, info-comp, digital camera, 2 sets of hand-cuffs.

♦ JESSERICK, VELIN GUIDE

History

Born of the Black Hawk Tribe that calls the plains around King's Gulch home, from a young age Jesserick was the target of signs and portents that spoke of a great destiny defending the velin people. She was trained as a warrior of her people, receiving extensive training in the use of the velin warbow and tutelage in the stories of her people, including the ancient stories of the vaasi*. From the onset of adulthood Jesserick served as a defender of her people, both against xenomorphs and against humans when needed. Jesserick also has the distinction of being one of the few velin to have fought the vaasi and lived, not only once but three times. On three separate instances the vaasi welled up from the passages near the King's Gate and your people have fought them back, but each time the vaasi have retreated and concealed their presence such that the humans did not believe you when you told them of the danger. Since the humans refuse to accept the truth they are in danger your people sent you to live among them in their town of King's Gulch to keep them safe. For the last year you have lived among the people of the town, learning their ways and trying to teach them of yours. Unfortunately it seems the humans are not very interested in what you have to say much of the time.

*The vaasi are a race of ancient evil that once invaded the planet Eos and killed off those who built the ancient ruins that dot its surface. They have remained hidden on the planet for time uncounted, waiting to strike again at the velin, the humans, and other descended from the ancients who dwelt on Eos. Only the velin know of them, and then for most velin it is only through myth and legend for they hide in the dark places beneath the world. The humans do not believe in the vaasi, calling them darklings, since they have never seen any and lived. But the velin know that just because you cannot see evil, it does not mean it is not there.

Personality

Jesserick believes firmly that she is a servant of both her people and the humans, even though the humans often do not believe what she says. Her service is one of guardianship, and she does whatever needed to make sure those under her charge remain safe. She believes the teachings of her people wholeheartedly, and while she tries to understand humans, she finds their more perplexing habits humorous. It is a wonder that such creatures could survive any length of time with all their reliance on tools and machinery.

Goals

Prove to the humans the darklings are a threat.
Protect the people of King's Gulch.
Destroy any vaasi you meet.

What You Think of the Others:

Cestmir Rostov, King's Gulch Sawbones: A quite man, he is a relative newcomer to King's Gulch, having only arrived a year ago. Not only concerned with the bodies he treats, he also works extensively to try and help people with their personal problems, varying from marriage counseling to helping teach at the town school. While he pitches in when the town needs assistance, he avoids posse and militia duty when he can.

Some folks say he's a pacifist, but the well-used shotgun that hangs in his office seems to indicate otherwise. He is a wise healer, and thus has your respect.

Professor Christopher D'Aldren, Dawning Star University Researcher: An out-of-towner, he came from Dawning Star University six months ago to study the King's Gate ruin and the other ruins in the area. Since then he's been digging up every strange looking rock for miles, but other than his rampant enthusiasm has done little to bother the locals. He does sometime put on airs since he's all educated in city learning, but he usually manages to step in a murrow pie shortly thereafter and deflate his own ego. He does not seem wise, though he is knowledgeable.

Elias Kane, King's Gulch Sheriff: One of the more influential members of the population of King's Gulch, he keeps the peace not so much with a fast gun as a calm voice and a stern stare. According to local legend he named the town King's Gulch after his home back on Earth, King's County (better known as Brooklyn, New York). Sheriff Kane actually remembers old Earth, and he has the wrinkles to show for it. While this has slowed down his gun hand, his mind is as keen as ever. A wise leader, he sadly does not put much stock in your tales of the vaasi.

Garret Crase, Hunter: He was here before King's Gulch, and it seems he'll be here long after. Garret got fed up with city life years ago and came to live in the area around King's Gulch long before anyone thought of settling it. He knows more about its ins and outs than anyone but the velin, but his social skills have suffered a bit from all those in the wild. He's a bit off his rocker. He is the only one who believes your stories of the vaasi. You see him as being as much a velin as human and he is the closest friend you have in King's Gulch.

Meg McMillian, King's Gulch Bartender: The owner and proprietor of the local watering hole, the Two Moons Tavern, Meg has been running the tavern for four years after buying it from its founder. She's an open and friendly sort, but she always seems worried or like she has something to hide. Some folks gossip she got the money to buy the Two Moons as a burglar in Dawning Star City. You do not understand some of her habits, but you do value the community building efforts she undertakes.

