

DRAGONMECH™

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PLATE 1 *The standard races are well represented in the land of Highpoint.*



INTRODUCTION

THE DARK AGE HAS BEGUN. WITH EACH PASSING DAY THE MOON GROWS LARGER IN THE SKY, TO THE POINT WHERE IT IS NOW LITERALLY FALLING TO EARTH, PARTICLE BY PARTICLE, IN AN EXCORIATING LUNAR RAIN THAT FLATTENS CASTLES AND KILLS ANYTHING FOOLISH ENOUGH TO WALK THE LAND OF HIGHPOINT BY NIGHT. THE MOON IS SO CLOSE THAT LUNAR MONSTERS CAN DROP TO THE SURFACE, WHETHER BY CHOICE OR AS INVOLUNTARY BYPRODUCTS OF THE LUNAR RAIN. DAY BY DAY, THE LUNAR DRAGONS SWARM IN EVER-GREATER NUMBERS, WHILE OTHER ABERRATIONS STALK THE SURFACE. IF THE LUNAR RAIN DOESN'T SKIN YOU AT NIGHT, THE LUNAR DRAGONS WILL EAT YOU DURING THE DAY.

Colonizing the underdeep was the only hope for those who once controlled the surface. Elven archmages and orc warlords were no match for the lunar rain pounding their cities night after night. Wave after wave of refugees sought shelter underground. But the entire world tried to cram into a limited number of havens, and they found only constant warfare. Each battle's winner had mere days until the next wave appeared, desperate to force its way into any covered shelter it could find.

Deep underground, the ancient dwarven stronghold of Duerok was safe from the dragons and lunar rain — but not from the refugees. Duerok's dark age was ferocious. Pushed back by the relentless waves of invasion, the dwarven city-state lost both land and lives. Some invaders swept past Duerok, retreating deeper and deeper underground in their quest for safety. Most did not. Duerok was under siege.

The lunar dragons ran rampant over the surface world. Surging hordes of refugees pressed at every entrance to the subsurface. The lunar rain razed the surface yet again each night. Chaos, death, and disaster threatened from every quarter. Was any hope left?

Yes.

A stooped, white-haired dwarf named Parilus came to Duerok one day, claiming to be the eldest of the Master Gearwrights. Only the most ancient dwarves remembered the Gearwrights Guild, which was but a footnote in stories of a mythical Age of Walkers passed on from their grandfathers' grandfathers.

Parilus taught the dwarves to build great mechanized walkers powered by steam. He showed them how mighty a ten-ton metal man could be, how its heroic metal hide could resist the lunar rain and beat back the dragons. He guided them through the construction of their



first thousand-foot-tall city-mech and watched proudly as it defeated dragon after dragon.

Then, unseen and unfollowed, he vanished.

Now, one hundred years later, the Second Age of Walkers is at hand. Five dwarven city-mechs housing populations in the thousands patrol the surface areas around Duerok. Armored well enough to protect against all but the most cataclysmic meteor storms, the city-mechs brave the lunar rain, though even their tough metal hides must be constantly refurbished.

These five city-mechs, known as the Stenian Confederacy, are now the center of surface life on Highpoint. The safe zone they protect is a new haven for trade and settlement, colonized by fleets of smaller mechs. Even as the lunar rain abates — some say the moon's surface must have been stripped to bedrock by now — the mechs become further embedded in the social structure. Trader-mechs form crucial links between the budding new surface settlements. Explorer-mechs comb through the ruins of the surface cities, while righteous adventurers fight mech to claw against the lunar dragons. Prospector-mechs scout for scant supplies of ore and coal, and tensions run high when supplies run low.

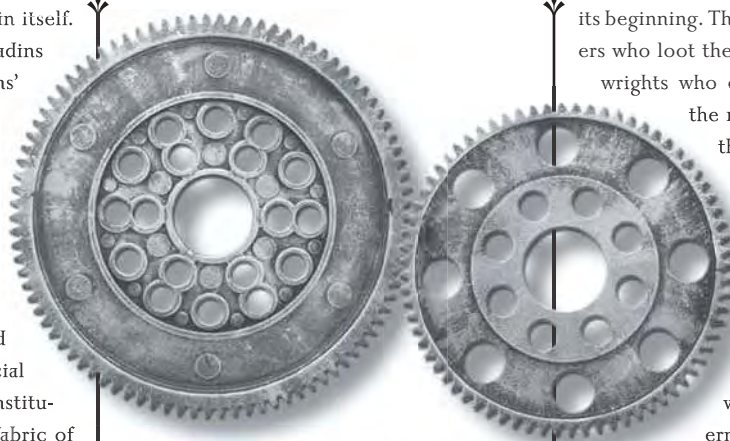
Resource disputes have brought the Stenian Confederacy into conflict with its neighbors. The disparate human nomad tribes, united for the first time in centuries by the charismatic demagogue Shar Thizdic, have constructed a steam-powered city-mech of their own. Now Shar sends his so-called Legion into routine skirmishes with the Stenian Confederacy. Mercenaries play both sides, profiting in the new demand for metal, fuel, and mechs.

Despite its imposition of law and order, not all are satisfied with the Stenian Confederacy. Its security comes at a cost. Martial law is the rule of the day; military-mech pilots are mobile judge, jury, and hangman. Already, vigilante-mechs backed by the people have challenged the Confederacy's authority. Many citizens, especially the clergy, feel the Confederacy is too concerned with short-term solutions. The surface is now inhabitable, but nothing



has been done to solve the lunar rain itself. While independent clerics and paladins organize attacks on the lunar dragons' home turf, the Confederacy focuses solely on terrestrial power. As many resentful citizens of the "oppressive" Stenian Confederacy exist as do outsiders desperate to enter its safe zones.

As the lunar rain destroyed long-established settlements, so too did it eradicate long-established social customs. With few exceptions, the institutions that once held together the fabric of life are now gone. In the place of churches and nations, new forces have emerged. Faith in the old gods has practically vanished as worshippers question those who could not save them. The newly emerging mechanical-god Dotrak whispers cryptically in the ears of his prophets, while the bizarre lunar gods recruit mortals in disguise. Mobile "mechdoms" rule where kingdoms formerly prevailed. The Gearwrights Guild is more powerful than some nations once were, com-

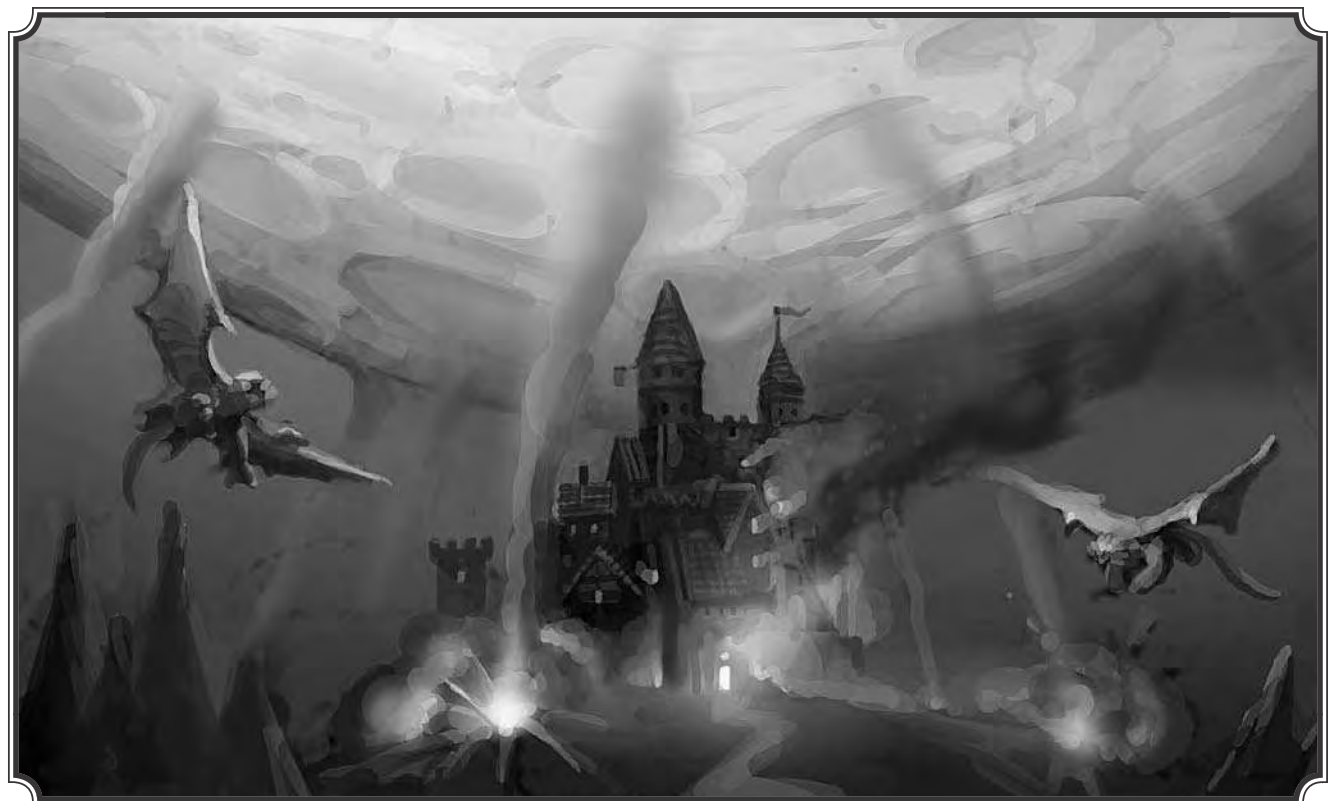


manding entire city-mechs in its name. Its coglayers and steamborgs push the limits of technology, eagerly seeking new techniques, while new recruits explore ancient legends: Is it true that the huge metallic dwarflike sculptures buried in the Wet Desert are in fact ruined mechs from the *first* Age of Walkers?

Not all accept the new order. While nearly five human generations have passed since the lunar rain began, most elves remember

its beginning. They resent the treasure-hunters who loot their ruined villages, the gearwrights who challenge their magic, and the mech jockeys who question their history. Riding magically powered mechs crafted from the still-living remnants of their village ancestor trees, elven artifact-hunters hunt lost treasures stolen by the new mechdoms. Meanwhile, the orcs of the southern plains grow entranced by the power of mechs, raiding more frequently as they seek to acquire mechs for themselves.

As always, the rogues profit. From an early stage, the thieves' guilds insinuated themselves into the management of the city-mechs. Even the Stenians now make concessions to the guilds. The destitute lower levels of their city-mechs are kept in line by ruthless guild organizations, which ensure available manpower to work the smelting





plants and engine rooms as long as their methods go unquestioned. All the while, a shadowy group of so-called “stalkers” practices infiltrating and disabling mechs from within. Rogues and cutthroats have fantastic new opportunities for power.

One hero stands above them all. Mech jockeys are the ace pilots who make life on the surface possible. They ferry precious loads of iron from distant mines, risking ambush by raiders and dragons. They pilot the massive military-mechs bristling with steam cannons. Independent operators ride scout-mechs into the frontiers, seeking new trade routes or ruins to loot. They smuggle contraband into the Stenian Confederacy,

outrunning the military when they can and outfighting them when they can't. Treasure-hunters travel to the endless plains, where they raid the Legion and the orc hordes; glory-hunters pit their steam-mechs against dragons, giants, demons, and necromechs. On the outskirts of the Confederacy, a loose collection of reclusive families called the Irontooth Clans rides under no flag but its own. The Irontooth practice the art of mech fu, steeped in ancient traditions but modernized for the world of mechs, and the “mech devil” pilots of the Irontooth Clans are feared above all others.

In a land where chaos comes hand in hand with opportunity, it is no surprise that efforts to solve the true cause of the problems — the lunar rain and the creatures it brings to earth — have failed repeatedly. Only the most heroic adventurer can resist the daily temptation of personal wealth and power. High-

point is essentially a Wild West environment with scattered law and great power waiting to be claimed. The old institutions are dead and gone. The competition to replace them has begun.

Now hope exists again. It is once again a time for adventure! On the fertile endless plains, elven wizard-pilots carry adventurers in search of lost elven treasures. Shar Thizdic's Legion sends saboteurs into Stenian mines, while independent mech jockeys profit from trade with both sides. Righteous paladins fight nobly against the lunar dragons, and treasure-seeking fighters hunt for their lairs. Gnome coglayers build fantastic clockwork weapons for their allies, while dwarven steamborgs replace their own body parts with steam-powered prosthetics.

All the while, the soft pinging of the lunar rain can be heard through the sturdy metal shell of your transport mech, as you bed down for the night outside the ruins of a once-great surface city. Hope exists once again ...

And it's powered by steam.



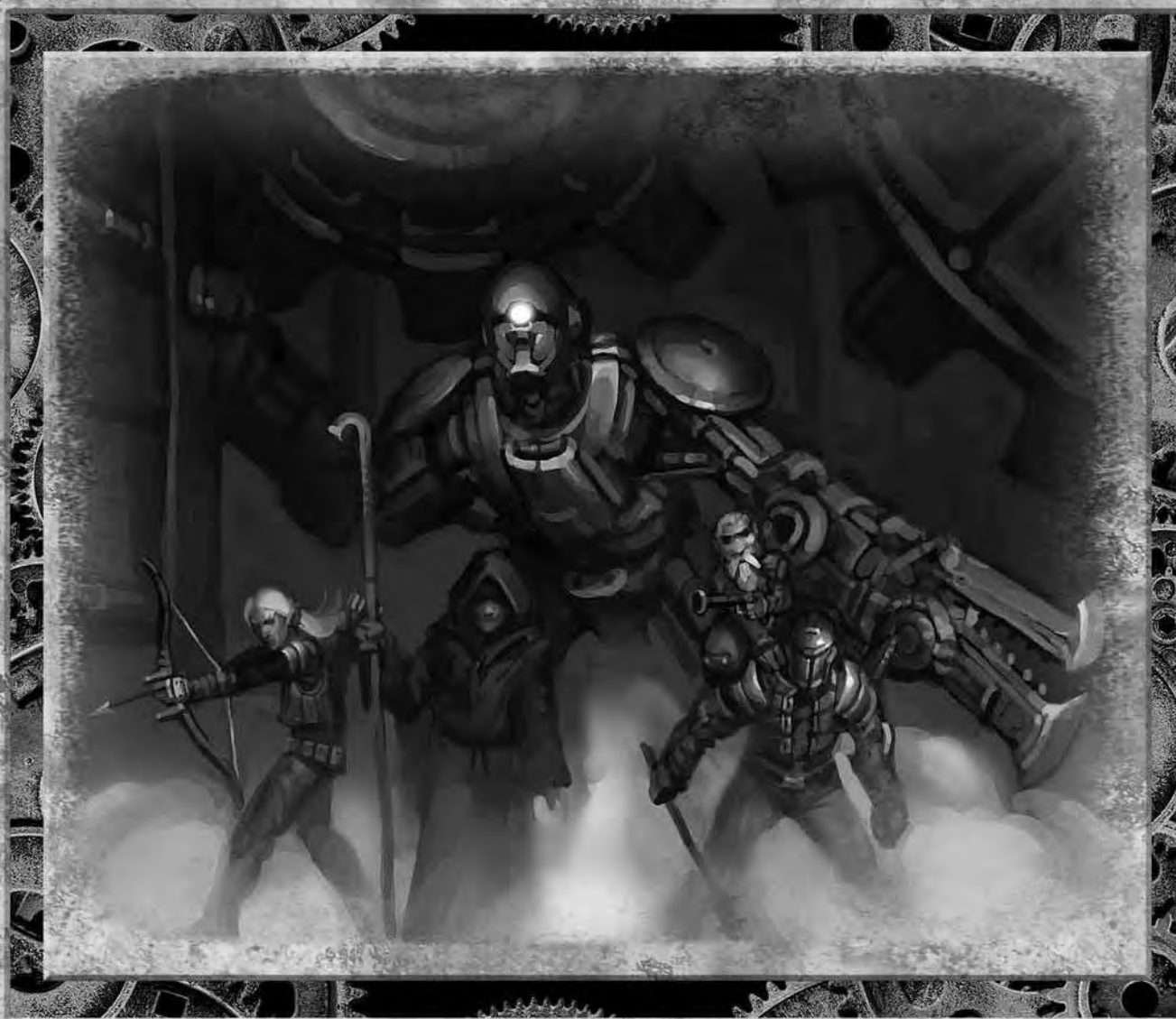


PLATE 2 *The heroes of DragonMech include the traditional classes as well as those who build and pilot mechs.*



CHARACTERS

GIVEN THE MASSIVE CHANGES ROCKING THEIR WORLD, THE PEOPLE OF HIGHPOINT SUFFER NO SHORTAGE OF ADVENTURERS. SOCIAL STRUCTURES HAVE COLLAPSED LEFT AND RIGHT, LEAVING MANY COMMONERS WITH NO RECOURSE BUT TO FIGHT FOR THEIR LIVES. MOREOVER, THE ADVENT OF MECHS HAS CREATED NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVENTURING. COLLECTING RESOURCES TO KEEP THEM GOING IS AN INDEMAND OCCUPATION THESE DAYS, AND THE MECHS HAVE RAISED THE IMPORTANCE OF A SKILL SET NOT FORMERLY VALUED: THE TALENTED PILOT. EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK, NEW ADVENTURERS ARE WANDERING THE LAND.

CHARACTER MOTIVATIONS

The world of **DragonMech** offers all the usual reasons to adventure and many more. Many clerics adventure to contest the lunar aberrations and their gods, while fighters are more concerned with claiming their exotic treasures. Mechs introduce a whole new level of adventuring opportunities, whether they're used simply as transport or as the focus of a campaign.

Before you begin creating your character, stop for a moment to think about *why* your character has become an adventurer. How has he been affected by the forces shaping Highpoint? As you go through the character creation process, keep these questions about your character in mind:

- Where did his ancestors live before the lunar rain? What happened to their hereditary home?
- Where did they turn for shelter during the lunar rain? What enemies and allies did they make?
- What interaction has the character had with

the dragons and other lunar aberrations?

- How does he feel about steam technology? Does it offer salvation or is it an affront to the old ways? Does it threaten the supremacy of magic or challenge the power of the gods?
- After all the devastation wrought by the lunar rain, and the hardships your character has endured, does he still have faith in his gods?
- Does the Gearwrights Guild speak the truth about the first Age of Walkers, even though the ancient elven texts make no reference to such an era?
- What does your character think about mechs? Are they vehicles, mere "wagons with legs," or a revolutionary new concept? Are those who pilot mechs merely using them as a crutch, or are they powerful in a manner that is new for the world?
- Does your character see the world's current state of unrest as a clarion call for heroic defenders to fight the lunar aberrations and end the lunar rain, or a once-in-a-lifetime chance for profit and power?

Considering your character's motivations throughout the creation process will also help your gamemaster focus his campaign.

If your party is composed of traditionalist mages and clerics who see mechs as a thinly veiled threat to the dominant role magic once played in the world, your DM will likely focus your campaign on fighting *against* mechs. On the other hand, if your party is composed of coglayers, steamborgs, and mech jockeys who see mechs as the best chance for defeating the lunar dragons, your adventures will be completely different.

With that in mind, here are some potential character motivations that have special places in **DragonMech**. Of course, a character is much deeper than a single motivating factor, so you can pick more than one, or adjust them as you see fit.

- Defeat the lunar aberrations
- Restore faith in the traditional gods
- Gain followers for a personal belief system from those who now have nothing left to believe in
- Oppose the plans of the lunar gods
- Explore (or loot) the ruins left by the lunar rain
- Restore the surface world (or your own hometown or nation) to its former glory
- Explore the depths of the underdeep, those exposed only since the surface-world refugees pushed ever deeper
- Locate the legendary Master Repository of the Gearwrights Guild
- Restore order and law throughout the world
- Fight against the oppressive policies of the Stenian Confederacy
- Acquire a personal mech
- Build your own mech
- Advance the art of mecraft through whatever means necessary
- Join the Irontooth Clans and become a mech devil
- Join the Gearwrights Guild
- Find a way to travel to the moon and destroy the lunar dragons at their source
- Forge an alliance between the splintered factions of the world, so the larger threats can be confronted in unison
- Pursue personal power through whatever means necessary, ensuring that you aren't affected by such disasters in the future
- Prove that steam-powered mechs are superior to magically powered ones (or vice versa)



- Restrict knowledge of mechs to those who can use it wisely
- Rise to a senior pilot position in the mech jockey hierarchy of the city-mechs
- Discover what lives in the endless engine rooms that power the city-mechs
- Prove that life on the surface is possible without the city-mechs
- Unravel the mystery behind the Pretominin Heads and the Great Standing Dwarf
- Hunt monsters, find treasure, and become a hero in this shattered world

RACES IN DRAGONMECH

The standard races are well represented in the land of Highpoint. Though they have been traumatized by the world's collapse around them, none has been completely exterminated.

Although Shar Thizdic has used racial tensions and hate-filled rhetoric as a ploy to grab power, interracial interaction has actually grown since the lunar rain. The chaotic nature of the world frequently throws together adventurers who never would have met before. The city-mechs are far too concerned about recruiting those with useful skills to worry about race (although tall humans certainly have difficulties on the low-ceilinged dwarf mechs), and independent mech operators are no different. Prospectors and treasure-seekers take whoever does the best job, and life on the surface is more about who can help you survive than who has pointed ears.

This section describes the major races in **DragonMech** and the ways they interact.

HUMANS

Historically, the humans of Highpoint have been nomads, and rather uncivilized nomads at that. The center of human "civilization" was the endless plains. Relatively

few natural obstructions, combined with well-defined boundaries preventing outside invaders, made this the perfect realm for nomads; the open plains were protected from invasion by the steppes to the west, the forests to the north, the sea to the east, and the swamps to the south. Between the nomad tribes, however, no shortage of conflict existed. Human civilization has always been wild and malleable to begin with, with entire kingdoms rising and falling within a few short generations, and the endless plains are no exception. The many tribes bickered constantly over territory, resources, and prestige. The orc hordes that also walked the plains made for still more conflict. The few nonnomadic cultures retreated to impregnable fortress-cities that the combative nomads could not invade.

Now, however, the endless plains are decaying. With little shelter from the lunar rain, they are eroding with every passing night. The human cities were easy targets for the lunar dragons, and many have been battered into the ground, their remains used by some dragons as lairs. At the same time, brave humans survive in the tunnels and small places under the ruins. The ruined cities are still home to hundreds or thousands of refugees, who hide where the dragons can't reach them.

The nomadic tribes were not as vulnerable as the cities. They fared well against the lunar dragons, being last on their list of targets. As wanderers with no fixed shelters, they were hit hard by the lunar rain. The luckiest found caves, mountains, or forests on the plains, which they were soon forced to defend against endless waves of refugees. The less

fortunate had to travel hundreds of miles to the western steppes or northern forests, where some were accepted by the elven villages. Most died en route.

Humans living in other regions, such as the flatland, were less affected by the catastrophe. They were closer to underground havens, or on good terms with nearby dwarves, and fared better than their nomadic brethren. Many took shelter in the dwarven strongholds. There they forged life-long alliances, standing side by side with their dwarven hosts to defend against later waves of refugees.

Older human characters are likely to be embittered, cynical refugees. Their personal history includes constant flight or fight for the past fifty-odd years. They've never known peace, stability, or true safety, nor have their fathers or grandfathers. To them, the mechs aren't hope; the mechs are merely the latest in a string of refugees. They adventure solely for survival.

Younger humans, however, were born into this world. Never knowing anything else, they take it for granted. To them, the mechs are simply there — some friends, others enemies, but all merely aspects of the environment, like mountains or houses. It is these new generations of humans that have the greatest potential for reshaping Highpoint, for they make the most of what is there rather than try to return to the old ways. They adventure out of a sense of hope and possibility, searching for the innovations that will restore the world (or at least their tribe) to greatness.

Human characters may hail from the specialized nomad tribes of the endless plains, some of which confer special abilities and limitations. The wild Stavians are excellent riders, while the Wisps are stealthy forest dwellers. See page 157 for information on these tribes.

DWARVES

Of all the races, the dwarves are the least affected by the catastrophes. Their underground homes were never in any danger from the lunar rain. The lunar





dragons were only a small threat; no large creature can fit very far into a dwarven tunnel. But the dwarves suffered mercilessly from the secondary effects of the catastrophes: When the surface dwellers looked for shelter from the lunar rain and dragons, they headed to the mountains. The dwarves were forced to defend their underground caves against almost every living surface-dweller in the world.

The dwarven kingdoms have been in a constant state of war for nearly a century. The more recent years have seen less violence, since most of the invaders are dead by now, and the development of mechs gives refugees another option. But the first few decades were horrible. Most dwarves now refer to these as the Years of the Blood Rain, for the invasions caused by the lunar rain spilled more dwarf blood than any other war or catastrophic event within memory.

During the Years of the Blood Rain, almost every dwarf household lost at least two thirds of its numbers. Some were exterminated entirely. Some mountaintop dwarven cities are now occupied entirely by humans, elves, and orcs. Some still have dwarven residents, who are the slaves of the current owners. Other cities have been successively occupied by wave after wave of invaders, each of which wipes out the preceding one. These “sanctuaries” from the lunar rain are testaments to its disruptive power.

Dwarven characters are likely stoic, tired defenders. After decades of invasion, they are distrustful of anyone who is unfamiliar, particularly if they are approached in their strongholds. To them, the mechs are a mixed blessing. They relieve the pressure on the dwarven kingdoms. At the same time, for those dwarves who now live in mechs, they represent the abandonment of thousands of years of dwarf stone-dwelling tradition. They adventure to escape their confines, search for new solutions, beat back the attackers who have threatened their way of life for so long, or free the dwarven cities that are still occupied by invaders.

The dwarven bonus to Craft checks related to metal applies to Craft (Mechcraft). Dwarves raised in mechs do not receive the stonecunning ability, but in its place receive a +2 bonus to Mech Pilot skill checks. The

dwarven bonuses in combat against giants, orcs, and goblinoids do not apply to combat with orc mechs. The bonus is due to generations of training in personal martial combat, not mech combat.

ELVES

The elves were well protected by their dense forest realms, which shielded them from the lunar rain for some time. Although the forests were eventually worn down, they bought time for their residents.

Even so, the elves suffered hard. The elven lifespan is long, and their traditions are strongly cemented. While humans had short memories and several generations to adapt to a new world, and the dwarves at least retained the vestiges of their former realms, the elves have had every last woodland village utterly destroyed. Tens of thousands of years of advanced civilization have been reduced to a few portable libraries, the occasional rolled-up painting, and remembered songs. Humans give birth to children who never knew anything different, but barely half an elven generation has passed since the lunar rains began. Each and every living elf is painfully aware of all that has been lost. To make it all the worse, they are now forced to live in confined spaces, a condition which is anathema to the elven psyche. A deep sadness permeates elven society.

Nonetheless, elves welcome the mechs with open arms. From the perspective of those used to woodland groves and high forest homes, living in a tall, mobile mech is a monumental improvement over living underground. Although the mechs were invented by dwarves and developed by humans, the most advanced are the product of elven magic. They have taken the denuded ancestor trees that were once the centers of their villages and magically recrafted them into still-living mechs. These wooden mechs must root in the earth for one hour each day, but they are still far more powerful than any others, wielding barrages of fireballs and other spells at their fingertips. They carry with them the villages' traditions.

Elven characters are sad and distant, but among all player character races they are the most hopeful. They have a seven-hundred-year lifespan — more than sufficient to use their mechs to eradicate the lunar dragons, use their magic to shield them from the lunar rain, and re-establish the culture they once had. They adventure with very long-term goals: to recover the artifacts and icons their villages lost, seek new sites to root their ancestor trees, establish alliances with others who would help them fight the lunar creatures, and find magical solutions to the world's problems.

GNOMES

The gnomes have suffered much as the dwarves have, with their underground burrows raided and used as shelters by other races. Unfortunately, the gnomes lack the extensive defenses of the dwarf kingdoms, and they have fared much worse. Despite their illusions, most gnomes were evicted from their burrows and forced to seek shelter elsewhere. Their burrows were then batted back and forth between successive invaders until the constant activity finally attracted the attention of the lunar dragons. Most gnome villages are now flattened wastes.

Although the dwarves invented the mechs and the humans developed them, gnomes actually constructed many of them. The few gnomes to survive their forcible displacement have been welcomed by mech crews, who deeply appreciate their technical prowess. They are less needed on the magically powered elf mechs, but most other mechs include a cadre of gnome technicians, and many gnome clans have traded their services for safety on a human or dwarven mech.

Gnomes are welcomed for another reason: They're fun to be around. The gnomish sense of humor has sustained the race, and their jokes and pranks are welcome diversions in the bleak land of Highpoint. Of course, their jokes these days tend to be a little darker, but they still make people smile.

Gnomish adventurers are jovial tricksters, as they always have been, but at night, when



they're alone in their bedrolls, they silently weep for the clan members they have lost.

HALF-ELVES

Half-elves on Highpoint have always had difficulty defining themselves. The radically different lifestyles of their two parents certainly never helped: The stable, ancient elves in their woodland towns lived a very different life from the whirling, wandering human nomads. Many half-elves split their time between their two cultures. Being from two races that respected one another, they were always accepted, even when they never belonged.

Each half-elf usually identified more strongly with one parent or the other and spent more time with that society, though he took pride in the accomplishments of both of his heritages. Now that the lunar rain has decimated the landscape, half-elves have, for the first time, had a chance to define their own identity as something other than a confused, misplaced mixture. Although it would be an enormous exaggeration to say that any half-elf actually appreciated the catastrophes, it is true that many have "found themselves" in the new world. As social structures which confused them have broken down, they have had less difficulty fitting into the newly reformed societies. They have flocked to the mechs, seeing the new culture as a place they can fit into from the start. Relative to their percentages in the overall population, half-elves are quite common in human and elven mech crews.

HALF-ORCS

Orcs have always been despised by the other races of Highpoint, and half-orcs are unfortunately subject to similar disdain. They are accepted by no society, and most become wanderers or adventurers. The few who settle usually live with the tribes of their orc parents, where they are considered weaklings.

Half-orcs are found in mechs only as paying passengers (when their payment is high enough to overcome natural prejudices) or as slaves or laborers on an orc mech.

Half-orc characters are coarse, crude mercenaries, as they have always been. The lunar rain is a catastrophe for others, not them; since half-orcs were never fully accepted by either parent, they don't feel a deep sense of loss for what has been destroyed. Of all the races, the half-orcs are perhaps the best adjusted, for they took the least pride in what they were to begin with.

HALFLINGS

The halflings of Highpoint never had a specific city or region to call their own, nor a civilization quite as advanced as that the elves lost. They settled everywhere and moved often; halfling neighborhoods existed in most human cities, throughout elven territory, in the halls of Duerok, and along the banks of the Endless River.

For many reasons, the halflings have adapted well to the catastrophes. First, their small size let them escape the lunar dragons easily. Many halfling communities were able to survive in the nooks and crannies beneath the rubble of cities destroyed by the dragons. Others became worm farmers. Unlike the larger races, they were not forced to battle for the underground homes of the dwarves and gnomes. Second, halflings are always quick to adapt to new opportunities, and they did so en masse after the catastrophes. Many became traders, scouts, guides, prospectors, and technicians.

Thus were born the "coglings": halfling laborers and technicians who tend to mechs. The huge, complex steam engines of the dwarven mechs require extensive maintenance, ranging from simple janitorial duties (cleaning off oil residues, monitoring wear and tear, etc.) to complex technical assignments (calibrating gears, checking pressure valves, etc.). Halflings can fit into smaller crevices than even the gnomes, and they were quick to recognize the utility of their size in the complicated regions of a dwarven

mech. Many halfling communities have now relocated to mechs, where they provide most of the unskilled and semiskilled labor required to keep the steam engines running. In many cases, these coglings are illicit stowaways unknown to the mech's leaders. In the most extreme cases, they have become feral gear-dwelling creatures, forgetting their heritage and living as perpetual stowaways in the harsh engines. (For more information on coglings, see page 183.)

Halfling adventurers are cynical, as are all the races, but not quite as jaded as others. After all, halflings see change as opportunity. Many halflings are now protected by the same mechs that protect the dwarves, gnomes, and humans, despite the halflings' absence in the innovation of such mechs. As usual, they have adapted rapidly and found places to support themselves.

ADAPTING CLASSES TO DRAGONMECH

Most traditional classes can be easily integrated into **DragonMech**, although a few require adaptation.

Barbarians

Barbarians have always been common, especially among the nomadic human tribes. Now, as new generations come of age in the rain-scalded world of Highpoint, they are even more common. Any character raised on the surface (in the rubble of old cities, in shallow cave complexes, or any other such area) is far more likely to be a barbarian than a fighter. Barbarians adventure to locate kin who were lost in the disasters, to acquire whatever vestiges of steam technology they can for their tribes, or because they have lost their tribes and have nothing left to go back to.

Bards

In a world with little to hope for, bards are in high demand. They are welcome wherever they go for the diversions they provide. While

most survivors of the lunar rain are naturally suspicious of anyone or anything they encounter, the one exception to their suspicion is the bard. They'll wait to ask questions until after the bard performs, and if he performs well, they might never ask any questions. Bards adventure to piece together what bits of knowledge they can, hoping to uncover the ultimate secrets behind the lunar rain. Even while joking and singing, they pursue the big questions: Why did it happen? What is it like on the moon? How can this be stopped?

Clerics

Few clerics have survived the catastrophes unscathed. The damage has been not to their

bodies (although many were killed) but to their faith. What sort of god would allow such disaster to befall his followers? Either the gods allowed such inexplicable disaster, which would make any follower question his own piety, or the gods did not allow the disaster, in which case they are ineffectual and lack the strength to stop whatever power *did* cause the disaster. Either way, a cleric's faith will be shaken, and many attribute their declining powers to these causes.

