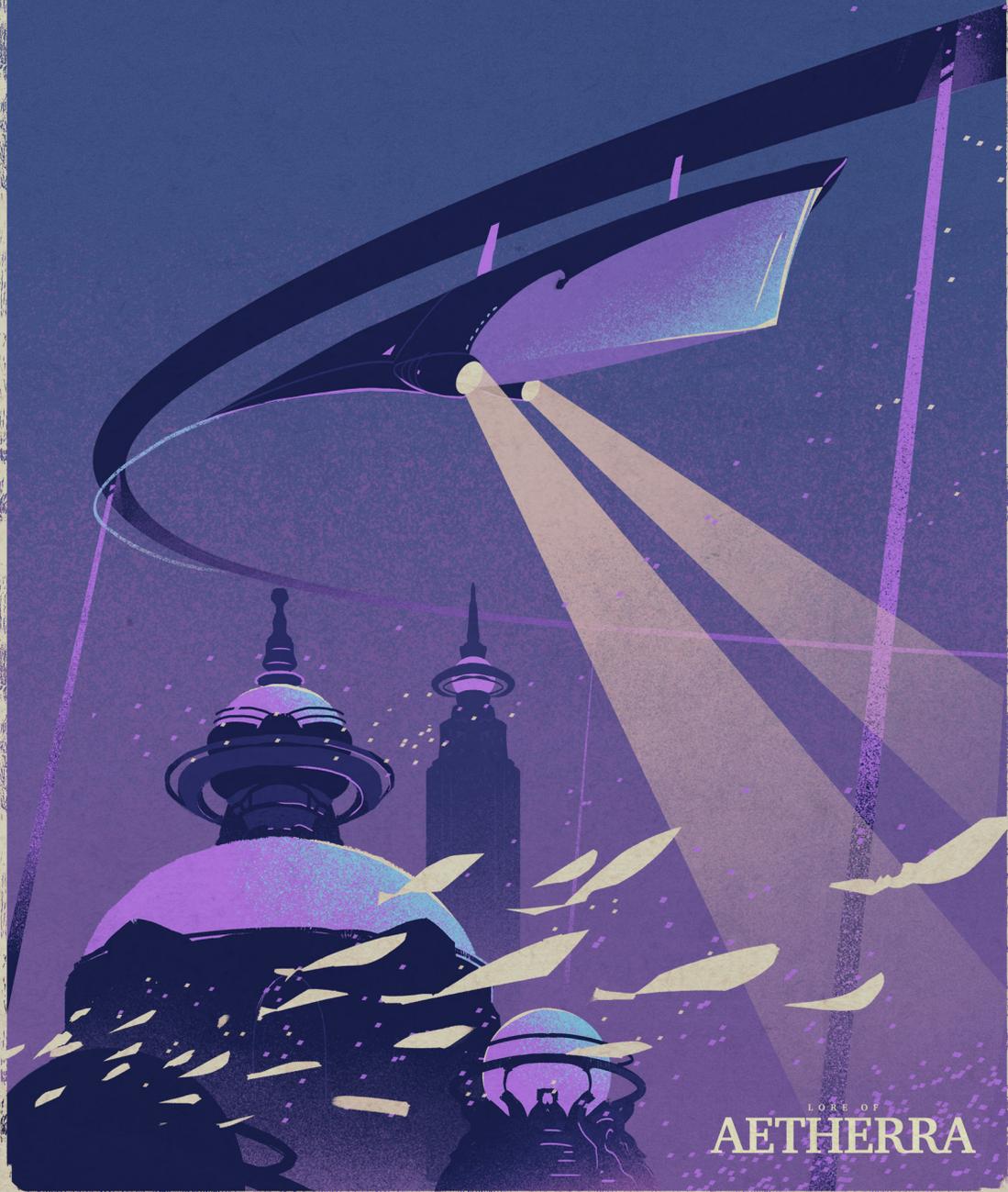


NOVARAIL

AN UNBEATABLE VIEW OF THE UNDERWATER CITY!



LORE OF
AETHERRA

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CONTENT WARNING

Some of the more mature subject matter in this adventure can be uncomfortable for certain players, including themes and depictions of *Body Horror*.

A L C H E M Y

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Introduction

THE NOVARAIL

YOU HOLD IN YOUR HAND THE NOVARAIL, a standalone thematic prequel to *Lore of Aetherra: Dark Symmetry*. This fusion of narrative storytelling and encounter mechanics is written to convey the scope and breadth of the world we've created. Ride along with Glider Primarine as she leads you on a tour of the beautiful and diverse habitats that comprise the underwater city of Chrysalea, a complex society where intrigue and mystery lie just beneath the tranquil surface. All rides must come to an end, however, and something wicked awaits you at the end of the line.

Come, ride the rails, see the sights, and settle in for an adventure in the deep.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The Novarail, an adventure created for the 5e system, takes a party of fifth-level characters on a journey with three distinct sections, each with its own purpose.

In *Cogbats!*, the characters have an opportunity to introduce themselves and meet the brilliant and carefree Glider Primarine as

she helps them escape Gloom.

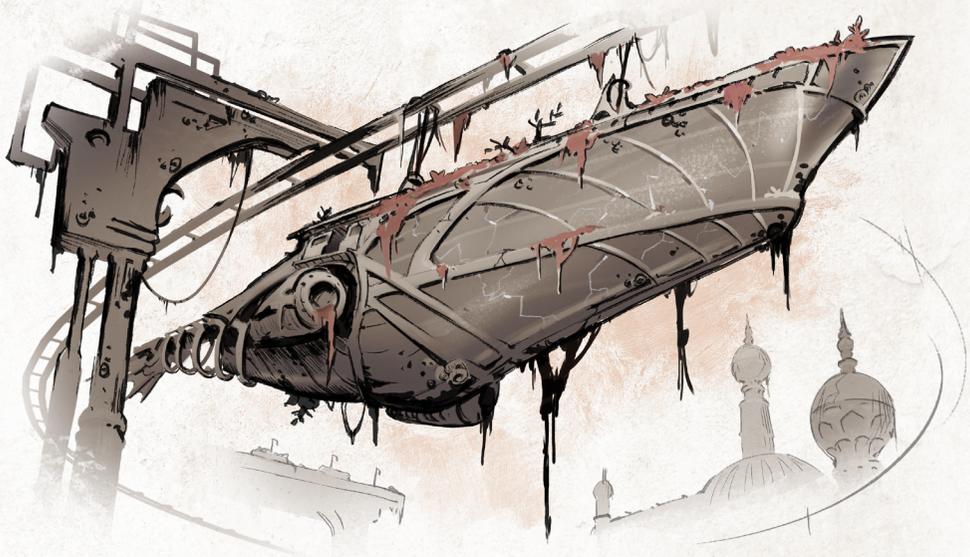
A Marvel to Behold takes the party on a railcar excursion across Chrysalea, seeing the sights while discovering that there's more to this city than what's on the surface. Pre-recorded voiceovers assist you in describing each of the scenes. A gamemaster can run this section in a few minutes, or take longer if the characters want to spend time talking to Glider.

Finally, in *Doom and Gloom*, the characters face off against a vicious nemosynth while trying to restart the stalled railcar and complete their escape.

Appended to the adventure is a new fighter subclass called the Graftknight.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The characters are residents of Gloom, a habitat overrun with pollution and isolated from the rest of Chrysalea. A stranger from the main city, Glider Primarine, offers to help you escape to a safehouse in Balance if she can fix a derelict railcar she found at an abandoned station.



Cogbats!

GLOOM HABITAT, CHRYSALEA

To begin the adventure, read:

You're standing in a glass-bottom Novarail car.

An abandoned station lies below in ruin, scarred and stained by the ravages of time. The railcar's control desk is propped open, exposing a circuit board overflowing with wooden transistors, silver capacitors, and a twisted mess of wires. Vines and ivy have infiltrated the electronic components, evidence of nature's supremacy over mortal creation. A young elf, appearing as no more than a pair of frightfully muddy boots buried deep in tangled circuitry, investigates the cause of the railcar's stoppage.