Orson "Saunglier" Geun, Rancher: Orson Geun has the unusual distinction of having several flocks of pigs under his care, part of a program being carried out by the Republic to introduce more terran livestock to the Eotian environment. Most would call Orson crude, and his nickname of Saunglier (or boar in French) is evidence of this. He is well known for being the dirtiest man in town, but also willing to lend his strong back to any worthy cause. A good man, he knows much of animals and their ways.

Subodai Kwan, Gunhand: A newcomer to town, having only been around for a few weeks, Subodai has been working odd jobs since his arrival. His manner and well-used guns speak of a dangerous past, but so far he has yet to cause any trouble and has actually served as a deputy with distinction. Subi, as he has come to be known, is still looked at askance by most folks but the Sheriff vouches for him, and that's enough for most people. A strange man who seems to thrive on money and violence, out of the humans you have met he may be the one you like the least.

Jesserick

(Velin Hunter 3/Fast Hero 1/Velin Guardian 3)

♦ CR 4

Medium-size Humanoid; HD 7d8+21; hp 60; Mas 20; Init +2; Spd 30ft. (35 without armor); Defense 26, touch 20, flat-footed 24 (+8 class, +2 Dex, +6 armor); BAB +6; Grap +8; Atk +9 melee (1d8+2 19-20/x2, velin war bow) or +9 ranged (1d8+2 20/x3, velin war bow); Full Atk +9/+2 melee (1d8+2 19-20/x2, velin war bow) or +9/+2 ranged (1d8+2 20/x3, velin war bow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Black Hawk tribe; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +3; AP 9; Rep +0; Wealth +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

PL Familiarity: 3

Occupation: Hunter

Skills: Craft (Tribal) +2, Handle Animal +3, Hide +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Navigate +3, Ride +5, Speak Language (English, Velin), Spot +5, Survival +14, Treat Injury +5.

Talents: Increased Speed +5.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (velin war bow), Simple Weapon Proficiency, Stealthy, Track, Weapon Focus (Velin War Bow).

Special Abilities: Low-light vision, Improved Detect Vaasi (4/day), Tribal Collective Memory, Guardian Reputation, Oathbound (Black Hawk tribe), Region Familiarity (King's Gulch Region).

Possessions: Velin war bow, velin battle armor, 60 arrows, first-aid kit, 3 days of rations, skinning knife, flint and steel, war horn.

♦ GARRET CRASE, HUNTER History

Garret Crase has spent most of his life outdoors, and wouldn't have it any other way. He was the fourth child born on Eos after the colony was founded, and has a deep love of the planet that few understand. Upon reaching adulthood, after years of the limited schooling available during the early days of Dawning Star City, Garret left to go "walkabout" and he never returned home. He has spent the last thirty-four years wandering across Dawnhome, learning of its animals, plants, and eventually the people who called it home. Garret Crase has forgotten more about the ecosystems of Eos than most people will ever know, but unfortunately he doesn't know much about dealing with people. Indeed he is more at home with animals and the velin than with his fellow humans, who often seem to think he smells bad or is rude. Really Garret just doesn't have time for all the niceties of "civilized" life. Garret Crase has been wandering around northern Dawnhome for decades and was in the area of King's Gulch before the town was founded. Since the town was founded he's helped the locals deal with critters, natural disasters, and other threats though he doesn't live in the town proper. He has developed quite a fondness for the town and tries not to wander too far from it. Instead Garret camps wherever his feet take him, earning his living through hunting, picking rare herbs, and helping catch bounties when they are available.

Last year Garret was recognized by the Black Hawk Tribe of the velin as a member and has spent much time with them since. Through this link he has come to be good friends with Jesserick, and Garret is the only human

in King's Gate who believes in darklings, or vaasi as the velin call them. Garret saw the corpse of one before the velin burned it, and he has no desire to meet such a horrid creature again.

Personality

Garret has spent most of his time in the wild and has had precious little contact with humans over the years. He has developed the habit of talking to himself, especially when thinking, and he usually talks very quickly. Garret generally stays quiet unless he has something important to say, or he's thinking hard. Garret places little value on technology and the other facets of civilization, preferring basic tools made by hand to all the techno-gadgets people rely on these days.

Goals

Keep the people of King's Gulch safe.