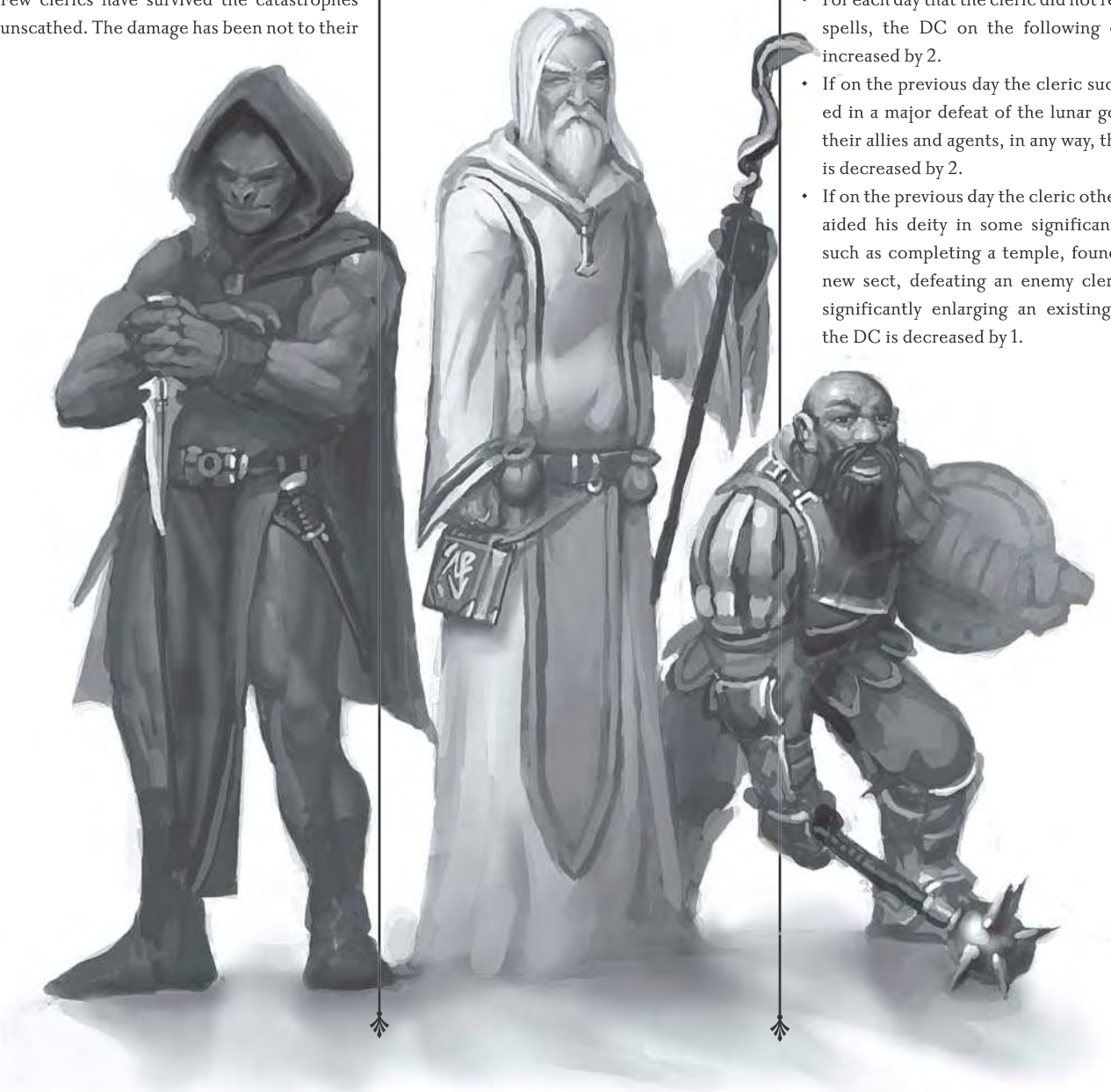
In reality, the old gods are being overrun by the lunar gods, particularly those of the lunar dragons. The physical interaction between

the moon and surface has given these gods a strong foothold in the affairs of the surface world. On other planes, they battle the old gods and are slowly overwhelming them.

Clerics in Highpoint must contend with the battles between their deities and the lunar gods. They receive spells only when their deities have the strength and divine focus to spare. Each day, after the cleric completes her hour of supplication, check to see if she receives spells. This is resolved with a Wisdom check against a base DC of 6. A roll of 1 always fails.

The base DC is modified as follows.

- For each day that the cleric did not receive spells, the DC on the following day is increased by 2.
- If on the previous day the cleric succeeded in a major defeat of the lunar gods or their allies and agents, in any way, the DC is decreased by 2.
- If on the previous day the cleric otherwise aided his deity in some significant way, such as completing a temple, founding a new sect, defeating an enemy cleric, or significantly enlarging an existing sect, the DC is decreased by 1.





This check is rolled separately for each and every cleric, even two of the same faith, as it depends not just on the deity's ability but also the cleric's piety and the deity's power on that day. Clerics still receive their spells most of the time, but the few days on which they don't are certainly disturbing.

This weakness of clerics reflects the distraction and limited power of their gods as they battle the lunar gods. However, there is a silver lining. The deities are now focusing much more of their energy on thwarting the invading lunar gods and their minions. Any cleric of any faith can attempt to channel divine energy spontaneously into a spell opposing any lunar dragon or other lunar creature or effect, including attempts to protect or heal someone from the consequences of lunar rain, damage from dragons, and other such causes — but only if he receives his normal spells that day.

To attempt such spontaneous casting, the cleric simply tries to cast any spell he could normally cast, regardless of whether it is in his daily allotment. A Wisdom check determines success. If the check is successful, the cleric casts the spell as normal without losing one of his allotted spells for that day. If the check fails, the cleric does not lose an allotted spell, but no spell effect occurs and his action is wasted. The cleric must still meditate to be able to cast these spontaneous spells.

These spontaneous spells can be cast more than once per day. The DC for the first spontaneous spell cast each day is 20, modified by the same adjustments as the cleric's chance to get spells. The DC for each subsequent spell rises by 4 for each attempted spontaneous casting, whether successful or not. For example, the initial DC is 20. After one attempt, whether failed or successful, it rises to 24. After a second attempt, again regardless of success, it rises to 28.

In addition, clerics and paladins of terrestrial deities may automatically sense if a creature is of lunar origin. They must already be aware of the creature's presence. This is resolved with an unadjusted Wisdom check against DC 15. On a success, the cleric successfully determines if a creature is lunar in

origin. This free action is a flash of insight provided by the cleric's deity in its war against the lunar gods and requires no effort on the cleric's part. The DM should make the check.

Clerics now feel a compelling urge to set forth in the name of their gods, or at least to fight *against* the lunar gods. They adventure out of a sense of faith, dedicated to reviving their faith and solving the root causes of the disaster, not merely profiting in its wake.

Druids

The lunar rain has had two effects on druids. First, not as many of them exist. Forced to seek shelter, many had to abandon their groves. Lacking the natural world with which to instruct new followers, they have had a hard time increasing their numbers. At the opposite extreme is a corollary effect: those druids who remain, and the few who have appeared since the lunar rains, are dedicated to their cause as no others before them. They see themselves as participants in a sacred battle of epic proportions, warring against the lunar denizens for the sake of all things natural. Few enemies of the lunar rain are so dedicated. They are utterly driven in their cause to protect what little remains of the natural world. In many cases, their dedication borders on insanity, so hard it is to take the losses that their groves have seen.

A player must explain how his druid character has come to such a profession in the world of Highpoint. He may be apprenticed to an older druid who roamed the woods before the catastrophes, or perhaps he is a refugee raised in a burrow, whose knowledge of nature is limited to the razed environment of the postcatastrophe world.

Fighters

Fighters are always in abundance, whether on Highpoint or any other world, but fewer of them are around now. The armies, dedicated training, and military schools necessary to produce fighters have been disrupted. Most fighters now hail from Chemak or Duerok. Fighters adventure to test their skills against the new challenges of this world and to defend the homelands

that trained them. Many also succumb to the allure of glory and treasure waiting to be had, and seek profit from the new world growing up around them.

Monks

The monasteries of Highpoint are traditionally located in the higher altitudes: the roughlands, the foothills of the Boundary Peaks, or even on the Peaks themselves. Some monasteries are in the Lilat and Hereál forests, and two extremely isolationist orders have set up camp west of the Boundary Peaks, far from civilization. All of these areas are far from the worst ravages of the lunar rain, and monks have endured the pain of the catastrophes as stoically as one would expect. Although monks have never been particularly common in Highpoint, they're as common (or as rare) now as they have been.

Some monks have reinterpreted their heritage in a new way. The mech devils of the Irontooth Clans have clear roots in monastic martial tradition, though they apply it to combat with mechs rather than personal melee. Many monks have joined these clans, where they are welcomed with open arms and taught the ways of the mech devils.

Paladins

Paladins are needed now more than ever before. As with the clerics, many have questioned their gods, but as the ultimate champions of their faith, none has held such doubts for long. Paladins have emerged as true champions, battling the lunar dragons where others flee, and their numbers have actually grown thanks to the examples they have set.

Paladin spellcasting is limited as a cleric's is (see above). None of the paladin's other abilities are affected.

Rangers

As with the druids, rangers have found their homes destroyed. Rangers can still be found among the elves and surviving human nomads, but new recruits are rare. Some have responded similarly to the druids, declaring a sacred war against the lunar creatures; others have simply given up, living the rest of



their lives in the meteor-pocked wastes of what were once great forests.

A variation on the traditional ranger, called the clockwork ranger, can now be found haunting the gear forests of city-mechs. Clockwork rangers are described in detail below.

Rogues

Rogues will always have a place, in any location and any time. The rogues of Highpoint have been unaffected by the catastrophes, except insofar as it has been a great time for opportunists and looters. Life on a mech doesn't particularly favor a rogue—the quarters are a little too cramped to get away with much—but rogues have found their skills are perfectly suited to infiltrating enemy mechs, which are little more than walking buildings. Some rogues have even specialized in such skills, and rumors exist of a secretive organization of “stalkers” who are dedicated to taking down mechs without ever being seen. Rogues adventure for the same reasons they always have: loot, experience, fame, infamy, and the challenge of a great heist.

Sorcerers

The moon's low orbit has caused all manner of strange events on Highpoint, not least of which is a huge jump in the number of natural-born spellcasters. Sorcerers are on the rise, apparently driven by some magical side effect of the moon. Many of the “new blood” manifest spells that are moon-themed variations on the traditions, such as *magic missiles* that launch meteorites instead of arrows. In some cases they are hated for this, being seen as part of the world's problems; in other cases, they are treasured as bearers of unique magic. In any event, the respect they enjoy must now be shared with mech jockeys and coglayers, a fact many sorcerers find grating. They adventure to test their limits and find their purpose, especially those whose talents indicate they are connected to the lunar catastrophes in some inexplicable way.

Wizards

Fewer places exist to learn magic these days, and fewer people are training to become

wizards. Much magical knowledge was destroyed along with the great cities, and the destruction of the ancestral elven villages dealt a powerful blow to the study of magic. Furthermore, the age favors steam power, not magic—except among the elves, it is the coglayers who are protecting their societies, not the wizards.

Wizards are not as common as they used to be. Those who remain are motivated to return magic to its place of preeminence. They adventure to prove the worth of their skills, to gain new knowledge, and to track down the few remaining archmages who can teach them the greatest secrets of all.

NEW CORE CLASSES

CLOCKWORK RANGER (VARIANT RANGER)

The clockwork ranger is a fighting man who has adopted the mech as his home. On a normal world he may have grown up studying the creatures of the woods, but, raised as he was on a mech, he has instead made the world of metal his domain.

Most clockwork rangers live in the gear forests—the vast engine rooms that occupy multiple levels of every citymech.

Clockwork rangers are in most respects just like traditional rangers. They study the creatures that occupy the gear forests, both natives (like coglings) and invaders (which can include practically any creature that threatens the engines regularly). They tend to be standoffish loners who retreat to the engine rooms for solace and skill. Clockwork rangers have a natural understanding of engineering rather than the affinity for nature found with woods-dwelling rangers,

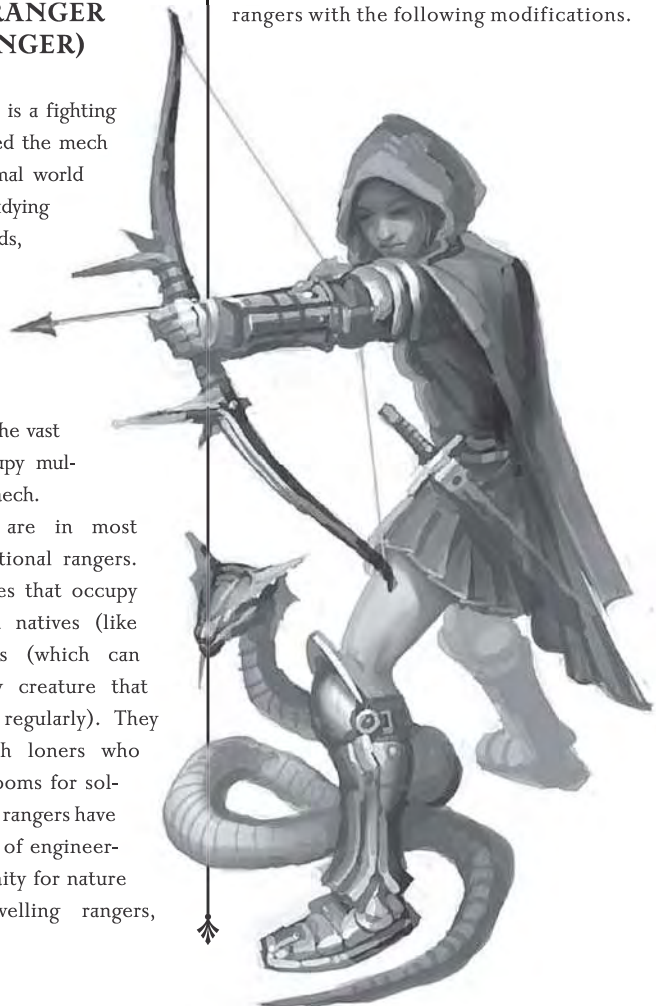
though their natural talent is not as well developed as that of the coglayers.

The personal history of a clockwork ranger usually motivates him to adventure. In many cases, their lives were saved by mechs early on. Their worship of the gear forest is intertwined with a desire to protect it as an environment, in part to preserve the city-mech itself. They adventure to foil those who would threaten the lumbering city-mechs, to find resources to benefit the city-mechs, or simply to further the cause of steam technology. They oppose those who advocate a return to the old ways, not just because it threatens the denizens of the gear forests, but because they see it as a deceptive solution.

Clockwork rangers are also known as metal rangers or enginekeepers.

Game Rule Information

Clockwork rangers are identical to normal rangers with the following modifications.





CLASS SKILLS

The clockwork ranger's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Use Rope (Dex).

Clockwork rangers have the unique ability to use Handle Animal to influence constructs. See page 42 for details.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

Clockwork rangers are like rangers except for the following.

Spells: Though the gear forest is a man-made environment, its inhabitants are creatures of nature. Many

gear forests develop their own unique ecologies, albeit it with creatures far removed from those that walk the woodland dale. Clockwork rangers may still draw on nature to cast divine spells, though the spells available to them are slanted more toward mechanical fe. See page 48 for their spell list

Track: Clockwork rangers still receive the Track feat. The grime and grease that coat the floors of gear forests count as firm ground for purposes of the feat. Particularly sludge-covered areas are considered soft ground.

Favored Enemy: Clockwork rangers still have favored enemies. They may choose from the traditional categories, provided they have had exposure to those enemies.

Animal Companion: The clockwork ranger's animal companion must be a creature native to the geaforests. Choose from this list: dire rat, grease lizard, monstrous centipede (Medium or Large), monstrous spider (Medium), or snake (Small or Medium size).

COGLAYER

A coglayer is a tinkerer and mechanic. Most coglayers are obsessed with steam engine technology, working tirelessly to eke out every last drop of performance from the engines they build. They experiment constantly and are always eager to learn about others' advances in the field. If anyone can build a bigger, better mech, it's a coglayer. Coglayers gain power through the devices they build, and they have special mastery over an area of technology known as steam powers. Steam powers enable them to construct fantastic engines with amazing powers.

Adventures: Coglayers adventure for two reasons. First, they like to test their inventions. The best way to find out if your mech is really up to snuff is to send it into battle. Second, they have a very expensive hobby. As if steam engines weren't expensive enough, mechs are downright exorbitant. Adventuring is a good way to fund this hobby.

Characteristics: Coglayers are shy and reclusive. They prefer to spend their time with machines, not people. They maintain a conservative appearance and don't draw attention to themselves — except when demonstrating new inventions, at which point they are happy to show them off.

Alignment: Coglayers tend toward neutrality and even chaos. Their belief structure places a high premium on knowledge and truth, as well as the advancement of technology through contributions to the greater body of knowledge. They consider these timeless values to be far more important than the temporal loyalties of mortal life.

Religion: Coglayers have no respect for the old gods. They are utterly atheistic. They worship only technology and the power it can bring them. If they exhibit any religious leanings at all, it is toward Dotrak, the "great engine."

Background: Many coglayers are officially trained by the Gearwrights Guild, or a similar organization in their hometown. If not part of the guild, they are almost always apprenticed to an older, more experienced coglayer, who teaches them the basics and then helps them advance. This apprenticeship is usually quite informal; it happens naturally due to the close camaraderie of coglayers, who seek each other out to discuss their studies. A strong feeling of fellowship exists among coglayers, since they have few other people with whom they can discuss their interests.

Races: Gnomes and dwarves are by far the most common races among coglayers. Human and half-orc coglayers aren't uncommon, though the latter rarely advance beyond simple mechanical contraptions. Coglayers of any other races are exceedingly rare: Elves prefer magically constructed mechs, and halflings are more interested in selling mechs than building them.

Other Classes: A coglayer is perceived by other classes as an odd eccentric. For most of an adventuring career, he'll be the small guy in the back hiding behind some weird contraption. But as he advances in level he gains the ability to construct ever more elaborate weapons, and eventually he can

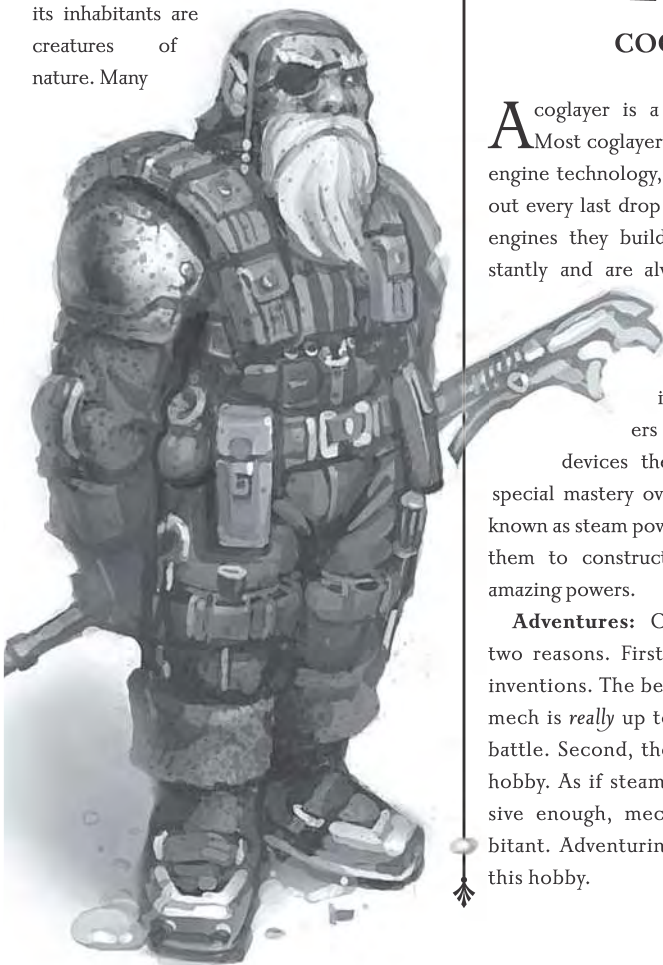




TABLE 1-1: THE COGLAYER

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL	STEAM POWERS
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Machine Empathy, Exotic Weapon Proficiency	2+Int
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Mech Weapon Proficiency	3+Int
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Integrated Parts	4+Int
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Exotic Weapon Proficiency	5+Int
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Mech Weapon Proficiency	6+Int
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	—	7+Int
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Integrated Parts	8+Int
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Exotic Weapon Proficiency	8+Int
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Mech Weapon Proficiency	9+Int
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	—	10+Int
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	Integrated Parts	10+Int
12	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	Exotic Weapon Proficiency	11+Int
13	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	Mech Weapon Proficiency	12+Int
14	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	—	12+Int
15	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	Integrated Parts	13+Int
16	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	Exotic Weapon Proficiency	14+Int
17	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	Mech Weapon Proficiency	14+Int
18	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	—	15+Int
19	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	Integrated Parts	16+Int
20	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Exotic Weapon Proficiency	16+Int

build mechs. It is at this point that coglayers start earning some respect.

Game Rule Information

Coglayers have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Intelligence is exceedingly valuable for coglayers, as is Dexterity. The former lets them dream up ever more powerful contraptions, and the latter lets them build them.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d4

CLASS SKILLS

The coglayer's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Craft (blacksmithing) (Int), Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), and Mech Pilot (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (8 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the coglayer.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency:

Coglayers are proficient with club, dagger, heavy crossbow, light crossbow, and quarterstaff. They are proficient with all shields except the tower shield, and the following armor types: padded, leather, studded leather, pilot's armor, chain shirt, scale mail, gearmail, and chainmail. As they advance, they gain proficiency with certain exotic weapons (see below).

A coglayer is always considered proficient with any weapon he has built using his steam powers.

Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Coglayers tinker constantly. They are always learning how to use new mechanical devices, including exotic steam-powered weapons. At each indicated level, a coglayer can become proficient with one of the following exotic weapons: buzzaxe, buzzsaw, chattersword, flame nozzle, lobster claw, steambreather, steam gun.

Machine Empathy (Ex): A coglayer is finely attuned to the functions of machines. He can identify problems from the slight-

est hum or whir. Coglayers receive the Craft Steam Gear feat for free at first level. Coglayers add their class level as a bonus to all checks in Craft (mechcraft), Knowledge (mechs), and Knowledge (steam engines).

Mech Weapon Proficiency: Coglayers spend far more time building and studying mechs than piloting them, so they do not learn to operate mech weapons as quickly as their mech jockey counterparts. Nonetheless, they become skilled with those they focus on. At each level indicated, the coglayer becomes proficient with any one mech weapon.

Steam Powers (Ex): A coglayer can construct a number of steam powers as indicated in Table 1-1. He receives a number of additional steam powers equal to his Intelligence modifier. Steam powers at 1st level are granted for free; future steam powers must be built and paid for per the usual rules.

These steam powers aren't indicative of what the character *knows*; they're indicative of what he is capable of maintaining. The character doesn't have to specify what each steam power slot is until he actually builds a device of some sort that uses the steam power. He can maintain only the number of steam powers indicated in Table 1-1. If for some reason he wants to alter the steam powers he is currently using, he can dispose of an existing device and create a new one. As long as the total steam powers in use do not exceed his limit as indicated in Table 1-1, that's not a problem. The old steam powers and the device they were used with are considered destroyed, however; even if they aren't actively destroyed, they fall apart from lack of maintenance.

Each morning the coglayer must spend one hour maintaining his steam powers. This includes adding oil, recalibrating parts, checking measurements, and so on. The coglayer must be capable of reasonable concentration during this time, though he is not affected by any distractions that might be normally experienced on a city-mech (such as engine noise or cramped quarters). For each day in which he doesn't maintain his steam powers, the coglayer temporarily



loses one steam power. All lost steam powers are restored as soon as the coglayer spends a full hour on maintenance.

Integrated Parts: Most coglayers are small creatures, such as gnomes, halflings, or coglings. With their low Strength, these coglayers have been forced to develop new ways to carry around all their gear. At 3rd level and every 4 levels thereafter, the coglayer can integrate two steam powers into one. These powers must be built into the same device. The two parts combined then weigh the same amount as the smaller of them did before they were combined. For example, an imagemaker combined with an iron arm would have a total weight of 8 lbs., the same weight as the iron arm by itself. Parts integrated in this manner cannot be separated once combined; to replace them, the coglayer has to build two whole new parts from scratch. It is perfectly acceptable to integrate disparate parts of radically different size, weight, and dimensions – after all, this is fantasy engineering!

That Piece is Important: At 12th level (or higher), a coglayer may take the *that piece is important* ability (per the stalker class description) in place of a normal feat. A coglayer with this ability may identify stalker sabotage in half the usual time (which nets to one-fourth the time the stalker spent finding the piece).

CONSTRUCTOR (VARIANT WIZARD)

A constructor is a wizard who specializes in building constructs. Constructors are a new phenomenon, having appeared only in the last several decades. A formal organization known as the College of Constructors is responsible for much of the growth in the field, as its members have expanded the science of magical constructs far beyond golems and guardians. Constructors learn spells that mimic the traits of constructs, just as they push the envelope of construct-building in an attempt to match the fabulous creations of the coglayers.

Characters become constructors because they exhibit a talent for both engineering and arcane magic. If they lacked the ability to cast spells, many would have become coglayers. Instead, they fuse their two skill sets to create creatures far beyond the scope of simple engineering (or so they hope).

The constructor class is a mix between a normal character class and a prestige class. Constructors are always members of the College of Constructors. This membership is freely available to anyone who professes an interest. In that regard, the constructor is like a prestige class, as it requires membership in a world-specific institution. On the other hand, this is hardly more specialized than what is required of a specialist wizard (an illusionist, for example). Constructors are essentially specialist wizards whose specialization includes membership in an organization. Unlike normal specialists, however, their specialization does not fall along the lines of a specific school.

Players may select constructor as their class at 1st level.

Game Rule Information

A constructor is identical to a normal wizard with the following modifications.

CLASS SKILLS

The constructor's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) × 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

Spells: The constructor class has its own list of spells. This includes all wizard spells, a few divine spells that have been adapted for use by the constructors (such as *animate objects*), several variant spells focused on affecting constructs rather than their previous targets, and a number of restricted spells.

The constructor school spell list appears on page 48. The restricted spells were developed by the College of Constructors and are strictly regulated. Members of the college

never teach these spells to nonmembers. The only way to learn them is to be a member of the college or to discover them in a member's spellbook.

Specialist: Constructors are specialists. As described in the *PHB*, a constructor can prepare one additional spell of each level per day, and receives a +2 bonus to Spellcraft checks to learn the spells of her chosen college. The extra spell selection may be any spell from the constructor school spell list (page 48).

To become a constructor, a wizard must select any single other school as her prohibited school. Almost all constructors choose necromancy as their prohibited school, since spells of all other schools are required for the creation of all typical constructs. Those who don't choose necromancy as their restricted school often have foul ambitions involving the creation of smoking dead and other undead semiconstructs.

Familiar: A constructor may build a clockwork familiar (see page 47).

MECH JOCKEY

A mech jockey pilots mechs. The mech jockey embodies technical inclination combined with lightning reflexes, extraordinary spatial abilities, an emotional sensitivity to machines, and an unflinching belief that a mech can do anything a human can.

While the earliest mechs were piloted by the technically minded people who built them, it soon became clear that technical talent and piloting ability are two separate things. The mechs now select mech jockeys based on piloting skill, not technical aptitude. Low-level mech jockeys merely understand the controls of a mech, while high-level mech jockeys can make their mechs do things the builders never thought possible.

In the lands of Highpoint, mech jockeys are the new wave of heroes. Their skills protect and shepherd their peoples. The ace pilots of the lightweight fighters speed their mechs across the landscape, sparring with monsters and repelling raiders. The more



cautious pilots of the massive city-mechs stride mightily above the ground, plotting their steps with expert precision so as to avoid disaster.

Adventures: Mech jockeys adventure because it's the only way they can get behind the controls of a mech. Most of them are in love with mechs from the moment they set sight on one. On top of that, mech jockeys get a thrill from the rush of piloting and love excitement, danger, battle, and loud noises. The transition from there to active adventuring isn't very far. Mech jockey adventures involve ferrying cargo, passengers, or even contraband; scouting out new locations for settlements or mines; patrolling safe zones; defending city-mechs against invading mechs; and going head to head with lunar dragons and other huge monsters.

Characteristics: The mech jockey is like the quintessential fighter pilot: cocky, self-assured, and good at what he does. Mech jockeys have a specific ability which has never before been recognized as useful. In the past, they may have become chariot drivers in the military, or simply raced buggies with the lads back in the village. Now their piloting talent finally has a productive, respectable outlet, and they're very proud of that.

Mech jockeys are always amateur technicians, and some start out as coglayers before multiclassing into piloting. Unlike coglayers, however, their technical abilities aren't directed at building new kinds of machines. Rather, they are most interested in "souping up" their "legs." They focus on customizing their mechs and jerry-rigging repairs.

Alignment: Mech jockeys can be of any alignment. A chaotic mech jockey sets out to acquire his own mech (whether legally or not), while a lawful mech jockey joins the military in order to be assigned to a mech.

Religion: Mech jockeys are not as atheistic as some of the other newly appearing classes, but their faith is still solidly planted on the side of machinery, not gods. They may retain some residual worship of the divine, but most espouse a belief in Dotrak.

Background: Mech jockeys love speed, thrills, and excitement. They were interested

in mechs and steam technology from an early age, but rather than learn how the mechs worked, they just wanted to make them go, go, go! They hail from cultures where mechs are common, or at least familiar: usually one of the mechdoms, or Duerok. Mech jockeys from the underdeep are unheard of.

Races: Although dwarves and gnomes are most common among the technical professions, mech jockeys are far more likely to be human. Humans love the thrill of piloting. Whenever you see a mech doing something extraordinary — dancing, fighting "unarmed" with its elbows and knees, moving faster than even the builder thought possible — it is almost guaranteed to be a crazed human mech jockey behind the controls. Mech jockeys of other races do exist, of course, but they're neither as crazy nor

as common. Many dwarven mechs are still piloted by coglayers.

Other Classes: Mech jockeys get along well with the wild, roughneck classes: barbarians, bards, rogues, and most fighters. The more conservative classes consider them a little too much to handle, including coglayers, who appreciate the mech jockey's love of their creations but really can't quite connect with them. Sorcerers and wizards often feel a sense of rivalry with mech jockeys, as they embody the steam technology that is rapidly challenging the predominance of magic. Clerics and paladins disdain them for their lack of faith, and monks consider them undisciplined and rowdy (except for the mech devils, whose own brand of monasticism intersects perfectly with that of a mech jockeys).

Game Rule Information

Mech jockeys have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Dexterity is by far the most important ability for mech jockeys. It helps them control their craft with precision and skill. Intelligence is useful for understanding the engineering that powers the mechs.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d6

CLASS SKILLS

The mech jockey's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Jump (Str), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), Mech Pilot (Dex), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the mech jockey.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Mech jockeys are proficient with all simple weapons, plus the rapier, short sword, all crossbows, and the steam gun. They are proficient with light and medium armor, including

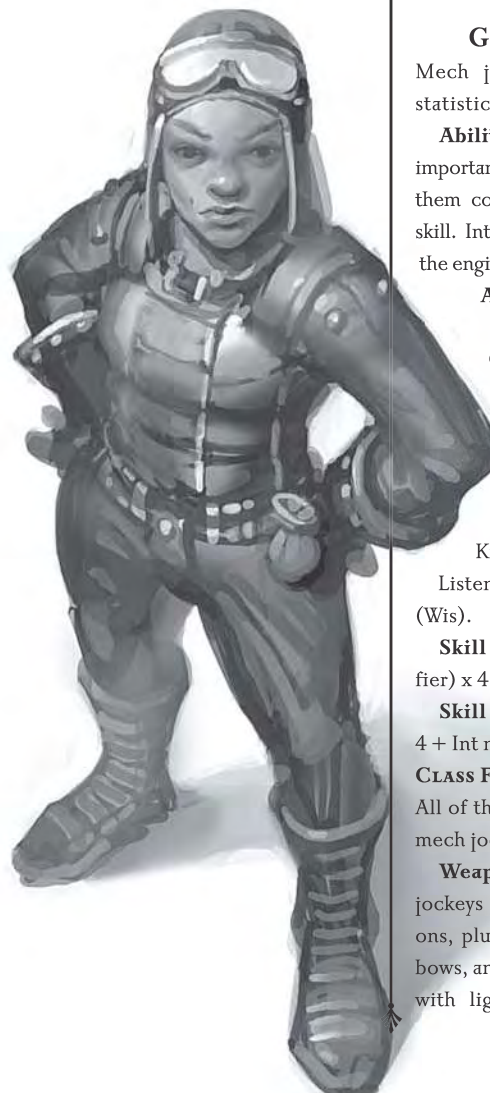




TABLE I-2: THE MECH JOCKEY

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	MECH ATTACK BONUS	F	ORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WIL L SAVE	SPECIAL
1	+0	+1	+0	+2	+0		Extraordinary Pilot, Mech Fingers – Warrior Instinct, Hand Speed
2	+1	+2	+0	+3	+0		Bonus Feat, Patchwork Repairs
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	+1	P	ush the Envelope 1/day
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	+1		Bonus Feat
5	+3	+5	+1	+4	+1		Roll with the Punches – 1 increment
6	+4	+6/+1	+2	+5	+2	P	ush the Envelope 2/day
7	+5	+7/+2	+2	+5	+2		Bonus Feat, Mech Fingers – Skill Transfer
8	+6/+1	+8/+3	+2	+6	+2		—
9	+6/+1	+9/+4	+3	+6	+3	P	ush the Envelope 3/day
10	+7/+2	+10/+5	+3	+7	+3		Bonus Feat
11	+8/+3	+11/+6/+1	+3	+7	+3		Roll with the Punches – 2 increments
12	+9/+4	+12/+7/+2	+4	+8	+4	P	ush the Envelope (Extreme Redlining) 4/day
13	+9/+4	+13/+8/+3	+4	+8	+4		Bonus Feat
14	+10/+5	+14/+9/+4	+4	+9	+4		—
15	+11/+6/+1	+15/+10/+5	+5	+9	+5	P	ush the Envelope (Extreme Redlining) 5/day
16	+12/+7/+2	+16/+11/+6/+1	+5	+10	+5		Bonus Feat
17	+12/+7/+2	+17/+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5		—
18	+13/+8/+3	+18/+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+6	P	ush the Envelope (No Overheating) 6/day
19	+14/+9/+4	+19/+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+6		Bonus Feat
20	+15/+10/+5	+20/+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+6		Roll with the Punches – 3 increments

pilot's armor and gearmail, but not shields.

Mech jockeys are automatically proficient with all mech weapons. They are the only class to gain full mech weapon proficiency as part of the class package.

Extraordinary Pilot (Ex): Mech jockeys add their class level as a bonus to checks in the Mech Pilot skill.

Hand Speed: A mech jockey is a highly skilled warrior who is most effective in a mech. Many of the talents that make him a skilled mech pilot — hand speed, quick reflexes, excellent hand-eye coordination — are also extremely useful in normal hand-to-hand combat. The mech jockey receives the feats Quick Draw and Weapon Finesse for free at first level, even if he does not meet the prerequisites. These reflect the ways his natural abilities can be used outside the mech.

Mech Fingers: Mech jockeys eventually learn to feel a mech as if it were an extension of their own self. Their strong spatial perception abilities make them acutely aware of the mech's dimensions. In effect, their fingers become the mech's fingers.

Warrior Instinct (Ex): At 1st level a mech jockey gains bonuses to attack while in personal combat and while using a mech. His attack bonus is divided into “Base” and “Mech” because he gets a higher bonus when attacking with a mech. This higher bonus applies to any attack he makes while acting as pilot or gunner on a mech.

Skill Transfer (Ex): At 7th level, a mech jockey is so skilled at fighting with his mech that his personal combat abilities carry over to the mech. With this ability, a mech jockey who possesses the following feats may use them with the mech and its weapons: Dodge, Expertise, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Trip, Power Attack, and Whirlwind Attack. (The following feats already apply to combat in a mech, even without the skill transfer ability: Improved Critical (on any mech weapon), Improved Initiative, and Improved Sunder. Shot on the Run and Spring Attack can be used without the skill transfer ability provided the mech jockey has the necessary prerequisites and the Mechwalker feat. The various two-weapon fighting feats do not

apply to mechs, and their abilities are subsumed by the new Mechidextrous feat.)

Patchwork Repairs (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, a mech jockey can perform patchwork repairs once per day to get his mech back on its feet quickly. Making patchwork repairs takes a full round action (and in a large mech, additional time may be required to move to the damaged area). Patchwork repairs fix the effects of one critical hit, but do not increase the mech's hit points. The repairs last for 1d6 hours plus one hour per two mech jockey class levels; after that, the critical damage recurs. For example, a steam-powered mech that suffers gyroscope damage must normally make a Reflex save (DC 16) with every move or fall over, and it suffers a –4 penalty to trip checks. A 4th-level mech jockey could temporarily fix the gyroscope so the effects disappear, but they reappear after 1d6+2 hours.

Push the Envelope (Ex): Mech jockeys have an uncanny ability to judge the limits of their mechs. They can redline a steam engine, push its boiler to the blasting point, yet judge the pressure just right so they max out performance without causing permanent damage.