"Curses! This old battery pack is dead. Hand me that Flitter there, will ya?"

Glider Primarine pokes her hand out from under the control desk and motions to

a wooden toolbox containing several bizarre-looking devices. Her breathing seems ragged and irregular. If asked about it, she'll say that she doesn't handle pollution well.

GLIDER'S TOOLS

The box that Glider pointed to contains four tools from which a character can select. Refer to the table on the following page for the descriptions of all four tools, but do not name them or explain what they do, then prompt one of the characters to select a tool.

If a character asks what it looks like, the distracted Glider will only offer a vague description.

If a character chooses the wrong tool.

Glider will tell them the name of the tool they chose and explain its function. She will then explain which tool the Flitter is and what its function is. Additionally, a character can ask Glider to explain the other tools by making a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

If a character chooses the Flitter: Glider takes the tool, goes still for a moment, and then begins frantically looking around the railcar.

“Cogbats! I ain’t seein’ no other energy packs around here. The Flitter will give us a full charge, but it draws energy from nearby sources of power, and if there ain’t any, it’s fixin’ to siphon off of me!”

The sprightly elf’s hoarse cough echoes from within the console.

“We’ll be meetin’ the beast of burden if we don’t get moving though!”

Glider jams the cylinder down into the mass of orbs forming the power cell. The Flitter makes a whirring sound, glowing blue, and the bubbles inside quickly circulate. Moments later, the multicolored lights of the control desk flicker to life and the engine begins to hum, sending the Novarail car down the track with a violent jolt. The air purifiers above whirl to life, cleansing the air of toxins. Glider crawls out from under the desk and slumps over, revealing a long head of pink and white hair and pale blue skin, then jumps to her feet.

“Felt that one in my bones!”

TOOL

DESCRIPTION

FUNCTION

Ocltivia

A ruby-encrusted brass hook attached to a wooden handle.

The ocltivia’s hook adjusts to fit around any object less than a foot in diameter. When powered on, the rubies glow, and the ocltivia will tighten a mechanical fastener so securely that it’s nearly impossible to remove.

Affixater

Two needles attached by twine to a mechanized spyglass.

The affixater’s scope can be used to discover missing items when its needles are inserted into the soft tissue behind the operator’s ears. The device reads brainwaves to determine what they are looking for and transmits the object’s location to the operator’s mind.

Sinerounder

An intricate tuning fork with a small circuit board and speaker horn on its handle.

When the sinerounder’s forks are placed on inorganic material, the horn emits a high-pitched noise that disrupts the material’s wave pattern, allowing a small object to pass through it.

Flitter

A handheld cylinder filled with small turbines and constantly whirring water.

When placed on a depleted power cell, a flitter can restore power by draining a nearby energy source. If no source is available, it will sap the operator’s vitality for the necessary power. The operator must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

Glider Primarine

MEDIUM HUMANOID (CHRYSALEAN), SHE/HER

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 76 (17d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4

Skills Insight +1, Investigation +5, Sleight of Hand +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Gnomish, Novarian

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Brave. Glider has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Keen Hearing and Sight. Glider has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Glider makes three attacks with her lead wrench.

Lead Wrench. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

A WILD INTRODUCTION

Take a moment to describe Glider Primarine to the characters.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Glider is a short yet strapping young Chryselean elf with pink-and-white-streaked hair spilling down below her hips. She wears utilitarian clothing: thick leather boots, insulated gloves, and a belt with pockets and hoops to store tools and trinkets. Bruises and scars decorate her skin, and a bandage wrapped around her left arm seeps blood. A monocle with a rainbow lens is situated above her right eye. A wicked smile spreads across her face, and her eyes burn with chaotic energy.

ROLEPLAYING GLIDER

Glider Primarine is a brilliant inventor brimming with reckless abandon. She's nonstop pep and can only focus on something for a little while before moving on. This firebrand usually acts before thinking, rejecting safe options for schemes that often end in disaster. Although she comes from a prominent family of Chryselean inventors, she outshines them with her keen intellect and unmatched skill with all things mechanical. Despite her lineage, her rebellious spirit and empathetic nature often get her in trouble, and she has no qualms about breaking a rule to help someone out.

Initially, Glider will dart back and forth, making adjustments to the car's engine. Once the railcar passes Balance without stopping, Glider will attempt to fix the brakes and become increasingly panicked as the tour progresses. Glider is also very sensitive to Gloom's pollution, so when she's exposed to it, you can emphasize her hacking cough or how sickly she may appear.

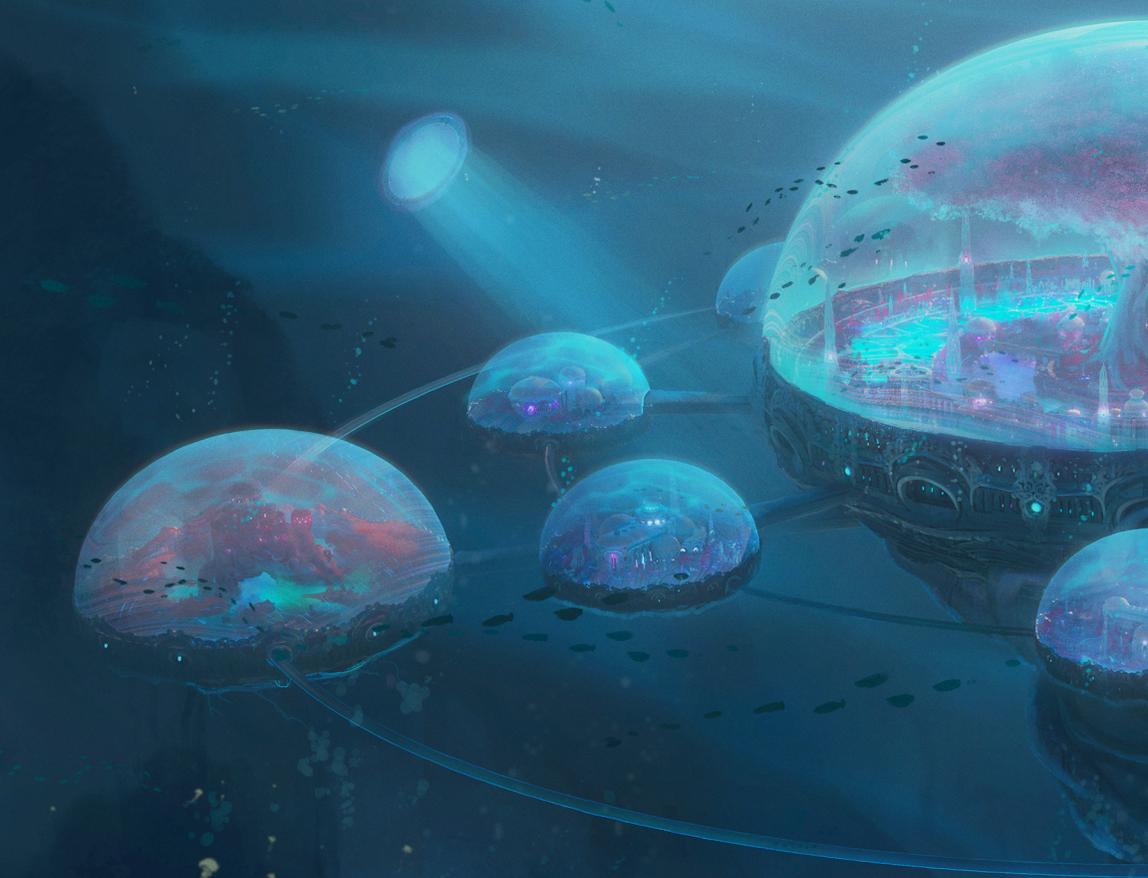
FAST FRIENDS

Nobody finds themselves banished to Gloom without some unfortunate reason, and Glider is curious to hear the character's stories. Use this time to let each of the players describe their characters.