Learn more about Eos and the creatures that call it home.

Show some of these city folk that they don't need all these fancy gadgets to get

What You Think of the Others:

Cestmir Rostov, King's Gulch Sawbones:

A quite man, he is a relative newcomer to King's Gulch, having only arrived a year ago. Not only concerned with the bodies he treats, he also works extensively to try and help people with their personal problems, varying from marriage counseling to helping teach at the town school. While he pitches in when the town needs assistance, he avoids posse and militia duty when he can. Some folks say he's a pacifist, but the well-used shotgun that hangs in his office seems to indicate otherwise.

Professor Christopher D'Aldren, Dawning Star University Researcher: An out-of-towner, he came from Dawning Star University six months ago to study the King's Gate ruin and the other ruins in the area. Since then he's been digging up every strange looking rock for miles, but other than his rampant enthusiasm has done little to bother the locals. He does sometime put on airs since he's all educated in city learning, but he usually manages to step in a muck pie shortly thereafter and deflate his own ego.

Elias Kane, King's Gulch Sheriff: One of the more influential members of the population of King's Gulch, he keeps the peace not so much with a fast gun as a calm voice and a stern stare. According to local legend he named the town King's Gulch after his home back on Earth, King's County (better known as Brooklyn, New York). Sheriff Kane actually remembers old Earth, and he has the wrinkles to show for it. While this has slowed down his gun hand, his mind is as keen as ever. He puts up with your peculiarities with little discussion, so he seems a good sort.

Jesserick, velin Guide: Of the local Black Hawk Tribe of velin, Jesserick spends much of her time in King's Gulch helping the locals learn about their velin neighbors. While a bit odd by human standards, she makes an active effort to understand humans and share her culture in return, though her interest in mysticism and hoobejoo has spooked some of the locals. You are a friend of her people and spend much time with Jesserick since she thinks of the land as you do.

Meg McMillian, King's Gulch Bartender:

The owner and proprietor of the local watering hole, the

Two Moons Tavern, Meg has been running the tavern for four years after buying it from its founder. She's an open and friendly sort, but she always seems worried or like she has something to hide. Some folks gossip she got the money to buy the Two Moons as a burglar in Dawning Star City. You try to stay away from the Two Moons since you've had some problems with drinking previously, but Meg seems a good sort. Certainly lots of fun.

Orson "Saunglier" Geun, Rancher: Orson Geun has the unusual distinction of having several flocks of pigs under his care, part of a program being carried out by the Republic to introduce more terran livestock to the Eotian environment. Most would call Orson crude, and his nickname of Saunglier (or boar in French) is evidence of this. He is well known for being the dirtiest man in town, but also willing to lend his strong back to any worthy cause.

Subodai Kwan, Gunhand: A newcomer to town, having only been around for a few weeks, Subodai has been working odd jobs since his arrival. His manner and well-used guns speak of a dangerous past, but so far he has yet to cause any trouble and has actually served as a deputy with distinction. Subi, as he has come to be known, is still looked at askance by most folks but the Sheriff vouches for him, and that's enough for most people.

Garret Crase

(Human Survivor 3/Explorer 4) ♦ CR 7

Medium-size human; HD 7d8+14; hp 54; Mas 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+4 class, +2 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +5; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d4+1, survival knife) or +7 ranged (2d8, Brase Arms hunting rifle); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+1, survival knife) or +7 ranged (2d8, Brase Arms hunting rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Black Hawk tribe; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +4; AP 9; Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 11.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Colonist

Skills: Balance +6, Disable Device +7, Gather Information +3, Knowledge (earth and life sciences) +7, Knowledge (history) +5, Listen +9, Navigate +12, Read/Write Language (English), Ride +4, Search +10, Speak Language (English, Velin), Spot +11, Survival +14, Treat Injury +11.

Talents: Skill Emphasis (Navigate), Aware.

Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Light), Dedicated Plus, Guide, Heroic Surge, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Track Velin Tribal Guest.

Special Abilities: Adaptable, Explorer Lore, Last Man Standing, Resolve, Skilled Searcher, Survival Instinct, Trap Sense (+1).

Possessions: Brase Arms hunting rifle with 50 rounds, survival knife, rough-outs, medkit, compass, binoculars, survival kit, backpack, 50 feet of durable, portable glow lamp, 6 days of rations, water purifier, 2 person tent.