A mech jockey can push the envelope a number of times per day as indicated on Table 1-2. When pushing the envelope, the mech jockey's mech gains a temporary +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls, +2 to all saving throws, and +10 ft. to its movement speed. The mech jockey can keep his mech redlined for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the mech jockey's Int modifier. At the end of the redline duration, the mech is overheated for 1d4 rounds. An overheated mech suffers a –2 penalty to attack and damage rolls.

A mech jockey who controls a specific function on a larger mech (for example, the gunner) gains the benefits of redlining only for the specific function he controls (generally one weapon).

At 12th level, the mech jockey can push the envelope to an extreme redline point. From now on, his bonuses for pushing the envelope are doubled: +4 to attack and damage rolls, +4 to the mech's saves, and +20 ft. to the mech's movement speed. The modifiers for an overheated mech are unchanged.



At 18th level, the mech jockey can continue to push the envelope to an extreme redline point, and the mech no longer overheats when the redlining is over.

Pushing the envelope is a free action that can occur at any point in a round, usually at the beginning of a mech jockey's turn. It is acceptable to declare that the pilot begins pushing the envelope after an attack or effect hits that forces a save.

Roll with the Punches (Ex):

A mech jockey learns to move his mech with the momentum of incoming blows, reducing the likelihood of critical hits. At 5th level, a mech jockey piloting a mech of average maneuverability or better treats critical thresholds as one increment less dangerous. Yellow critical hits are treated as green, orange critical hits are treated as yellow, and red critical hits are treated as orange. This means he rolls on the lower threshold column to determine the effects of critical hits.

At 11th level, a mech jockey treats critical hits as two increments less dangerous. Yellow and orange critical hits use the green column, while red critical hits use the yellow column.

At 20th level, a mech jockey treats critical hits as three increments less dangerous. All critical hits use the green column, regardless of threshold.

Bonus Feat: At each of the indicated levels the mech jockey may take one of the following feats for free, provided the feat's prerequisites are met: Dodge, Expertise, Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus (any mech weapon), Greater Weapon Specialization (any mech weapon), Improved Critical (any mech weapon), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip, Mech Dancer, Mech Fu, Mechidextrous, Mechwalker, Power Attack, Shot on the Run, Speed Freak, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (any mech weapon), or Weapon Specializa-



tion (any mech weapon). A mech jockey who takes Weapon Specialization, Greater Weapon Specialization, or Greater Weapon Focus counts his mech jockey levels as fighter levels for purposes of meeting the feat prerequisites.

STALKER (VARIANT ROGUE)

Stalkers are rogues who specialize in infiltrating and destroying mechs. Although their abilities are generally similar to traditional rogues, their training departs in a few important ways. They study steam engine technology and mech piloting extensively, and the focus of their rogue skills is on infiltration and concealment at the expense of certain other areas. For game purposes, they are considered a different class than the traditional rogue.

Stalkers are described in more detail on page 179. They are not a formal organization, simply a type of rogue with specialized interests.

Game Rule Information

Stalkers are identical to normal rogues with the following modifications.

CLASS SKILLS

The stalker's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (any) (Int), Craft(mechcraft) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge(steam engine) (Int), Listen (Wis), Mech Pilot (Dex), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha), and Use Rope (Dex).

The key differences between these skills and those of a rogue are as follows:

New Skills: Stalkers have access to these new skills: Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Mech Pilot (Dex).

Lost Skills: These traditional rogue skills are not class skills for a stalker: Appraise (Int), Forgery (Int), Perform (Cha), Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (8 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All class features are identical to those of a rogue except as described here.

Special Abilities: On achieving 10th level and every three levels thereafter (13th, 16th, and 19th), a stalker gains a special ability. At 10th level the stalker must take the *contortionist* ability. At 13th level the stalker must take the *that piece is important* ability. At future levels he may choose from the usual options.

Contortionist (Ex): A stalker with this ability can contort her body into a bewildering variety of shapes. She can dislocate joints at will, contract her body into unnaturally



small shapes, and fit through incredibly tiny spaces. She receives a +5 competence bonus to Escape Artist checks. This stacks with the Agile feat. Stalkers use this skill to squeeze into the tiniest openings on a mech, often finding entry through narrow air vents and seemingly impassible exhaust pipes.

That Piece Is Important (Ex): A stalker with this ability can assess weak points in a mech's engines with expert ability. After extensive study of the mech's engine rooms, she can identify a single piece that, if destroyed, will bring the entire mech to a grinding halt.

Using this ability requires studying the mech's engines for at least one full hour on a small mech, and as long as several months on the endless gear forests of a city-mech. After the period of study, the stalker can make a Disable Device skill check. The stalker cannot take 10 or take 20 on this roll. The time required and the DC depends on the mech's size as follows:

Size S	Study Time	Disable Device DC
Large	1 hour	16
Huge	2 hours	18
Gargantuan	4 hours	20
Colossal	8 hours	22
Colossal II	2 days	24
Colossal III	5 days	26
Colossal IV	2 weeks	28
Colossal V	3 weeks	30
City-mech A	1 month	32
City-mech B	2 months	34
City-mech C	3 months	36
City-mech D	4 months	38
City-mech E	5 months	40
City-mech F	6 months	42

If successful, she brings the entire mech to a grinding halt. Within 2d6 minutes of her sabotage, every single system connected to the mech's central engines has failed, from the legs to the arms to the water supplies to any weapons connected to the main engines. The mech loses no hit points but must be repaired as if its hit points had been reduced by 15%. Repairs take an unusually long time because the mech's coglayers must locate the specific part damaged by the stalker. Before repairs can begin, the mech crew

must spend at least half as much time finding the damaged piece as the stalker spent identifying it.

If the check fails, the stalker can continue searching for another week, then make another check. After each failed attempt the stalker must pass a Bluff check of the same DC as the Disable Device check or have her activities in the engine rooms detected (probably by investigating coglayers). This routine of a new check each week can continue until the stalker gives up or is detected.

This ability is far more subtle than simply bashing in an important gear. It's sabotage in the most inconspicuous possible manner. The stalker might remove a single bolt, cut a single wire, or file the edges of a gear by a single millimeter. This ability sums up the very motto of the stalker: cause maximum damage with minimum visibility.

Necromantic and animated mechs are not affected by this ability.

Favored Class: Regardless of race, any rogue may multiclass as a stalker as if stalker were a favored class, and vice versa.

STEAMBORG

The steamborgs are a profession unlike anything the world has seen before. They are human, dwarf, and gnome engineers who have taken steam engine technology to a dangerous new level. Rather than experiment in building enormous mechanized walkers, they took the next logical step: They turned *themselves* into mechanized walkers. They are, in essence, self-constructed cyborgs built from steam engine technology.

The rise of steam engine technology, coupled with the nihilism of a world in tatters, led to the creation of steamborgs. The early impetus was artificial limbs. A peg-legged dwarven engineer named Darius had long experimented with a variety of articulated legs, both magical and mundane. As steam engine technology improved he applied it to his prosthetics, with surprising results. He was able to produce an artificial leg that worked *better* than his normal leg. Not only

was it faster and stronger, it was modular and easily repairable.

From Darius' experiments formed a coterie of obsessive dwarven engineers. It wasn't long before they dispensed entirely with the pretense of helping the crippled. Soon they were voluntarily performing surgery on one another, replacing natural limbs and organs with steamborg parts. In time, they were more steam engine than dwarf, and thus were born the steamborgs.

Adventures: Steamborgs adventure because it provides a source of funds for their experiments and a chance to test their latest accouterments. Some are also motivated to adventure because they have no homes and nowhere else to go. Low-level steamborgs may still have a place in their society, but as they advance and become progressively less human (or dwarven or gnomish, as the case may be), they invariably become outcasts. Some are treated as deranged eccentrics — useful allies, but certainly not someone to leave unattended with your children — while others are deemed a bad influence and chased out of town.

Characteristics: Steamborgs acquire power through the addition of steam engine technology to their own bodies and their improved proficiency in using it. Over time they become more and more adept at operating steampunk equipment. Not only can they use the powers built into their artificial body parts, they can surpass the limitations of humanity, mixing the best aspects of machine and mortal. Their ability to operate technology is similar to that of gearwrights, but their talent with technology is focused more on applying it in creative ways than inventing new techniques.

Alignment: Steamborgs tend toward neutrality and chaos. Becoming a steamborg requires overstepping cultural boundaries common to almost all societies. Little discipline is involved; rather, it entails comfort with risk and, in a world where steamborgs are still extremely rare, a great degree of daring the unknown.

Religion: Steamborgs have no respect for the old gods. Where are they now that the world is falling apart? For a steamborg, power



comes from the steam technology that infuses his being, not through worship of absent gods. Steamborgs worship only technology and the power it can bring them. They exhibit any religious leanings at all, it is toward the quasigod Dotrak, the "great engine."

Background: Steamborgs are born tinkers. Those who had normal professions before the catastrophe were often blacksmiths, metal workers, and other craftsmen. Many were known for their fabulous hand-crafted devices, such as complex clocks and self-loading crossbows. After the catastrophe, they were drawn to the developing field of steam engine technology. Without exception, a steam borg has been involved in the construction of at least one mech. Some have worked on more than one, and many became technicians or coglayers.

Just what spurs the leap from coglayer to steamborg is a matter of debate and often varies by individual. Some saw mechs as the wrong direction for steam engine technology, believing instead that personal power was more important. Others have no objections to mechs but pursue steamborg technology for self-defense. Still others always aspired to personal power but lacked the requisite talent to become fighters or wizards.

Races: High-level steamborgs are universally dwarven, for it was the dwarves who developed the class in the first place. Mid-level steamborgs may be dwarves or gnomes. Beginning characters tend to be dwarves or gnomes, as they are the most advanced in steam engine technology, but human steamborgs are also known, since humans are ambitious, innovative, and willing to experiment for personal gain.

Other Classes: No one doesn't have a strong opinion about steamborgs. In general, most other classes find steamborgs disturbing, to say the least. They are most accepted among gnomes and dwarves, but even then are seen as freaks. Among druids, rangers, bards, and monks, as well as most elves, they are viewed as twisted, depraved mockeries of nature. The only exception is the drow, whose own magical adamantine limbs lend them to accept steamborgs more

readily. Some wizards, with their own ambitions and willingness to make sacrifices for personal improvement, sympathize with the steamborgs' motivations. Fighters, barbarians, and some rogues (as well as most orcs) respect the improvements that come with steamborg parts, even if they see the process as unnatural. Coglayers sympathize with the reverence for technology but still see steamborgs as freaks. Clerics and paladins disdain the steamborg's abandonment of religion.

Game Rule Information

Steamborgs have the following game statistics

Abilities: Constitution is the defining trait of a steamborg. He gains power by pushing his body to its absolute limits. At the upper levels of advancement, the body is



almost completely replaced by steam engine technology, and only through sheer physical vitality are the body's basic systems able to sustain themselves.

Intelligence and Charisma are also important to a steamborg. With Intelligence, he comprehends the technology that he will build into his body, expressed in his acquisition of skills. With Charisma, he retains his essential humanity as his body becomes more and more metal.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d8

CLASS SKILLS

The steamborg's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (mechanical) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Heal (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), and Profession (engineer).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level:

4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the steamborg.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency:

Steamborgs spend little time learning about weapons. They devote their energy to other things. As a result, they are proficient only with simple weapons and the following exotic weapons (which they learn about in their engineering studies): buzzaxe, buzzsaw, chattersword, flame nozzle, lobster claw, steambreather, and steam gun. Their armor proficiency is limited to light and medium armors, and shields (except the tower shield).

A steamborg is always considered proficient with any weapon he has built using his steam powers.

Steam Engine (Ex): A steamborg becomes a steamborg when someone implants a steam engine into his body. All 1st-level steamborgs are the recent recipients of steam engine implants. The steam engine is usually implanted into the chest cavity but can be anywhere: inside the thigh, in a metal sheath in the small of the back, even on the crown of the head. The steam



TABLE I-3: THE STEAMBORG

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	ORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL	STEAM POWERS
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Steam Engine	—
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Artificial Part +1	—
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Lose Self	—
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Artificial Part +2	0+Int
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Metal Skin	0+Int
6	+4	+5	+2	+5	Artificial Part +3	1+Int
7	+5	+5	+2	+5	—	1+Int
8	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Artificial Part +4	1+Int
9	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Steel Skeleton	2+Int
10	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Artificial Part +5	2+Int
11	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	—	2+Int
12	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Artificial Part +6	3+Int
13	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	—	3+Int
14	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	Artificial Part +7	3+Int
15	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	—	4+Int
16	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Artificial Part +8	4+Int
17	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	—	4+Int
18	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Artificial Part +9	5+Int
19	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Ageless	5+Int
20	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Artificial Part +10	5+Int

engine is a fist-sized engine that powers all the steamborg's future equipment.

The steam engine is protected from attack but is still quite obvious. Gauges and pipes are visible on the surface. A smokestack spews forth gusts of black exhaust. This gives a -4 penalty to all Hide checks. Steamborgs can disable the exhaust function for up to 5 minutes in order to hide, but after 5 minutes they *must* emit the exhaust or they begin to suffocate.

The steam engine is protected from exposure to the elements — except for complete submersion. If completely submerged for more than 30 minutes, it ceases to function. All special abilities associated with the steam engine cease and the engine itself must be repaired as if it had lost 20% of its hit points (a minor repair, based on a cost of 100 gp; see the Craft (mechcraft) skill, page 40). Note that artificial limbs are disabled when the steam engine stops functioning, meaning a steamborg with two artificial arms cannot repair itself!

The engine draws moisture from the steamborg's body. All steamborgs must drink three times as much water as a normal

person. The extra water goes to the steam engine. The steamborg's physical body does not need any more water; thus, dehydration only sets in if the steamborg gets less than a normal person's water requirement in a day. However, if the steam engine doesn't get its full share of the water, it starts to malfunction. If it gets only half its normal water requirements, the steamborg's engine-related functions drop by half; if it only gets a third of its normal requirements, the engine-related functions drop by two thirds; and so on. This exact details are up to the DM to adjudicate. Maybe it means the devices work in the morning but not the evening ... or maybe they work sporadically for 10 minutes out of every 20. It's up to you.

Artificial Part (Ex): Once the steamborg becomes acclimated to the use of its steam engine, it's time to start replacing body parts with steam-driven equipment. The steamborg can replace any one body part *except* its head. The exact part isn't important, although it should somehow relate to the effect it has. For example, artificial earlobes should improve hearing, not movement speed! What's most important is the associ-

ated bonus. The associated bonus can be used to improve ability scores, attacks, movement, and other physical attributes, as follows:

FUNCTION	CHANGE	BONUS EQV.
Str	+1	+1
Dex	+1	+1
Attack bonus (ranged and melee)	+1	+1
Damage (any attack that uses Str)	+1	+1
Natural armor	+1	+1
Fortitude saves	+1	+1
Reflex saves	+1	+1
Movement speed (max of double)	+5 ft.	+1
Natural weapon or unarmed damage	Next higher die (1d4 to 1d6 to 1d8, etc.)	+1
Hit dice	+1	+2
Attacks (max of two extra)	1 extra attack at lowest attack modifier	+3

For example, a 2nd-level steamborg can use the +1 bonus from its artificial part to improve any function with a bonus equivalent of +1. At 4th level, the steamborg can add another replacement part, or improve the functioning of the current one, as long as the total bonus is +2 or less. Thus, he can improve two functions with +1 bonus equivalents, or make one change of a +2 bonus equivalent. At 6th level, the steamborg can again add another part or improve the functioning of an existing one, as long as the total bonus equivalent is +3 or less. And so on.

All of these bonuses are tied to the steamborg's steam engine. If it ceases functioning, the steamborg immediately loses all associated bonuses. Additionally, the artificial parts stop working. For example, an artificial arm freezes up or becomes limp. Don't get an artificial heart — if your steam engine cuts off, you'll die!

This ability has an important restriction. The steamborg's body can sustain a limited amount of stress. If too many artificial parts are added, or they are too powerful, the physiological functions of his mortal body are overwhelmed.

The steamborg may never have a cumulative bonus from artificial parts that exceeds twice his Constitution modifier. For example, imagine a 13th-level steamborg had a Constitution of 17 (+3 bonus). Upon achieving level 14, the steamborg would have



to maintain the current artificial part bonus of +6, because his body simply can't handle any more. If his Constitution is raised to 18, he immediately gains the additional artificial part bonus due to him for being 14th level, bringing the total to +7.

One final consideration: The steamborg's artificial parts must come from somewhere. The steamborg can either build them or buy them. In general, a steamborg acquires new abilities from leveling up at no cost and can install the artificial parts successfully without difficulty. But altering an existing part's ability (i.e., changing an artificial part bonus from a previous level) costs 1,000 gp per bonus point changed.

Improved Technology Skills (Ex): As the steamborg gains experience with artificial parts, he understands steam engine technology better and better. The steamborg's total artificial part bonus equivalents are added to all skill checks for Craft (mechcraft), Disable Device, and Knowledge (steam engines).

Built-in Weaponry (Ex): A steamborg with an artificial arm can wield it as a club. As long as his arm functions, he is never considered unarmed, and causes 1d6 damage with his arm attack. Additionally, artificial arms may be constructed with built-in weapons, as long as the price of the weapon is paid. A steamborg thus equipped can never be disarmed.

Rust Vulnerability (Ex): With each artificial part bonus the steamborg acquires, his body becomes progressively more metallic. He becomes vulnerable to rust monster attacks, the spell *rusting grasp*, and similar effects. If subjected to such attacks, he may make a Fort save to resist, even if the spell or effect does not normally allow it. This represents the chance that the attack targets what is left of his flesh-and-blood body. The DC is determined normally (10 + spell level + ability modifier for spells; 10 + 1/2 creature's HD + relevant ability modifier for creature attacks), and the steamborg uses his Fort modifier combined with a negative penalty equal to his artificial part bonus. For example, a 6th-level steamborg has a +5 Fort save and a +2 artificial part bonus, resulting in a net (5 – 2 =) +3 modifier. If the Fort save

fails, he is affected as if he were a ferrous creature (e.g., he takes 3d6 damage from a *rusting grasp* spell).

Metal Skin (Ex): At 5th level, the steamborg is able to embed metal plates into his skin. These give him a +2 natural armor bonus to AC. This bonus stacks with other types of armor, as it increases the total thickness of armor covering the steamborg's body.

The materials for the implantation cost 2,000 gp, and the procedure requires a successful Craft (mechcraft) check (DC 25). The steamborg can perform this operation on himself or have someone else do it. Failure means the operation failed but can be retried at additional time and expense. The operation takes one full day and requires two weeks of convalescent time.

Lose Self (Ex): As the steamborg's body becomes more and more metallic, he risks losing his own identity. Some high-level steamborgs are really nothing but mobile calculating machines, lacking any personality whatsoever.

Starting at 3rd level, the steamborg must make a Charisma check each morning. The DC is equal to 10 plus his accumulated artificial part bonuses. For example, the check at 3rd level is DC 11; at 15th level, it's DC 17. If the check is successful, the steamborg suffers no ill effects.

If the check is failed, the steamborg loses its self identity for the day. A successful check the following morning restores its personality, but for the remainder of the day of the failed check, the steamborg's alignment becomes true neutral. It thinks like a machine. Human emotions are irrelevant to its calculations. It is bland and boring to be around. Loyalty and friendship are evaluated only in terms of their immediate utility. Other human conditions are affected as well. For example, the steamborg may retain a sense of humor derived from analyzing humor patterns but lack any real comedic sense.

Until it recovers, a steamborg that has lost its self suffers an inherent –4 penalty to all Charisma-based skill checks. Failing this check several times in a row fulfills one of the requirements of the Assimilated prestige class, in which the steamborg's body is perma-

nently implanted into a mech (see page 27).

The DM may substitute other robotic tendencies in place of the tendency toward true neutral. The steamborg could become overly logical or extremely repetitive. It could "cross its wires" and begin behaving in a seemingly insane manner, or some aspect of its personality could simply shut down. The exact effects are up to the DM. They should be grounded in the nature of the ongoing campaign, and be sufficient to disrupt the steamborg's interactions with other sentient creatures without negatively affecting its playability.

Steel Skeleton (Ex): At 9th level, the steamborg can replace his skeleton with a metal substitute. This steel skeleton is stronger and more durable than a mortal skeleton. It grants a +2 bonus to Constitution and Fort save (not inclusive of any bonuses due to the improved Constitution). This bonus to Fort save is not included in the save progression in Table 1-3.

The materials for the operation cost 5,000 gp and the operation itself requires a successful Craft (mechcraft) check (DC 30). The steamborg cannot perform this operation on himself. Failure means the operation failed but can be retried at additional time and expense. The operation takes five full days and requires four weeks of convalescent time.

Ageless (Ex): At 19th level, a steamborg is more machine than man. His body has been so thoroughly reconstructed that aging is no longer a factor; old parts can simply be repaired or replaced. For all practical purposes, the steamborg no longer ages, although he must have access to materials and tools to maintain this ageless state.

Steam Powers (Ex): The steamborg can imbue his artificial limbs with steam powers. These powers require the steamborg's steam engine to be fully functional, as they are hard-wired into the mechanics of the limbs. A steamborg gains steam powers according to his level and Intelligence modifier, as shown in Table 1-3.

Each power is associated with one artificial part. Once a power is chosen, it may only be changed if the artificial part is changed. The ability to execute the power is a physical part of the steamborg's body, hard-wired



TABLE I-4: THE ANKLEBITER

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL
1	+1	+1	+3	+0	Mech Rider, Tools
2	+2	+1	+4	+0	Connections I, Rapid Boarder +1
3	+3	+2	+4	+1	Bloody Invader, Connections II
4	+4	+2	+5	+1	Connections III, Rapid Boarder +2
5	+5	+3	+5	+1	Trample Evasion
6	+6	+3	+6	+2	Rapid Boarder +3
7	+7	+4	+6	+2	Bonus Feat
8	+8	+4	+7	+2	Rapid Boarder +4
9	+9	+5	+7	+3	Bonus Feat
10	+10	+5	+8	+3	Rapid Boarder +5

into the cogs and gears of its artificial parts.

Steam powers are described in more detail on page 53.

NEW PRESTIGE CLASSES

ANKLEBITER

Not everyone sees the mechs as salvation. To countless raiders and bandits, they are simply scrap metal waiting to be harvested and sold. Dwarven religious sects devoted to earth deities consider mechs heretical for the way they have led the dwarves out of the earth. Burrowing races not threatened by the lunar rain see mechs as an infringement on their territory.

The anklebiter is a warrior who specializes in foot combat against mechs. Anklebiters charge valiantly into trampling range of a mech, then use their climbing and jumping skills to board it. From there, they engage in its brutal hand-to-hand combat as they chop their way to the pilot's seat. A skilled anklebiter can take down a mech without damaging it one bit.

Becoming an anklebiter is not particularly difficult. Although training or mentoring makes the process much easier, no formal associations are devoted to the profession.

Instead, the techniques are passed down from one generation to the next among bandit tribes, raiders, and those who defend against mechs. Even warriors with no specialized training can learn the skills of the anklebiter with sufficient in-fantry-versus-mech combat experience.

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an anklebiter, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Skills: Balance 5 ranks, Climb 5 ranks, Jump 5 ranks

Reflex save: +4

Base Attack Bonus: +3

CLASS SKILLS

The anklebiter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Jump (Str), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Listen (Wis), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points

at Each Level: 4

+ Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the anklebiter prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency:

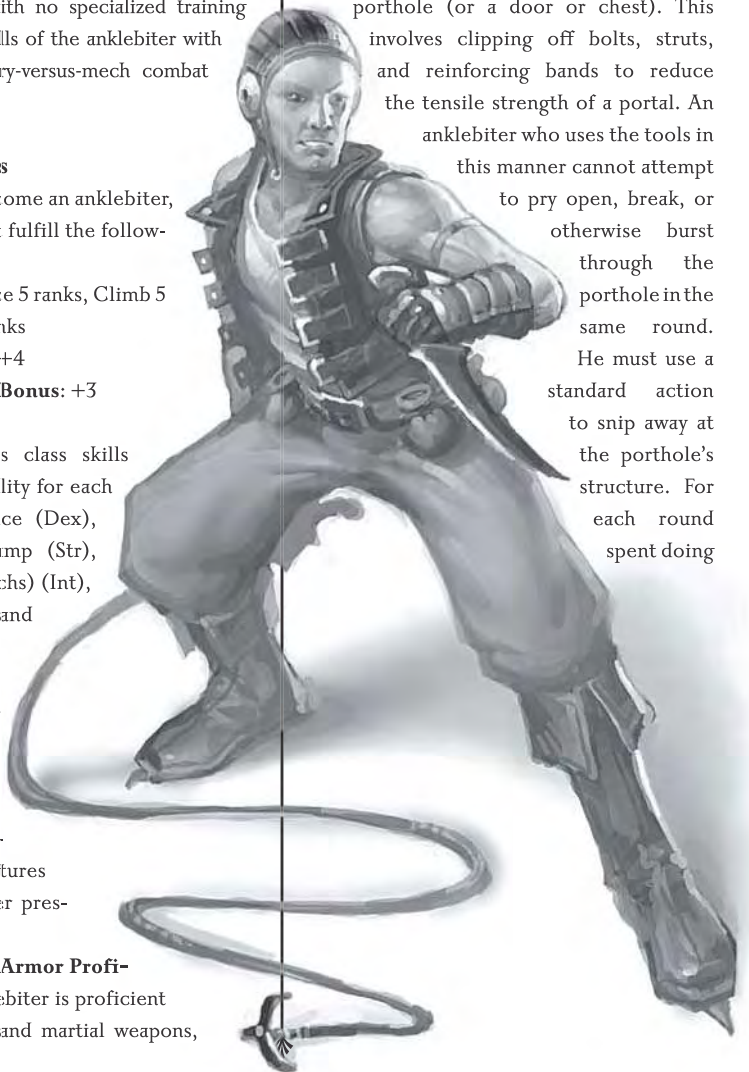
An anklebiter is proficient with all simple and martial weapons,

the net and whip, and with all armor and shields (except the tower shield).

Mech Rider: A 1st-level anklebiter automatically receives the Mech Rider feat even if he does not meet the prerequisites.

Tools: Anklebiters carry special tools designed to open mech portholes. Consisting of an assortment of crowbars, levers, and bolt cutters, these tools are constructed of the strongest steel and crafted by the best blacksmiths. These masterwork tools grant two benefits. First, they add a bonus to attempts to pry open doors, chests, and mech portholes. This is similar to a crowbar, but the bonus is +4 due to the masterwork nature of the tools.

Second, they can be used in a methodical manner to ease the difficulty in opening a porthole (or a door or chest). This involves clipping off bolts, struts, and reinforcing bands to reduce the tensile strength of a portal. An anklebiter who uses the tools in this manner cannot attempt to pry open, break, or otherwise burst through the porthole in the same round. He must use a standard action to snip away at the porthole's structure. For each round spent doing





this, the break DC of the porthole is reduced by 1, to a maximum reduction of 5 points. Hanging on to a mech to work in this way may require a Balance check, per the usual rules. At any point the anklebiter can stop working and make an attempt to break open the porthole. If he fails, he may use the tools again (if he hasn't reached the maximum reduction yet) and then make another try at the reduced DC.

For example, a normal mech porthole has a break DC of 28. An anklebiter with his tools and an 18 Strength receives a +8 modifier to this check. That means he still has to roll a natural 20. He climbs onto the mech and spends five rounds clipping at the porthole, reducing the DC to 23. He can now break open the porthole on a roll of 15 or better.

Connections (Ex): An anklebiter seeks out those who can supply him with the right tools to take down mechs. At 2nd level, he has the connections to buy up to 1d4 pressure bombs each day. At 3rd level, he has the connections to buy up to 1d4 magnet bombs each week. At 4th level, he has the connections to buy up to 1d4 rust bombs each month.

Rapid Boarder (Ex): The anklebiter develops a technique for grabbing mechs as they pass near. He receives a bonus to Climb checks to climb a mech's legs, ranged touch attacks to hook a mech with a grappling hook, and Jump checks to grab hold of a passing mech. The bonus is +1 at 2nd level and rises thereafter as shown on the anklebiter class table.

Bloody Invader (Ex): By 3rd level, the anklebiter has learned the benefits of rapid boarding. Less time spent hanging off the mech means less time being shot at. The anklebiter can now exert all of his energy to try to break open a mech porthole immediately, even going so far as to hurt himself in

the process if need be.

Before making an attempt to break open a mech portal, the anklebiter declares he'll attempt a bloody invasion. As a free action, he then makes a Fort save against DC 10. If he succeeds, he manages to push himself past the normal limits of his body, hurting himself in the process. For each point by which the save exceeds 10, he adds +1 to his Strength check to break open the portal but takes 1 point of nonlethal damage. For example, if his Fort save result were 14, he'd add 4 to his Strength check and take 4 points



of nonlethal damage. This maneuver may be attempted as often as the anklebiter wishes, up to once per round.

This ability can also be used against normal doors and chests.

Trample Evasion (Ex): An anklebiter of 5th level or higher takes only half damage if he fails his Reflex save against a

mech trample.

Bonus Feat: At the indicated levels, the anklebiter gains a bonus feat selected from the list of fighter bonus feats. He must still meet all normal prerequisites.

ASSIMILATED

Some mech jockeys become so devoted to their mechs that they literally join with them. These are the assimilated.

They are similar to steamborgs in that they replace their natural body parts with artificial components. Unlike steamborgs, however, their reconstructed bodies don't mimic the functions of their original parts. Instead, their metal bodies are hardwired into a mech. Eventually an assimilated is little more than a torso embedded in a metal throne, its nerve endings directly wired into its steel "legs."

Only a handful of assimilated are known to exist. They are condemned as insane by everyone, including even steamborgs. Why would anyone choose to weld his body into a mech?

To the assimilated, everyone else is insane. They know life in a way the rest of humanity will never grasp. An assimilated perceives the world as if his mech were an extension of his own body. He feels pain when it is wounded, feels the wind on its skin when it runs, and feels the rush of adrenaline when its pistons are pumping full bore. The

assimilated are literally living mechs.

Hit Die: d4

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become assimilated, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria. The criteria are quite rigid. Usually the only paths to the assimilated are via the steamborg class, or by a multiclassed steamborg/



mech jockey progression.

Alignment: Not lawful

Constitution: 18+. Only hardy characters can survive the process of assimilation.

Skills: Craft (mechcraft) 10 ranks, Knowledge (mechs) 15 ranks, Knowledge (steam engines) 15 ranks, Mech Pilot 15 ranks

Feats: Mech Dancer, Mechidextrous, Mechwalker

Lost Self: The character must have lost all sense of his humanity. This criteria is fulfilled when a steamborg of 3rd level or higher fails its daily Charisma check five times in a row. Generally, a lost self can happen only to steamborgs who have become too much like machines. Alternatively, the DM may rule it is also possible through magic, deep personal tragedy, or other circumstances, but they must be extreme. In essence, the character must retain almost no vestige of his human thought processes; he must think like a machine.

Assistance: The process of becoming assimilated requires extensive construction, including modification of the recipient mech and the character's artificial parts. This cannot be done alone. The character must have at least one coglayer or steamborg of 10th level or higher assist him in his endeavor. It is very difficult to hire help for this job, however, as most consider the assimilated to be insane. Even for a steamborg, the assimilated are a little extreme. Thus, the character must have friends or allies willing to help him through the process.

Mech: The character must possess a mech that he will become assimilated with.

Mobility: Although it is not a requirement, it is recommended that the character have limited steam power abilities, at least enough to create clockwork puppets who can do his bidding. By the time his transition to assimilated is through, the character will be immobilized in the cockpit of his mech.

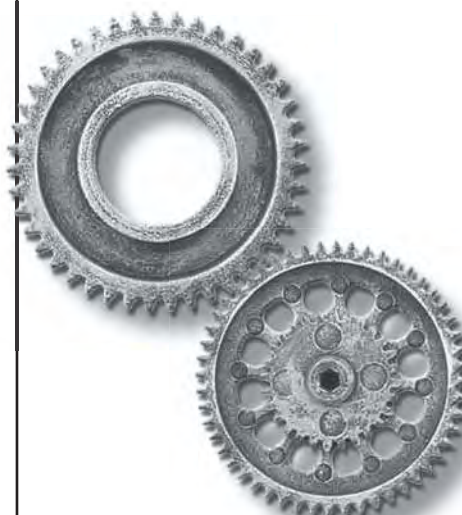
CLASS SKILLS

The assimilated's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), Mech Pilot (Dex), and Spot (Wis).

TABLE 1-5: THE ASSIMILATED

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	MECH ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL	MOBILITY
1	-2	+2	+0	+0	+0	Impossible Pilot, Mech Fu	—
2	-4	+4	-1	-1	+1	Wired	Paraplegic
3	*	+6/+1	-1	-2	+2	Feat	Quadriplegic
4	*	+9/+4	-2	-4	+3	Feat, Perfect Knowledge	—
5	*	+15/+10/+5	-2	-6	+4	Assimilated, Feat	Immobile

*INCAPABLE OF PHYSICAL MOVEMENT.



Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the assimilated prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The character gains no additional weapon or armor proficiencies but automatically becomes proficient with any weapons ever mounted on his mech.

Attack Bonus: The assimilated actually lose physical ability as they advance in level. They become sedentary and immobile. Their base attack bonus declines as they advance, until they are immobilized and rendered incapable of physical motion. At the same time, their mech piloting skills improve dramatically, as reflected in their mech attack bonus and other abilities.

Impossible Pilot (Ex): An assimilated moves his mech as an extension of his own body. His precise, delicate movements seem impossible to normal pilots. An assimilated adds twice his assimilated class levels to Mech

Pilot skill checks.

Mech Fu: An assimilated pilot automatically gains the Mech Fu feat if he does not have it already.

Mobility: The assimilated voluntarily severs his own nerve endings in order to connect them to his mech. As the assimilation process continues he becomes more and more embedded in the mech. Eventually an assimilated is completely ensconced in metal, unable to move except through control of the mech. What few bodily functions remain are handled by specially constructed machines also built into the mech.

Mobility is affected at various levels as follows:

Paraplegic: At 2nd level, the assimilated's legs are physically locked into his mech. He may still move his upper body and hands but has no mobility from the waist down. He can detach himself from the mech in order to move about in a wheelchair or other device (such as an iron jacket; see page 59). Once an assimilated has reached this stage, he cannot take additional ranks in skills that are affected by his limited mobility.

Quadriplegic: At 3rd level, the assimilated is permanently installed into his mech. This begins a substantial improvement in his attack bonus while piloting the mech. In exchange, he is completely immobilized from the neck down. He may not be removed from his wired position.

Immobile: At 5th level, the assimilated is completely immobile. Even his eyes and mouth cannot move under his control. His brain is wired into the mech and its sensors are his sensors.

Wired (Ex): At 2nd level, the assimilated is physically wired into his mech. He can



now communicate with his mech via thought alone. He need not move or speak. Unless the mech has sufficient optical interface, he still must use his eyes to pilot it.

Feat: At each level indicated, the assimilated receives one feat from the following list that he does not already have. He must meet the usual prerequisites: Gearhead, Natural Pilot, Speed Freak.

Perfect Knowledge (Ex): At 4th level, the assimilated has fully integrated his nervous system with the hull of his mech. At all times, he has perfect knowledge of the mech's physical condition. He receives direct feedback from any sensory devices built into the mech (such as optical orbs, described on

page 60). He immediately feels any damage to the mech or its engine. In effect, he has the same sensory perception of the mech that normal people do of their bodies.