Apart from a physical description, they can talk about their life before confinement in the habitat and their plans once they escape.



STU HARRINGTON



A Marvel to Behold

THE NOVARAIL, CHRYSALEA

THIS TRIP AROUND CHRYSALEA IS meant to be a fast-paced glimpse at the underwater city and—by using the provided voiceovers—can be completed in a few minutes. If the characters desire a more detailed tour experience, Glider has a wealth of information that she will share with anyone who asks.

As the railcar begins to move, read:

The shrill sound of static and a distorted voice blasts out from a wooden horn in the corner of the railcar. Glider pounds her fist against the wall to which it's affixed.

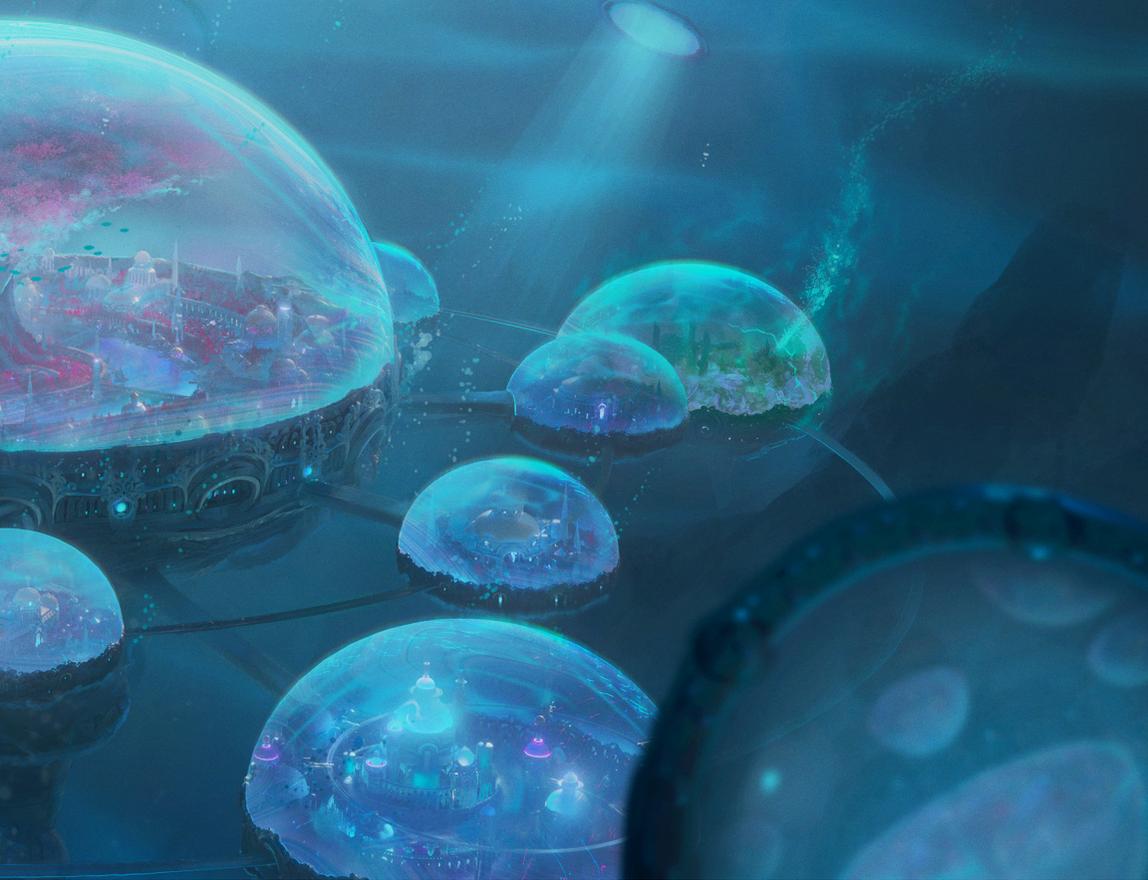
"This tour recording is likely a thousand years old. A tad outdated, but still a hoot to listen to!"

Sparks crackle as Glider clips a wire trying to repair the ancient machine, causing a barrage of feedback to bark through the speaker. A hint of panic flashes across her face, and she struggles for a moment before tightening the correct bolt. The noise instantly stops, and the warm voice of a confident and personable man fills the air.

As the voice of Evvan plays through the horn in the railcar, play the included voiceover: **VO-01**, or in Evvan's voice, read:

"Welcome visitors! Young and old, near and far! Welcome to the marvel of all Aetherral! Welcome to the wondrous underwater kingdom of Chrysalea!"

The car lurches forward with a groan, shud-



dering as it exits the habitat and enters the open water. Cracks in the glass creak as the crushing water outside threatens to break through, but the glass holds true in spite of them. As the car's speed stabilizes, the bubbles surrounding it dissipate, revealing a panorama of the many translucent domes that house the expansive elven kingdom.

SITE 1: CHRYSALEA

Now moving through the open water on the Novarail, the city of Chrysalea comes into view. As the tour begins, play **VO-02** or read:

"Much like Fano, Chrysalea was founded long ago by the Novarian elves. While Fano sits above the waters of Chrysal Lake, the

MUSIC & VOICEOVER

The voice of Evaan, the Novarail tour guide, can be played aloud using the provided musical ambience and voiceovers found at loreofaetherra.com/novarail

city of Chrysalea lies deep below its surface, sharing the darkness with strange creatures the anglers above only dream of. Though sea creatures are fascinating, the Novarians found something much more valuable: an unlimited supply of aether, a mystical element of unimaginable power! With it, Chrysalea has grown into a hub of innovation and technology. These extraordinary advancements continue to this day, thanks to the hard [...]

work of Taos of the Openda family, whose work provides our kingdom with all it needs to thrive and prosper!

"Let's begin with the most important dome of Chrysalea, and in it, The Mother Tree! Once a seed the size of a marble, it grew in tandem with the translucent cell that eventually became our largest dome. Once this massive habitat was complete, the Mother Tree spread her roots allowing us to expand our city into the surrounding habitats. Everything here is dependent on the Mother Tree and her roots bring life and strength to all of Chrysalea."

WHAT GLIDER KNOWS

If the characters ask Glider about Chrysalea, Glider will freely offer the following information:

- Chrysalea has two seasons: the *paralight* for when the phosphorus bacteria flourishes, and the *castlight* for when it recedes.

THE COVENANT OF PROGRESS

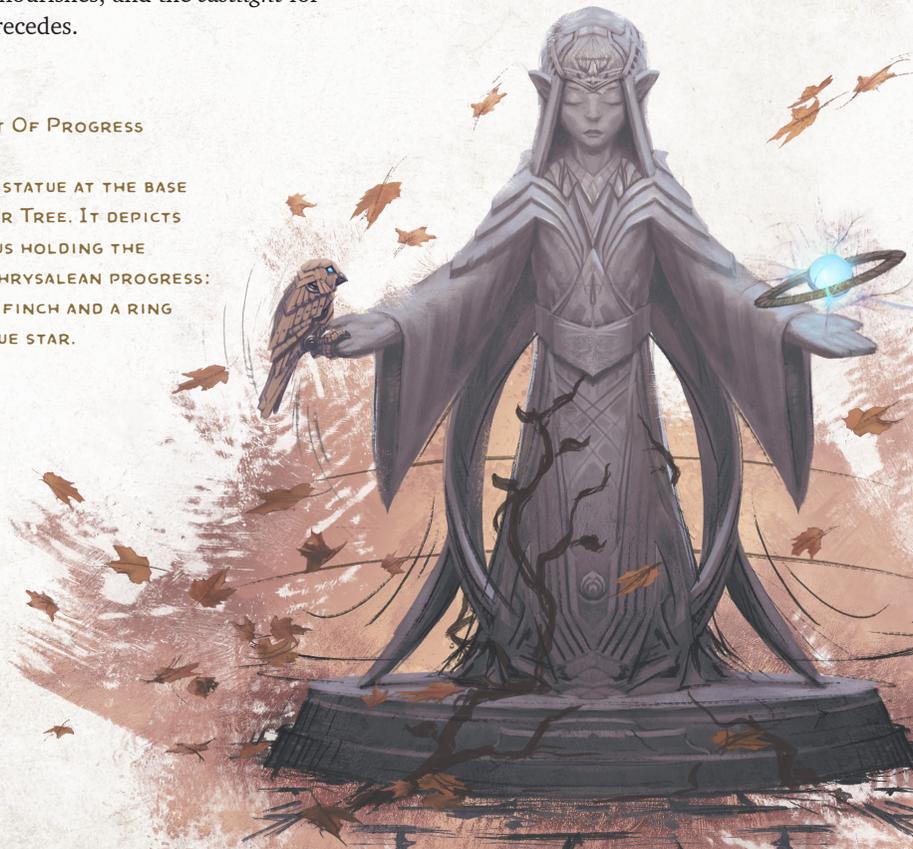
AN ENORMOUS STATUE AT THE BASE OF THE MOTHER TREE. IT DEPICTS A YOUNG LILLIUS HOLDING THE SYMBOLS OF CHRYSALEAN PROGRESS: A MECHANICAL FINCH AND A RING ORBITING A BLUE STAR.