♦ MEG McMILLIAN, KING'S GULCH BARTENDER History

Meg McMillian grew up in Dawning Star City; spending most of her childhood helping her parents run their restaurant in one of the less well off neighborhoods of the city. Meg attended some school and did fairly well, but found her habits lay far more in talking her way out of trouble, or talking other people out of their money, rather than the scholarly arts. From a young age she began running scams across Dawning Star City, growing more and more bold with each success. After finishing her schooling she became a criminal full time, though she limited her crimes to confidence scams and trickery and always stole from those she figured could afford the loss. Eventually though things went sour and she got involved in a robbery that went bad. The burglars she was working with ended up killing a security guard at the warehouse they were robbing, something Meg was not in any way prepared for. She shortly left Dawning Star City, fearing arrest for her part in the murder. After months of wandering she used the nest egg she had built up over years of grifting to buy the Two Moons Bar in King's Gate, and has been running the bar ever since. She has become a contributing member of the town and has left most of her criminal ways behind her, but she still can't pass up the occasional slightly rigged game of poker or other small time scam, though she would never do anything so drastic as to endanger her position in the town. While Meg is trying to go straight, it's a hard row to hoe.

Personality

Outgoing but unsure of herself, Meg tends to charm others with self-deprecating humor and faked insecurities. She prefers others to underestimate her so they won't be disappointed if she fails. Meg is quick witted and very clever. She prefers to avoid violence when possible, mainly out of fear of being injured or killed as opposed to any moral qualms about killing others. Meg believes strongly that the stupid and their money should be parted, but tries to steal from those who can afford it.

Goals

Keep her cover in King's Gulch.
Make some money, hopefully enough to retire.

What You Think of the Others:

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Professor Christopher D'Aldren, Dawning Star University Researcher: An out-of-towner, he came from Dawning Star University six months ago to study the King's Gate ruin and the other ruins in the

area. Since then he's been digging up every strange looking rock for miles, but other than his rampant enthusiasm has done little to bother the locals. He does sometime put on airs since he's all educated in city learning, but he usually manages to step in a murrow pie shortly there after and deflate his own ego.

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Orson "Saunglier" Geun, Rancher: Orson Geun has the unusual distinction of having several flocks of pigs under his care, part of a program being carried out by the Republic to introduce more terran livestock to the Eotian environment. Most would call Orson crude, and his nickname of Saunglier (or boar in French) is evidence of this. He is well known for being the dirtiest man in town, but also willing to lend his strong back to any worthy cause. He's one of your most regular customers and your best friend among the people of King's Gulch.

Subodai Kwan, Gunhand: A newcomer to town, having only been around for a few weeks, Subodai has been working odd jobs since his arrival. His manner and well used guns speak of a dangerous past, but so far he has yet to cause any trouble and has actually served as a deputy with distinction. Subi, as he has come to be known, is still looked at askance by most folks but the Sheriff vouches for him, and that's enough for most people. You've occasionally hired him as a bouncer when needed, and you two have a good working friendship.

Meg McMillan (Fast Hero 3 / Infiltrator 4) ♦ CR 7

Medium-size human; HD 7d8+7; hp 45; Mas 12; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 22, touch 19, flat-footed 20 (+8 class, +3 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +4; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4, survival knife) or +7 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4, survival knife) or +7 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL none; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +3; AP 10; Rep +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 14.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Criminal

Skills: Bluff +7, Disable Device +11, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +9, Forgery +3, Gamble +5, Hide +15, Knowledge (Streetwise) +7, Move Silently +15, Read/Write Language (English), Search +7, Sleight of Hand +14, Speak Language (English), Tumble +7.

Talents: Footwork, Improved Footwork.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Deceptive, Iron Will, Meticulous, Nimble, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy.

Special Abilities: Improved Evasion, Improvised Implements, Sweep

Possessions: EDF-9 Auto Pistol with 3 clips, rough outs, survival knife, info-comp, lockpicks, tool kit, medkit, portable glow lamp.