A secondary benefit of this knowledge is that the assimilated always knows the exact limits of his engine. He may *push the envelope* (as the mech jockey ability) five times per day. This stacks with uses of that ability gained from the mech jockey class.

Assimilated (Ex): At 5th level the character is fully assimilated. No physical or psychic distinction exists between him and the mech. They have truly become one. The character's soul pervades the entirety of the mech and is subject to death effects, necromantic effects, and other such attacks aimed at the mech. The assimilated mech is subject to psionic attack and will register via *detect thoughts* and other such spells. He is effectively a living construct.

What remains of the mech jockey's flesh-and-blood body is so thoroughly dissected by steam engine apparatus that it cannot be detached without destroying it — but even this would not cause the character's death. His hit points are merged with the mech's and they are considered one pool. Killing the character's body removes his hit points from the pool but does not eliminate his consciousness from the mechanical decision-making sentience now governing the mech.

Other Classes: The path toward assimilation is not to be taken lightly. Once a character has become assimilated, he may take levels in other classes or prestige classes only

insofar as he can physically achieve the class requirements. This requires some discretion on the part of the DM. In general, if the assimilated cannot physically perform the core abilities of the class, he cannot advance in that class. For example, a quadriplegic assimilated cannot fight in hand-to-hand combat, so he cannot advance as a fighter. In general, the only other classes available to assimilated are mech jockey, coglayer, and steamborg. Optionally, some spellcasting classes are available provided the character is limited to spells with no somatic components (or has the Still Spell feat) and doesn't need to flip through a spell book physically.

GEARWRIGHT

Gearwrights are the most knowledgeable of all steam engineers. As members of the Gearwrights Guild, they have access to knowledge that dates back to the first Age of Walkers. The knowledge, training, materials, and resources offered by the Guild are superior to anything else in the known world. Any coglayer would leap at a chance to join — but membership is offered only to the best of the best.

For more information on the Gearwrights Guild, see page 177.

Hit Die: d4

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a gearwright, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Race: Dwarf or gnome. Humans have been accepted on a few rare occasions, but they must be exceptionally skilled (all numerical prerequisites listed below must be exceeded by at least 20%). No elves, half-elves, half-orcs, or halflings have ever been admitted to the Guild.

Alignment: Neutral

Abilities: Dexterity 16+, Intelligence 8+

Skills: Craft (mechcraft) 10 ranks, Knowledge (mechs) 10 ranks, Knowledge (steam engines) 10 ranks, Mech Pilot 10 ranks

Membership fee: Membership dues of 500 gp per year, paid upon admission

Sponsorship: The applicant must be sponsored by an existing gearwright.



TABLE I-6: THE GEARWRIGHT

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL	STEAM POWERS	RANK
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Machine Empathy	2+Int	Apprentice
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Mech Weapon Proficiency	3+Int	—
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Craft Mech, Integrated Parts	4+Int	—
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	—	5+Int	Journeyman
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Mech Weapon Proficiency	6+Int	—
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Integrated Parts	7+Int	—
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Research	8+Int	Gearwright
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Mech Weapon Proficiency	9+Int	—
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Integrated Parts	10+Int	—
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Take 30	11+Int	Junior Officer
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	Mech Weapon Proficiency	12+Int	—
12	+6	+4	+4	+8	Integrated Parts	13+Int	Senior Officer
13	+6	+4	+4	+8	—	14+Int	Master Gearwright

Loyalty: The applicant must swear loyalty to the Guild above all other institutions and loyalties, including family, friends, nation, city-mech or mechmod, and religion. This loyalty includes a pledge of asceticism in the name of knowledge: The gearwright must devote all his efforts to expanding the realm of knowledge.

CLASS SKILLS

The gearwright's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Craft (blacksmithing) (Int), Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), Mech Pilot (Dex), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the gearwright.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Gearwrights gain no new weapon proficiencies except with mech weapons. At each indicated level, the gearwright may become proficient with one new mech weapon.

Steam Powers (Ex): As with coglayers, gearwrights receive steam powers. The Int bonus to steam powers is not stacked with any Int bonuses from prior classes; e.g., a 10th-level coglayer who becomes a 1st-level

gearwright receives 10+2+Int steam powers, not 10+2+Int+Int.

Integrated Parts (Ex): At 3rd level and every 3 levels thereafter, a gearwright gains the ability to integrate two steam powers, as the coglayer ability of the same name.

Rank: A gearwright's rank within the guild determines his access to the Master Repository and the knowledge taught him by the senior members of the guild.

Moving from one rank to the next requires more than just accumulating XP. The character must actually be promoted by a senior gearwright. The promotion to journeyman is easy and assured. Promotion to the gearwright title is generally assured and takes place only two times a year in special ceremonies. Upon becoming a gearwright, the character chooses a specialization (which confers a certain title): academic knowledge (repository), mechanical engineering (maintenor), or research (cogulor).

Promotion to officer status depends on available openings and may take months or years, even after the character has accumulated the necessary XP — or, in the cases of unpopular gearwrights or those who have offended existing officers, it may never happen at all. Making the rank of a senior officer is even more difficult, as fewer positions are available and less turnover occurs. Once a character becomes an officer, he becomes known not as a gearwright but as his specialized status. e.g., a Junior Repos-

itor). The guild has a total of 10 Senior Officers and 20 Junior Officers of each specialization.

The Master Gearwrights never number more than three, one for each specialization, and promotion to that status requires the assent of all three current Master Gearwrights when one of them has decided to retire, as well as a majority vote of all Senior Officers. Since retirement of a Master Gearwright happens once every 300 years or so, only the most dedicated of gearwrights are ever even considered for this position.

Machine Empathy (Ex): As with coglayers, gearwrights add their class levels as a bonus to all checks in Craft (mechcraft), Knowledge (mechs), and Knowledge (steam engines). This only applies through 6th level. Upon achieving 7th level and specializing, a gearwright's bonus to skill checks changes. He retains bonuses for previous class levels, but new class levels afford bonuses depending on his specialization:

Repositories receive a +2 bonus per level past 6th to checks in any Knowledge skill.

Maintenors receive a +2 bonus per level past 6th to checks in Craft (mechcraft) and Craft (engineering).

Cogulors continue to receive a +1 bonus to checks in Craft (mechcraft), Knowledge (mechs), and Knowledge (steam engines).

Craft Mech: At 3rd level the gearwright learns the Craft Powered Mech feat if he does not have it already.

Research: At 7th level, the gearwright gains limited access to the Master Repository. Any time he must make a Knowledge check, he may spend time in the library to improve his chances. For each week of research, he receives a +1 bonus to his check, to a maximum of +5.

Take 30 (Ex): Upon reaching the rank of officer, a character gains access to the Master Repository's most sacred texts. These texts are the guild's cumulative record of advanced engineering techniques; they contain every significant development for several thousand years. An individual researcher working on his own could invent only a few of these techniques in his lifetime. High-level coglayers and gearwrights have learned perhaps a quarter or third of them. Learning them all at once from the sacred texts results in a quantum leap in



engineering a bility.

Gearwrights of levels 11, 12, and 13 can incorporate these techniques into their research. They gain the ability to take 30 (yes, 30) on any skill check relating to mechs or steam engines. This works in all respects as taking 20 except that the result is 30 and the time required is 30 times normal. These high-ranking gearwrights are notoriously slow in building their constructs, but they are capable of producing incredible feats of engineering that no other living engineer can match.

MECH DEVIL

Mech devils are the most feared of all mech pilots. Natives of the rowdy Irontooth Clans, they are the mech jockey equivalent of half monk, half barbarian. Their attacks are precise, planned, and tactical, but they strike with the fury of a raging barbarian.

The only mech devils known to exist are those within the Irontooth Clans. Other mech jockeys have tried and failed to develop similar techniques. Their methods are easily observed but difficult to learn. Many jealous outsiders attribute the skill to some sort of infernal or supernatural influence — hence the term “mech devil.”

Mech devils are not formally organized in any way. Achieving the title of mech devil (which the Irontooth have proudly claimed as a term of honor) is possible only by the general approbation of the Irontooth clansmen.

Becoming a mech devil is the secret ambition of every mech jockey. No matter how skilled they become, they are both galled and awed by the existence of “barbarians” who can put them to shame. Even though joining the Irontooth Clans to become a mech devil requires an outsider to disown all other ties, no mech jockey would fault him for it. In their heart, they all secretly wish they had the nerve to do it themselves.

Hit Die: d6

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a mech devil, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Abilities: Dexterity 18+, Intelligence 16+

Skills: Mech Pilot 13 ranks

Feats: Mech Dancer, Mech Fu, Mechidextrous, Mechwalker, Natural Pilot

Irontooth Clansman: The character must be a member of an Irontooth clan. If not already a member, he must gain admittance by challenging and defeating a renowned Irontooth mech jockey (not necessarily a mech devil) in a ritualized Irontooth joust. The clan must then decide he is worthy and offer him membership. This usually requires formally annulling allegiances to mechdoms other than the Irontooth clan.

Master: The character must apprentice



himself to an existing Irontooth mech devil. This requires covering much of the master's expenses, which are split between his apprentices. This can prove quite expensive — on the order of 2,000 gp or more per year in material costs, plus countless hours of labor for each apprentice.

Special: The tradition of mech fu grew out of the same traditions as those of the monk class. The Irontooth Clans have great respect for skilled monks and will accept them into their ranks without question. Any monk of at least 5th level is automatically accepted into the clan, regardless of mech ability. Once accepted, the monk may multiclass as a mech jockey, trained by the clan. Provided the monk meets the Dexterity and Intelligence requirements of the mech devil prestige class, and takes the Mech Dancer and Mech Fu feats as soon as possible, he will be accepted as a mech devil regardless of the other prerequisites, though he must take the rest of the feats as soon as possible.

Restrictions: The Irontooth clansmen consider the assimilated to be insane. They forsake the humanity that makes the mech devil truly great. No master will accept an assimilated as a pupil, even if he meets all other criteria of the prestige class.

CLASS SKILLS

The mech devil's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), Mech Pilot (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the mech devil.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Mech devils gain no additional weapon proficiencies.

Unarmed Damage (Ex): Mech devils are masters of mech fu. They hone their skills until they can strike “unarmed” mech attacks with deadly accuracy. The damage inflicted by a mech devil's unarmed mech attacks is



TABLE I-7: THE MECH DEVIL

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	MECH ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	UNARMED DAMAGE	SPECIAL
1	+0	+1	+0	+2	+0	+1d6	Extraordinary Pilot, Special Skill Uses, Unarmed Damage
2	+1	+2	+0	+3	+0	+1d6	Stunning Attack
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	+1	+2d6	Agile Mech +1
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	+1	+2d6	Fast Movement
5	+3	+5	+1	+4	+1	+3d6	—
6	+4	+6	+2	+5	+2	+3d6	Agile Mech +2, Improved Trip
7	+5	+7	+2	+5	+2	+4d6	Deflect Projectiles
8	+6	+8	+2	+6	+2	+4d6	Masterful Dodge
9	+6	+9	+3	+6	+3	+5d6	Agile Mech +3
10	+7	+10	+3	+7	+3	+6d6	—

increased by the amount indicated in Table 1-7. This extra damage applies only if the mech attacks with a hand holding no weapon.

A monk who becomes a mech devil can use her *flurry of blows* to make unarmed attacks with a mech, using her flurry of blows attack bonus instead of her mech attack bonus at no additional penalty. A normal monk without this prestige class cannot use *flurry of blows* while piloting a mech.

Special Skill Uses: Mech devils may use the following skill synergies to aid their mechs.

Balance: For every full 4 ranks in Balance, the mech devil receives a +2 bonus to checks to resist enemy trip attempts.

Bluff: Mech devils may bluff with their mechs, robbing enemy mechs of their pilot's Dexterity bonus to armor class (if applicable; see the Mech Dancer feat). The check is made as usual against the opposed check of the enemy mech pilot.

Climb: When climbing in a mech, the mech devil receives a +2 synergy bonus if he has at least 4 ranks of Climb.

Escape Artist: The mech devil may use his Escape Artist skill to allow his mech to escape being trapped by hooked axes, barbed blades, and other such weapons. When made for a mech, such checks use half the mech devil's ranks, rounded down, modified by the mech's Dexterity score (not the pilot's).

Tumble: With a mech of good maneuverability or better, the mech devil may attempt to tumble his mech through opponents,

as with the regular use of the Tumble skill. The tasks and DCs for tumbling in a mech are exactly as with the skill as described in the *PHB*, except that the distance moved in a tumble is equal to one half of the mech's normal speed rather than 20 feet.

Extraordinary Pilot (Ex): Mech devils add their class level as a bonus to checks in the Mech Pilot skill.

Stunning Attack (Ex): Beginning at 2nd level, a mech devil can cause stunning damage to enemy mechs by striking them in the joints, under loose armor panels, at the crew quarters, in the pilot's cockpit, and in other vulnerable areas. This is an extraordinary ability; it's a result of the mech devil's uncanny familiarity with mechs and how they function. It is only possible when the right opportunity presents itself and the mech devil acts fast



enough to seize it.

Once per day per level in the mech devil class, the character can make an unarmed stunning attack against a mech within two size categories of his own. (Armed stunning attacks are not possible, and larger mechs generally have their vital points beyond the reach of smaller mechs.) This attack must be declared in advance as a stunning attack. An enemy mech successfully damaged must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the character's mech devil levels) or be stunned as it suffers damage to some important system (hydraulic backflow, electrical surges, etc.). Crew and passengers on the mech may function as usual, but the mech itself can't act (regardless of what the crew does) and loses any Dexterity bonuses to AC, while attackers receive a +2 bonus to attack rolls. The stunning effect lasts one round.

Agile Mech (Su): The mech devil has learned every twist and turn of his mech. It is like an extension of his own body. In his hands it moves with an agility not seen anywhere else. When piloted by the mech devil, any mech of average maneuverability or better gains a bonus to its Reflex saves equal to the mech devil's *agile mech* modifier, as per Table 1-7.

Fast Movement (Ex): At 4th level, the mech devil has an uncanny ability to always step on solid ground, plant the mech's feet at just the right lengths, and avoid obstacles. Any mech he pilots has its speed improved by 10 feet. This isn't a supernatural ability; it's the mech devil's capacity for maximizing the mech's inherent abilities. This ability stacks with the Speed Freak feat, a mech jockey's ability to push the envelope, and the fast movement trait of certain mechs.

Improved Trip: At 6th level, the mech devil gains the benefit of the Improved Trip feat when making trip attacks with his mech. He does not have to meet any prerequisites.

Deflect Projectiles: At 7th level, a mech devil gains the benefit of the Deflect Arrows feat without meeting the usual prerequisites. He may then use his mech



to counter incoming arrows, ballistae, hurled boulders, steam cannons, hells, and other shot or thrown weapons. The mech must have at least one free hand to make an attempt. (If an attempt is made with a hand that holds a weapon, the weapon is automatically damaged by the attempt.) Otherwise, the ability is in all respects like the Deflect Arrows feat. The Reflex save is made using the mech's save, not the character's, but the character may add his personal Dexterity bonus to the roll because he has the Mech Dancer feat.

Once a mech devil has the Deflect Arrows feat, he may then take Snatch Arrows as a normal feat slot (even if he lacks the other prerequisites) and use it to catch incoming projectiles.

Masterful Dodge (Ex): At 8th level, the mech devil anticipates enemy attacks and jumps out of the way just before they hit. Any mech he pilots receives a +2 dodge bonus to AC.

RIFTWALKER

Those who survived the early meteor storms did so in a variety of ways. Most sought shelter in sturdy castles, then underground once the castles were shattered. It was this stream of thought that eventually led to the creation of the mech.

Other refugees sought a different survival path. Mages with access to planar travel simply left during the lunar rain. Some teleported to the opposite side of the world, where it was still daylight. But most established beachheads on other planes. Their material strongholds blinked out of existence when the moon came up, then reappeared when the lunar rain was over. For the duration they were literally on another plane.

Riftwalkers are characters who specialize in this mode of survival. They escape the lunar rain — and other threats — not by confrontation, but by evasion. Many spellcasters are found within their ranks, but so too are rogues and monks. Rogues find riftwalker skills infinitely applicable to sneaking around. Monks with a fluid approach to combat (“The

greatest victory is the one without a fight”) find the riftwalker techniques well suited to confounding and evading opponents without ever having to confront them.

The first riftwalker of renown was Fasil of the Aurora Plains. He had already been tinkering with the concepts of the riftwalker for some time before the lunar rain began. Within a few days of the first meteor storms, he was successfully shifting his wizard's tower onto another plane whenever it was threatened by the lunar rain. This attracted many pupils, who learned from him and eventually established a small school called the School of the Aurora Walkers. But one morning Fasil's tower didn't reappear, nor did the Aurora Walkers. Those who had already left the school carried on its traditions, but the tower and those who were in it that night have never returned. It is surmised that they decided to find permanent habitation on another plane, but it is possible their high-risk nocturnal jaunts were detected by a powerful extraplanar creature that destroyed them. Only by finding the tower can the truth be determined.

Hit Die: d6

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a riftwalker, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Skills: Knowledge (the planes) 5 ranks, Search 5 ranks, Spot 5 ranks, Survival 5 ranks

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 2nd-level spells or use *ki strike* (magic)

CLASS SKILLS

The riftwalker's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Search (Wis),

Spellcraft (Int), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the riftwalker.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: As previous class. No additional proficiencies are gained.

Spells: Riftwalkers can cast spells. Their spell choices are very limited, focusing on spells designed to travel the planes or

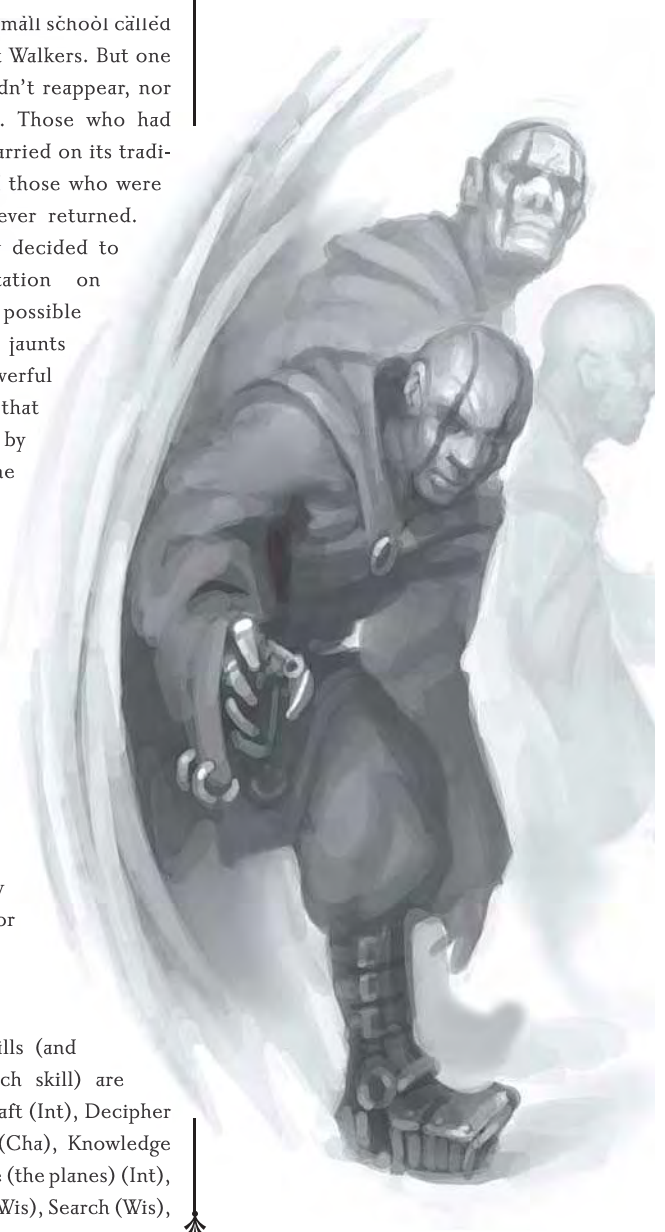


TABLE I-8: THE RIFTWALKER

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL	SPELLS PER DAY	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH	6TH	7TH	8TH
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Rift Sensitivity		1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Riftwalk		2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	+2	+1	+1	+3			2	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Riftdoor		3	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Rapid Shift		3	3	2	2	1	—	—	—
6	+4	+2	+2	+5			3	3	3	2	2	1	—	—
7	+5	+2	+2	+5	Ghostwalk		4	3	3	3	2	2	1	—
8	+6	+2	+2	+6	Evasion, +2 Dodge AC		4	4	3	3	3	2	2	1
9	+6	+3	+3	+6			4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2
10	+7	+3	+3	+7	Improved Evasion		5	4	4	4	3	3	3	2

prevent detection. The primary use for their spellcasting is not even the casting of spells, but instead the channeling of magical energy to open dimensional rifts (see the *riftwalk* ability, below). Rift walker spells are memorized from a spellbook as a wizard's are. In all other respects, they are like a wizard's spells, requiring a sufficient Intelligence score to learn. The riftwalker spell list appears on page 48.

Rift Sensitivity (Su): The riftwalker's greatest ability is a knack for finding shortcuts in the fabric of reality. The material plane is filled with minute rifts to other planes. These rifts are formed from natural stresses or ambient magical energy released after planar travel spells. The riftwalker learns to locate and exploit them.

A riftwalker has a natural sensitivity to these rifts. A riftwalker (and only a riftwalker) can search an area to attempt to discover planar rifts. Locating a rift requires a Search check against a DC based on the plane's proximity to the riftwalker. Within the context of the four groups of planes (material, transitive, inner, and outer), the DC is 20 to go one increment, 25 to go two, and 30 to go three. Traveling between planes in the same group (such as from the astral to ethereal plane) is DC 20.

For example, finding a rift to a transitive plane (ethereal, shadow, or astral) from the material plane would be DC 20, whereas finding a rift to an outer plane would be DC 30. Once the riftwalker travels to the ethereal plane, it's DC 20 again to find a rift back

to the material, or DC 25 to find a rift to the outer planes from the ethereal plane (since they're now closer).

Note that this ability doesn't let the riftwalker use the rift to travel the planes (yet). It simply lets him find them. It also doesn't let him look through the rift to see what's on the other side. Travel through such rifts is generally safe, but not always.

Searching takes one minute per five feet searched. A failure does not get a retry, and the riftwalker cannot take 10 or 20 on this roll. In general, as long as the riftwalker passes the check, it's safe to assume a rift is around. Most planes are tattered by such rifts; they're just hard to locate for normal people.

Riftwalk (Sp): At 2nd level, a riftwalker can use these rifts to transport himself between planes. Doing so requires locating the appropriate portal, then expending spell energy to shift through it. A shift of one

increment (such as material to transitive, or transitive to inner) requires two spell levels, two increments requires four spell levels, and three increments requires eight spell levels. The riftwalker must have the requisite spell energy available and sacrifice it. A spell counts toward levels as its spell level.

For example, *magic missile* is a 1st-level spell. A riftwalker with *magic missile* memorized twice (or otherwise available twice) could surrender two castings of it to riftwalk one increment. Or he could sacrifice two castings of it, plus *web* (a 2nd-level spell), to surrender four spell levels and travel two increments.

At this level, the riftwalker can transport only himself through the rifts. Riftwalking is a full-round action (one standard action to expend the spell energy, then one movement action to move through). Other creatures see the riftwalker seemingly step into an invisible door, then disappear.

Distances traveled on other planes often cover much greater distances on the material plane. A riftwalker may be able to *riftwalk* to the astral plane, travel for a few rounds on the astral plane, and then *riftwalk* back to appear miles away from his former material location.

The riftwalker has a 1% noncumulative chance per riftwalk that he will step through the rift into a dangerous area (that is, even more dangerous than the usual state of planar travel). This could include walking into a solid object, entering a lava flow, or appearing inside the acidic belly of a great astral





whale. If this occurs, the riftwalker takes 1d6 damage per increment traveled and is immediately shunted back to the material plane.

Riftdoor (Sp): At 4th level, the riftwalker can make the rifts large enough for other creatures to travel with him. By expending as much spell energy as for his initial riftwalk, the riftwalker can hold open the rift long enough for someone else of up to Medium size to pass. Expending double the spell energy lets a Large creature walk through, quadruple lets a Huge creature go through, and so on. The rift automatically closes when the riftwalker goes through, so he must be the last to exit.

For example, a riftwalker opens a rift from the material to the astral plane at a cost of two spell levels. He can hold it open for another Medium creature at a cost of two additional spell levels. By expending six more spell levels he could let three more creatures pass before he finally steps through.

Other creatures who riftwalk must use a move action to reach the portal and walk through it. The riftwalker may also use a standard action to concentrate and move the rift itself. This requires a Concentration check each round (DC 10). If successful, the rift can move by up to 20 ft. Riftwalkers can use this ability to make a rift envelop an entire house or tower, sending it to another plane.

Rapid Shift (Su): At 5th level, the time required for the riftwalker to locate a portal is reduced to one round per 5-foot square. If the Search check beats the DC by 5 or more, he finds the portal fast enough to step through immediately on the same round he searched.

Ghostwalk (Sp): A 7th-level riftwalker is so attuned to planar rifts that he can seemingly walk through solid objects. As a free action, he may make a Spot check to detect rifts within his intended path of movement. (Up until this time he has used Search; this is the first level at which he can locate rifts so casually.) The DC is the same as the Search check for rift sensitivity.

If the riftwalker passes the Spot check, he has found the necessary rifts to perform a *ghostwalk*. By expending one spell level, he can travel up to ten times his usual speed in a single movement action and step through

solid objects while doing so, as long as his movement remains within the visual range of his starting position. He can charge up to twenty times his usual speed.

Observers see him constantly flickering in and out of existence as he moves, seemingly jumping ten or twenty paces between flickers. He is stepping through one rift after another to cover ground rapidly, effectively teleporting himself multiple times over the course of a single move.

The riftwalker must physically touch at least one fourth of the distance of his travel. He can use this ability to bypass squares threatened by enemy attacks of opportunity, move through intervening opponents, step through solid objects that would block his path, and bypass obstacles (such as pits or lava flows).

Additionally, a 7th-level riftwalker has the spell level cost of the *riftwalk* and *riftdoor* abilities reduced by half. At this level the riftwalkers of legend truly escaped the lunar rain, for they were able to begin shifting entire houses or even mansions onto other planes for merely an evening.

Evasion (Su): At 8th level, the riftwalker has developed the habit of subconsciously identifying nearby rifts and using them to constantly flicker in and out of existence on the material plane. He gains the rogue's evasion ability as a supernatural ability, not as a result of terrific reflexes, but because he has a good chance of not being present at the instant of any area effect. This works even against opponents from another plane — the riftwalker can always choose another plane to retreat to.

Additionally, an 8th-level riftwalker gains a constant +2 dodge bonus to AC, to reflect the fact that he's often not present when enemy attacks come swinging through. This dodge bonus is not lost when the riftwalker is flat-footed (he's still flickering

on and off), but it is lost when he is asleep or unconscious. When fighting defensively, he can concentrate on his flickering to coordinate it with enemy attacks, raising his dodge bonus to +4. This stacks with the normal benefits of fighting defensively.

Improved Evasion (Su): At 10th level, the riftwalker gains *improved evasion*, as the rogue ability.

STEAM MAGE

Despite coglayers' native intelligence, the difficult apprenticeship required of that profession prevents them from having the time to study magic also. Some special individuals possess both intelligence and innate spellcasting abilities, however. Though their careers begin as coglayers, these individuals often take sabbaticals to explore their spellcasting abilities. As they





TABLE 1-9: THE STEAM MAGE

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL	STEAM POWERS	SPELLS
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Item Creation Feat, Steam Powers	1+Int	+1 level of existing class
					Clockwork Familiar	—	—
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Arcane Channeling (combine)	2+Int	—
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	—	2+Int	+1 level of existing class
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Arcane Channeling (power)	3+Int	—
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Item Creation Feat	3+Int	+1 level of existing class
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	—	4+Int	—
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	—	4+Int	+1 level of existing class
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	—	5+Int	—
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Item Creation Feat	5+Int	+1 level of existing class
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Arcane Channeling (synergy)	6+Int	—
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	—	6+Int	+1 level of existing class
12	+6	+4	+4	+8	—	7+Int	—
13	+6	+4	+4	+8	Item Creation Feat	7+Int	+1 level of existing class
14	+7	+4	+4	+8	—	8+Int	—
15	+7	+5	+5	+9	—	8+Int	+1 level of existing class

become skilled with these two disparate professions, they learn of uncommon but powerful synergies available for the astute pupil. Thus is born a steam mage.

Steam mages are rare individuals with an aptitude for both magic and machine. A proficient steam mage is more dangerous to constructs and mechs than a wizard or coglayer of equal level. But the requirements to gain such insight are great. What sets them apart is their ability to channel magical energy through their steam-powered creations.

It is not unheard of for a wizard to become a steam mage after spending some time as a coglayer, but most steam mages have levels as sorcerers. Steam mages are known regionally by many titles, including gear warlocks (or gearlocks), technomages, arcane coglayers, and babbage casters.

Hit Die: d4

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a steam mage, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Abilities: Intelligence 16+, Charisma 16+

Skills: Knowledge (steam engines) 8 rank

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 2nd-level arcane spells

Feats: Craft Steam Gear

CLASS SKILLS

The steam mage's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Craft (blacksmithing) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the steam mage.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Steam mages gain no additional weapon proficiencies.

Spells: As shown in Table 9, a steam mage continues to advance his spellcasting abilities as if he were advancing in his prior class, albeit at a slower rate. For example, imagine a character were a 10th-level sorcerer before becoming a steam mage. After taking five levels in the steam mage class, he would cast spells as if he were a 13th-level sorcerer.

Item Creation Feat: At 1st level and at every four levels thereafter, a steam mage receives a free item creation feat.

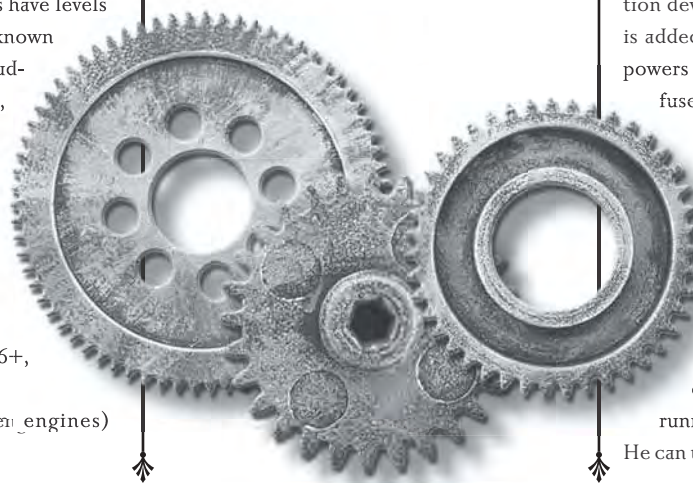
Steam Powers (Ex): Steam mages receive steam powers. These stack with those granted by prior class levels, though bonus steam powers for a high Intelligence are received only once.

Arcane Channeling (Sp): Steam mages learn to channel arcane energy to power their creations. This ability grows in power as the steam mage advances.

Combine: The most notable ability of a steam mage appears at 2nd level. The steam mage learns to combine steam powers with arcane energy. He may now mix magic items and steam power devices interchangeably. For example, he could craft a *fireball* wand with an amplifier attached.

The steam mage must meet all the normal prerequisites to craft the magic items and steam powers that make up the combination device. The cost and construction time is added together and then doubled. Steam powers used in a magic item are permanently fused with the magic item. The steam mage may substitute other steam powers for them only by destroying the magic item and starting over. Wands that are drained of charges must be recharged normally.

Power: At 4th level, the steam mage learns to power his devices using arcane energy. He may expend spell slots to keep a device running in lieu of using a steam engine. He can use one 1st-level spell slot to keep any





steam-powered device functioning for a day. Each device (regardless of the number of separate steam power components) requires a separate spell slot. Note that at this stage the steam mage can use this ability only on steam powers, not regular engines.

Synergy: At 10th level, the steam mage learns to harness magical energy to power any engine. He converts raw arcane energy into heat, light, kinetic motion, or whatever other force is needed to power the engine. The first benefit of this is that he can now craft magical engines of any kind. This is considered an act of the Craft Wondrous Item feat. The second benefit is that he can expend spell slots to give power to any engine, including those that power mechs. The amount of energy required to power an engine depends on the size of what it runs, measured in spell levels as follows:

SIZE D	DAILY SPELL LEVEL POWER REQUIREMENT*
Medium	5
Large	10
Huge	25
Gargantuan	50
Colossal	100
Colossal II	150
Colossal III	250
Colossal IV	400
Colossal V	600
City-mech A	900
City-mech B	1,250
City-mech C	1,750
City-mech D	2,500
City-mech E	3,500
City-mech F	5,000

*ZERO-LEVEL SPELLS COUNT AS 1/2 A SPELL LEVEL. ALL OTHER SPELLS COUNT AS PER THEIR LEVEL (e.g., A 2ND-LEVEL SPELL HAS A VALUE OF 2).

Powering an engine in this manner requires that the necessary spell energy be expended as spells cast directly into the engine. The “spell” cast has no name; it is simply a unique form of expending arcane energy. Each such spell takes one full-round action to cast and uses spell-level energy equal to the level of the spell (except for zero-level spells, which count as 1/2 level). At least 20% of the day’s

total spell requirements must be cast up front to start the engine, then the rest can be cast over the course of the day as the engine burns through its power. For example, a steam mage powering a Large mech could do so by casting five 2nd-level spells, which would take five full rounds, or six 1st-level spells and two 2nd-level spells, which would take eight full rounds.

This steam mage ability can be duplicated by the *spell furnace*, a magical item the steam mages themselves built (see page 143).

Clockwork Familiar: Sorcerers planning careers as steam mages usually forego taking familiars until they are able to build clockwork familiars. Steam mages are the only class besides constructors able to build clockwork familiars. Since they lack access to the College of Constructor’s facilities, however, construction is more difficult. Building a steam mage’s clockwork familiar takes one week and costs 500 gp. See page 46 for more details.

VESSEL OF DOTRAK

The pseudogod known as Dotrak, or the Great Engine, is acknowledged by many coglayers, steamborgs, and gearwrights as the creator of the universe. They don’t worship him in the traditional sense, nor does Dotrak have clerics or churches. His adherents eschew worshipping the traditional gods, however. Instead, they proclaim their belief in Dotrak, a belief that is little more than acknowledgement of a greater order they cannot fathom.

Whether Dotrak is real is a matter of great debate. Some evidence exists that Dotrak has genuine power. The enigmatic trak traks — animated piles of junk gears that wander aimlessly before dissipating — are one “proof” put forth by his adherents. Another far more powerful point of persuasion is the vessels of Dotrak, living beings spontaneously endowed with his energy. These religious messengers are known as messiahs by the followers of Dotrak, for they combine his technical aptitude with a divine spellcasting ability unknown among coglayers.

Vessels of Dotrak are not true clerics. They have very little control over their powers, even over whether they become vessels or continue to advance as them. They are endowed with divine abilities by Dotrak’s growing consciousness but are ultimately freak manifestations of still-wild energy. They cannot commune with their god as clerics can, but they clearly are being given power by someone.

Currently fewer than two dozen vessels exist in all of Highpoint. They are known far and wide among Dotrak’s followers. More than one coglayer has been motivated to start a long journey in search of their thoughts on the true word of Dotrak.

Hit Die: d6

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a vessel of Dotrak, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Race: All vessels so far have been dwarven, though it is conceivable that another race could be chosen.