- Chrysaleans record their folklore in hymnals.

Hidden Knowledge. On a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Glider tells the characters that the Mother Tree used to be green and robust, but its health declined around the time the portals to Fano closed. She's heard rumors that Queen Lillius is gathering Alllanders, warriors who derive power from aether, believing that they are the answer to its revitalization.

TRANSITION

The curve of the track makes its way around the perimeter of the kingdom. The railcar approaches the dome that sits to the northeast and speeds through a dark tunnel at the base of the habitat.





SITE 2: BALANCE

After a short journey, the railcar approaches the next habitat along its path. Once inside, the tour reveals a pristine landscape peppered with rolling hills and groves of vibrant trees. A monastery complex nestled atop a steep embankment overlooks the entire habitat. A wide stream meanders through the pastoral utopia while a fabricated sun, fixed in the corner, bathes the residents with the splendor of an eternal sunset.

After describing Balance, play **VO-03** or read:

"The first habitat on this tour is Balance. And wow, look at that beauty! Doesn't it seem peaceful, like you could spend an eternity here? Well, this is a place that's meant to be just that. It's a retreat for hard-inventing

Chrysaleans who desperately need to unplug and recharge before heading back to their labs. And when I'm not guiding tours, I'm running the show here as the Peace Mentor."

"One of the most exciting innovations here in Balance is the Mnarias Project. A sentient network that..."

Suddenly, the voice cuts out, and the vines and ivy glow brighter and tighten their grasp on the circuitry. For a moment, the car lurches, nearly stalling out, before a whirl of energy pushes it forward. The voice recording resumes.

"I'm rambling. I assure you nothing will go awry. I'm taking all the necessary safety precautions in my work!"

WHAT GLIDER KNOWS

If the characters ask Glider about Balance, she will freely offer the following information:

- The crystal waters in Balance's ponds are delicious, refreshing, and safe to drink.
- The head gardener has an obsession with making sure his favorite flowers, the Ruby Tropicas, aren't touched by anyone else.

Hidden Knowledge. On a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Glider tells the characters that the Mnarias Project is a program in Balance where a radical medical procedure is performed on "volunteers." These brave souls are tethered together in a shared waking-dream state with the hope of experiencing an illuminated sense of being.

TRANSITION

As the car approaches the Balance rail station, Glider attempts to apply the brakes, but nothing happens. She panics for a moment, but tells the characters that she should have it repaired by the time they loop around to Balance again. She goes to work as the car starts to pick up speed on the way to Origin, the next habitat.

On the way, the window on the left reveals a perfect view of the **Ourro Quarter**.



THE MNARIAS PROJECT

A PROCEDURE PERFORMED ON INDIVIDUALS IN THE BALANCE HABITAT THAT BINDS THEM PERMANENTLY TO A SHARED WAKING-DREAM STATE WITH A NETWORK OF OTHER DREAMERS.



SITE 3: THE OURRO QUARTER

Continuing along the track, the railcar passes by the Ourro Quarter: the sparkling center of daily life in the main habitat. A large pond, fed by a series of marble aqueducts and painted with the reflection of the cityscape, provides enjoyment to carefree pedestrians wandering along the waterfront. A rotunda capped with a twisting spire occupies the center of the district, while four tapered obelisks peer down from high above the plaza. Leaves tinged red and orange drift down from the towering Mother Tree in the distance, giving those who wander a soft path to tread.

After describing the Ourro Quarter, play **VO-04** or read:

“Before we continue to the next of the four outer habitats, please look to your left to see

the Ourro Quarter, the heart of Chrysalea’s main habitat and our most populated and lively area. Here, you will find shops and markets stocked with all of the necessities that a busy inventor might want or need. We even have a learning facility for the youth in our city—the Center of Continuum. Children are the tomorrow, as they say, and those little minds are quite powerful. A little too powerful, maybe!

“In the distance, you’ll find a stunning view of our beautiful Mother Tree. There, our fair leader and eldest of the Openda siblings, Queen Lillius, nurtures the Mother and tends to her needs. Her wisdom guides our good people to fulfill their purpose, encouraging them to be the greatest inventors the world has ever seen.”

WHAT GLIDER KNOWS

If the characters ask Glider about Ourro, she will freely offer the following information:

- A pastry shop in the quarter sells slices of cake that can add an hour to your day.
- During the turning of seasons, the quarter holds Opus, a festival where Chrysaleans show off their homemade inventions.

Hidden Knowledge. On a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Glider tells the characters that Queen Lillius is becoming erratic and volatile, which is out of character for her. She will occasionally find peace by donning her crown, placing her hand on the Mother Tree, and speaking to it in whispers.

TRANSITION

As the Ourro Quarter fades from view, the railcar moves swiftly into the darkness of the lake. Glider continues to work on the brakes and grows frustrated with the car's increasing speed.

After several minutes of travel, the view of the next habitat cuts through the murky water: **Origin.**

CROWN OF LILLIUS

THIS ANCIENT HEADPIECE PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS OF PROMINENT NOVARIANS IS AUGMENTED WITH PLANT LIFE ENHANCED BY TECHNOLOGY. DONNING THE CROWN BRINGS THE WEARER HEIGHTENED AWARENESS OF NATURAL MECHANICS.





SITE 4: ORIGIN

Origin's centerpiece, built amid impeccably manicured surroundings, is an enormous laboratory that dominates the landscape with its size and beauty. Several towers of varying heights jut from the complex of buildings comprising the lab. Each is topped with an iridescent glass dome, ethereal and pulsing with energy.

One tower, half as big as the lab itself, eclipses the others; its spire nearly reaches the summit of the habitat itself. Lush gardens fed by cascading waterfalls decorate the campus, providing places of contemplation and relaxation for the hardworking scientists inside. While several minor laboratories on the fringe of Origin engage in small-scale experimentation and development, the greatest acts of creation occur in the main laboratory, The Reach.

After the railcar enters Origin, play **VO-05** or read:

"Next up, we have the crown jewel of Chrysalea—Origin. This habitat, dedicated to the art of invention, exemplifies our spirit of ingenuity. Our best and brightest minds toil around the clock in The Reach, Origin's main laboratory, harnessing aether's essence and transforming it into the world's most advanced technology."

"I overheard that our most esteemed and influential scientist, Ioran Audame, has begun work on the Peerless Arc, a curious aether-fueled device capable of producing an incomprehensible amount of power. Now that I say that out loud, it might be best to keep that as our little secret. We must hurry on now; they don't like when visitors linger."