◆ ORSON "SAUNGLIER" GEUN, RANCHER History

Orson Geun was never an attractive man. Even in childhood other children called him Piggy due to his upturned nose and abnormally large teeth. Orson grew up on Agri-Factory 12b, one of the largest ranches on Eos, a massive facility that produced massive amounts of food for Dawning Star City. This facility was where the first murcows were domesticated and later slaughtered. Orson's parents were agricultural engineers and they worked hard on the farm, often bringing Orson with them to take care of the various animals they cared for. Unfortunately one day both were killed after suffering from a violent attack of Fisher's Syndrome from eating murcow meat for the first time. Orson was fifteen at the time and ended up as a ward of the state, though he stayed on the farm taking care of the animals his parents had overseen for six more years before eventually moving on. The farm reminded Orson too much of his parents and eventually the barbs of the people of the farm got to him.

He wandered for a time before ending up in King's Gulch, where he built a murcow ranch. Orson obtained his original stock of murcows from some contacts back at Agri-Factory 12b. He did so well raising the murcows that his farm was put on a short list of facilities to receive Earth pigs from the Creature Tanks in the hopes of getting full scale pork production underway. Orson has been in King's Gulch for six years now and has become somewhat prosperous from all his hard work, though you would not know if to look at or smell him. Nicknamed Saunglier by some of the locals, he has found some peace in King's Gulch; all the more so after he beat a visiting rancher senseless with little effort after the rancher mocked Orson's appearance. Now Orson hopes to keep his farm and his animals safe, keep his new home safe, and maybe even some day find a wife.

Personality

Since most folks expect Orson to be stupid due to his appearance, he tends to live up to that perception as long as it serves his purposes. A hard worker and extremely loyal, Orson prefers to solve problems physically when he can. Orson has been the target of many a barb and the years of abuse have made him very sensitive of hurting the feelings of others. Unless someone has proven themselves his enemy, Orson rarely speaks in anger or spite to anyone.

Goals

Keep your friends and King's Gulch safe.

Keep your animals safe.

Make sure the people of the town respect you.

What You Think of the Others:

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strong back to any worthy cause.

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Orson "Saunglier" Geun

(Tough Hero 4 / Rancher 3) ♦ CR 7

Medium-size human; HD 7d10+18; hp 72; Mas 16; Init +0; Spd 30ft.; Defense 19, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+6 class, +3 armor); BAB +5; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2 19-20, axe) or +5 ranged (2d8, sawed-off shotgun); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2 19-20, axe) or +5 ranged (2d8, sawed-off shotgun); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL King's Gulch residents; SV Fort +9, Ref +1, Will +4; AP 9; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 8.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Ranch Hand

Skills: Handle Animal +12, Knowledge (local) +6, Navigate +4, Ride +13, Survival +7, Swim +5.

Talents: Damage Reduction 1/--, Tough Rage.

Feats: Animal Affinity, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Guide, Mounted Combat, Mounted Gunplay, Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Special Abilities: Special Mount, Riding Mastery, Region Familiarity (King's Gulch).

Possessions: Axe, sawed-off shotgun with 30 rounds, rough outs, survival knife, 2 days of rations, portable glow lamp, canteen, flask of whiskey, compass.

Horse ♦ CR1

Large advanced animal; HD 5d8+10; hp 32; Mas 15; Init +2; Spd 60 ft; Defense 16, touch 11, flatfooted 14 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +5 natural); BAB +3; Grap +9; Atk +4 melee (1d4+2, hoof); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+2, 2 hooves); FS 10 ft by 10 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ scent, low-light vision; AL Orson Geun; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; AP 0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +7, Spot +7.

♦ SUBODAI KWAN, GUNHAND

History

Born in the faction-camp of Sunder Ridge, Subodai (or Subi as he is commonly known) learned how to fight from an early age. His parents were miners who worked long hours to get food on the table for Subi and his five brothers, meaning Subi and his brothers were often left to their own devices while their parents were working. The Kwan Brothers became the terror of Sunder Ridge, getting involved from everything from burglar to protection rackets. Eventually though their criminal enterprises turned sour after they stole some supplies from the EFL, a job that ended up with a fire fight between the brothers and an EFL Special Forces team. Subodai survived but he still doesn't know if any of his brothers did. Swearing vengeance on the EFL, Subodai moved to

Republic territory and began putting his skills with a gun to use as a bounty hunter and mercenary, taking as many contracts against the EFL as possible. Subodai has spent the last four years honing his skills, becoming reasonably well known in some circles for his ability to walk away from most combats with barely a scratch.