Alignment: Neutral

Abilities: Intelligence 16+, Wisdom 16+

Skills: Knowledge (steam engines) 10 ranks

Worship: Must be an adherent of Dotrak

Whim of the Gods: No one chooses to be a vessel. It simply happens. And once it happens, there’s no guarantee it will continue.

If a character is eligible to become a vessel, the DM should carefully monitor his actions. If the character consistently performs deeds of outstanding engineering expertise, spreads the word about Dotrak, and embodies the (admittedly vague) principles of Dotrak, the character may be stricken with the powers of a vessel. When the character next advances a level, he has a 10% chance that he will advance to a 1st-level vessel, regardless of his desires or wishes. From then on, his will is enmeshed with that of Dotrak. Though the character receives no communication or signs from Dotrak other than the occasional spells, he is clearly being affected by his power.

Gaining one level in the vessel of Dotrak class doesn’t mean a character will advance any further. See below.



CLASS SKILLS

The vessel's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (blacksmithing) (Int), Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (any) (Int), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), Mech Pilot (Dex), Profession (engineer), Spellcraft (Int), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

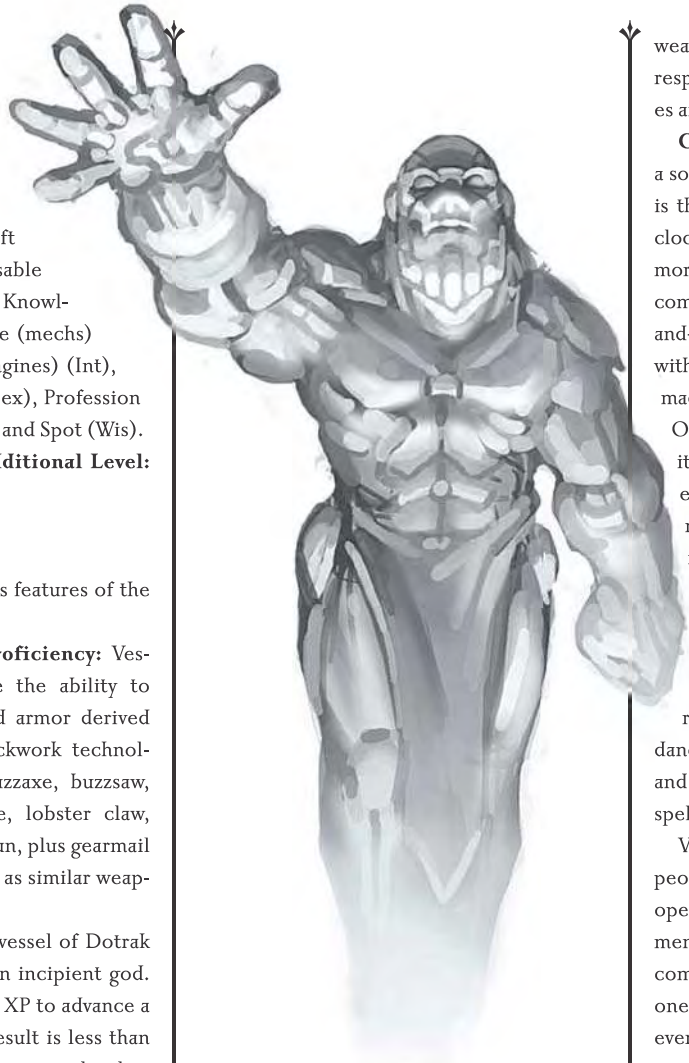
CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the vessel of Dotrak.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Vessels spontaneously acquire the ability to use all exotic weapons and armor derived from steam engine or clockwork technology. These include the buzzaxe, buzzsaw, chattersword, flame nozzle, lobster claw, steambreather, and steam gun, plus gearmail and hydraulic armor, as well as similar weapons and armor.

Level Advancement: A vessel of Dotrak advances by the whims of an incipient god. When a vessel gains enough XP to advance a new level, roll 1d6. If the result is less than or equal to the character's current level as a vessel of Dotrak, he advances a level in this class. Otherwise, he advances in his former class (or the class of his choice if he had more than one former class). From 6th level onward, a vessel is guaranteed advancement should he so desire it, but a vessel who advances to 7th level or above may no longer advance in any other class. His purpose in life is now completely intertwined with that of Dotrak.

Spells: A vessel of Dotrak casts divine spells according to Table 1-10: The Vessel of Dotrak. Vessels cast spells exactly as a cleric, including domain spells. They acquire them differently, however. A vessel does not need to meditate or pray for his spells. Instead, his spells are spontaneously given to him at a different time each day. When relevant,



roll 2d12 each day to determine the hour at which a vessel receives his spells. They simply appear in his head, there for the using.

The vessel may choose which spells he receives, with one caveat. Dotrak isn't yet a real god and can't always provide the assistance his worshippers desire. Each day, the vessel has a 10% chance of receiving a spell other than the one he wanted. If this occurs, 1d4 requested spells are substituted for randomly determined spells of the same level. Domain spells are never substituted in this way; it occurs only with other spells.

Deity, Domains, and Domain Spells: A vessel must worship Dotrak, whose domains are Engines and Knowledge. A vessel has both of these domains. Dotrak's favored

weapon is a metal quarterstaff. In all other respects, the rules governing domain choices and spells are the same as for clerics.

Clockwork Heart (Su): The first sign that a soul has been selected as a vessel of Dotrak is the transmogrification of his heart into a clockwork device. The vessel wakes up one morning to the sound of an audible ticking. It comes from his chest cavity, where his flesh-and-blood heart has somehow been replaced with a beautifully wrought mechanical pump made from gold, silver, and the finest steel.

Of course, no one can see this heart, since it is still within the vessel's body, but its existence is audible to anyone who stands nearby (Listen check, DC 10 within 5 feet, inaudible past there). The authenticity of those who would claim to be vessels can be immediately ascertained by placing an ear to their chests.

The clockwork heart is immune to rust of any kind, be it magical or mundane. It is considered a magical construct and is immune to *tick tock knock* and similar spells.

Vessels of Dotrak are among the few people on Highpoint to accept steambots openly. They see steambots as spiritual men of sorts, willing to go to great lengths to come closer to the essence of Dotrak. But no one would confuse a vessel for a steamborg, even after he acquires a metal skin or clockwork body (see below). Aside from their spellcasting abilities, the simple fact is that steambots need steam engines to power themselves, while the only visible power source for a vessel is divine favor. Besides, steambots don't have clockwork hearts.

Turn or Rebuke Constructs (Ex): At 2nd level, a vessel gains the ability to rebuke and command constructs, just as an evil cleric rebukes and commands undead. This ability only works against animated constructs that move of their own volition, such as golems and shield guardians. A vessel cannot turn a mech or similar piloted construct. Turning constructs requires a holy symbol of Dotrak: a toothed gear set with ornate scrollwork of gold and platinum. Such a symbol costs 300 gp to create.

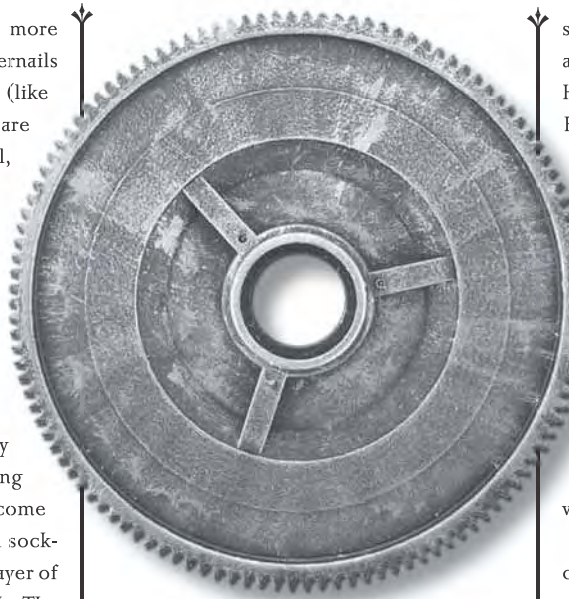
Steel Skeleton (Su): Over time, the



vessel's body becomes progressively more mechanical. At 2nd level, his fingernails and toenails become silvery and hard (like aluminum), and at 3rd level his teeth are encased in a metal sheath. At 4th level, the vessel's skeleton is transmuted to steel. This grants a +2 bonus to the vessel's Constitution. His Fort save is increased by an additional +2, stacked on top of the bonus from extra Constitution. These bonuses are not included in the saves indicated in Table I-10.

Metal Skin (Su): The vessel's body continues to transform into a living construct. At 6th level, his eyes become metal orbs, his joints turn into metal sockets, and his skin is replaced by a thin layer of steel with incredible tensile strength. The appearance of the metal skin varies; some vessels have skin like aluminum foil or gold leaf, others have skin like chainmail or even overlapping reptile-like scales. Regardless, the change grants a +2 natural bonus to AC, which stacks with other kinds of armor. The metal skin is literally the character's skin, and cannot be removed or detached without the character taking damage as if his normal skin were removed. At 8th level, the skin begins to shimmer with the radiance of silver, an indication of the vessel's growing closeness to Dotrak.

Beginning at 6th level, the character becomes partially vulnerable to *rusting grasp* and related spells, as a steamborg is. He may make a Fort save to resist such effects.



Because of his divine favor, he is less vulnerable than a steamborg; a vessel sustains half damage on a failure and no damage on a success.

Clockwork Body (Su): At 9th level, the character's transformation to a construct is complete. His entire body is an intricately wrought clockwork creation that is indistinguishable from a construct, fashioned in exquisite detail far beyond the means of any living gearwright. The character is essentially a living construct.

He is now immune to mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects) and to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromantic effects. He is not

subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. He is immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects). He is not at risk of death from massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points, he is immediately killed. Unlike a construct, he can be resurrected or raised (he still has a soul), and his body does heal damage normally. The character must still eat and drink as a normal person.

The character's body stays a silvery color, as per his metal skin change at the previous level. The character is still partially vulnerable to *rusting grasp* and related spells.

Prophet of Dotrak (Su): At 10th level, the character's clockwork body acquires a golden sheen. He gains the following abilities

Prophet's Touch: Once per day, with a single touch, the prophet can restore a damaged mechanical or clockwork device to perfect functioning. This works on magical and nonmagical devices, though the ability fixes only nonmagical mechanical problems. The device can be as large as a city-mech or as small as a pocket watch, provided it is one single interconnected engine. This ability does not clean the device, make it more efficient, affect cosmetic concerns, or improve flaws in its design, nor does it repair nonmechanical damage; it simply repairs any mechanical problems in a device's current functioning. Roughly half of all hit points lost in combat are considered mechanical problems for these purposes; the remaining nonmechanical damage must be

TABLE I-10: THE VESSEL OF DOTRAK

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL	SPELLS PER DAY	0	1	2	3	4	5
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Clockwork Heart	3	1+1	—	—	—	—	—
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Steel Skeleton (nails), Turn/Rebuke Constructs	4	2+1	—	—	—	—	—
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Steel Skeleton (teeth)	4	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Steel Skeleton (skeleton)	5	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—
5	+3	+4	+1	+4		5	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—
6	+4	+5	+2	+5	Metal Skin I	5	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—
7	+5	+5	+2	+5		6	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—
8	+6	+6	+2	+6	Metal Skin II	6	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—
9	+6	+6	+3	+6	Clockwork Body	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—
10	+7	+7	+3	+7	Prophet of Dotrak	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—

repaired through normal means.

Commune with the Great Engine: The prophets are the only mortals who claim true knowledge of Dotrak's existence. The Great Engine speaks to them, they say, and leads them to problems in the infinitely complex mechanical system that mortals know as reality. Three times per day, the prophet may meditate for 30 minutes prior to examining a mechanical device. For the next hour after such meditation, the prophet receives a +20 competence bonus to any Craft (mechcraft), Disable Device, Knowledge (mechs), Knowledge (steam engines), Profession (engineering), or other similar skill checks relating to identifying a problem, fixing a problem, or building something.

Create Trak Trak: Once per day, as a standard action, the prophet may animate any pile of gears as a trak trak (see page 202). For 3d10 minutes, the trak trak will obey the prophet's command. At the end of the duration, it collapses into the pile of junk from whence it came.

Ex-Vessels: Vessels who somehow leave the fold of Dotrak lose all spells and class abilities and can never advance as a vessel again. Their clockwork body parts convert back to simple flesh.

SKILLS

Abbreviations:

Crg: clockwork ranger

Cog: coglayer

Con: constructor

Mcj: mech jockey

Stk: stalker

Smb: steamborg

Ank: anklebiter

Asm: assimilated

Grt: gearwright

Mcd: mech devil

Rft: Riftwalker

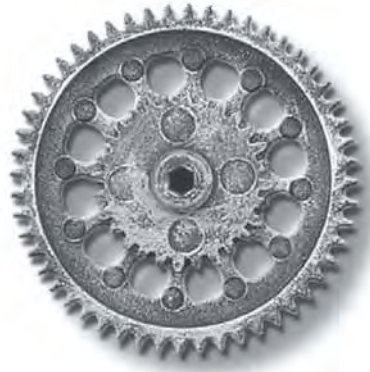
Stm: steam mage

VoD: vessel of Dotrak

C = class skill

c = cross-class skill

x = you can't buy this skill



Craft (Mechcraft) (Int; Trained Only)

The skill Craft (mechcraft) is exceedingly valuable in today's Highpoint. Mechcraft determines your success in building mechs and repairing mechs. It also covers general knowledge of crafting steampunk equipment, including general steam engine technology, but the skill is called mechcraft because mechs are its primary focus.

Check: Building mechs is covered in Chapter 2. Repairing them depends on the mech's complexity and how damaged it is, as follows:

REPAIR	DC	REPAIR MODIFIER
Minor	10	1
Major	15	2
Critical	20	3

The cost of repairs is always equal to the mech's lost hit points as a percentage of its total, multiplied by its base cost, multiplied by the repair modifier (which grows as the object takes more damage). For example, say a mech's base cost is 10,000 gp and it has 100 hp. It has suffered 30 hp damage. 30 is 30% of 100, which means it's a major repair (as described below). 30% of 10,000 gp is 3,000 gp. The repair modifier is 2, so the cost is 3,000 gp x 2 = 6,000 gp. The cost of repairing 30 hp on this mech is 6,000 gp.

Minor: The mech has suffered less than 20% of its hit points in damage. These sorts of repairs usually involve a single broken part, a minor fault, or a visible and obvious problem. They require few or no replacement parts. The modern equivalent is a broken brake light on a car. The time required is 1 minute per hit

point, or 3d6 minutes for a general effect (such as repairing a critical hit).

Major: The mech has suffered between 21% and 50% of its hit points in damage. It is substantial damage — a major component is broken or damaged; the modern equivalent is a busted radiator on a car. You can retry until you make the fix. The time required is 10 minutes per hit point, or 1d3 hours for a general effect. Obviously, you will need the replacement parts.

Critical: Damage of greater than 50% of starting hit points. The time required is 1 hour per hit point, or 1d3 days for a general effect. Most importantly, you can make only one check, which is made *after* the time and cost of the repair is expended. If the check fails, the mech cannot be repaired.

The DM makes the check. You don't know whether you've fixed the mech until you try to use it. Note that it's easier to repair a mech than to build one in the first place.

Salvaged Parts: Coglayers can use the Craft (mechcraft) skill to salvage parts from wrecked mechs for use in their steam powers. No other class can use the skill in this manner. With a successful Craft (mechcraft) check, the coglayer can find salvageable parts in a wreck.

Only steam-powered and clockwork mechs can be salvaged. The time required to conduct the salvage operation is ten minutes per payload unit of the mech when it was intact. The coglayer can make a DC 20 check for every full hour of searching, with an additional check for any "left-over" time based on PU not in increments of 6.

The gp value of the salvaged parts is equal to the margin by which the coglayer beats each skill check, multiplied by 10, limited by the wreck's maximum salvage value as described below. For example, a coglayer who rolls 24 on a check finds 40 gp worth of salvageable parts. If he made the same check result for three hours in a row, he'd find 120 gp of salvageable parts.

A coglayer can continue to make salvage checks until the full payload unit allotment of the mech has been searched (in which case he has found all he can from that mech, though another coglayer may find more), or



TABLE I-II: SKILLS

SKILL	CRG C	OG C	ON	MCJ S	TK	SMB	ANK	ASM	GRT	MCD	RFT S	TM V	OD	UNTRAINED	ABILITY
Appraise	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es	Int
Balance	c	c	c	C	C	C	C	c	c	C	c	c	c Y	es	Dex
Bluff	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c Y	es	Cha
Climb	C	c	c	C	C	C	C	c	c	C	c	c	c Y	es	Str
Concentration	c	c	C	c	c	C	c	C	c	c	C	C	C Y	es	Con
Craft (any)	c	c	C	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	C	c	c Y	es	Int
Craft (blacksmithing)	c	C	C	c	C	c	c	c	C	c	C	C	C Y	es	Int
Craft (mechcraft)	c	C	C	c	C	C	c	C	C	C	C	c	C	No	Int
Decipher Script	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	No	Int
Diplomacy	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	C	c	c Y	es	Cha
Disable Device	c	C	C	c	C	C	c	C	C	c	c	C	C	No	Int
Disguise	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es	Cha
Escape Artist	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c Y	es	Dex
Forgery	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es	Int
Gather Information	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es	Cha
Handle Animal	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	No	Cha
Heal	c	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	c	C Y	es W	is
Hide	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es	Dex
Intimidate	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es	Cha
Jump	C	c	c	C	C	C	C	c	c	C	c	c	c Y	es	Str
Knowledge (any)	c	C	C	c	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	C	C	No	Int
Knowledge (arcana)	c	C	C	c	c	c	c	c	C	c	C	C	C	No	Int
Knowledge (mechs)	c	C	C	C	C	c	C	C	C	C	c	C	C	No	Int
Knowledge (nature)	C	C	C	c	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	C	C	No	Int
Knowledge (religion)	c	C	C	c	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	C	C	No	Int
Knowledge (steam engines)	c	C	C	C	C	C	c	C	C	C	c	C	C	No	Int
Knowledge (the planes)	c	C	C	c	c	c	c	c	C	c	C	C	C	No	Int
Listen	C	C	c	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C Y	es W	is
Mech Pilot	c	C	c	C	C	c	c	C	C	C	c	c	C	No	Dex
Move Silently	C	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es	Dex
Open Lock	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	No	Dex
Perform	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es	Cha
Profession	C	c	C	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	C	C	c	No W	is
Profession (engineer)	C	c	C	c	C	C	c	c	c	c	C	C	C	No W	is
Ride	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es	Dex
Search	C	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	C	c	c Y	es	Int
Sense Motive	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c Y	es W	is
Sleight of Hand	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	No	Dex
Speak Language	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	No	None
Spellcraft	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	C	C	C	No	Int
Spot	C	c	c	C	C	c	C	C	C	C	C	C	C Y	es W	is
Survival	C	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es W	is
Swim	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es	Str
Tumble	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	No	Dex
Use Magic Device	x	x	x	x	C	x	x	x	x	x	c	x	x	No	Cha
Use Rope	C	c	c	c	C	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c Y	es	Dex



until the mech's maximum salvage value has been met (in which case no one else will find salvageable parts in the wreck).

A wreck's maximum salvage value is its original gp cost divided by 10.

Salvaged parts can be used in one of two ways:

- The coglayer can re-use the parts in his steam powers. In this case, the value of the salvaged parts can be applied to the cost of any new steam power that the coglayer builds. For example, a coglayer who gains a new steam power chooses to add a discriminator to one of his creations. A discriminator costs 350 gp. The coglayer waits until he finds a mech to salvage. From the wreck he salvages 142 gp worth of parts. He can put these toward building the discriminator, which he can now build using these parts and only 208 gp. Using salvaged parts in this manner requires one hour of labor for every 10 gp of applied cost, as the salvaged parts must be reworked into usable condition.
- The parts can be sold. Parts sold in this manner are generally useful only to other coglayers, and because they require so much labor to transform into useable mechanisms, the going price is low. Assuming a buyer can be found, salvaged parts can be sold for 1/10 of their value. For example, the above coglayer could instead sell his 142 gp worth of parts for 14 gp and 2 sp.

There is one exception to the above rule: A coglayer can automatically recover maximum salvage value from anything he himself built without making a check. The required salvage time is unchanged.

Constructs built from steam engines can also be salvaged in this manner. This includes clockwork puppets, steamborg carcasses, and most devices built from coglayer steam powers. Treat them as having PU equal to their size: 1 for Medium, 3 for Large, 5 for Huge, 10 for Gargantuan, and 16 for Colossal.

Salvaged parts have an average weight of 1 pound per 10 gp value.

Retry: For repairing mechs, this depends on the difficulty, as above. No retry is allowed for salvage attempts.

Special: Characters receive a +2 synergy bonus if they have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (steam engines).

Mechcraft is similar to engineering, and in many cases they overlap; it is essentially a specialized form of engineering. In general characters with Profession (engineering) may attempt anything covered by Craft (mechcraft) at a -4 penalty.

Handle Animal (Cha; Trained Only)

Clockwork rangers, and *only* clockwork rangers, may use Handle Animal to influence the attitude of constructs and clockwork creations, just as wild empathy influences the attitude of animals. In some cases, this is completely useless, particularly with constructs that are programmed to attack anything that comes near automatically. In other cases, it may be possible to convince a laborer construct to work for you, fool a guardian construct into thinking that you are nonthreatening, or bribe semi-intelligent constructs with high-quality metals or other gifts. Extremely skilled clockwork rangers can intuit the nature of a construct's programming from the most subtle signs to gain a sense of what actions are least likely to provoke it. A truly talented clockwork ranger has occasionally been said to have convinced a construct that he is its creator, though this talent is so rare the stories may be merely apocryphal.

For purposes of the table for influencing NPC attitude, almost all constructs are considered initially hostile or unfriendly. Some will attack even when indifferent, but all will be pacified if rendered friendly. To impersonate the construct's creator successfully, the clockwork ranger must effectively persuade a construct to be helpful (usually DC 50).

Knowledge (Int; Trained Only)

The advent of steam technology has made certain kinds of knowledge more useful than ever. Popular new areas of knowledge include:

- Mechs, which covers identifying a mech's abilities and weapons based on its silhouette, placing mech designs with the mechs that use them, and knowing how

to control a mech. While the Mech Pilot skill represents practical piloting ability, Knowledge (mechs) is academic knowledge of the piloting process and systems.

- Steam engines, which covers understanding their function, identifying their parts, and knowing how to build or destroy one.

Special: Characters checking their knowledge of mechs receive a +2 synergy bonus if they have 5 or more ranks in Craft (mechcraft).

Mech Pilot (Dex; Trained Only)

This skill lets you control mechs. You can make them go where you want them to go, fire their weapons, operate their cargo bays, and generally work with them without damaging either yourself or the mech.

Check: This skill lets you pilot a mech. Unless you have the relevant feats, you may not fire the mech's weapon and pilot it in the same round — your attention must be focused solely on one action or the other. General piloting does not require a check, but a check is necessary in unusual circumstances, such as these:

TASK	BASE DC*
Maintain balance in difficult terrain	10
Maintain balance in extremely difficult terrain	20
Deploy from a city-mech	10
Board a city-mech	15
Right an overturned mech	20
Jump V	aries
Climb V	aries**

*PLUS MODIFIERS, AS DESCRIBED IN THE RELEVANT SECTIONS.

**USE DCs FOR CLIMB SKILL +4.

Maintain balance: It is difficult for a mech to walk over rubble, rocky areas, riverbeds, and other uneven surfaces. Collisions and other circumstances may also challenge a mech to keep its balance. A check is required to keep the mech from losing its balance and falling over. Failure on this check means the mech falls over. See page 87.

Board a city-mech: City-mechs are enormous, thousand-foot-tall mechs that can host smaller mechs on their docking bays. Boarding a city-mech requires jumping or stepping onto the city-mech as it walks by. This is extremely difficult to time properly, and the consequences of failure are great: More than



one mech has been crushed by the city-mech's foot when its pilot judged improperly. This is described in more detail on page 88.

Right an overturned mech: A mech that has fallen over is not always easy to get up, especially if it's in an awkward position. This check must succeed for the mech to stand on its feet, as described on page 64.

Jump: Some mechs can jump, as described on page 88.

Climb: Some mechs can climb. Use the DCs for the Climb skill +4, as described on page 88.

Special: A pilot with the Mech Dance feat and 5 or more ranks in the Balance skill receives a +2 synergy bonus to Mech Pilot checks.

FEATS

In general, most of the normal feats presented in the *PHB* provide no benefits when a character is piloting a mech. They are the result of personal training and practice, and the kinesthetic sense resulting from this practice does not translate into piloting a mech. Extensive practice in a mech can result in new abilities, however. These are reflected with the following new feats.

One normal feat that does carry over to mech combat is Improved Initiative — a pilot with fast reaction time can utilize that in or out of a mech. Certain other feats also carry over, as described in the *skill transfer* ability entry of the mech jockey class.

Combine Spell (Metamagic)

You can cast spells that combine with the same spell cast by other casters or yourself, in order to generate greater areas of effect.

Benefit: All spellcasters involved must declare before casting that their spells are to be combined and what effect is to be achieved. If the spells are cast simultaneously (by multiple spellcasters) or in immediate succession (by one caster), one aspect of the spell's range, target, or duration doubles for each spell cast. These doublings use the tra-

ditional d20 system of incremental doubling (e.g., x2 twice is x3, not x4).

Combined ranges and durations double normally, as do targets that affect areas or numbers. In the case of "creature" targets, the spell's potential target size rises by one size increment per extra spell cast. (Normally "creature" target spells are limited to creatures no more than twice the caster's size.) For example, three *endure elements* spells cast by a Medium caster could be used to affect a Gargantuan mech.

All spellcasters involved must have the Combine Spell feat. This feat is commonly used to cast spells capable of affecting mechs. See page 143 for more details.

Craft Magical Mech (Item Creation)

You can build mechs powered by magic.

Prerequisite: Spellcaster level 9th+, Craft (mechcraft) 5 ranks

Benefit: You can design any animated or undead mech whose prerequisites you meet. The actual construction of a mech usually requires a crew and is covered in more detail on page 81.

Craft Powered Mech (Item Creation)

You can build mechs powered by steam, clockworks, or human labor.

Prerequisite: Craft (mechcraft) 10 ranks, Knowledge (mechs) 10 ranks

Benefit: You can design any steam-powered mech whose prerequisites you meet. The actual construction of a mech usually requires a crew and is covered in more detail on page 81.



Craft Steam Gear (General)

You can build steam-powered gear, such as flame nozzles, chatterswords, steam guns, hydraulic armor, and the like.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (steam engines) 5 ranks

Benefit: You can design and build steam-powered equipment. If you create a steam-powered weapon, this does not necessarily mean that you will be proficient in it. Crafting steam gear by the use of this feat takes one day for every 1,000 gp of the item's cost.

Normal: A character without this feat can use skills such as Craft (blacksmith) to construct simple pieces of steam gear (such as steam guns), but the time required is measured in silver pieces per the usual rules of Craft checks. It takes much less time to build such gear with the knowledge granted by this feat.

Gearhead (General)

You have a strong intuitive grasp of how engines work.

Prerequisite: Int 13+, ability to use steam powers

Benefit: You have the ability to use two extra steam powers.

Special: This feat may not be taken more than once.

Gearstride (General)

You can move at normal speed through gear forests without suffering any additional danger from hazards.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+ and extensive experience in gear forests (at DM's discretion)

Benefit: Your chance of encountering hazards in a gear forest is halved — 12% while walking and 25% while running or fighting. If you do encounter a hazard, you receive a +2 bonus to your Reflex saving throw to avoid it.

This feat does not grant complete immunity to the dangers of a gear forest. That is only possible after living in one for several months (see page 215).



Normal: Gear forests are normally more dangerous if you move faster than half your walking speed, or fight within them.

Mech Dancer (Mech: Irontooth)

Some Irontooth clansmen are so skilled at piloting their mechs that they can make them “dance.” Other mech jockeys acquire this skill through great talent as pilots.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Mech Pilot 10 ranks

Benefit: You are so finely attuned to your mech’s positioning that you can maneuver it as if it were an extension of your own body. You add your own Dexterity modifier to the mech’s AC, to the mech’s trip checks (in addition to your ranks in Mech Pilot or the mech’s Str or Dex bonus), to the DC for creatures to avoid being trampled by the mech, to the mech’s Rêrîëx saves, and generally to all other mech checks that are contingent on Dexterity.

Mechdancers are able literally to make their mech dance. This has no practical combat

applications but is certainly good for entertainment. The most talented Irontooth clansmen often have mech dancing competitions

Mech Fu (Mech: Irontooth)

A small but dedicated cult of Irontooth clansmen has taken mech dancing to a whole new level. They are so in tune with their mechs that they are able to fight with them as they themselves would fight in close combat — weaving, ducking, punching, and kicking as the mech design allows. Termed “mech fu,” this art of close mech combat is extremely rare but exceptionally powerful.

Prerequisites: Dex 15+, Mech Dancer, trained by Irontooth clansmen

Benefit: Once per round, you may use unarmed attacks to counter melee attacks on your mech. You must use a ready action to specify that you are countering melee attacks from a specific enemy mech. If that mech’s melee attack hits, you may make a Mech Pilot skill check using the enemy’s attack roll as the DC. If you succeed, you

deflect the enemy attack and take no damage. The enemy may take no further actions or movement after you deflect his attack. Furthermore, if you succeed by a margin of 5 or more, you manage to wound him in the process, and he suffers damage as if hit by your unarmed attack.

Once you have the Mech Fu feat, you may advance in the mech devil prestige class. See page 31 for more details.

Mech Rider (Mech: Rust Rider)

The rust riders are renowned for fighting “from the mech.” They often ride the legs of their mechs, attacking both infantry and mech targets as they pass. The most dangerous thing about many rust riders isn’t the mech itself — it’s the thirty swordsmen hanging off of it!

Prerequisites: Dex 13+. As a general rule, characters may not take this feat unless they are rust riders or have trained with the rust riders, or are anklebiters. A character who observes rust riders in action may





TABLE I-12: FEATS

FEAT P	REREQUISITE	BENEFITS
Combine Spell (Metamagic)	—	Combine spells for greater effect
Craft Magical Mech (Item Creation)	Spellcaster level 9th+, Craft (mechcraft) 5 ranks	Can design magical mechs
Craft Powered Mech (Item Creation)	Craft (mechcraft) and Knowledge (mechs) 10 ranks	Can design powered mechs
Craft Steam Gear (Item Creation)	Knowledge (steam engines) 5 ranks	Can build steam gear
Gearhead	Int 13+, use of steam powers	+2 steam powers
Gearstride	Dex 13+, experience in gear forests	Less danger from gear forests
Mech Dancer	Dex 13+, Mech Pilot 10 ranks	Add pilot's Dex bonus to mech's
Mech Fu	Dex 15+, Mech Dancer, Irontooth clansman	Counter mech melee attacks
Mech Rider	Dex 13+, train with rust riders	No Balance check when attacking from mech
Mech Weapon Proficiency	— P	roficient in all weapons on one kind of mech
Mechanized Combat Practice	Dex 13+	Mech attack bonus = BAB
Mechidextrous	Dex 15+, Mechwalker	Can attack two targets while piloting a mech, at –3 penalty
Mechwalker	Dex 13+	Move and fire in a mech
Moonwatcher W	is 13+	Can predict lunar rain patterns
Natural Pilot	—	+1 maneuverability on mechs you pilot
Seroficitacit's Changes F	ollower of Seroficitacit W	eecky Change Check
Siege Weapon Proficiency	— P	roficient with siege weapons
Speed Freak	Mech Pilot 5 ranks	+10 ft. to mech speed
Unnatural Pilot	Natural Pilot, divination spells, Dotrak follower	+4 AC, trip, etc. for 2 spell slots

attempt to teach himself this feat (provided he has a feat slot available, of course). This requires a mech to practice with and takes at least three months. For every full three months of dedicated practice, the character must make a Wisdom and Dexterity check (DC 13); if he passes both he learns the feat. For each failed check, he gains a +2 bonus to subsequent attempts.

Benefit: You do not need to make a Balance check to hold onto a moving mech, or attack (or take similar actions) while doing so. To make a ride-by attack while on a mech, you must make your attacks on the mech's initiative count, by delaying your activation or having the mech delay its activation if necessary.

You may make a ride-by attack at any point in the mech's movement. You may attack any target within your reach and may make as many attacks as you are normally permitted to do. These attacks do not provoke any attacks of opportunity beyond what's normal.

Depending on the situation, you may even be able to lift both hands off the mech to make your attack. This requires you to make the usual Balance check to keep from falling

off the mech (see page 96), but you receive a +4 bonus due to this feat.

Mech Weapon Proficiency (Mech)

You are proficient in certain mech weapons.

Benefit: Choose one type of mech of size Colossal III or smaller. You are proficient in all weapons mounted on that mech, whether "Mech" or "Siege" type. You may use them without penalty. You may also use different-sized versions of the weapons without penalty.

Normal: Without being proficient with a weapon you suffer a –4 penalty to its use.

Mechanized Combat Practice (Mech)

A fighter with decades of combat experience is practically useless in a mech, where his base attack bonus is not incorporated into the roll. With extensive training, however, he can transfer that skill to the mech.

Prerequisite: Dex 13+

Benefit: You learn to fight effectively with each mech model that you spend at least three months practicing on. You now have a mech attack bonus equal to your base

attack bonus. This includes multiple attacks if you have them. This applies only to mechs you have trained with.

Normal: Only the classes of mech jockey, assimilated, and mech devil normally have a mech attack bonus. Other classes fight at half their base attack bonus and may not use multiple attacks.

Mechidextrous (Mech)

You are able to operate both a mech's hands at once, even while you pilot the mech.

Prerequisites: Dex 15+, Mechwalker

Benefit: Even while causing a mech to move, you can also fight with it. You can use up to two of a mech's weapons each round, at the same time you are piloting it, provided the mech's construction permits as much. This includes targeting ranged weapons, which may be used to attack different targets. If you attack with two weapons in the same round, each suffers a –3 penalty to its attack roll.

Normal: Most mech pilots can barely use a single weapon while piloting a mech, much less attack with two.

Mechwalker (Mech)

You are able to maneuver a mech at the same time you use its weapons.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+

Benefit: You can attack with one of a mech's weapons in the same round that you cause the mech to move.

Normal: Except for trained mech jockeys, most civilians are able to cause a mech to move or to attack with it, but not do both at the same time.

Moonwatcher (General)

You are unnaturally sensitive to the phases of the moon.

Prerequisites: Wis 13+

Benefit: You can predict the lunar rain with some degree of accuracy. A Wisdom or Survival check (DC 10) will allow you to forecast the general severity of this evening's lunar rain in your immediate vicinity. You may forecast further ahead, but the DC rises by 2 points for every day past the first. For example, forecasting the lunar rain for three nights from now would require a check against DC 16. The same rule applies to forecasting at great distances, with the DC rising by 2 for every five miles beyond your location. For example, forecasting the lunar rain for three nights from now at a point 15 miles away would require a check against DC 20.

This feat bestows other benefits as well. You are naturally attuned to the moon's phases and always know them by heart. If you are a spellcaster, you cast *detect lunar* and similar lunar-related spells at +1 caster level.

Normal: Most people cannot predict the lunar rain until they see it coming down.

Natural Pilot (Mech)

You have an innate talent for piloting mechs. Most people with this ability were raised in families of mech jockeys, or taught to pilot mechs from an early age. A rare few have no mech experience whatsoever, yet are perfect pilots from the moment they start. The gearwrights claim these prodigies are descended from the lineage of ancient mech jockeys from the First Age of Walkers.