IORAN ADAME

AN INVENTOR WHOSE REPUTATION FOR FRINGE SCIENCE EARNED HIM A PLACE AMONG CHRYSALEA'S ELITE, UNTIL HIS ULTIMATE BANISHMENT TO GLOOM FOR EXPOSURE TO DANGEROUS ELEMENTS.

WHAT GLIDER KNOWS

If the characters ask Glider about Origin, she will freely offer the following information:

- The Reach Laboratory contains a statue of a small girl holding the symbols of progress, but Glider has no clue who the girl is supposed to be.
- The inventors have lunch in the courtyard, and for some reason, they always eat standing up.

Hidden Knowledge. On a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Glider tells the characters that her acquaintance once came across a Leaflet Gridone containing classified information about an accident in the lab that was covered up. Apparently, some inventors were exposed to something dangerous and were quarantined in Gloom.

LEAFLET GRIDONE

THIS BIOORGANIC LEAF IS AN INTRICATE DATA STORAGE SYSTEM USED IN THE ORIGIN LABORATORY. NEARLY UNLIMITED INFORMATION IS STORED ON FRACTALS AND CAN ONLY BE READ BY HIGHLY TRAINED OPERATORS USING THEIR SENSE OF TOUCH.

TRANSITION

As the railcar heads towards the exit, it passes a section of the laboratory devastated by a cataclysmic explosion. A portion of the wall lies in scattered chunks and nothing grows within sixty feet. The ground itself glows, emitting radiation so strong it distorts the field of vision above it. The area is cordoned off and plastered with signs warning that entering the area could be deadly.

Glider begins to act frantic as she continues her repairs on the brakes. The car seems to be going significantly faster at this point as it speeds toward **Provis**.

Evaan continues, read:

"...And rest assured, although these scientists here test the limits of physics and reality, Chrysaleans maintain the strictest possible protocols for workplace safety!"



JORDON KERBOW



SITE: 5 PROVIS

The low rumble of rushing water builds, filling the railcar with white noise. The track takes a sharp turn upwards, and the car rockets out of a blue pool and into the open air of the habitat. It speeds by an abandoned station platform before arcing across the middle of the habitat. A massive warehouse takes up a large portion of the dome, and farmland-covered hills fill in the rest of the available space.

Massive smokestacks dot the landscape, ascending to the dome's peak in clusters of tangled wires, tubes, and vents. The world outside the glass dome is nearly imperceptible, blocked by a thick layer of sooty smog hanging heavy in the atmosphere.

After the railcar enters the Provis habitat, describe it, then play **VO-06** or read:

"We are now entering the habitat most crucial to the wellbeing of our fair citizens. Behold the miracle of Provis. Here, our diligent horticulturists pioneer new methods to provide sustainable nourishment to our people. There are many hardworking mouths to feed down here, and they all need the proper sustenance!"

"In fact, just recently the scientists in Provis created a miraculous tonic they call Chrysalean Flourish. There's no saying what it's made of, but it is uncommonly delicious and incredibly nourishing."

WHAT GLIDER KNOWS

If the characters ask Glider about Provis, she will freely offer the following information:

- A machine in a Provis warehouse maintains a constant temperature for all of Chrysalea.
- The warehouse's resident cat does NOT like being pet on the rear.

Hidden Knowledge. On a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Glider tells the characters that she heard an unsettling rumor about Chryselean Flourish. Apparently, the scientists in Provis are hatching creatures whose sole purpose is to be sent to the Dead Sheds. Once there, their bodies are drained of their nutrients and processed into the popular food supplement.

CHRYSALEAN FLOURISH

THIS DELICIOUS, NUTRIENT-RICH DRINK IS A MIRACLE FOOD MADE BY CHRYSALEANS, FOR CHRYSALEANS. THE RECIPE IS A SECRET KNOWN ONLY TO THE ENGINEERS IN PROVIS, BUT GIVEN THEIR UNUSUAL METHODS, IT'S LIKELY CHOCK-FULL OF STRANGE AND DELIGHTFUL INGREDIENTS.



TRANSITION

The railcar pierces through the thick clouds of smoke hovering above the farms at the edge of Provis. The car now travels at a breakneck speed as Glider tries to assure the characters that she can still fix everything in time.

Once in the open water, the car makes its way to **Gloom**, leaving a trail of murky filth in its wake.

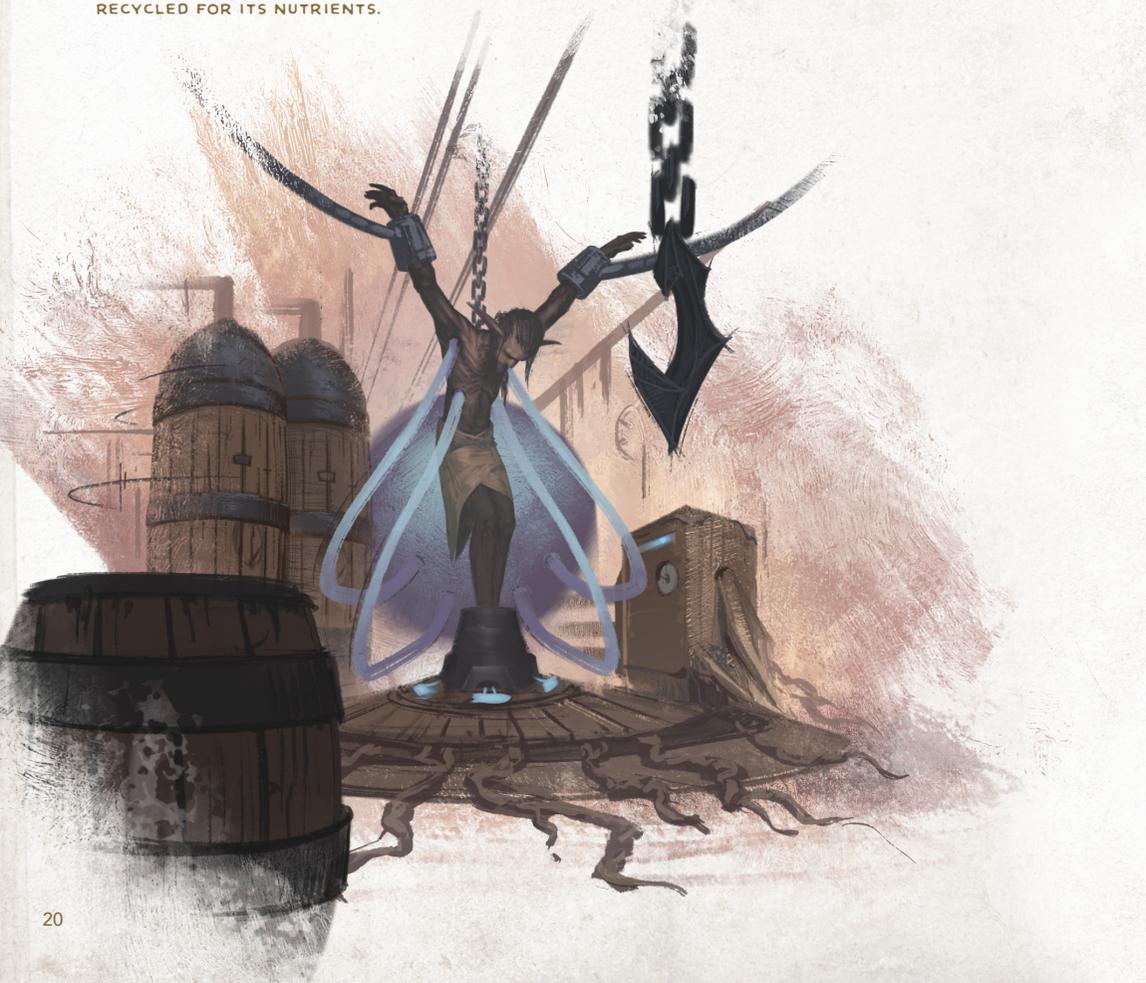
SITE 6: GLOOM

The railcar enters the habitat and is immediately struck by wretched pollution permeating this wasteland. Chasms and holes lie in wait, ready to trap anything unfortunate enough to fall in. Several huts, assembled from refuse and building scraps, form a makeshift village, the only bastion of civilization visible in this hellscape.