Subodai came to King's Gulch six months ago after losing the trail of a bandit known as Tasker Bossq in the area. Instead of searching elsewhere Subodai decided to take a break and sort of settled down in town, living out of the flophouse and taking whatever odd jobs he can get. Usually this ends up with him assisting Sheriff Kane as a deputy, but he's also helped herd murcows, dig wells, and whatever else needs doing. It may not be as exciting gun battles and bounty hunting, but it is a heck of a lot safer.

Personality

Cocksure and quick to jump into action, Subodai Kwan is every inch a professional gunfighter. Always ready to jump into danger for the right cause or the right amount of money, he is utterly convinced of his own invincibility. Despite his arrogance Subodai does not insult or belittle others; he rather exudes an extreme sense of confidence that most find heartening. He's not much of a thinker, and he realizes this, leaving the plans to others but keeping the action for himself.

Goals

Keep King's Gulch safe.

Prove yourself as good as you think you are.

What You Think of the Others:

Cestmir Rostov, King's Gulch Sawbones:

A quite man, he is a relative newcomer to King's Gulch, having only arrived a year ago. Not only concerned with the bodies he treats, he also works extensively to try and help people with their personal problems, varying from marriage counseling to helping teach at the town school. While he pitches in when the town needs assistance, he avoids posse and militia duty when he can. Some folks say he's a pacifist, but the well used shotgun that hangs in his office seems to indicate otherwise.

Professor Christopher D'Aldren, Dawning Star University Researcher: An out-of-towner, he came from Dawning Star University six months ago to study the King's Gate ruin and the other ruins in the area. Since then he's been digging up every strange looking rock for miles, but other than his rampant enthusiasm has done little to bother the locals. He does sometime put on airs since he's all educated in city learning, but he usually manages to step in a murcow pie shortly there after and deflate his own ego.

Elias Kane, King's Gulch Sheriff: One of the more influential members of the population of King's Gulch, he keeps the peace not so much with a fast gun as a calm voice and a stern stare. According to local legend he named the town King's Gulch after his home back on Earth, King's County (better known as Brooklyn, New York). Sheriff Kane actually remembers old Earth, and he has the wrinkles to show for it. While this has slowed down his gun hand, his mind is as keen as ever.

Jesserick, velin Guide: Of the local Black Hawk Tribe of velin, Jesserick spends much of her time in King's Gulch helping the locals learn about their velin

neighbors. While a bit odd by human standards, she makes an active effort to understand humans and share her culture in return, though her interest in mysticism and hoobejoo has spooked some of the locals.

Garret Crase, Hunter: He was here before King's Gulch, and it seems he'll be here long after. Garret got fed up with city life years ago and come to live in the area around King's Gulch long before anyone thought of settling it. He knows more about its ins and outs than anyone but the velin, but his social skills have suffered a bit from all those in the wild. He's a bit off his rocker.

Meg McMillian, King's Gulch Bartender: The owner and proprietor of the local watering hole, the Two Moons Tavern, Meg has been running the tavern for four years after buying it from its founder. She's an open and friendly sort, but she always seems worried or like she has something to hide. Some folks gossip she got the money to buy the Two Moons as a burglar in Dawning Star City.

Orson "Saunglier" Geun, Rancher: Orson Geun has the unusual distinction of having several flocks of pigs under his care, part of a program being carried out by the Republic to introduce more terran livestock to the Eotian environment. Most would call Orson crude, and his nickname of Saunglier (or boar in French) is evidence of this. He is well known for being the dirtiest man in town, but also willing to lend his strong back to any worthy cause.

Subodai Kwan

(Fast Hero 4 / Gunhand 3) ♦ CR 7

CR 7; Medium-size human; HD 7d8+14; hp 53; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 22, touch 19, flat-footed 19 (+6 class, +3 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +6; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4, survival knife) or +10 ranged (2d8+5, Desert Eagle); Full Atk +4/+4/-1 melee (1d4/1d4, survival knife) or +8/+7/+3 ranged (2d8+5/2d6+2/2d8+5, Desert Eagle and EDF-9 Auto-Pistol) or +10/+5 (2d8+5, Desert Eagle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL none; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +0; AP 9; Rep +1; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Adventurer