Benefit: Any mech you pilot has its maneuverability improved by one incre-

ment. For example, a mech with a average maneuverability has good maneuverability in your hands. This has no effect on mechs with perfect maneuverability.



Seroficitacit's Changes (General)

You have been marked by Seroficitacit, the lunar god of change.

Prerequisites: You must have declared adherence to the beliefs of Seroficitacit and instigated some sort of major change to something longstanding. Additionally, this feat is almost always found in lunar creatures, though it could theoretically appear in any worshipper of Seroficitacit, even terrestrial ones.

Benefit: You are now a living embodiment of change. Once per week, make a special Change Check. Roll 1d20, then make a Wisdom check against that result. If the check succeeds, your body morphs to anticipate future changes. One small part of your body — a finger, elbow, eye, nose — changes shape. You have a 25% chance that the change will be harmful (one eye blocked by morphed eyelid flesh), and a 25% chance it will be helpful (improved eyesight); otherwise, it is neutral. The greatest potential bonus due to such a change is a +2 bonus to an attribute (for example, improved Strength thanks to growth in the arm).

The change lasts until the next successful Wisdom check. At that point, the old change reverts to its natural state and a new one occurs.

Siege Weapon Proficiency (General)

You are proficient with siege weaponry.

Benefit: You are proficient with ballistae, catapults, javelin racks, steam cannons, and other siege weapons.

Normal: Without being proficient with a weapon you suffer a -4 penalty to its use.

Speed Freak (Mech)

Speedfreaks love to push their mechs to the limit. They have the uncanny ability to coax a little extra speed out of even the clumsiest mech.

Prerequisites: Mech Pilot 5 ranks

Benefit: Any mech you pilot moves 10 ft. faster than normal.

Unnatural Pilot (Mech)

You move mechs like no one has ever seen before. Your skill is so unnatural they say you must have made a pact with a demon.

Prerequisites: Natural Pilot, ability to cast divination spells, worshipper of Dotrak

Benefit: This bizarre talent has only manifested itself among a handful of mech jockeys, all of whom were clerics or mages in prior careers but converted to the worship of Dotrak when they became mech jockeys. By expending two levels of spell slot (which are used for channeling divinatory energy), you gain a flash of insight concerning how to pilot your mech. This grants the following bonuses:

- Your mech's maneuverability is improved by one increment for this round and the next round only. This stacks with the benefits of Natural Pilot.
- Your mech gains a +4 insight bonus to AC.
- Your mech gains a +4 insight bonus to checks to oppose enemy trip attacks (though not for making them) and any other checks or rolls to avoid tripping, falling, or losing control of your mech.

Activating this feat and expending the spell slots is a free action — you simply experience a flash of insight that is brought by Dotrak. The spell slots can be expended in any combination of levels. It takes two 1st-level spells, one 2nd-level spell, or one spell of higher than 2nd level to activate this feat.



This ability may be used as many times per day as you are willing to expend spell slots.

SPELLS

SPELL VARIANTS

Clockwork rangers and constructors both learn spells designed to affect constructs. In many cases, they create modifications of existing spells in order to affect constructs. This lets their spells affect all inhabitants of the gear forest, whether animal or construct. It affects their casting of some spells, such as *summon nature's ally* (see page 52), and gives them the ability to affect constructs with spells normally limited to animals and plants.

A clockwork ranger or constructor may cast any of the following spell variants, which are identical to the indicated spells but with a construct as the target instead of an animal or plant. In their divine form, these spells are available to clockwork rangers only. In their arcane form, they are available through the College of Constructors only (see below).

Speak with constructs (variant of

Speak with animals; affects constructs)

Clockwork messenger (variant of *animal messenger*; affects a Tiny clockwork creature)

Hold construct (variant of *hold animal*; affects constructs)

Control gears (variant of *control plants*; affects gears and metal engines)

Diminish gears (variant of *diminish plants*; can make a gear forest passable at normal speed, though no less dangerous)

Gear shape (variant of *tree shape*; subject resembles a huge gear or piston)

Gear stride (variant of *tree stride*; subject can step between gears with a range of transport of 1,500 feet)

COLLEGE OF CONSTRUCTORS

The College of Constructors is rapidly advancing the study of constructs. Its members are developing arcane magics dedicated to controlling, creating, and modifying constructs.

Membership in the College is open to any constructor, with dues of 200 gp per year. No other character class may join. Joining the College confers several advantages: spell variants, construct labs, exclusive spells, and clockwork familiars.

Spell Variants: As noted above, arcane spell variants that affect constructs instead of animals or plants are constantly being developed by the College. In their arcane form, these spells are available to members of the College only. Constructors will never share the spells with other classes. If another class is seen casting these spells, constructors will endeavor

to find and punish the "leak" in their organization. Depending on the behavior of the outsider who is casting their spells, they may also attempt to steal his spellbook in order to erase his access to the spells in question.

Construct Labs: The College maintains several labs dedicated to creating constructs. The labs are well stocked and specially designed to make construct building more efficient. Any member of the College may use the labs, though he may have to travel to the location of one and wait until space is available. Generally the labs are found on large city-mechs (including Nedderpik) or on smaller mechs operated by the College and built specifically to house the labs. They are always well guarded by golems and other constructs. Building a construct in one of the College's labs eliminates the need for a constructor to build his own lab (normally it costs 500 gp to build the lab necessary for construction of a golem). It also reduces the gp cost of the construct's material components and labor expenses by 10%.

Exclusive Spells: The College has developed a number of entirely new spells whose distribution it controls. Some are taught only to constructors who take the Spell Mastery feat so they can leave no written trace of the coveted knowledge they have learned. Non-constructor characters may not learn the arcane versions of these spells unless either taught by a constructor or by acquiring the knowledge illicitly.

In their arcane forms, the following spells are exclusive to the College of Constructors: *animate gears*, *clockwork double*, *detect clockworks*, *enginemaster's grasp*, *ironclad*, *tick tock knock*, *transpose spirit*, and *vanquish spirit*.

Clockwork Familiars

The artisans of the College of Constructors build intricately detailed clockwork creatures that are intended to serve as familiars for wizards. These are available for any constructor to use. The normal process of summoning a familiar instead animates the clockwork construction, which from then on acts as a miniature clockwork familiar. It is imbued with a life force of its own, and except for its shell of metal is exactly like a



normal familiar. It grants all the usual benefits and upon its death or dismissal has all the usual drawbacks. In addition, it has the following qualities:

Construct Immunities: As a construct, the clockwork familiar is immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromantic effects. It is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. It cannot heal on its own, but it can be repaired by its creator at a cost of 2 gp and ten minutes per hp.

Darkvision: The clockwork familiar automatically has darkvision.

Natural Armor: The clockwork familiar has an extra +2 natural armor bonus to AC, in addition to the usual bonus for familiars.

Speak with Constructs: Instead of the ability to speak with animals of its type, the clockwork familiar can speak with constructs, provided they have an Intelligence score and the ability to communicate.

Constructor School Spell List

Constructors may select any spell that wizards and sorcerers normally select, as well as the following spells. These are considered their specialized spells for the purpose of extra spell selection.

Note that the spells below fall across a variety of schools — all but necromancy, in fact. A constructor who selects necromancy as his prohibited school may use all of the spells below. Otherwise, the constructor may not select spells from the list below that are from his prohibited school.

- 1st — *construct friendship*, *detect clockworks*, *enginemaster's grasp*, *speak with constructs*
- 2nd — *clockwork messenger*, *hold construct*, *make whole*, *shield other*
- 3rd — *control gears*, *diminish gears*, *gear shape*, *tick tock knock*
- 4th — *gear stride*, *rebuild soul*, *rusting grasp*
- 5th — *animate gears*, *ironclad*, *ferrous soul*
- 6th — *animate objects*
- 7th — *soul box*, *transpose spirit*, *vanquish spirit*
- 8th — *clockwork double*
- 9th — The College of Constructors has not developed any new 9th-level spells. The spe-

cialist constructor may choose one spell of any previous level in place of this slot.

Clockwork Ranger Spell List

Clockwork rangers select their spells from this list.

- 1st — *alarm*, *animal friendship*, *construct friendship*, *delay poison*, *detect animals or plants*, *detect clockworks*, *detect snares and pits*, *enginemaster's grasp*, *magic fang*, *pass without trace*, *read magic*, *resist elements*, *speak with animals*, *speak with constructs*, *summon nature's ally I*
- 2nd — *animal messenger*, *clockwork messenger*, *cure light wounds*, *detect chaos/evil/good/law*, *hold animal*, *hold construct*, *protection from elements*, *sleep*, *snares*, *speak with plants*, *summon nature's ally II*
- 3rd — *control gears*, *control plants*, *cure moderate wounds*, *diminish gears*, *diminish plants*, *gear shape*, *greater magic fang*, *neutralize poison*, *plant growth*, *remove disease*, *summon nature's ally III*, *tree shape*
- 4th — *animate gears*, *cure serious wounds*, *freedom of movement*, *gear stride*, *nondetection*, *polymorph self*, *summon nature's ally IV*, *tree stride*, *wind wall*

Riftwalker Spell List

Riftwalkers select their spells from this list.

- 1st — *detect secret doors*, *endure elements*, *expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *floating disk*, *hold portal*
- 2nd — *arcane lock*, *knock*, *levitate*, *locate object*, *obscure object*, *resist energy*, *whispering wind*
- 3rd — *blink*, *dimensional anchor*, *dimension door*, *fly*, *gaseous form*, *nondetection*, *phantom steed*, *protection from energy*
- 4th — *detect scrying*, *L.'s sturdy cottage*, *lesser planar ally*, *locate creature*, *minor creation*, *passwall*, *plane shift*, *teleport*
- 5th — *contact other plane*, *dismissal*, *dream*, *false vision*, *lesser planar binding*, *M.'s faithful hound*, *M.'s private sanctum*, *major creation*, *R.'s telepathic bond*, *sending*, *shadow walk*, *telekinesis*
- 6th — *contingency*, *ethereal jaunt*, *greater teleport*, *phase door*, *planar ally*, *planar binding*, *teleport object*
- 7th — *banishment*, *dimensional lock*, *forcecage*

8th — *astral projection*, *etherealness*, *gate*, *greater planar ally*, *greater planar binding*, *maze*, *teleportation circle*, *temporal stasis*

NEW CLERIC DOMAIN: ENGINES

Deities: Dotrak

Granted Power: Once per day, you can heal or smite an engine (your choice). With a touch, you can heal 1d6 points of damage per caster level, or inflict the same. This power affects only constructs, mechs, and other such creatures.

Add Knowledge (steam engines) to your list of class skills.

Engine Domain Spells

- 1 *Construct friendship*
- 2 *Hold construct*
- 3 *Tick tock knock*
- 4 *Rusting grasp*
- 5 *Animate gears*
- 6 *Animate objects*
- 7 *Transpose spirit*
- 8 *Clockwork double*
- 9 May choose any one spell from the prior spell levels

NEW SPELLS

Animate Gears

Evocation

Level: Con 5, Crg 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Targets: One or more piles of scrap metal

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell turns scrap metal into animated humanoid creatures that follow your commands. The moment you finish the incantation, the targeted scrap metal rises into the air, swirls about, and forms a roughly humanoid shape. Known as an iron shambler, this “undead construct” mindlessly obeys your instructions. It can follow you, or remain in an area and attack any creature (or just a specific type of creature) entering the place.



Iron shamblers remain animated until they are destroyed. A destroyed iron shambler can't be reanimated.

Each casting of *animate gears* creates a number of HD worth of iron shamblers equal to your caster level. It takes at least 200 pounds of scrap metal to create a normal 1 HD iron shambler. The scrap metal must be loose and not be attached or connected to any larger object, since the spell cannot break strong bonds. For example, *animate gears* cannot be cast on a functioning section of a gear forest — those gears are connected to the larger engine and can't be manipulated by the spell. Alternatively, the scrap metal could already be assembled into a humanoid shape, which the iron shambler will then assume.

The iron shamblers you create remain under your control indefinitely. No matter how many times you use this spell, however, you can control only 2 HD worth of iron shamblers per caster level. If you exceed this number, all the newly created creatures and any excess from previous castings become uncontrolled.

Iron shamblers are described in more detail on page 194.

Clockwork Double

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Con 8

Components: V, S, M, F

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: 0 ft.

Effect: One clockwork double

Duration: Instantaneous

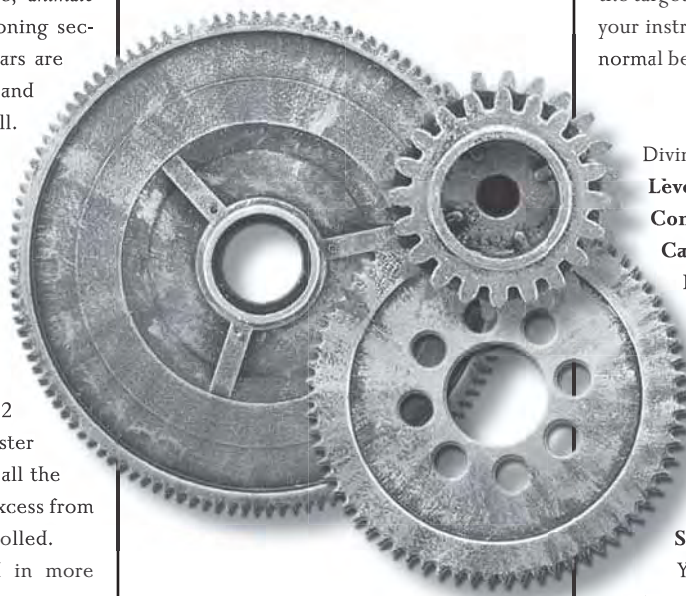
Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: No

Clockwork double functions like the necromantic spell *clone* except that it creates a mechanical clockwork double rather than a biological clone. The clockwork double is a physical duplicate except that it is constructed entirely of metal, from its skin to its eyes to its heart. Until the original creature's soul enters, it is inert and unliving. Its basic framework must be built by the caster, a process that takes 2d4 weeks. Thereafter, the spell's magic

fills in the details, which takes another 2d4 weeks, until the clockwork double is a metallic twin of the original creature.

Once the soul has occupied the clockwork double, it has the same ability scores as the original body, except that it no longer has a Con score. Its type changes to construct, and it gains all the immunities and limitations of a construct. It is not a robot, however; the construct has the same personality,



memories, skills, and levels of the original at the time the construct was built.

In all other regards, the spell is like *clone*.

Material Components: Hair, nail, scale, or the like from the original creature, various laboratory supplies (cost 1,000 gp), and the precious metals to build the construct's body (cost 5,000 gp).

Focus: Special laboratory equipment (cost 500 gp).

Construct Friendship

Enchantment (Charm)

Level: Con 1, Crg 1, Engine 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One construct

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This charm makes a construct regard you as its trusted friend and ally. It is like *charm animal*, except that it affects a creature of the construct type. Constructs immune to magic are not affected by this spell, nor are those that are piloted or otherwise not self-propelled. This includes mechs that require a pilot. Other constructs act as if their attitude is friendly. You are able to command the target as if you were its creator, provided your instructions are within the scope of its normal behavior.

Detect Clockworks

Divination

Level: Crg 1, Con 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Area: Quarter circle emanating from you to the extreme of the range

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You can detect clockwork life. Any animated clockwork creature, whether a construct or a naturally occurring creature, will be registered by this spell. Only self-animated creatures are detected; clockwork components of larger creatures are not. Casting this spell within an animated mech reveals clockwork life in all directions.

The amount of information revealed depends on how long you search a particular area:

1st Round: Presence or absence of clockwork life in that quarter.

2nd Round: Number of individuals in the area and the condition of the healthiest specimen.

3rd Round: The condition and location of each individual present. If a construct is outside your line of sight, then you discern its direction but not its exact location.

Conditions: The categories of condition are defined as with the spell *detect animals or plants*.



Note: Each round you can turn to detect things in a new area. The spell can penetrate barriers, but 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 feet of wood or dirt block it.

Earthrise

Evocation [Earth]

Level: Clr1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will half

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell uses the energy of the earth to break a lunar creature's connection to the moon. The caster utters the necessary incantations as he touches the target with a handful of fertile soil. If the target is a lunar creature, it immediately takes 1d10 points of damage +2 points per caster level (up to +10). The target must be physically touching the ground for this damage to take place; flying lunar creatures are unaffected.

If the target is an earth elemental of any kind, it is immediately healed for 1d10 points +2 points per caster level (up to +10).

Other kinds of creatures are not affected.

Material Components: A handful of fertile soil, a fragment of a lunar meteorite.

Enginemaster's Grasp

Transmutation

Level: Crg 1, Con 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Area: Metal engine components in a 40-ft.-radius spread

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: Reflex (see text)

Spell Resistance: No

Gears, cogs, sprockets, belts, chains, and even pistons reach to grab any creatures in the area, holding them fast. All metal engine parts in the area are affected. Creatures grasped are considered entangled, with these effects: -2 to attack rolls, -4 to effective Dexterity, and unable to move. An

entangled character who attempts to cast a spell must make a Concentration check (DC 15) or lose the spell. She can break free and move half her normal speed by using a full-round action to make a Strength check or an Escape Artist check (DC 20). A creature who succeeds at a Reflex saving throw is not entangled but can still move at only half speed through the area. Each round, the gears once again attempt to entangle all creatures who have avoided or escaped entanglement.

At the end of the spell, affected engine parts return to their original positions and resume their former motions. Parts bent or otherwise damaged by escaping creatures are not fixed. Because the animated engine components may be part of larger processes, this spell has unpredictable side effects. Casting this in the midst of a gear forest is quite likely to cause damage to the mech's engines — though the ever-present coglings may fix the damage before anyone notices.

Ferrous Soul

Transmutation

Level: Con 5, Clr 5, Wiz/Sor 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature and new vessel touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Ferrous soul is a voluntary form of *rebuild soul* where the caster transfers a living soul into a metal construct body. The effects are exactly as *rebuild soul* and include the same costs for the construct body. The effect is permanent, and the spell works only in one direction — it can't be cast again to return the soul to the flesh-and-blood body. That body, which now has no soul, immediately drops to -10 hit points and collapses to the floor, utterly dead.

If the subject is unwilling he receives a saving throw to resist. If he is willing the effect is automatic. This spell can be cast on oneself, if a wizard wishes to transfer his own soul to a construct.

The recipient construct of *ferrous soul* may be built as part of a larger vessel. A "ghost mech" on the endless plains called the Red Lotus was reportedly taken over against the pilot's will by a mad constructor using this spell.

Ironclad

Transmutation

Level: Crg 5, Con 5

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 10 minutes/level or until discharged

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Ironclad transforms the target into a living, breathing creature of metal. Its internal organs become clockwork apparati made of the finest platinum and gold. Its skin becomes a thick, dense armor of living iron. Its mind becomes a mechanical decision-making machine. The spell is similar to *iron body*, but it transforms the creator into a clockwork creature rather than an iron golem, and is less powerful.

A target of *ironclad* gains the following benefits:

- A natural armor bonus of +8. This stacks with any armor the target is wearing.
- Damage reduction 10/magic.
- A +4 enhancement bonus to Strength.
- Construct immunities: Immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. The creature is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage.
- Construct limitations: While under the influence of the spell, the target cannot heal, be raised, or be resurrected.
- Metallic vulnerabilities: The target is now a creature of metal. It suffers from the effects of spells such as *heat metal*, *rusting grasp*, *shocking grasp*, and *tick tock knock*. A rust monster's antenna touch



deals 4d6 damage. A crumble bug's bite deals 1d6 damage.

Once the spell has prevented a total of 10 points of damage per caster level (maximum 150 points), it is discharged.

Material component: A piece of metal from a construct.

Rebuild Soul

Transmutation

Level: Con 4,Clr 4,Wiz/Sor 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Target: Dead creature and new vessel touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

In a world of magic and metal men, why bring the dead back into bodies of flesh? *Rebuild soul* is a form of reincarnation in which the deceased soul is summoned back from the dead — into a metal body built to hold it. The soul must be willing to return or the spell fails. (But even a willing soul may fail to return if this spell is cast on Highpoint; see page 64.) Furthermore, the death must have occurred no more than one week prior to the casting of this spell. A creature that has been turned undead or killed by a death effect can't be returned to life with this spell. The usual limitations of reincarnate apply.

The metal body must be constructed of the finest steel, and in order to grant the revived soul some semblance of its former human abilities, it must be articulated and balanced far more carefully than the typical construct. It costs 20,000 gp to build, plus another 1,000 gp for each level or HD of the creature being raised. The spellcaster must place the dead body beside the metal body and cast the spell while touching them. A burst of light and a chilling sensation much like a nearby strike of lightning occur, and then the metal body rises with new life.

The deceased awakens to find himself in a new body, a body not of flesh and blood but of metal and gears. The character is now a

living construct with a soul. He has the following traits:

- He is now immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, and disease.
- Although a construct, he does have a living soul and a working mind. Unlike most constructs, he is subject to death effects and necromancy effects. He is still vulnerable to mind effects (charm, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- The construct body requires no sleep and no food. It does require a normal amount of water. It does not require fuel; magical animation provides its energy. It does not breathe.
- The character's metal body does not heal naturally. It must be repaired. Repairing one point of damage takes thirty minutes, costs 50 gp, and requires a repairman with the Craft Construct feat or at least 15 ranks in Craft (blacksmithing). Knowledge (mechs), Knowledge (steam engines), and Craft (mechcraft) are of little help in these repairs because the construct body is magically powered. The character may repair himself, provided he has the skills and the tools. Certain spells also provide healing. *Mending* heals 1 point. *Make whole* heals 2d8 points +1 point per caster level (maximum +10). *Major creation* completely heals the construct, but the hit points are temporary and vanish after 20 minutes per caster level.
- The metal construct body is vulnerable to rust attacks but receives a Fortitude save to resist them.
- The construct body is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, physical ability damage or ability drain, fatigue, or exhaustion. It is subject to mental ability damage or ability drain, and energy drain effects.
- The construct is immune to most effects that require a Fortitude save, but not necessarily all. This requires discretion on the part of the DM. Anything that would affect the character's soul or mental processes still affects him. Certain effects, such as rust effects, grant a Fortitude save to resist them.

- The construct is not at risk of death from massive damage. When the body hits 0 hp the character's soul is immediately released and the construct body dies. The character can once again be raised or resurrected, provided the proper spells are at hand.
- The construct body has darkvision to 60 feet and low-light vision.
- The metal body retains the character's Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma scores. It has new physical scores: Strength 18 and Dexterity 12. It has no Constitution score. The character no longer receives ability score adjustments every four levels, but magical effects can still adjust his abilities.
- The character retains hit dice gained from levels or race, but they are now d10 dice. The character receives exactly 5.5 hit points from each hit die.
- The character may continue to advance in level, using d10 hit dice regardless of class. Advancement in some classes may be limited due to the character's new body.
- The character retains all feats, skills, base attack bonuses, saving throws, class abilities, and racial abilities, except where the metal body may change them. His alignment is unchanged.

This spell is permanent. The recipient construct of *rebuild soul* may be built as part of a larger vessel. It is possible to bestow consciousness to a mech by building the recipient construct body into the mech, then casting this spell.

Material Component: A perfect crystal worth 500 gp, plus the metal body described above. The body takes 1 week per 10,000 gp to build.

Soul Box

Necromancy

Level: Con 7,Clr 8,Wiz/Sor 8

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature and new vessel

Duration: Instantaneous and permanent (see below)



Saving Throw: None (see text)

Spell Resistance: No

Soul box is a voluntary form of *soul bind* designed to avoid the difficulties of resurrection on Highpoint. The terrestrial gods are loath to allow reincarnation of the souls of their most faithful, for they'd rather have the souls fight their wars on the outer planes. Thus, normal death often results in the soul being pulled to the outer planes before raising is possible. *Soul box* prevents this by temporarily trapping the soul in a small charm until it can be revived or transferred to another body, perhaps even a construct or mech.

Soul box is cast in advance on a charm worth at least 5,000 gp (usually a valuable gem). The charm must be worn around the neck of the target while the spell is cast. The soul must be willing to accept temporary imprisonment, so this spell affects only willing targets. Unwilling targets are simply not affected. Charms and compulsions aren't enough to elicit cooperation; the target's true soul must be willing.

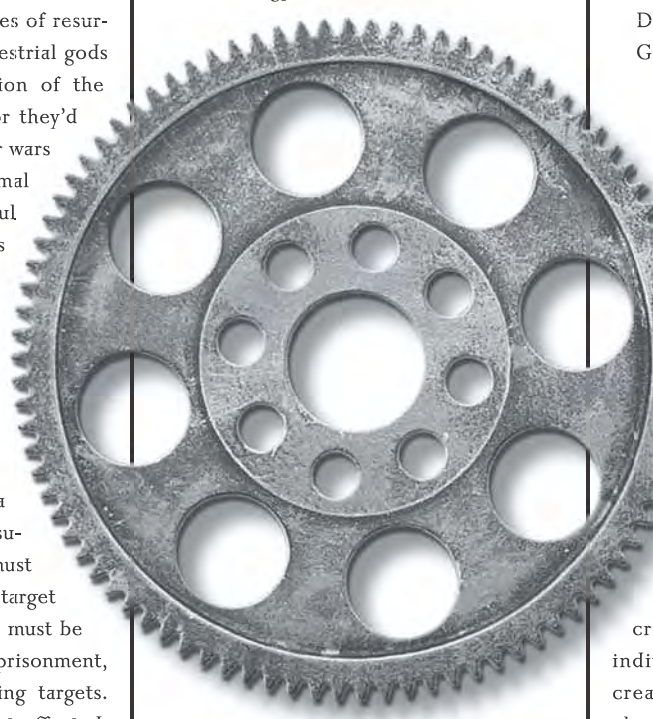
The soul remains trapped in the gem for one day per caster level. After this period, it is released and travels on to the afterlife. If the target is killed by death effects or necromancy while wearing the charm, his soul is destroyed before it reaches the charm. In that case, the charm is ineffective.

The spell effects last indefinitely until activated or until the charm is destroyed. If the target dies with the charm still around his neck, his soul is instantly captured by the charm. Unlike *soul bind*, the soul can be raised through *reincarnation*, *raise dead*, *rebuild soul*, and other such spells even while trapped in the charm. As long as the soul remains in the charm, it does not leave the material plane.

Summon Nature's Ally I–IV

When cast by a clockwork ranger, *summon nature's ally* calls only those creatures native to the gear forests, as described here. Not

all of these are animals (or even vermin), but they are all nature's allies in the gear forest ecology.



4th Level

Animated object, Large (usually an animated engine component)
Dire grease lizard
Gelatinous cube

Tick Tock Knock

Transmutation

Level: Crg 3, Con 3, Eng 3

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Nonmagical construct or engine of Large size or smaller

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will partial (see below)

Spell Resistance: No

Tick tock knock is a devious spell designed to combat clockwork creations. The spell is targeted at an individual nonmagical construct. Any creature or object with a nonmagical clockwork or steam engine component can be targeted, such as an automaton, a clockwork horror, or a clockwork puppet. Smoking dead and steamborgs are also vulnerable because of the steam engines that power them.

Although the spell is targeted at an individual creature, it actually affects the space immediately around it, in an area that moves with the creature. *Tick tock knock* disrupts the natural rhythms of space and time. All laws of physics governing mechanical motion become unpredictable. A smoothly swinging pendulum placed within the affected area would suddenly swing erratically — fast, slow, fast, fast, slow. Springs, cogs, and gears lose their natural rhythms and turn at swiftly changing rates. The spell disrupts the regular motion that a clockwork engine depends on for smooth functioning.

The effect on constructs and creatures that depend on steam engines is devastating. They are immediately stunned. This is an exception to the normal construct immunity to stunning. The stunned effect lasts for 1 round per caster level. A construct that suc-

1st Level

Clockwork puppet (warder)
Dire rat
Giant beetle, fire
Monstrous centipede, Medium
Monstrous spider, Small

2nd Level

Animated object, Small (usually an animated engine component)
Giant ant, worker
Grease lizard
Iron shambler
Monstrous centipede, Large
Monstrous spider, Medium
Trak trak

3rd Level

Animated object, Medium (usually an animated engine component)
Giant ant, solder
Giant beetle, bombardier
Giant lizard
Monstrous centipede, huge
Monstrous spider, large



ceeds in a Will save is only confused rather than stunned.

Material component: A miniature pendulum made of the finest silver (value 40 gp), which is consumed as the spell is cast.

Transpose Spirit

Abjuration

Level: Con 7

Components: S, M, V, F

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Magical construct animated by an elemental spirit

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Transpose spirit is a specialized spell developed for combat against golems. It requires a focus of a small doll made of pure elemental energy of the same sort that animates the target. For example, a clay golem is animated by a spirit from the elemental plane of earth, so the focus in attacking a clay golem is a small doll of elemental earth energy. Creating the doll costs 300 gp and requires access to the necessary materials. The doll's type must match the energy or energies that animate the golem; if the wrong kind of doll is used, the spell has no effect.

The caster must hold the focus in his hand as he casts the spell. He then targets one golem within range and points the doll at it. The spirit that animates the golem vacates it and enters the doll. The golem's body collapses, lifeless and inanimate. It may be freely attacked for the duration of the spell. When the spell ends, the spirit is expunged from the doll, and the golem is once more animated.

Transpose spirit bypasses a golem's magic immunity by specifically targeting the trapped elemental spirit rather than the golem itself. The spell does not force the spirit to do anything but instead invites it to escape its imprisonment for a short period, effectively opening a portal for it to reside in the doll. Spell resistance and magic immunity are no defense against this spell. However, the spell affects *only* constructs animated with elemental spirits.

The doll containing the spirit may be attacked. It can be damaged by weapons of +3 enchantment or better, and has AC 10 and 25 hit points. Part of the spell incantation requires the caster to promise the spirit that it will be protected, however. Golem spirits are unwilling and welcome any chance to escape their prisons, even if it is only another prison for a short while. If the caster allows someone to damage the doll while it is within his power to defend it, the spirit will immediately leave the doll and return to the golem, ending the spell prematurely.

Focus: The doll described above.

Vanquish Spirit

Abjuration

Level: Con 7

Components: S, M, V

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Touch

Target: Construct animated by a soul

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

Vanquish spirit is a specialized spell used to combat constructs animated by living souls. By such targets it is greatly feared, for it is the construct equivalent of a death effect. *Vanquish spirit* breaks the binding between a soul and its metal construct, effectively "killing" the construct and sending the soul into the afterlife.

The target must be a construct animated by a living soul. Potential targets include recipients of the *rebuild soul* and *soul box* spells, as well as the mechs of 5th-level assimilated characters. Lower-level assimilated characters still have their souls focused on their bodies, not the entirety of their mechs.

Once touched, the target receives a Will save to resist the effect. If the save fails, the tie between the soul and construct is immediately broken. The construct body falls lifeless to the floor (though it does not lose any hit points — it is simply unanimated). An assimilated mech affected by this spell grinds to a halt but can still be piloted normally if such control mechanisms exist. The soul travels to the afterlife and can return only via

spells such as *reincarnate* and *raise dead*. It is possible to bind the escaped soul back to the construct body provided the body is intact and *rebuild soul* is cast in time.

STEAM POWERS

Steam engines can do amazing things. Some can launch fireballs, an ability previously restricted to spellcasters. Others can generate force fields or shoot projectiles. Given the right parts and the right builder, a steam engine can accomplish feats previously unheard of in Highpoint.

The effects produced by an innovative steam engine are called *steam powers*. The simplest steam engines have no steam powers; they merely spin cogs, lift levers, and pump cylinders in order to make something move. More complicated steam engines combine special parts, rare chemicals, innovative designs, and ingenious building techniques to generate amazing effects. These are the steam powers.

Coglayers are always experimenting with different kinds of metals, stones, and liquids, searching for unusual properties with practical applications. Although they eschew magic in favor of scientific logic, they deem it perfectly acceptable to incorporate naturally occurring materials into their creations. Thus, it is not unusual to see a steam engine use arcane ingredients combined with nonmagical techniques to produce seemingly magical effects. The best examples are the element generators, which are steam engines capable of producing fire, water, earth, or air, due to a bit of pure elemental energy built into their systems.

A coglayer's grasp of steam powers is determined by his level and intelligence. Similar guidelines affect steamborgs and other classes. A given steam power might require sophisticated construction, elaborate piping, rare materials, and an insufferably complex design. Only characters with sufficient experience, training, and



intelligence will be able to build it.

Coglayers relentlessly pursue the perfection of their steam engines, and they are always on the lookout for new steam powers. When Gilmer Guddengut first produced electrical sparks with his steam engine (the predecessor to successful imitation of the *lightning bolt* spell), the word spread like wildfire. Coglayers from miles away paid visits to find out how he did it. In every city and on every mech, informal groups of coglayers meet routinely to discuss their research and swap inventions.

The one restriction common to all steam powers is a steam engine. All steam powers depend on a steam engine to run, and all steam engines, regardless of powers, need water to operate. Most of the time, this is not a problem. But any time characters make an extended trip into areas without renewable water sources, they'd best bring along plenty of extra water. Some steam engines can be specially adapted to function with other liquids, as described below.

USING STEAM POWERS

Accomplished coglayers and gearwrights can build devices with steam powers. Steamborgs can also do so, but only as extensions of their artificial parts.

Steam powers are not divided into levels as spells are. Rather, they are divided into parts. Each part is an engine component that can produce a specific effect. For example, one part might produce a small flame. The flame alone isn't an effective weapon, though. It needs another part — a pump — to send it billowing after an enemy. The addition of yet another part — an amplifier — makes it even more dangerous. Finally, a fourth part — a billows — can change its shape from a line to a cone.

As a coglayer learns to build parts, he combines them as he sees fit in order to create various effects. Individually, parts aren't especially powerful. Combined, they can be deadly. It is up to the coglayer's ingenuity to find the right way to combine them.

Any character who knows a steam power with offensive potential is automatically considered proficient with its use.

BUILDING STEAM POWERS

Once a coglayer or steamborg gains an understanding of how to use a certain steam power, he still must build the engine to use that power. Each steam power entry includes a building cost. This covers materials only; it is assumed the coglayer provides the labor. Labor time is equal to one complete day (eight hours) for every 1,000 gp of value or fraction thereof. Building some steam powers requires assistants, as well; this is indicated in the entry. *Qualified* assistants, such as blacksmiths, apprentice coglayers, or specially trained helpers, cost 1 gp per day. *Unqualified* assistants can be retained for only 1 sp per day, but this generally doubles the building time and may have negative repercussions on the functioning of the constructed steam power, at the DM's discretion.

Some steam powers require unconventional materials. These are not included in the cost; instead, they are listed separately. The listed materials cost assumes the character is in an area with a ready supply of normal building materials. In the wilderness or other areas where metals and tools are scarce, costs may double or even triple.

Mundane Combinations: In many cases, a player may have an idea for combining a steam power with a relatively mundane item. For example, a rotor arm could be combined with a length of chain to make a steam-powered chain weapon. These mundane additions are perfectly acceptable. It is only the addition of an enhanced function or ability that qualifies as a steam power.

Crossbows, spring arms (as demonstrated on a catapult), and chains are all popular additions to steam-driven engines.

Order of Combination: Many steam powers affect other powers. The order in which the powers are assembled determines the final effect.

When parts are combined, the player must specify the order and which parts mod-

ify which other parts. This is especially true with amplifiers, which improve the power of another part.