Barren hills rise up erratically, forming steep, rocky banks. Unlike the other glass domes, the humid climate here makes the upper reaches foggy and an expansive patch of technicolored bacteria covers nearly a quarter of the surface.

DEAD SHEDS

THESE SMALL CABINS ARE NESTLED DEEP IN THE HILLS OF THE PROVIS FARMLANDS. EACH CABIN HOUSES A BODY BEING RECYCLED FOR ITS NUTRIENTS.



After describing Gloom, play **VO-07** or read:

“Last, but certainly not least, we have Trace. We originally used this habitat to develop and perfect our terraforming techniques. There, we gained the know-how to craft hills and gardens that can take your breath away. Of course, these skills took a bit of time to get right, so you may see a few minor geographical blemishes. But fear not! The environment is quite resilient, and that resilience caught the attention of Orrien, the youngest Openda sibling. His love for the people of Fano inspired him to build a glorious city where Chrysaleans and surface folk can live together in harmony. He’s going to name it Apitha.” The foundations of this magnificent city of the future are visible in the distance.

The far corner of the habitat is home to the ruins of the half-built town of Apitha. In stark contrast with Evvan’s description of a budding utopia, this city, overgrown with moss and dangerous-looking plants, has certainly seen better days. The crags surrounding the vestigates of this ruined village drench the town in shadows. The mud-caked skeletons of several gargantuan creatures poke out from the ground, and the scattered bodies of creatures and humanoids alike rot in the sticky air.

TRACE = GLOOM

Over 1000 years ago, when Chrysalea was first being built, the creators named this habitat Trace and used it as a sandbox for terraforming experiments. Over the next millennium, it became a dumping ground for the pollution generated in Origin’s laboratories, making life difficult for the population forced to live there.

The squalid conditions of this once promising zone prompted the citizens of Chrysalea to rename the habitat Gloom.

After describing the ruins of Apitha, play the final voiceover: **VO-08** or read:

“The ecosystem here is truly marvelous. A while back, a few scientists diverted just a smidge of runoff from Origin to this habitat. It turns out that the land was capable of absorbing the pollution and creating life in its place. So fear not—Chrysaleans know how to properly handle waste. We’ve taken all the necessary precautions to make sure the habitat remains clean and healthy!”

“What a ride! I regret to inform you that we’re coming to the end of the Outer Ring Tour. If you hold a two-ticket card, join me for the walkabout Inner Ring Tour where you’ll get an exclusive look at the personal lives and properties of those who invent Chrysalea’s most important and powerful creations. If you hold a single-ticket card and this is your only tour for the day, for your safety please note that when you exit and step onto the platform, make sure you never...”

TRANSITION

Suddenly, the monorail car lunges forward and halts violently. The tour voice cuts out, and the whole board goes black. Glider shouts with joy, exclaiming that she’s fixed the brakes. She tries to get the car moving again, but it won’t start.

Glider then informs the characters that they might have a **problem**.



Doom and Gloom

GLOOM HABITAT, CHRYSALEA

GLIDER DARTS AROUND THE CABIN. Without power, the air purifier shuts down, letting pollution seep into the railcar. The young Chrysalean looks a little unsteady, violently coughing as she attempts to restore the power. In the distance, a nemosynth takes notice of the stalled railcar and begins to fly towards it (passive Perception 13+ to notice).

RUNNING THIS SCENE

The tension of the scene mounts as the characters try to get the railcar running and leave Gloom while the nemosynth attempts to bore through the hull to get to the party. Describe how the track bends when the creature lands on the car or the crunch of steel as it gnaws on a weak point in the wall. When it first

breaches the hull, it will stick its elongated tongue through the gash and whip it around to ensure it can fit through. The car's glass floor presents an excellent opportunity to describe the strange vegetation, ramshackle huts, and dangerous wasteland beneath their feet.

PICK YOUR PROBLEM

The characters have two rounds to continue repairs and prepare for the nemosynth's arrival before it reaches the railcar. The party will contend with several hazards: **the toxic threat** of the environment, the **nemosynth** trying to break in, and the need to **repair** the air purifiers and power drive. Glider will spend the first round retrieving three *Oximer packs* (devices worn like backpacks that



nullify the effects of Gloom's pollution) and offering them to the characters to use as they wish. A creature wearing an *Oximer pack* automatically succeeds on their saving throw to avoid toxicity points, but retains any points already acquired.

OXIMER PACK

A MECHANISM THAT PURIFIES TOXICITY FROM THE BODY BY VAPORIZING THE WEARER'S BLOOD, FUSING IT WITH RARE ALGAE, AND TRANSFUSING IT BACK INTO THE BODY.



PROBLEM 1: THE TOXIC THREAT

For each round that the characters are exposed to the contaminated air in Gloom, they must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or gain one point of toxicity. This includes Glider, who begins the encounter with 4 points due to her sensitivity to pollution. Players should keep track of their own toxicity points. Use the reference table below to explain the effects of accumulated toxicity. If an *Oximer pack* is attached to Glider or an unconscious character, they will recover the following round but will immediately lose consciousness if the pack is removed before leaving Gloom.

Toxic Threat Reference Table

TOXICITY	EFFECT
1	Take 1d4 poison damage
2	Take 1d6 poison damage
3	Take 1d8 poison damage
4	Take 1d10 poison damage
5	Become unconscious until removed from the toxic environment.

PROBLEM 2: THE RAILCAR REPAIRS

Two of the car's primary systems are broken: the **air purifiers** and the **power drive**. The characters will have to combine their ingenuity with the tools Glider mentioned earlier to fix the malfunctioning equipment. If a character attempts a fix one of the broken systems, refer to the repairs reference table on the following page and follow these steps:

- Determine which **system** the player wants to repair.
- For the chosen system, read the **symptoms**.

- Prompt the character to give their **solution** and use their action to attempt it.

The **solution** column of the repairs reference table gives one possible resolution for each problem, but you should encourage the characters to find their own method of fixing the situation, setting any relevant DCs to 15. As long as Glider is conscious, she will complete one repair every turn, starting at the top of the Repairs Reference table.

PROBLEM 3: THE NEMOSYNTH

While the characters struggle with the toxic threat and the repairs, they encounter a new problem: the nemosynth. This serpentine creature flies on dozens of bat-like wings, and its round, tooth-filled maw can chew through metal.

When the characters notice it rushing towards the incapacitated railcar, read:

In the distance, hovering amid the opaque haze, a swarm of tiny objects flow together in choreographed movement. As the cloud moves closer, the form of a hideous winged beast begins to take shape, and lets out an ear-shattering noise. Several other screeches echo back from further away as the monstrosity continues to amass, closing the distance between you and it.

The beast takes two rounds to arrive and will spend the third round searching for a weak point before deciding to attack a section where the glass meets the frame. Each round after that, it will try to breach the hull (AC 15, 20 hp) using Gestating Bite, ignoring the saving throw and extra damage.

After it finally eats through, it will morph into its swarm form and begin pouring into the cabin, taking two turns to fully form inside the railcar. Once inside, it will fight the characters until it is destroyed.

Repairs Reference Table

SYSTEM	SYMPTOM	SOLUTION
Air Purifier	Water is dripping from an untightened bolt overhead.	Use the Octlivia to tighten the loose bolt.
Air Purifier	The water storage tank is nearly empty.	Fill with water (or another liquid).
Air Purifier	The tubing is clogged with a rock and beginning to swell.	Use the Sinerounder to allow the rock to be removed.
Power Drive	All battery cells are depleted. The power gauge reads empty.	Use the Flitter to reactivate at least 2 cells. Of the 8 cells, only cells 2, 3, 6, and 8 are capable of holding a charge. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows the character to discern which ones can be charged.
Power Drive	Gear-shifting lever is missing.	Use the Affixater or make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to find the lever under a pile of debris.
Power Drive	Grime and residue from the nemosynth swarm is coating the entire control panel.	Wiping won't work; the residue must be burned away (DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check to learn this). Can use the Octlivia or any other method of creating fire to clean the panel.