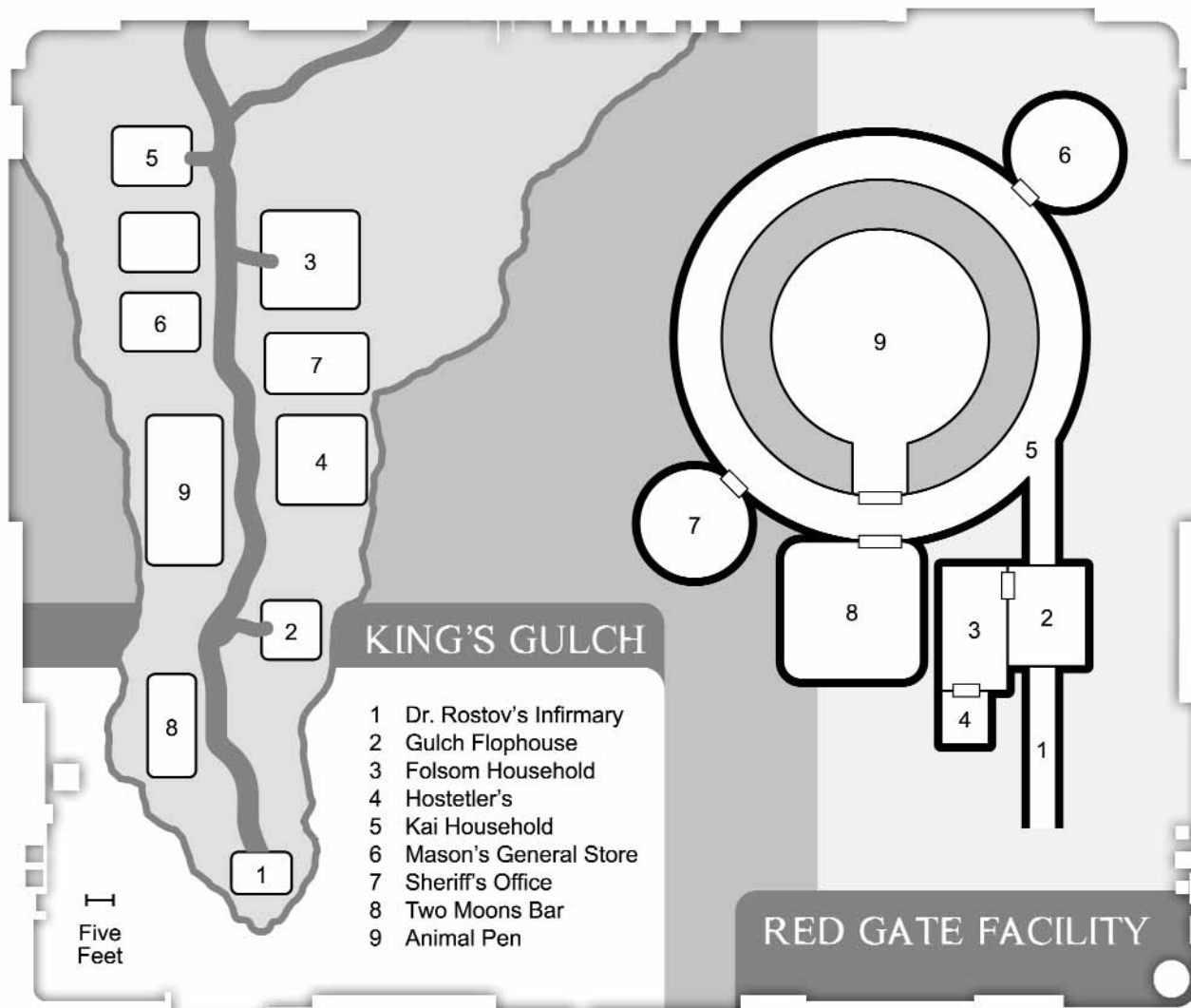
Skills: Balance +6, Gamble +7, Hide +9, Intimidate +9, Move Silently +9, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +8, Survival +7.

Talents: Sharpshooter, Improved Sharpshooter.

Feats: Dodge, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point-Blank Shot, Double Tap, Precise Shot, Mobility, Two-Weapon Fighting, Quick Draw.

Special Abilities: Tough as Nails, Weapon Specialization (Desert Eagle).

Possessions: Desert Eagles with 5 clips, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol with 5 clips, 2 survival knives, universal communicator, rough outs, flask of gin, sunglasses, hat.0



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