For example, imagine a combination pilot light/light generator, which produces a small flame and illuminates an area. If the character were to add a pump and amplifier, he would have to specify to which piece they were being added. If both were added to the pilot light, he would have a small flame-thrower that also illuminated an area. If both were added to the light generator, he would have a weak pilot light and a good lantern. If, on the other hand, the pump were added to the light generator and the amplifier to the pilot light, the character would have a bull's-eye lantern and a torchlike weapon that causes 1d6 points of damage.

Reconstituting Steam Powers: A character may want to rearrange his steam powers on the spot in order to achieve a new result. This can be done at no cost but requires 1 full minute for every steam power to be affected. Parts that have been combined per the coglayer's integrated parts ability cannot be separated and rearranged.

Size: Each steam power has a listed size, scaled for a Medium user. Combine the sizes to determine how large the final construction will be. As always, two Tiny components combine to make something of size Small, two Small components make something Medium, and so on.

To make things easy, we have also listed a numerical size value for each part. Adding together all values of the component powers yields the total size. Compare the value to the following table to determine what that means in normal size increments:

Sum Size E	EQUIVALENT
1 F	fine
2-3	Diminutive
4-8 T	tiny
9-16	Small
17-32	Medium
33-64	Large
65-128	Huge
129-256	Gargantuan
257+	Colossal

A steam power's size relative to the user's size determines how many hands are



required to use it, as usual. For example, a Medium user must use two hands to wield a Large steam power, but only one for a Medium or smaller steam power.

New Steam Powers: A player who would like to create a new steam power not described here may do so at the discretion of the DM. Note that all steam powers are individually quite simple; it is only through combination (and, in most cases, several steps of recombination) that they become powerful

BUILDING STEAM POWERS OF DIFFERENT SIZES

The steam powers below are scaled for a Medium user. Gnomes build smaller versions, and coglayers interested in applying them to mechs frequently build bigger versions. Adjusting the size has no effect on performance, damage, or any other factor other than the size itself. Cost and weight are changed as follows:

SIZE SCALE	COST (GP)	WEIGHT (LBS.)
Small	x1	x 3/4
Medium	x1	x1
Large	x1-1/2	x2
Huge	x2	x3
Gargantuan	x3	x4



STEAM POWERS LIST

- Amplifier
- Animator
- Automator
- Billows
- Blood Pump
- Boiler
- Cauterizer
- Clockwork Puppet
- Darkness Generator
- Dehumidifier
- Descrambler
- Discriminator
- Drill
- Fin Apparatus
- Flywheel
- Fog Generator
- Folder
- Force Generator
- Identifier
- Imagemaker
- Iron Arm
- Iron Jacket
- Light Generator
- Lobber
- Metal Ear
- Metal Legs
- Noisemaker
- Nozzle
- Optical Orb
- Ranger
- Pilot Light
- Pump
- Rotor Arm
- Scanner
- Spark Generator
- Targeter
- Translator
- Voice Command
- Wavemaker

Steam Powers Descriptions

The steam powers are described in alphabetical order by their titles.

AMPLIFIER

Cost: 200 gp
Assistants: 2
Size: Tiny (6) (but see below)
Weight: 1 lb.

The amplifier is a powerful component that accepts energy as an input. Its output is the same energy, but greatly magnified.

Any nonmagical source of heat, cold, light, or other energy will work as an input. The amplifier increases the power of the energy in increments of its base value. For example, a device with a base range of 50 ft. would have a range of 100 ft. with one amplifier, 150 ft. with two, and 200 ft. with three. Effects that cause damage have their die sizes increased by 1 (in this progression: 1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, 1d12, 1d20, 2d20, 3d20, etc.). The DC of any applicable saving throws is increased by 2. For example, an amplifier combined with a pilot light produces a flame that causes 1d6 damage, illuminates a 10 foot by 10 foot area, and can ignite a fire on any target that is stationary for one round.

Amplifiers have no effect on magical energy, unless the wielder builds them with special properties (see the entry for the steam mage class). They are precision instruments. They must be connected to the piece in question. You can't launch a fireball through an amplifier and on to a target.

Amplifiers can be stacked. A second amplifier added to the above example produces a flame that causes 1d8 damage, illuminates a 15 foot by 15 foot area, and can ignite a fire on any successful attack. As you can see, some degree of DM discretion may be required in adjudicating the effects. The determination that the fire is caused on a successful attack, as opposed to a touch attack, is for game balance reasons.

ANIMATOR

Cost: 400 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Small (16)
Weight: 6 lbs.

An animator is a mechanical brain that provides rudimentary kinetic intelligence. Where a discriminator lets a device make decisions about what to do, an animator lets it make decisions about *how* to do things.

By itself, an animator is useless. Combined with a device that can move, or a static device fitted with an automator, it gives a device the ability to perform a



specific open-ended function with general accuracy. It is, in essence, a simple form of artificial intelligence.

In practical terms, an animator can allow a device to fight in melee, fight with ranged weapons, control a mech, or do some other rather complex but single-minded function.

An animator by itself is like a brain without a body; the device possesses the conceptual knowledge of how to perform its task but can't physically do so. In most cases, a discriminator is required in order for the device to have any sense of judgment between friend and foe.

AUTOMATOR

Cost: 20 gp

Assistants: 0

Size: Half of automated object

Weight: Half of automated object

An automator is a collection of springs, coils, and bolts that can be used to automate another device, allowing it to perform a task of up to three simple steps. The other device must be something that lacks the parts needed to do the task at hand. Examples include automatic reloading of a bow or crossbow, polishing a suit of armor, turning an axle, lifting a latch to open a door, and picking up a dropped object. A device that includes the necessary parts to automate its actions — such as a clockwork puppet — doesn't need an automator.

The automator's specific task is determined during the time of construction, and it can do nothing else. Its construction is specialized to fit the precise task at hand. It excels at that one task, however, and can do it over and over again without error.

BILLOWS

Cost: 5 gp

Assistants: 0

Size: Small (10)

Weight: 3 lbs.

A billows mixes air with a pump's output to create clouds. A billows converts a normal attack into a cone with a range equal to its previous edge. The cone's width at its furthest point is equal to its range.

For example, a pilot light with two amplifiers illuminates an area of 20 feet by 20 feet. With a pump, it has a maximum range of 80 feet. With a billows added, it would attack in a cone with a range of 20 feet.

BLOOD PUMP

Cost: 1,500 gp

Assistants: 0

Size: Medium (20)

Weight: 8 lbs.

Materials: 4 gallons of blood for construction, plus more blood to function

This foul addition to a steam engine allows it to run on blood in addition to water. In general, all other functions remain the same, though the blood being used may transfer some properties to specific devices. For example, a fog generator powered by the blood of a poisonous creature may produce poisonous fog. The precise effect is at the discretion of the DM.

A device with a blood pump affixed to a living creature deals 1 hp of damage per hour as it slowly pollutes the creature's blood supply. Perversely, the blood pump can also be used as an artificial heart, provided the blood passing through it is artificially oxygenated. Unverified reports exist of zombie-like, semi-undead creatures powered by blood pumps.

Blood pumps are banned in Duerok, the Stenian Confederacy, and most other civilized lands.

BOILER

Cost: 40 gp

Assistants: 1

Size: Medium (24)

Weight: 20 lbs.

A boiler increases the force that the steam engine can exert. It makes physical outputs of the steam engine more powerful.

A steam engine with a boiler can generate twice the force it previously could. This doubles the weight it can support and the force of any attacks. For example, a boiler allows the steam engine to turn a rotor arm of twice the normal length.

Boilers can be stacked. Their effects accumulate arithmetically, not exponential-

ly. For example, two boilers allow a steam engine to turn a rotor arm of three times the normal length.

CAUTERIZER

Cost: 500 gp

Assistants: 2

Size: Small (12)

Weight: 2 lbs.

Materials: Mundane healing agents worth 200 gp; must be refilled after every 20 points of healing

A cauterizer is a rudimentary healing device. It uses heat and a variety of natural herbs to mix and apply healing salves.

Holding a cauterizer over a creature's wounds immediately heals 1d4 hit points. A creature can be healed only once per day by a cauterizer; additional uses have no effect on the same creature.

Multiple cauterizers can be combined to build more effective healing devices. Each additional cauterizer heals an additional 1d4 points, though the healing process takes an extra round for each extra die.

CLOCKWORK PUPPET

Cost: 1,000 gp

Assistants: 4

Size: Fine (1), Diminutive (3), or Tiny (6)

Weight: 1 lb. (Fine), 3 lbs. (Diminutive), or 6 lbs. (Tiny)

A clockwork puppet is a finely constructed model of a creature of up to size Tiny. Multiple clockwork puppets can be combined to build larger models: Two puppets can be used to build something Small, four to build something Medium, eight to build something Large, and sixteen to build something Huge. No known coglayer has constructed a clockwork puppet above size Huge.

By itself, the model merely sits in place. It is manually operated using a control box on its back. It can be animated with the addition of an animator. Once so equipped, the model can accurately mimic the movements of its model creature, although its motions are jerky and it is obviously robotic. Without a discriminator it can be operated only via the control box. With a discriminator and voice command it can be commanded to attack.



TABLE 1-13: CLOCKWORK PUPPET

SIZE S	TR	DEX A	C*	HP A	TTACK D	AMAGE	SPEED
Fine	4	18	23	1	Slam -2 melee	1d2-3	10 ft.
Diminutive	6	16	18	1	Slam -1 melee	1d2-2	10 ft.
Tiny	8	14	16	2	Slam +0 melee	1d3-1	20 ft.
Small	10	12	14	4	Slam +1 melee	1d4	20 ft.
Medium	12	10	14	11	Slam +3 melee	1d6+1	30 ft.
Large	16	10	17	16	Slam +7 melee	1d8+3	40 ft.
Huge**	20	8	19	33	Slam +16 melee	2d6+5	60 ft.

*INCLUDES MODIFIERS FOR SIZE, DEX, AND NATURAL CONSTRUCTION.

**CLOCKWORK PUPPETS ABOVE SIZE HUGE ARE PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO BUILD.

The clockwork puppet has the statistics shown on Table 1-13. Most models are constructed with a built-in weapon of some sort, in addition to the slam attack below.

DARKNESS GENERATOR

Cost: 250 gp
Assistants: 1
Size: Small (10)
Weight: 5 lbs.

Materials: A bit of pure energy from the plane of shadow, or the casting of a total of 6 spell levels of energy from spells with the shadow descriptor

A darkness generator produces a powerful darkness that extinguishes all light within an area. It can completely envelop a 20 foot by 20 foot area. Combined with a pump, it can produce a device that functions much as a bull's-eye lantern, but it sheds darkness instead of light. Shined into an enemy's eyes, it "blinds" him as long as he is enshrouded by the darkness.

The darkness requires magical materials to create, but it is a nonmagical effect; once constructed, it is unaffected by *dispel magic* and similar effects. Creatures with darkvision can still see in the dark. A light generator and darkness generator cancel each other's effects.

DEHUMIDIFIER

Cost: 20 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Medium (24)
Weight: 30 lbs.

Materials: 100 gp of extremely fine silk
A dehumidifier pulls moisture from the

air. In normal conditions, it produces half a pint of water each hour. In rainy conditions, this is doubled; in arid conditions, this is halved. In extremely dry areas, the rate may be quartered, but it still functions.

Although a steam-powered dehumidifier may make little sense, keep in mind that many steam engines are powered by materials other than water. Moreover, even a water-powered dehumidifier produces more moisture than it consumes.

DESCRAMBLER

Cost: 320 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Diminutive (3)
Weight: 1 lb.

Materials: An extensive selection of locks of all varieties, worth at least 1,000 gp, which are necessary to mold the descrambler's parts. The locks are not consumed or damaged but must be present for construction. A high-level locksmith in any large city should have the necessary collection of locks.

A descrambler picks locks. It can be inserted into any mundane lock and will automatically pick it. It is useless against magical locks. The time required is one round for each level of DC (e.g., a lock of DC 22 will take 22 rounds to pick).

DISCRIMINATOR

Cost: 350 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Tiny (6)
Weight: 4 lbs.

A discriminator is a heavy metal brain that allows a machine to make decisions. Each discriminator can make one set of decisions. The most common model discriminates between friends and enemies, which is the source of the name, but any similar decision can be made.

An object fitted with a discriminator has a very rudimentary form of artificial intelligence (effective Int of 1). Just because it can discriminate between friend and foe doesn't mean it will actively attack enemies; most devices still require some sort of direction, whether via voice command or a control box.

There is no benefit to adding a boiler, amplifier, or other enhancement-oriented device to a discriminator.

DRILL

Cost: 10 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Diminutive (2)
Weight: 2 lbs.

This is a normal drill with a steel bit 12" long and 2" wide at the base. It is steam-powered and can drill 6" per round through solid stone.

If wielded as a weapon, the drill is Medium, weighs 7 pounds, and causes 1d4 damage. If a drill is applied to a grappled or otherwise prone opponent, damage is doubled.

Combining drills doubles their size, damage, and speed. For example, combining two drills creates a drill 24" long and 4" at the base that does 2d4 damage. Combining three drills creates a drill 36" long and 6" at the base that does 3d4 damage, and so on.

FIN APPARATUS

Cost: 35 gp
Assistants: 1
Size: Medium (32)
Weight: 8 lbs.

A fin apparatus has a variety of functions. It can be used to steer any sort of aerial or submarine vehicle. It can also be used to direct the current of any form of energy. For example, a character who adds a fin apparatus to the end of a pilot light/pump combination can shoot flames at right



angles, attacking creatures around a corner without injuring himself. The angles of fins within reach can be adjusted once per round as a free action. Multiple fins can be combined to create weapons that fire in an S shape. Mirrors can be added to the fin mounts for around-the-corner visibility.

FLYWHEEL

Cost: 280 gp

Assistants: 0

Size: Small (12)

Weight: 3 lbs.

A flywheel is a series of cogs and gears with teeth of different measurements. The flywheel can be used to speed up the functioning of any other device. A device fitted with a flywheel operates twice as fast as normal. This doesn't affect power output or damage, nor does it let the character gain an extra attack. It only improves the speed of objects that move or require a specified amount of time to function.

No more than one flywheel can be fitted to each device.

FOG GENERATOR

Cost: 70 gp

Assistants: 0

Size: Medium (18)

Weight: 12 lbs.

A fog generator produces a dense, thick cloud of fog. The fog spreads in a 15 ft. radius, 10 ft. high, centered on the user. If operated continuously, the radius expands by an additional 5 ft. each round.

The fog obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures within 5 feet have one-half concealment; creatures farther away have total concealment. The fog disperses in 1d4+1 rounds in still weather and much faster if there is wind.

A fog generator can be used four times before draining its water reservoir. It is refilled with one gallon of water.

FOLDER

Cost: 2,000 gp

Assistants: 3

Size: Medium (17)

Weight: 1/6 of subject

The folder is a thoroughly entertaining device. It is an apparatus of springs, pipes, and joints that can be fitted on any construction. It requires a great deal of installation and once fitted cannot be removed without its destruction.

A folder folds the object it is attached to back on itself, like a piece of origami, until it is much smaller than it started out. It effectively reduces the size of something by one increment. For example, it

can make a Large device Medium. When

determining sizes numerically, simply reduce the size value to the middle of the range for the next lowest size.

The object cannot be used while folded. Initiating the unfolding requires a normal action by the coglayer, and the folding/unfolding process takes 1d6 rounds.

A single folder can affect an object of up to Medium. Stacking two folders affects a Large object, stacking four affects a Huge object, and so on. Multiple folders do not add benefits, nor do amplifiers affect folders.

Yes, mechs can be folded in this fashion, but they are useless and cannot be occupied while folded.

FORCE GENERATOR

Cost: 2,000 gp

Assistants: 0

Size: Small (16)

Weight: 7 lbs.

A force generator produces force energy, like that used in many evocation spells. Unlike the spells, however, the force generator uses mechanical means to produce this energy.

A force generator can produce up to ten square feet of force energy. That's roughly equivalent to a circle 3 1/2 feet across, or a square of a little more than three feet to a side, or a cube of a little more than two feet to a side. An amplifier doubles the area that can be produced.

The force can be arranged in any shape or size that the operator wishes, though reconfiguring the machine for a new shape requires a full-round action. The force field can float up to three feet off the ground. It functions in most respects as a *wall of force*, though it can be pierced given enough force (hardness 10, AC 10, hp 20 to puncture). If used in combat, it can be positioned vertically to provide cover as if a large steel shield.

The force field is not subject to gravity, but the force generator is. If set upon its own force field, both it and the force field will fall to the ground.

IDENTIFIER

Cost: 200 gp plus samples and consultation

Assistants: See below

Size: Medium (24)

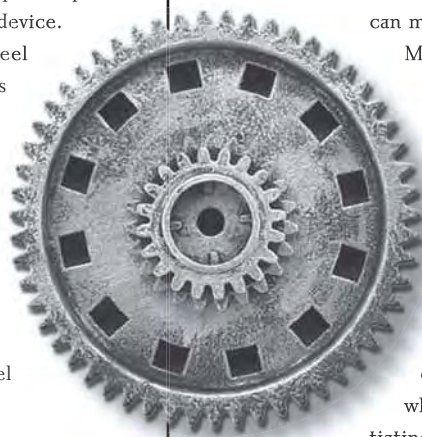
Weight: 10 lbs.

Materials: Special samples and experts (described below)

An identifier can identify almost any natural, nonmagical substance placed within it. It can break down foods and poisons to their component ingredients and point out the source of a particular flavor or toxin. Its most common use is to tell whether a liquid or food is poisonous, though it can do much more than that.

For game purposes, the identifier can identify any natural, nonmagical substance as if it had 20 ranks in the relevant Knowledge skill. Identification requires a small sample (about 1 ounce), which is destroyed in the process. It is useless in identifying magical, extraplanar, or artificial materials, although it *can* identify any mundane ingredients in such concoctions.

Building an identifier requires a full six months of work, an endless variety of natural samples, and consultation with a variety of experts. Such experts are usually found only





in major metropolitan areas. A coglayer who cuts corners while constructing an identifier will end up with a device with holes in its knowledge.

IMAGEMAKER

Cost: 90 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Large (48)
Weight: 50 lbs.

An imagemaker uses steam technology to transmit and receive video images, much like a modern television. It does not transmit sound; a separate w avemaker is needed for that. Each imagemaker can send and receive images over a 5-mile range, on a clear day with no obstructions. Use while underground or otherwise impeded by thick walls (including transmission within a mech) is often limited to a mile or less.

IRON ARM

Cost: 40 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Small (12)
Weight: 8 lbs.

An iron arm is exactly what it sounds like: a piston-powered metal arm with a hand at the end, simulating a normal human arm. It can do pretty much anything a normal arm can do, with a functional Str of 18 and a Dex of 8. If attached, it has hardness 10 and 20 hit points. If used to attack, it uses the wielder's base attack bonus and its own Strength and Dexterity.

Normally the arm is worn on the shoulder and operated via a handheld controller, which takes a standard action. Weak coglayers often put a weapon in the iron arm's hand and wade into combat to utilize its greater strength. With the addition of a voice command, the arm can be operated orally (still a standard action). With a discriminator and animator, it will function on its own and effectively grants an extra attack each round.

IRON JACKET

Cost: 400 gp
Assistants: 1
Size: Medium (24)

Weight: 40 lbs.

An iron jacket is a collection of pipes and springs that can be fitted to the shape of any Medium or smaller creature. It serves as an exoskeleton. Combination with an additional iron jacket allows it to fit a creature of one size larger.

By itself, an iron jacket acts as a rudimentary suit of armor, granting a bonus of +2,

maximum Dex bonus of +1 (it's quite stiff), armor check penalty of -4. The iron jacket can be locked via a switch on the back. The wearer can reach the switch. Once locked, the wearer cannot move at all unless he succeeds in a Strength check (DC 30). An iron jacket must be fitted directly over the wearer's skin, but armor cannot be worn over it.

In combination with an automator (to flip the switch) and a voice command, an iron





jacket can be used to retain an unwilling creature involuntarily, though it can be freed at the captor's command. With a discriminator and animator (which can move the jacket's limbs even while it is locked), the creature can be sent into combat against its will. (Resisting the motions of an iron jacket requires the same Strength check of DC 30.) Coglayers of evil alignment have used this method to animate corpses or send their still-living enemies into battle against their friends.

Fitting an unconscious, Medium creature with an iron jacket takes 10 minutes, a Large creature takes 20 minutes, a Huge creature takes 40 minutes, and so on. An actively resisting creature must be knocked out or held down by someone else or the iron jacket can't be properly installed.

LIGHT GENERATOR

Cost: 40 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Small (16)
Weight: 4 lbs.

A light generator produces a powerful light. Unlike a pilot light, which produces light as a byproduct of heat, a light generator produces *only* light.

A light generator produces enough light to illuminate a 20 foot by 20 foot area clearly. Combined with a pump, it can produce a device that functions much as a bull's-eye lantern. A light generator equipped with a pump and amplifier can be used to blind enemies within one quarter of its maximum range. Make a normal touch attack to target the enemy's eyes; if successful, the enemy must make a Reflex save (DC 16) or be blinded for 1d6 rounds. Stacked amplifiers improve the range of the blinding attack, not the DC. Adding a nozzle to this device creates a lantern that can be quickly turned into a blinding weapon.

LOBBER

Cost: 15 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Tiny (8)
Weight: 4 lbs.

A lobber is a device that converts an attack into explosive globules. For example,

it could convert a flame into a fireball, or water into a huge splash. Attacks made with lobbers explode in a burst equal to the same area the attack normally has. A lobber has a range increment of 30 feet. A device equipped with a pump, billows, lobber, and nozzle can be switched between three modes of attack: line, cone, and burst.

METAL EAR

Cost: 35 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Small (16)
Weight: 4 lbs.

A metal ear is an artificial listening device. It can hear just as well as a normal human ear. Combined with a wavemaker, it can transmit noises across distances, perhaps even to a wavemaker that will speak what the metal ear hears.

METAL LEGS

Cost: 300 gp
Assistants: 1
Size: Medium (17)
Weight: 50 lbs.

Any mundane object can be fitted with a pair of mechanical legs. The legs will support any creature up to size Large with a weight of 1,000 pounds or less.

When in rest, the legs are compressed. Shoving the object causes the legs to extend, raising the object to an upright position. From that position it is easily guided about. The legs can be compressed again by applying downward pressure.

When combined with a voice command, the beleagged object can become extremely useful: a chair that follows its owner around the house; a tool chest that is always right at hand; and so on.

NOISEMAKER

Cost: 300 gp

Assistants: 0
Size: Small (12)
Weight: 3 lbs.

A noisemaker is pretty straightforward: It makes noise. A noisemaker can record up to one hour of noises. The noises can subsequently be played according to various tracks, much like a modern CD.

A noisemaker can also speak any noises received via a wavemaker or other source. An off-site user can use a noisemaker to make inanimate objects seem to speak. Combined with a wavemaker and voice command, it can be commanded to play prerecorded noises via remote.

Combined with a discriminator, it can make noise when certain conditions are met (when a friend passes, when an enemy passes, etc.).

NOZZLE

Cost: 10 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Diminutive (2)
Weight: 1 lb.

A nozzle lets the character switch the output channel of an attack. It can be used to turn a pump on and off. When added to a device with more than one output source, such as a pump and billows, it lets the character switch between different forms of attack (e.g., a cone attack or line attack). The switch is made as a free action, provided the player declares what kind of attack he is making before each roll. If he does not declare, the attack is automatically the same as whatever the previous attack was.

OPTICAL ORB

Cost: 275 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Diminutive (3)
Weight: 2 lbs.

An optical orb is a glass eye set in a metal base. It can perceive the world around it. It is semi-animate and will turn in place to watch moving objects. It can be destroyed easily — hardness 5 with 3 hit points.

An optical orb combined with an image-





maker can transmit its signals over long distance. Two optical orbs combined with two imagemakers can create a two-way video link.

PILOT LIGHT

Cost: 120 gp
Assistants: 1
Size: Tiny (6)
Weight: 6 lbs.

This device produces a small flame. The flame cannot be extinguished unless it is submerged or cut off from a supply of oxygen. Even then, it can be immediately relit with any spark.

The flame is too small to be used as a light source; it illuminates only a 5 foot by 5 foot area. It can be used as a last-resort melee weapon, however, like a torch. It causes 1d4 points of fire damage but cannot ignite a fire unless the target is stationary for 2 rounds.

A pilot light requires a fuel source. It can hold enough fuel for 10 shots before requiring reloading. If the fuel source is ruptured, it will explode. The explosion has the same area as the flame, centered on the wearer. It causes double damage to everything within the area (all but the wearer may make a Reflex save at DC 14 to take half damage). The fuel source is well protected and won't rupture in normal combat. A long fall, a piercing attack from behind, and extreme heat may rupture the fuel tank.

PUMP

Cost: 35 gp
Assistants: 1
Size: Small (12)
Weight: 2 lbs.

Adding a pump allows the steam engine's output to be launched at a distance. A pump combined with a pilot light creates a flamethrower. A pump combined with a water source creates a hose. A pump combined with a light source creates a spotlight.

A pump can accept anything as an input: heat, light, cold, water, steam, electricity, flames, or anything else. The

pump lets the character shoot that energy at a distance. The pump's maximum range is the area of the input divided by 5.

For example, a pilot light has a 5 foot by 5 foot area. That's 25 square feet. If sent through a pump, the pilot light could be channeled into an attack with a range of 5 feet. If an amplifier were added, the pilot light's new area would be 10 feet by 10 feet, and its range in the pump would be 20 feet. Adding a second amplifier extends its range to 80 feet.

A pump's range increment is 40 feet. Its maximum range is always limited by the rules above, regardless of range increment.

RANGER

Cost: 240 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Diminutive (3)
Weight: 2 lbs.

A ranger is a collection of springs and bearings fitted to a short barrel. The ranger acts like an adjustable sight. Devices fitted with rangers gain a +1 enhancement bonus to any attack at a range of 20 feet or more. Bonuses from multiple rangers on the same device do not stack.

ROTOR ARM

Cost: 500 gp
Assistants: 0
Size: Small (12)
Weight: 10 lbs.

A rotor arm is a metal rod that rotates. A normal steam engine can support a steel rod up to 5 feet in length. The rotor arm can rotate at various speeds.

At its highest settings, the rotor arm has a number of uses. Held in front of the character, it rotates fast enough to deflect incom-

ing shots, granting a +1 shield bonus to AC.

Additionally, it is a powerful melee weapon (sort of like a steampunk weedwhacker) that causes 1d8 damage on a successful attack. Because the rod rotates from a fixed point, however, it threatens the two corner squares in front of the character, but not the square directly in front of him.

Any attack made with a rotor arm automatically attacks both corner squares in one action at no penalty. This ability can't be "turned off" — all attacks made with the rotor arm affect both sides of the character, whether friends or foes are there.

If pointed at the sky, the rotor arm creates lift. A normal rotor arm can lift up to 40 pounds at a speed of 40 feet. With the addition of boilers, it can lift more weight. Nonflying characters automatically fly at clumsy maneuverability. A character can expend a skill point to improve his flying ability; each skill point increases his flying by one increment, to a maximum of good.

SCANNER

Cost: 800 gp
Assistants: 2
Size: Medium (32)
Weight: 20 lbs.

Materials: At least 100 specimens of material to be detected

A scanner can detect certain physical types in the area around it: undead, elves, dragons, metal, etc. Each scanner detects one kind of material, at a range of 100 feet. The scanner displays the material's approximate location, and an experienced reader can determine the material's quantity, too. For example, a scanner set to detect elves would show the location of nearby elves, and a skilled reader could tell how many elves were there.

The material is determined when the scanner is constructed, by including at least 100 specimens of the material to be detected in the scanner's construction. Generally the scanner will pick up the common denomi-





nator for all provided specimens. If all 100 specimens are pieces of dragons of various kinds, the scanner will pick up dragons. If, on the other hand, they are all gold dragon scales, the scanner will pick up only gold dragons. Usually this isn't a problem, but coglayers who aren't careful (or who don't adequately scour the area to provide enough variety in their specimens) may inadvertently build the wrong kind of scanner.

Scanners can only be set to detect physical properties. Elves are physically different from dragons, so both can be detected; rogues are not physically different from fighters, so scanners cannot detect character classes. Magic and magical properties are not considered "physical" for these purposes; scanners cannot detect magic.

SPARK GENERATOR

Cost: 75 gp

Assistants: 0

Size: Small (12)

Weight: 4 lbs.

A spark generator produces a steady stream of electrical current. The current can be anywhere from tiny, harmless sparks to a taserlike charge. At its highest setting, the generator causes 1d4 points of nonlethal damage with a touch attack. Attacks against metallic creatures or targets wearing metal armor receive a +2 circumstance bonus to the attack roll.

If amplified, the spark generator causes 1d4 points of normal damage. If amplified a second time, it causes 2d4 points of normal damage. From then on it rises in increments of 1d4.

A spark generator fitted to a pump has an initial range of 5 feet, which is doubled with each amplifier.

TARGETER

Cost: 320 gp

Assistants: 0

Size: Diminutive (3)

Weight: 1 lb.

A targeter automatically acquires a target for a weapon. By itself, a targeter always aims at the nearest creature, whether friend or foe. Combined with a discriminator, it will aim at the nearest enemy. Combined further

with a scanner, it will aim at the nearest enemy creature of the type detected by the scanner. Further combined with a voice command and animator, the targeter-equipped weapon can be commanded to aim and fire, and it will always pick the nearest enemy of the type detected by the scanner. With an automator, it can then reload itself.

TRANSLATOR

Cost: 25 gp

Assistants: 0

Size: Small (12)

Weight: 3 lbs.

Materials: Builder must know both languages to be translated.

A translator can translate one verbal language into another. It looks like an old-fashioned telephone: The user listens by holding a speaker to his ear and pointing a receiver at the speaker, then speaks into the speaker to have his speech translated. Translators are built with a specific language exchange in mind and can only translate between two languages. The builder must know both languages.

VOICE COMMAND

Cost: 100 gp

Assistants: 0

Size: Tiny (6)

Weight: 1 lb.

A voice command box lets a device receive its instructions via the coglayer's commands, rather than manual controls. It can hear a normal voice at a range of 5 feet and a shout at 30 feet, and is trained during construction to recognize the owner's voice. It will not respond to anyone else's voice, nor will it respond if the owner's voice is somehow altered; in such a case, it would have to be completely rebuilt.

WAVEMAKER

Cost: 65 gp

Assistants: 1

Size: Tiny (6)

Weight: 1 lb.

A wavemaker transmits and receives sounds through radio waves. A single wavemaker is useless, but two in concert can

make up a walkie-talkie system. Each wavemaker can send and receive sounds over a 5-mile range, on a clear day with no obstructions. Underground use is often limited to a few dozen yards.

A device fitted with a wavemaker and voice command can be controlled by the operator at a distance, provided he also has a wavemaker. With a wavemaker, voice command, and discriminator, a decision-making device can be activated and deactivated as necessary.

SOME FUN COMBINATIONS

Here are some fun combinations of steam powers that can be derived from those listed above. Many other possibilities exist.

The Ally: Clockwork Puppet + Animator + Voice Command + Discriminator = A Tiny construct that will go into battle on your command.

The Handheld Ally: Clockwork Puppet + Clockwork Puppet + Clockwork Puppet + Clockwork Puppet + Animator + Voice Command + Discriminator + Folder = A Medium construct that can be folded to Small size for easy transport.

Guardian Angel: Discriminator + Animator + Iron Arm holding a normal longsword = An extra longsword attack in melee.

Personal Combat Assistant: On one shoulder, a Discriminator + Animator + Iron Arm holding a normal longsword; on the other shoulder, a Force Generator = An extra longsword attack plus a shield in melee.

Sidewinder Flamethrower: Rotor Arm + Pilot Light + Amplifier + Pump = A rotor arm that shoots a 20-foot-long flame to either side of the character with each attack.

Three-way Flamethrower: Rotor Arm + Pilot Light + Amplifier + Pump, combined with Pilot Light + Amplifier + Pump facing forward: A flamethrower that attacks in three directions (ahead and to each side) with each attack.

Cover Fire: Normal repeating crossbow + Automator + Targeter + Discriminator + Voice Command, mounted on the character's shoulder: A voice-operated weapon that will target and attack the nearest enemy,



then reload itself. Point it behind you for rear protection. Add a Scanner set to elves for an “elf-slaying automatic crossbow.”

RELIGION

“Where are the gods to protect us now?”

The faiths of Highpoint are broken. With the catastrophe that has overwhelmed their planet, the people have begun to doubt the abilities of their gods. It’s easy for an individual to ascribe personal problems to his lack of piety, but a continent-spanning disaster that affects all faiths equally casts doubt upon the gods themselves. Surely the entire continent was not impious. Surely at least one god could have intervened. “Where are the gods now that we need them?”

In fact, the gods are still there, as witnessed by the continued existence of divine magic (shaky as it is these days). Clerics still receive their spells and paladins still march for their faiths. But the powers of the gods have two limitations in repelling their lunar challengers. The first is physics. Altering the orbit of a moon is beyond their power. Collectively, were they all to work together, they could perhaps have prevented the lunar rain — were it not for the second limitation: the lunar gods themselves.

The lunar dragons have their own pantheon, an assortment of bizarre otherworldly deities that has watched over them for eons. The dragons are ancient, and their gods are beyond time. When the elves were young, the lunar dragons were already old, and their gods were older still.

These lunar gods welcomed the invasion of the world below. For them, it was an escape. For too long, their influence was limited to moon-dwelling creatures. Now, their minions — including the lunar dragons — can expand their influence to new lands.

The moment the first fragment of the moon touched earthly soil, the lunar gods had new power in the affairs of the surface world — and they have not hesitated to use it. On other planes, they war with the old gods and

slowly overwhelm them. The powers of earthly clerics become progressively more limited as the lunar gods sap their strength. The earthly deities, so used to their own bickering, are unable to muster a concerted defense, and they slowly wane under the cooperative force of the lunar gods. This limits the powers of clerics, as described on page 13.

The greatest of the lunar gods is Andakakilogitat, the god of dragons. His name is always spoken in a chant. Andakakilogitat is worshipped by the lunar dragons, who see him as the only natural force stronger than themselves.

Second among the lunar gods are Erefiviv-iasta, goddess of flight, and Seroficitacit, god of change. Together they have battled Andakakilogitat for time untold, resisting his conquest of the moon. Now this ancient drama has reached Highpoint.

Highpoints’ terrestrial gods are typical of most fantasy worlds. The drow worship the Spider Queen, the dwarves worship the Soul Father, and so on. But two things are changed. First is the level of faith. Few gods receive the same tribute they once did. Their peoples are in tatters. The gods have aided as best they can: Clerics receive helpful visions more often, and servants of the gods often arrive to aid their faithful. But this is nothing more than bandaging a fatal wound: No matter what they do, the gods cannot address the root cause of the trouble, and their followers have lost faith as a result.

The second change is the rise of new religions, many of them cults. On top of that are the mechs themselves. They are the first breath of hope in decades, and they have inspired a new approach to religion: atheism. Why worship the gods when iron, steam, and your own hard work can save you? Most mech passengers still participate in some kind of worship, but it is primarily cultural rather than spiritual. The mech crews are becoming progressively less and less reliant on faith.

At the opposite end of the spectrum are the cults. The shattered societies living in the rubble of the surface world have spawned all sorts of fervent belief systems, most of them led by opportunistic fanatics.

The Regenerators are the largest of the cults, a cross-racial group that aspires to rebuild surface society through any means possible. Disdaining the failed religions and impotent armies of the past, they have joined across racial backgrounds to war against the lunar dragons.