Nemosynth

MEDIUM CONSTRUCT (BIO-ENGINEERED)

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 91 (14d8+28)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	11 (0)	10 (0)

Saving Throws Con +5

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

Swarm. The nemosynth can move through any opening large enough for a mouse by morphing into a swarm of synthetic insects.

Regenerate. The nemosynth regains 5 hit points at the start of its turns if it has at least 1 hit point but won't regain hit points if it was dealt fire damage since its last turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The nemosynth makes a gestating bite attack and a tail whip attack.

Gestating Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 1d8 piercing damage as a grub bursts from its skin.

Tail Whip. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. The target must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

Nemosynth Tactics

- Nemosynth will use its multiattack.
- It will attack the nearest target with gestating bite.
- It will use its tail whip attack against the last target that dealt it fire damage.
- Otherwise, it will use its tail whip attack against a random creature.

TRANSITION

Once the party fixes the broken power drive, the lights on the console will start flashing and the whole car will hum with energy. If Glider is awake, she will engage the power drive and get the car moving. If she is unconscious, a character will have to revive her (by either fixing the air purifiers or equipping her with an oximer pack) or make a DC 14 Intelligence check to figure out how to get it going.

Once the car is moving, proceed to **Back in Business**.



BACK IN BUSINESS

With the railcar moving again, the party has one fewer problem to contend with, but the nemosynth will keep pressing its attack. Likewise, if the air purifiers haven't been repaired, the characters will need to continue making saves until it's fixed. All the while, a new problem lurks ahead.

JUMP THE RAILCAR

In about one minute (10 rounds), the railcar will arrive at a section of the rail where a 15-foot long section of track is missing. The track is bent up at a 45 degree angle right before the gap, and at the end of the gap the track is several feet lower than where it begins. If Glider is conscious, she will inform the characters of the missing track and will, with great glee, suggest trying to jump the gap. Otherwise, only characters with a passive Perception score of 11 or more will notice the perilous condition of the track ahead. The car will need to go much faster to avoid crashing into Gloom below.

In order for the party to make it across safely, they will need to either increase their speed or devise another plan. A speedometer on the dash goes from zero to 120, marked

in increments of ten miles per hour, and it is currently on the fourth mark (40 mph). If conscious, Glider will tell the characters they'll need to peg the speedometer. Otherwise, any character succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence check comes to the same conclusion.

Refer to the acceleration chart when a character attempts a solution to see how much speed they gain. If the solution isn't listed, use your discretion and set any relevant DCs to 15. If the characters have difficulty finding possible solutions, allow them to take an action to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check, revealing one option with a success.

A HAPPY ENDING?

Nobody knows your players like you do. Some like to dig into the mechanics and live or die by the results, while others want to be the cinematic action hero. If you don't think your group would enjoy the risk of falling into Gloom and a slightly less heroic ending, use your discretion to help them successfully jump the railcar.

Acceleration Reference Table

METHOD OF INCREASING SPEED	SPEED GAINED
Throwing 125 pounds of weight off of the rail car	10 MPH
Using the Flitter to reactivate the other two cells capable of being charged	20 MPH
Casting levitate on the car (functions the same as reducing the weight by 500 pounds)	40 MPH
Dealing lightning damage to one of the non-operational power cells to supercharge the system	MPH equal to lightning damage
Executing a character-initiated plan to increase the speed	GM discretion

TRANSITION

If the party doesn't manage to reach the required speed, the car will plummet off the rail and land in a small clearing on the edge of a pond of polluted sludge. The crash of the rail car deals 3d6 bludgeoning damage to all occupants, including the nemosynth. Burning piles of trash litter the clearing outside, and drops of oily black water drip from the crack creeping up the massive dome. The nemosynth will continue attacking the party, belligerent until its final moment. If the characters defeat their foe, proceed to **Novarail Down**.

If the party increases the railcar to the required speed, it jumps the gap in the track and reconnects safely at the other end. Proceed to **Making the Break**.

NOVARAIL DOWN

If the characters crash into Gloom but defeat the nemosynth, read:

The wreckage sizzles and smokes on the bank of a putrid pond. Parts, gears, and glittering glass are sprayed out across the wasteland. Not too far off you see the lifeless, gurgling heap of the Nemosynth, already rotting in the rancid atmosphere. Glider, smeared in blood and covered in scrapes and burns, jams her arm into the depths of the pond and pulls out her toolbox. She takes inventory and shakes her head.

"Cogbats! That shoulda worked! In case it ain't clear, we didn't make it out of Gloom, and we damn near died."

She wrings oily gunk out of her hair.

"But on the bright side, you're still with yours truly, Glider Primarine! I know a few more ways out of this death dome, but I'll tell ya this, out of all our options, that sky track nonsense was the safest one."

MAKING THE BREAK

If the characters successfully jump the car across the track, read:

The speeding railcar reconnects with the track with a loud crash just as another nemosynth lands on the roof and tries to bite its way through, unaware of the quickly approaching tunnel just ahead. It hits the dome's wall with an echoing crack, splitting it lengthwise as the railcar continues into the water. Half of its carcass, caught on the rail, trails behind the car like a child's kite, while the rest falls into an unceremonious pile of torn flesh and festering bile. As the car jets through the open water, Glider unleashes a gleeful scream.

"Did you see that? We did it!"

She spins her rainbow monocle, sending a prism of colors glittering around her face.

"Now that we're in control of this thing we'll make straight for Balance. I've arranged a safe place where we can hideout and... "

Glider's voice trails off, and her eyes grow wide as she stares out the window.

"Oops, scratch that. Gone and made too much of a racket. Sentinels!"

In the water, seven Chrysalean sentinels descend upon the car from every direction. Through swirling effervescence, you see each outfitted with heavy mechanical diving suits powered by wooden turbines. Yet they move quickly and easily through the open water, wielding tridents twice as long as their bodies with glowing orbs at the end of each razor-sharp fork.

"And they ain't coming to give us a slap on the wrist either. These dead-eyed creeps are life-enders."



PALMY DEV, THE GRAFTKNIGHT

The Graftknight

FIGHTER SUBCLASS

FLESH, MUSCLE, ORGAN, SINEW, BONE. Unruly components of many the ungrateful creature, made and formed to be used for unrefined and untamed purposes. How much more fiercely would the predator claw rend if it knew where best to aim? How much better would the scales or hide of a resilient beast protect if it were worn by someone trained and refined? Many warriors seek out the blade or the spear, but if nature provides apex predators with perfect tools, why not seek them out?

These questions form the foundation of the Graftknight, who learn the ways of the five bodily components to improve that with which they were born. Through medicinal study and a smattering of magical application, a soft hand can be traded for one with sharp talons. A back bereft of wings can be remedied, if only you slew an airborne foe. The teeth with which you eat, the ways in which you breathe, and even the senses you've relied upon can all be traded, swapped, or improved.

For a Graftknight, any body can be a treasure chest.

BONUS PROFICIENCIES

3RD-LEVEL GRAFTKNIGHT FEATURE

You gain proficiency with Wisdom (Medicine) and can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10 when making a Wisdom (Medicine) check.

FLESHGRAFTER

3RD-LEVEL GRAFTKNIGHT FEATURE

You learn how to manipulate the taken anatomy of others to work with your body. You can perform an hour-long surgery and graft up to two body parts onto yourself, either by replacing your own equivalent or simply adding it in tandem with it. The body part must still be whole, come from a corpse that is still largely intact, and, if not preserved in some

CHARACTER CREATION

Lore of Aetherra: Dark Symmetry is designed to take a party of characters from level 5 to level 10 over the course of the adventure. The final book will also include several new character creation options to explore, including 12 new subclasses, one new race with two subraces, three new backgrounds, and five premade characters. In this adventure, you'll find the Graftknight fighter subclass, along with a premade character: Palmy Dev.

Download the character sheet at
loreofaetherra.com/novarail

way, be grafted onto you within 24 hours of the corpse's time of death. Additionally, the creature you take a body part from must be a humanoid, beast, aberration, dragon, fey, giant, monstrosity, or plant type creature. You can attach another graft to your body at 7th, 10th, and 15th level.

The appearance of each graft remains the same, though its size is changed, if need be, to fit according to the body. For example, if a dragon's eye is grafted, the appearance remains that of a dragon's eye, though its size is reduced to fit. If you remove one of your own body parts to attach this new graft, you may reattach it later on, so long as it is preserved while it is not attached to you.

Unless specified otherwise, a graft can only be selected once. The following parts are available to you when you attach a graft:

Natural Armament. You can graft a creature's weapon attack to yourself, such as a claw, a bite, or a slam. This attack deals 1d6 plus either your Strength or Dexterity modifier in the same damage type while it was still attached to its original owner. If the crea-

ture's attack had a secondary effect, you do not gain it.

This graft may be selected multiple times. Each time it is selected, you can improve the damage die of this attack to the next die size, gain an additional weapon attack, or gain an existing armament's secondary effect so long as it is nonmagical and forces a creature to make a strength, dexterity, or constitution check (such as a wolf's bite or a giant scorpion's sting). The DC for this effect is 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency modifier. An armament that doesn't have its damage die increased has the light weapon property. — All weapon attacks are treated as magical.

Wings. You can graft a creature's wings to yourself, granting you a fly speed equal to your speed. Wearing heavy armor reduces this speed by half. This graft can only be selected if the original wings are from a creature of medium size or larger.

Gills. You are able to breathe underwater.

Toughened Skin. You graft a creature's tough hide, scales, or skin into your own, giving yourself a +1 bonus to AC. This graft can only be taken from a creature with a natural armor bonus to their AC.

Sensory. You graft a sensory organ to yourself. If the organ grants its owner blindsight, darkvision, or tremorsense, you gain this sense out to 30 feet. If you already possess these senses, they increase in range by 30 feet. Alternatively, you may choose to enhance your existing senses instead. By doing so, when you make a Perception (Wisdom) check, you can roll a d4 and add the number rolled to the ability check.

Breath Weapon. You can graft a creature's breath weapon organ inside yourself, giving yourself its breath attack. When grafting this organ, you may choose for it to target a 30-foot cone or a 60-foot line, and each creature

in the area of the breath weapon's area must make a saving throw, the type of which is determined by its original save when it was still attached to its previous owner. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your Constitution modifier + your Proficiency bonus. A creature takes 3d6 damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one. This damage increases by 1d6 at 6th, 9th, 12th, 15th, and 18th level.

Tail. You graft a creature's tail to yourself. You are able to make Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks with advantage. You are able to grab with this tail, but you are unable to manipulate objects or use weapons in it.

Bones. A trickier graft, but one most invaluable. You graft the bones of tougher creatures to take the place of yours. You gain an additional number of hit points equal to your fighter level.

PREDATOR'S APPROACH

7TH-LEVEL GRAFTKNIGHT FEATURE

The memory of flesh joins with your own, distinct, but familiar in the same way that blood is to an animal without ever knowing the word for it. Choose one of the following options:

Pride Begets Arrogance. You gain proficiency in Intimidation and may use your Constitution modifier in place of Charisma when making Intimidation checks. If you are already proficient, you add your proficiency bonus twice when making Intimidation checks.

Prey's Clothing. You are able to suppress your grafts, hiding them within your body and under layers of skin and muscle, forcing bone to sink and limbs to bend in new natural ways in an aching full minute. While suppressed, you do lose any benefits of your current grafts unless otherwise specified. You are able to reveal and regain use of all of your grafts as an action. You are able to

reveal and regain use of one graft of your choice as a reaction.

RENEWAL OF FLESH

10TH-LEVEL GRAFTKNIGHT FEATURE

You gain an additional use of your Second Wind feature. When you use your Second Wind feature, you can end any or all of the following conditions currently affecting you, if any: Blinded, Deafened, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned, and Stunned.

THEIR HEARTS AS YOURS

15TH-LEVEL GRAFTKNIGHT FEATURE

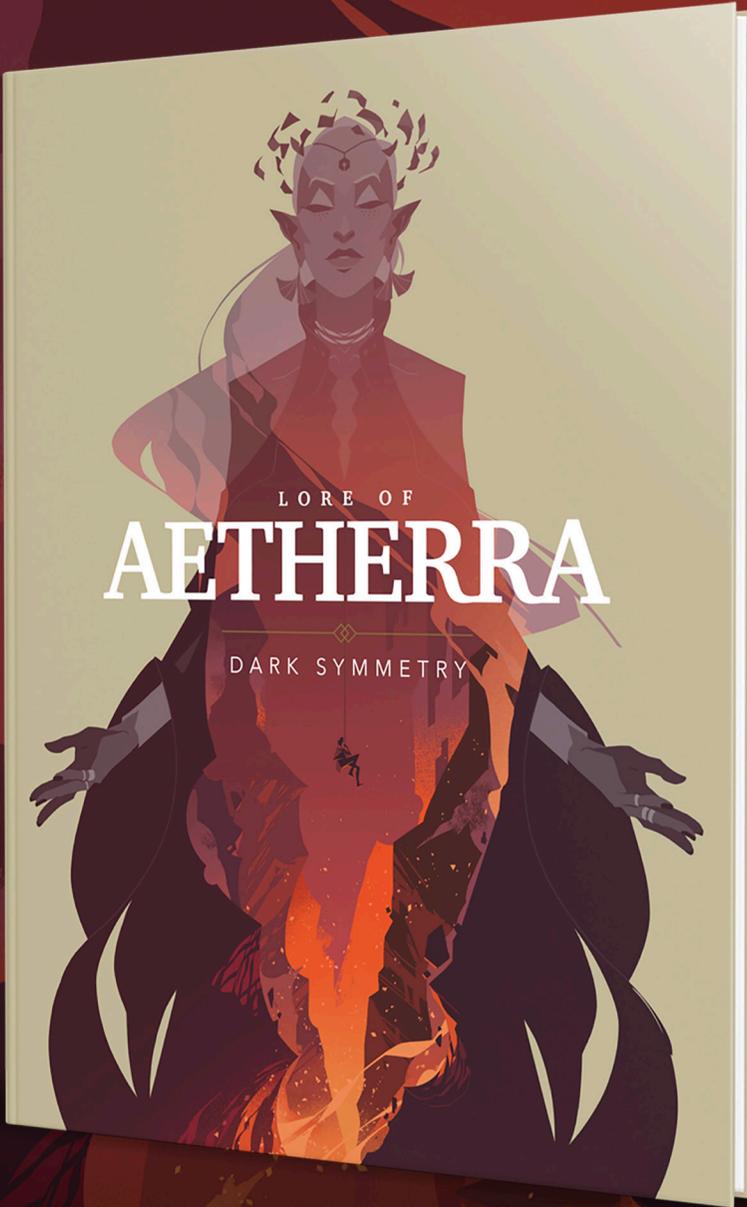
The continued tinkering and grafting upon yourself has fortified your heart and body. You gain resistance to necrotic and poison damage. Additionally, your Constitution score increases by 2. Your maximum for this score is now 22.

APEX PREDATOR

18TH-LEVEL GRAFTKNIGHT FEATURE

Your knowledge of the anatomy of creatures and yourself allows you to refine your grafts to perfection. Any attack gained from Nature's Armament deals an additional 1d8 points of damage, and any DC derived from any graft is increased by 1.

Additionally, you may graft two additional arms to your body. These do not count towards your normal graft limit amount.



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AUGUST 2022

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