Not all cults are led by humanoids, though. The treants of Lilat have become completely deranged since their forests were sheared to the ground by the lunar rain. Now calling themselves the forestrati, they are fanatical in their defense of the few remaining groves. They have become meat-eaters, hungrily for the flesh of the dragons, and their maniacal fervor for combat has reached the point where they launch offensive assaults against anyone sighted nearby.

Somewhere between the atheism and the cults are the “steam gods,” as they are being called. The need to explain the world’s mysteries is deep-seated, and even the most devoted gearwrights still find themselves asking unanswerable questions. Why are the natural properties of water just so? How did steam engines come to be in the right place at the right time to inspire the new mechs? The treatises of the traditional gods provide no answers. Many gearwrights believe in a pantheon of loosely defined “steam gods,” led by Dotrak, which is a shorthand for the dwarven phrase “great engine.” No conclusive evidence yet exists that Dotrak is even real, but “his” beliefs have spread among the gearwrights and many worship him in their own ways.

Here are some of the emerging deities of Highpoint.

Andakakilogitat, Lunar God of Dragons

The lunar god of dragons is chaotic evil. He is known to all lunar dragons by his true name of Andakakilogitat, which is chanted in reverence, along with a variety of other chants that translate into his many titles: One-God, Black Death, and Enemy Watcher. He appears as a twisted, convoluted swarm of draconic limbs, wings, necks, and heads, their central body unidentifiable within the squirming mass, with different heads



speaking his thoughts in turn. His symbol is an asymmetrical swirling pattern of dragon heads. Andakakilogitat is close to lunar dragons and lunar dragon-kin, and some earthly dragons have begun worshipping him in the hopes that it will improve their chances of survival. For millennia, he has watched the world of Highpoint with a covetous eye, and he has no sympathy for its residents; they are fodder to be conquered, nothing more. The domains he is associated with are Chaos, Destruction, and War.

Dotrak, the Great Engine

Dotrak, the “great engine,” may or may not be a real deity. He has no formal churches and no clerics, though his “vessels” or “messiahs” appear with greater and greater frequency. His worshippers are the generally agnostic gearwrights, who limit Dotrak’s role in the cosmology. They ascribe no creation myths to him nor any great legends; instead, he is simply the “Starter,” the god that laid the universe’s gears in place and then left them to run.

Followers of Dotrak are scorned for several reasons. First, they have no evidence that their god is real. Detractors call him a figment of the imagination. Second, Dotrak isn’t a “god” in the traditional sense. He doesn’t walk the earth or cause miracles; according to his own followers, he merely set things in motion and then sat back to observe. Other religions consider him weak and powerless.

In reality, both camps are right. Dotrak doesn’t exist yet, but he soon will. The steam engine is a new force in the universe, and the collective energies of the myriad gearwrights who fervently believe in its potential, combined with the power of their understated but very real worship, has coalesced into a nascent consciousness. Dotrak is an infant god, little more than a subtle thought wave, who is slowly growing in power. His influence is already seen in the mysterious piles of animated gears called trak traks (see page 202) and the “vessels of Dotrak” that now walk the earth (see page 37). In the years to come he will continue to evolve, and, if his followers are sufficiently numerous and their will sufficiently strong, he may come into being as a deity proper.

Dotrak is neutral. He does not have the power to grant spells to clerics aside from his mysterious vessels, who are associated with the domains of Engines and Knowledge.

Erefiviviasta, Lunar Goddess of Flight

Erefiviviasta is called “goddess” because her manifested character seems more feminine than those of her peers, but sexes among lunar creatures are poorly understood and it is not clear at all whether “she” is truly female. Erefiviviasta enjoys a twisted following among the lunar dragons, who were once her most devoted servants. Her role was usurped by Andakakilogitat, a great dragon who rose to godhood and gathered the dragons to him. Ever since, Erefiviviasta and Andakakilogitat have been bitter rivals. When the invasion of Highpoint began, however, they put aside their differences to support the lunar dragons jointly.

Seroficitacit, Lunar God of Change

Seroficitacit is the lunar god of transformation. It appears as a pulpy mound of flesh that continually generates vaguely recognizable shapes on its skin before they dissolve into something else. It has no sex and no symbol; various followers often create their own symbols, which change from group to group and from time to time.

Seroficitacit has a range of worshippers sprinkled throughout the various lunar races. Its worshippers have no cohesion and no unity, and they come and go as times change. Lunar thought processes are hardly intelligible, but to the extent that they are understood, those who worship Seroficitacit seem to be those opposed to tradition and longstanding ritual, be they terrestrial or lunar in origin. Seroficitacit actually grows in power from the changes in its base of worshippers, regardless of the number of worshippers, so it rewards those who leave its fold as well as those who enter. The greatest reward is to make the worshipper’s body as malleable as that of Seroficitacit through the rewarding of the Seroficitacit’s Changes feat.

Since the beginning of the lunar rain,

Seroficitacit has grown steadily in power. The rampaging changes sweeping across both planet and moon have only fed its power. Now it has many worshippers, including some terrestrial creatures, who think that the time of change is at hand.

RESURRECTION ON HIGHPOINT

The war between the lunar and terrestrial gods has wrought an interesting twist on the nature of resurrection. While the terrestrial gods gain power from their believers on the material plane, they also gain soldiers when those believers’ souls return to the afterlife. The gods are battling vast wars on the outer planes, and the souls of the dead make up the foot soldiers in these conflicts.

As a result, the terrestrial gods aren’t eager to let souls return to mortal life, especially if they’re powerful followers who could help even more in the outer planes. The dire need for assistance in the planar wars has created a perverse effect: The most faithful followers of a god are now the least likely to be revived by *raise dead* and similar spells. Conversely, it is the heathens and disbelievers whom the gods have little need for, so their souls are free to return.

An attempt to use *raise dead*, *resurrection*, *rebuild soul*, or a similar spell on Highpoint requires a Will save by the character being raised. The base DC is 10. If the character has class levels as a cleric or paladin, those levels are added to the DC. For example, a 6th cleric would have a Will save DC of 16.

If the character makes this save, his soul returns to his body according to the nature of the spell cast and is affected normally. If the save is failed, the soul has been conscripted for service in the afterlife. No attempt at restoration will ever succeed, for divine intervention has placed the soul beyond the reach of mortal spells. This is a great honor to the soul, for it has gone to serve side by side with its god in the afterlife.





PLATE 3 From city-mech to combat walker,
the mech is the defining feature of today's Highpoint.



MECHS

THE MECHS OF HIGHPOINT ARE OF A UNIQUE TYPE. THEY ARE MODELED ON MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN IMAGERY, CRAFTED IN AN ERA WHERE MASS MANUFACTURE IS UNKNOWN, AND CONSTRUCTED WITH ANTIQUE MACHINERY, HAND-TOOLED PARTS, AND MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF HARD PHYSICAL LABOR. THE ADVANCED MECHA OF JAPANESE ANIME HAVE NO BEARING ON **DRAGONMECH**. INSTEAD, CONSIDER THE GUTENBERG PRESS, HAND-MADE MUSKETS WITH CUSTOM-FITTED BULLETS, AND DA VINCI'S FLYING MACHINE—THAT IS THE HISTORICAL LEGACY IN WHICH THE **DRAGONMECHS** ARE STEEPED.

This chapter gives rules for the construction and use of mechs, as well as many examples of the specialized mechs that have appeared in the harsh circumstances of Highpoint. The focus of this book is on the adventures of individual characters, not mech-vs.-mech mass combat, so the rules herein maintain the scale of normal d20 battles. Tactical-level mech combat will be described in future volumes, where a different set of rules will streamline such encounters.

ORIGINS

The true origins of the mech are obscured by legend and lore. The Gearwrights Guild claims provenance over the earliest mechs, which they built many thousands of years ago. A great vault deep in the earth still stores the greatest creations of this lost Age of Walkers, and certain archaeological oddities, such as the Pretominin Heads, hint at such deep history. Outside the Guild and its dwarven adherents, few cling to this tale, especially among the elves, who dismiss such claims as complete foolishness. After all, the elves are oldest of all, and if their memories

hold no record of the Age of Walkers, surely it never happened.

In modern times, the mech resurfaced when Parilus, Master Gearwright, brought his knowledge out of the underdeep. His instructions to Duerok led to the first operational mech and the first city-mech, Durgan-lok. (See page 170 for the full story.) It is undisputed that the dwarves of Duerok were the first creatures in modern times to wield a mech.

Now mechs are common among all advanced surface cultures. The humans of the plains, the elves of the forest, and even the ubiquitous orcs have built, stolen, or salvaged their own mechs. It is said that even some underdeep civilizations have experimented with mechanized walkers, though theirs are much smaller than the ones found on the surface.

Mechs were designed to fill two needs. The first need was protection from the meteor rain and lunar dragons. The mechs' thick armor protects from the rain; their enormous size and large-scale weapons provide a counter to the dragons. With mechs, the dwarves (and now all races) were able to reoccupy the surface world for the first time in recent memory.

The second need was mobility. In a world of scavengers, refugees, and flying menaces,

protection alone was not enough. Castles built solidly enough to withstand a dragon were simply coffins in which the inhabitants would starve while they futilely tried to outwait its siege. The mobile mechs could defeat some dragons, flee from others, and band together for additional protection.

The crucial component in mech construction is the steam-powered engine. In a world of magic, steam engines were, until recently, unimpressive. Mundane spells can be used to create much more powerful devices with much lower maintenance requirements. The dwarves had long used steam engines but had never developed them on a grand scale. They built steam-powered tunnel cars and a few walkers which were used to patrol mountain strongholds. Aside from that, steam technology was primitive and never seen outside of dwarven holds.

Parilus changed that. He demonstrated that steam could efficiently power armored vehicles that were larger than even the dragons. His engineering knowledge allowed the dwarves not only to build mobile suits of armor that could match the best spell-created constructs, but also to fight with them using weapons that were themselves powered by steam. When Parilus demonstrated the first operational mech, the dwarves immediately understood the steam engine's potential. It was as if they had had the residual knowledge and needed only to be shown how to use it.

The success of the steam-powered mechs was immediate. Lunar dragons that had previously been defeated only with massed forces, cumbersome siege weapons, or high-level mages were beaten back by the mobile, maneuverable mechanized walkers that carried their siege weapons with them. Even at close range — which the more intelligent dragons utilized with brutal success in the early battles — the mechs could fight back with gargantuan battle axes and colossal javelins. Even when a mech was lost to a dragon, there was no question as to the mech's effectiveness. A single dwarf in a mech could do more damage to a dragon than one hundred dwarves on foot, and the mech could be built and its pilot trained in a tenth of the time it took to train a high-level mage.



The early mechs were built primarily of wood and stone, with iron infrastructures underlying it all. Now, the best mech jockeys personally commission custom-built steel mechs with mithral or adamantine armor. The humans have mastered basic iron construction methods, the elves have magically bent still-living trees into the shapes of mechs, and the orcs have learned to chop down huge forests to build crude wooden mechs. Some mages have attempted the construction of massive, hollow golems which are essentially animated mechs. Some reports even say that foul necromancers reanimate the bodies of felled dragons into necromantic bone-mechs.

SOCIETY

Most mechs are used only for patrols, raids, and other combat exercises. After the battle ends, the crew seeks shelter in its normal refuge: a surface city, an underground complex, or even a larger city-mech.

The culture of mech jockeys varies from race to race but invariably reflects the competitive, aggressive nature of the mech jockeys themselves. When out of their mechs, they walk with a swagger in their step, and understandably so: It takes nerves of steel and phenomenal reflexes to win a battle in a mech. Mech jockeys of the same squad or fleet will fight like brothers in battle, but off the field they compete incessantly. Deep down, a proud mech jockey might resent the fact that his life was saved by a cohort's crack shot, seeing it only as an attempt to show off.

On the battlefield, this competition manifests itself as a barely contained battle lust. Mech jockeys from different armies bear longstanding grudges against each other. A dwarven pilot defeated by an elven mech will remember every detail of his enemy, storing it away for future use. If he sights that mech in a future battle, he will go out of his way to engage it. This native personality trait has proven difficult to contain, especially

among the generally regimented forces of the Stenian Confederacy. Personal grudge matches are officially off-limits to mech jockeys of all civilized races (orcs naturally not falling into that category), but once the mechs are in the field, their superiors often look the other way, knowing full well that there's no point in fretting over something they can't stop. In battles involving mech fleets with longstanding rivalries, it is customary to declare short-term cease-fires so individual mechs can pair up and resolve their grudges *mano a mano*.

The largest mechs support full-time populations. The majority of a so-called city-mech's population is crew, civilian support personnel, and military. A small but growing cadre of wealthy aristocracy has bribed its way into the populations of several city-mechs, highlighting a constant problem: determining who is "useful" on a city-mech.

City-mechs are by far the safest places to live on modern-day Highpoint, and in their early days, most had strict rules concerning who could live on board. The crew was most valuable, followed by military personnel. Civilians could fill the spots that remained but only insofar as they were useful to the mech. Thus, blacksmiths, engineers, and other such professions were well represented; farmers and traditional craftsmen were present only to the extent that their skills could be exercised and used on the mech; and miners, bankers, and other such specialists were completely absent. Visiting traders (a guise under which many an adventurer got on board) were permitted for short periods, provided they had needed goods (or a handy bribe).

Rules governing living requirements are stringent, especially in the lawful Stenian Confederacy and the Legion, two of the earliest factions to build city-mechs. Military law rules on the city-mechs, and courts and a judge are considered luxuries if an unruly citizen is interfering with the mech's functioning. Cruel or arbitrary as it may be, the population supports it, since they know perfectly well that their own safety depends on the city-mech's smooth functioning.

Over time, expanding safety zones have made the residency requirements less stringent. Most city-mechs don't perceive themselves as being in the same state of siege that they once were, an attitude that has been helped along with extensive bribery. Thus, a portion of each mech's population is now "nonessential." Rules governing such positions vary from mech to mech. On most mechs, nonessential personnel are required to pay monthly "rent" to the mech's governing forces and are also prohibited from owning "land" on the mech. Certain sections of the mech can be owned, much like a modern condominium within a larger complex, while other areas are considered common property or restricted areas. Many a thieves' guild has already exploited this situation to control black-market land ownership and get stowaways on board. Wealthy aristocrats have resorted to bribes and influence peddling to get spots, while politics have started concerning which "professions" are declared essential.

Daily life on a city-mech is much the same as it used to be on the surface, though it's substantially more cramped. Even the aristocrats have had to come to terms with smaller quarters. A social hierarchy of sorts has evolved on the mechs, with the most prestigious quarters being those furthest from the ground. This evolved naturally from the placement of the mech's control center in the head or upper chest, and the simple fact that the higher areas are safer. The highest areas are occupied by military officers, senior members of the Gearwrights Guild (or other governing forces), and aristocrats. The middle areas (the mech's chest) are where you'll find the peasants and their common areas, including markets, pubs, inns, and the workplaces of the more respected professions (such as engineers and physicians). The lower you go, the more impoverished it becomes. A city-mech's legs are usually ghettos filled with the menial laborers who keep the mech running day to day. Below these quarters are hot, oppressive foundries and workrooms. Many stowaways hide in these areas. Below them are the gear forests, the massive levels of engine rooms that power the mech.

In other mechs, such as those of the Irontooth Clans and the orcs, the depths are intentionally left open to outside settlement and sealed off from the rest of the mech. They end up filled with sto w-aways who fight tooth and nail to keep their places. Some are settled by horrid monsters or evil humanoids looking for roosts. While this is terrifying to those who live on the levels of the mech closest to the depths, it serves a productive purpose: The mech is extremely difficult to board. Whatever lives in the depths fights hard to keep outsiders at bay. Orc mechs in particular are notoriously vile in this regard. Cruel orc taskmasters make examples of unruly slaves by tossing them into the depths, where they are devoured by whatever lairs there.

INSIDE A MECH

Except for cockpits, firing ports, and areas near portholes, the inside of a mech is naturally pitch-black. Dwarves don't mind this, but other races do. Elves and humans illuminate their mechs via magic, gas lighting, and simple torches.

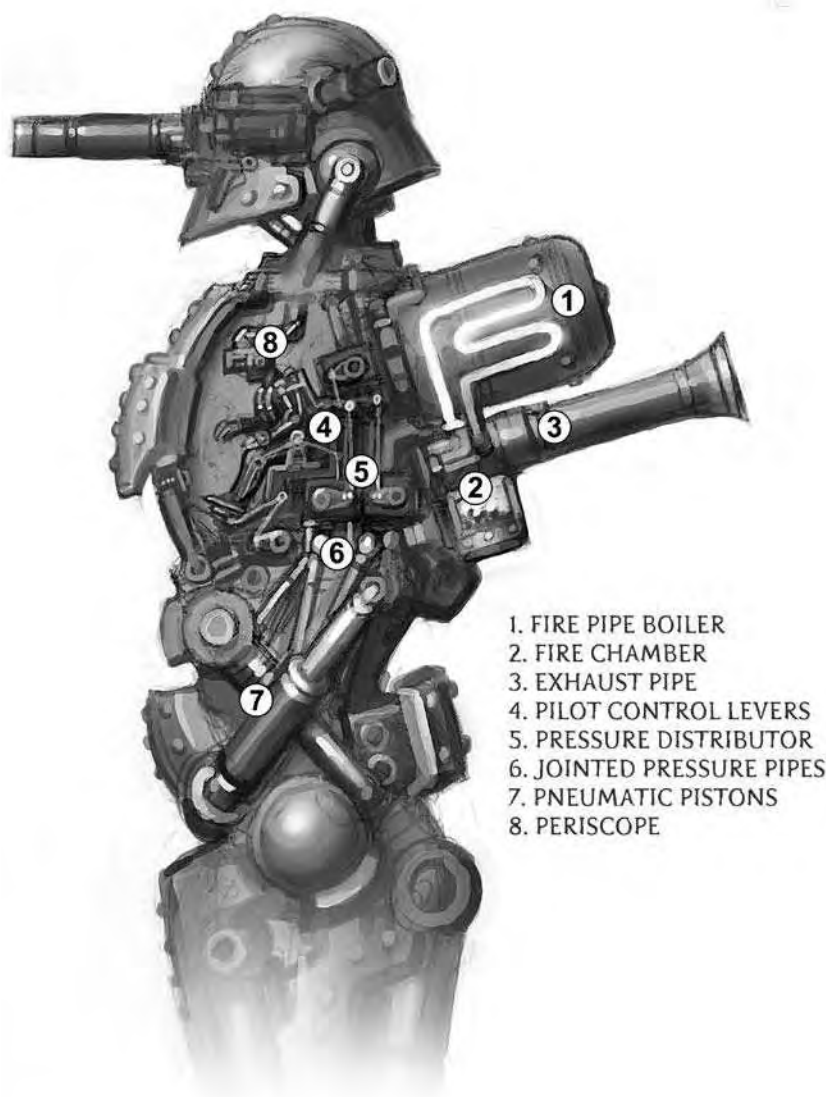
City-mechs generally have room to walk around, but other mechs are not comfortable. The quarters are small and cramped.

Riders must stay in the same positions for hours at a time; they have no room for stretching. Wearing armor other than leather, studded leather, padded, or hide is guaranteed to result in chafing and blisters after more than two hours of the mech's bumpy, irregular walking. Characters attempting to stay armored must make a Fortitude save every hour (DC 15) or give in to the discomfort and doff their armor — if they have room to do so. There's no room to take off half-plate or full plate. Characters who keep uncomfortable armor on suffer 1 hp of non-lethal damage each day. Mech jockeys wear

a specialized form of armor called pilot's armor (described on page 138).

Mechs walk in a jarring, jerky fashion that is far more abrupt than the subtle swaying of a city-mech. The first time a character boards a mech other than a city-mech, he must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) or suffer from “mechsickness” due to the jerky motion. Mechsickness is exactly like seasickness. Mechsick characters spend 1d4 hours nauseated then suffer a -1 circumstance penalty to all rolls until they’ve spent a day getting used to the mech’s motion.

A mech's controls are straight forward. Each usually has two levers, as in a tank. Each controls one leg. Push the right lever forward and the right leg advances; push the left lever





forward and the left leg advances. Push them forward in an alternating sequence and the mech walks. Push a lever all the way and the mech strides as far as it can; push it halfway and the mech takes a shorter stride.

Piloting a mech consists of learning how to time the motion of the levers. The pilot must connect his own personal kinesthetic sense to that of the mech. A voiding boulders while walking across a rocky field requires moving the legs in different strides with each step, which only the best mech jockeys can do with any sort of speed or precision. Jumping requires pumping the legs to the maximum stride at just the right moment, then putting them in the right position when the mech lands. Turning requires moving one leg forward and the other backward at just the right rate. All of these techniques are hard to learn and difficult to master (especially since the consequence of failure can be toppling over and damaging the mech).

A pilot-operated weapon is generally controlled with a metal strut or arm that extends from the cockpit's wall. The pilot moves the weapon by moving this oversized joystick, whose motions are amplified and mimicked by the mech's arm. If it is an axe or other melee weapon, the pilot must swing the joystick in the right motion relative to the position of the mech's real arm. If it is a steam cannon or other ranged weapon, the pilot must aim the arm, then push a button to fire.

Since it is nearly impossible for a two-handed creature to control two joysticks and two levers at once, advanced mech jockeys modify their controls to make them easier. One common adaptation is the addition of a horizontal bar between the two leg levers. The bar has a ball joint on each end, and if the levers are given a little leeway at their base, the bar can be used to control both levers at once. The pilot simply grasps the bar in one hand and then shifts the strength of his hand to move one lever or the other. Pushing forward on the center of the bar brings both levers forward; pulling back does the same thing. It's similar to pushing a bicycle with one hand on the handlebars.

Steam-powered mechs require large amounts of water, as well as fuel. Usually this is coal or wood. When burned, this fuel heats the water reserves to the boiling point, providing the steam power. The mechs are designed to suck water through filters in their feet whenever they pass over a river or stream, but the fuel can be more difficult to come by. In places without large timber reserves, wood and coal have become pricey commodities. Mechs that utilize such power sources have built-in pulley systems for lifting buckets of coal into the mech. The pulley-powered bucket brigades can even be powered by the mech's steam engine, if fuel is that common. No other kind of mech requires fuel except for clockwork mechs, which need a short burst of fuel once every week. Their needs are so minimal that they're not worth keeping track of.

Communication between mechs takes place in a variety of ways. Almost all elven mechs use magic items or spells that allow telepathic communication. Dwarven city-mechs, as well as larger mechs with room to spare, incorporate steam powers such as wavemakers. Mechs without these luxuries use signal flags. The exact signals vary by race and faction but can range from simple (orc mechs usually have only three flags: "attack," "retreat," and "stop") to complex (the mechs of the Legion have more than two dozen flags that have different meanings when combined with each other).

Mechs distinguish their allegiances in a number of ways. General aesthetics are one method; it's very easy to tell a dwarven mech from an elven mech at a glance, and the allegiance of any mech taken over by the Irontooth clansmen is obvious. Beyond that, a mech will fly a flag indicating its mechdom, or, on the larger mechs, simply paint the flag or a coat of arms on its arm or torso. Military insignia are commonly painted on, as well as personal insignias as the pilot prefers.

Finally, certain flags are universal. A sky-blue flag means a merchant or trader. Mech traders use these flags to find customers in territories that would be hostile to anyone else. Mechs with such flags are still subject

to scrutiny, especially if they appear in numbers or in any way appear to be military mechs, but the blue flag will keep them from being blown away at a distance before they ever get to talk.

DESCRIPTION AND CONSTRUCTION

A mech can be built by anyone with skill, a lot of gold, and a huge labor pool. In theory, the field is wide open; in practice, only well organized (or extremely numerous) societies can cobble together a battle mech, much less a city-mech.

Player characters can build their own mechs to field against dragons, enemy mechs, and other foes. They can also adventure on board the larger city-mechs, explore the burned-out husks of wrecked or ancient mechs, battle against enemy mechs, and research new ways to improve mech technology.

This section covers the description and construction of mechs. The two topics are covered together because by discussing a mech's construction, we will simultaneously detail its description.

POWER SOURCE

Mechs are classified by their power sources. By this measure, five types of mechs exist: steam-powered, man-powered, clockwork, animated, and undead.

Steam-powered mechs are the most prevalent. The first mechs to be built were steam-powered, and most new mechs continue to use steam as their power source. Dwarves and humans are the predominant users of steam-powered mechs. These mechs are durable and rugged, but labor-intensive and vulnerable to mechanical mishap.

Man-powered mechs are primitive constructs that mimic the mech's physical shape and abilities using a more antique engine—human labor. The typical man-powered mech requires dozens or hundreds of slaves toiling ceaselessly to keep it running. Orcs are the only race to use man-powered mechs



extensively. These mechs are slow, cumbersome, and vulnerable to slave revolts.

Clockwork mechs are in many respects similar to steam- or man-powered mechs, but their precision craftsmanship and extraordinary construction set them apart. Clockwork mechs are powered by springs, pendulums, and other such mechanisms. What makes them special is the exactitude of their design. A clockwork mech is periodically “wound” like a clock. For several days thereafter, all the power it needs comes from the unwinding of its mechanisms. Every single component of the mech is connected in an elegant, complex symphony of brass and steel. The winding process requires extreme force — generally it entails turning a massive spring running the height of the mech — and the clockwork mech incorporates steam or manpower once every few days to wind itself. Outside of this “refueling process,” however, it runs on its own power. Clockwork mechs are extremely powerful and extremely rare, having been seen only in the hands of high-level gearwrights. It is rumored that the Master Repository holds even more advanced designs.

Animated mechs are like massive, hollow golems. Rather than be granted limited intelligence, as traditional golems are, they are endowed solely with a rudimentary kinesthetic sense that lets them move their bodies in response to their commanders’ wills. Only the elves wield such mechs, which are magically constructed. These mechs are by far the fastest and most agile, and their magical arsenals are deadly. But they have one fatal weakness, which the dwarves are learning to exploit expertly: The concerted use of *dispel magic* spells can render animated mechs inoperable.

Undead mechs are a rarity. Known only through anecdotal evidence, they are rumored to be the reanimated, reconstructed remnants of dragon skeletons. Who would reassemble a dragon into a mechlike creature is unknown. Nevertheless, explorers of Highpoint’s less-traveled regions continue to bring back disturbing

TABLE 2-1: COMPARISON OF MECH POWER SOURCES

	HD	STR	DEX	REF	FORT	SPEED	CREW NEEDS	MANEUVERABILITY
Steam-powered	High	High	Low	Low	High	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.
Man-powered	Avg.	Low	Low	Low	Avg.	Low	High	Low
Clockwork	High	High	High	High	Low	High	Low	High
Animated	Low	Low	High	High	Avg.	High	Low	High
Undead	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	High	Low	Very low	Low

reports of undead mechs. Little is known about them.

The various power sources have different strengths and weaknesses. Table 2-1 sums them up.

PROFILE

A mech’s stats are defined in the traditional monster format. They have hit dice, attacks, damage, and ability scores, just like any construct. A few new terms apply to mechs, however, and a few old terms are defined differently, as follows.

Hit Dice: All mechs use d10 for hit dice, and they always receive 5.5 hit points per hit die.

Speed: Mech speed is listed in tactical terms, as with normal monsters. Large mechs can move great distances quickly due to their massive strides, but in general mechs are not capable of high-speed movement.

Tactical speed converts to overland speed at the following rates:

TACTICAL SPEED	OVERLAND SPEED
30 ft.	3 mph
40 ft.	5 mph
50 ft.	6 mph
60 ft.	7 mph
70 ft.	8 mph
80 ft.	9 mph
100 ft.	11 mph
120 ft.	14 mph
140 ft.	16 mph
160 ft.	18 mph
180 ft.	20 mph
200 ft.	23 mph
220 ft.	25 mph

AC: Armor Class isn’t relevant in most mech combat. Each mech has an armor class, but due to their size they are often painfully easy to hit.

More important is the mech’s hardness, which is a function of its size and material type.

Hardness: A mech built of iron is more durable than a mech built of stone. This is reflected in the mech’s hardness score. Similarly, a Colossal size mech has a denser superstructure than a Large mech. It also has more open space, meaning a successful penetration is less likely to hit something important. All of this is reflected in the mech’s hardness rating.

Critical Thresholds: A heavily damaged mech may suffer system failures long before it is completely destroyed. Mechs have what are known as critical thresholds. These are divisions of their hit points. At each new threshold, the mech is more likely to suffer critical hits. Critical hits cause not only additional damage, but also specific system failures (such as a loss of power to the right arm, or clogged gun ports).

Each mech has four critical thresholds: green, yellow, orange, and red. A mech’s entry will include break points, as a percentage of total hit points, for these critical thresholds. For example, “Green, Yellow 50%, Orange 25%, Red 10%” means a mech crosses the threshold to yellow when reduced to 50% of its starting hit points, orange at 25% of its total, and red at 10% of its total.

The effects of hits at the various critical thresholds is described in more detail on page 91. Note that all critical damage ignores the mech’s hardness, since it takes place inside the mech’s shell.

Attacks: A mech’s attacks depend on its crew. This is described in more detail in the combat section (see page 86). For now, keep in mind that even though a mech may have many attacks listed, it



needs the relevant crew members to be alive and functioning in order to make those attacks.

Space/Reach: The height of a mech is determined by its size, as indicated on Table 2-2. The height may vary by up to 10% of the indicated measurement with no change in statistics. The face of a mech is generally equal to 1/2 its height, rounded down. The reach is 1/2 the mech's height. Again, the exact dimensions may vary based on the mech.

Saves: Mechs have Fortitude and Reflex saves. They do not have Willpower saves. A mech's base Reflex save (which is almost always negative) is *not* inclusive of Dexterity modifiers.

Ability Scores: Mechs have Strength and Dexterity scores. Both are contingent on the mech's size and power source. Some mechs may be clumsy but powerful, while others are agile but weak.

As with all constructs, mechs lack a Constitution score. Mechs do not have Intelligence, Charisma, or Wisdom scores. The mechs themselves are never subject to effects or checks concerning these stats; such effects or checks instead affect their pilots and crews.

Payload Units (PU): This new term describes how many people and weapons a mech can support in addition to its basic superstructure, armor, and engines. One Medium creature or weapon takes up one payload unit, a Large creature or weapon takes up two payload units, a Huge creature or weapon takes up four payload units, and the progression doubles at each increment thereafter.

Living space (for city-mechs) requires additional payload units. The absolute minimum is living space equal to the creature's PU (e.g., a Medium creature would require 1 PU for workspace and 1 PU for living space). This is slavish housing—just enough room to lie down beside a workstation. Normal mech living conditions require double the creature's PU (e.g., a Medium creature requires 1 PU for workspace and 2 PU for living space). This is still quite cramped but at least includes enough room for a bed and a few possessions.

TABLE 2-2: TYPICAL MECH TRAITS BY SIZE

SIZE	PU	HEIGHT	SIZE MOD.	HARDNESS	FIRING PORTS	UNARMED DMG.
Large	3	10 ft.	-1	+0	100%	1d6
Huge	5	15 ft.	-2	+0	100%	1d8
Gargantuan	10	25 ft.	-4	+0	100%	1d10
Colossal	16	35 ft.	-8	+1	80%	1d12
Colossal II	32	50 ft.	-8	+2	65%	3d6
Colossal III	64	75 ft.	-8	+4	55%	2d12
Colossal IV	128	110 ft.	-8	+6	40%	5d6
Colossal V	256	165 ft.	-8	+8	30%	3d12
City-mech A	512	240 ft.	-8	+10	20%	7d6
City-mech B	1,028	360 ft.	-8	+12	18%	4d12
City-mech C	2,056	540 ft.	-8	+14	16%	9d6
City-mech D	4,112	810 ft.	-8	+16	14%	5d12
City-mech E	8,224	1,200 ft.	-8	+18	12%	11d6
City-mech F	16,448	1,800 ft.	-8	+20	10%	6d12

Aristocrats, mech jockeys, senior engineers, and high-ranking military officers generally have 3 or more PU for living space.

Payload requirements for common spaces (kitchens, marketplaces, mess halls, recreational areas, etc.), are assumed to be included in the normal living space as an averaged figure. This is an abstraction, but it makes the mech-design process simple and fast. (It's certainly a lot easier than calculating kitchen and marketplace requirements for a city of 3,000 residents...)

Payload requirements for weapons generally include space for ammunition and reloading, unless noted otherwise.

The mech itself occupies a space equal to twice its payload units. For example, a Huge mech stored on board a city-mech would occupy 8 PU.

Payload units can also be used for transporting raw materials. In general, 1 PU is sufficient to carry a volume measuring roughly 6x6x6 ft (216 cubic feet), or a weight of 1,000 pounds.

Crew: Different kinds of mechs require different kinds of crews. Man-powered mechs are extremely labor intensive, since the entire mech runs by manpower. Steam-powered mechs also need a lot of hands on board to keep the fires stoked and maintain machinery. Animated mechs require substantially less crew (mostly just gunners and tactical staff), while an undead mech requires only a single

necromancer to control it. A mech's profile will indicate its crew requirements.

Firing Ports: In a small mech, all the passengers are near the edges and can fire ranged weapons through firing ports. The larger a mech becomes, the lower the proportion of its passengers that is near the edge and has access to firing ports. The firing ports entry is determined by a mech's size. It indicates what percentage of the mech's total payload units are next to firing ports. Remember to add vertical height into the range determinations for shots fired from high up on large mechs.

Power Source: As described above. A mech's entry includes a definition of the power source that runs it.

SIZE

A mech is constructed by determining its size and type, customizing various components, and adding weapons. Construction will be described in more detail later, along with information on pricing. For now, let's look at the various components of a mech's profile.

The first consideration in a mech's profile is its size. This determines the range of its payload and height. The type when combined with the size then determines the



range for the rest of the attributes. A mech can exceed its normal size/type range, but this raises the cost.

The “size modifier” applies to the mech’s AC and melee attack bonuses.

Each individual mech type has its own profile based on its size, as follows. These profiles include critical hit tables for each mech type. These critical hit tables will be explained in more detail later.

MANEUVERABILITY

For the purpose of simplicity, a mech’s maneuverability is linked to its size and power source. More flexible mechs can be built but they are more expensive.

The base maneuverability classes by mech size are as follows:

SIZE	MANEUVERABILITY
Large	Good
Huge	Good
Gargantuan	Average
Colossal	Average
Colossal II	Average
Colossal III	Poor
Colossal IV	Poor
Colossal V	Poor
City-mech A	Clumsy
City-mech B	Clumsy
City-mech C	Clumsy
City-mech D	Clumsy
City-mech E	Clumsy
City-mech F	Clumsy

Maneuverability is then modified by the mech’s construction type, as follows. No mech can be worse than clumsy or better than perfect when it comes to maneuverability

POWER SOURCE	MANEUVERABILITY
Steam-powered	No modifier
Man-powered	–1 increment
Clockwork	+1 increment
Animated	+1 increment
Undead	–1 increment

With regard to mechs, maneuverability classes are defined as shown in Table 2-3. Note that mech maneuverability is even more cumbersome than the typical flight maneuverability increments — most mechs are hardly graceful.

TABLE 2-3: MECH MANEUVERABILITY CLASSES

	PERFECT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	CLUMSY
Reverse	Free	–10 ft.	No	No	No
Turn	Any	90°/20 ft.	45°/20 ft.	45°/20 ft.	45°/40 ft.
Turn in Place	Any	+90°/–20 ft.	+45°/–20 ft.	No	No
Maximum Turn	Any	Any	90°	45°	45°
Trip Checks	+4	+0	+0	–4	–8
Climb	Yes	–4	No	No	No
Jump	Yes	–4	–8	No	No
Clearance	3/4 height	1/2 height	1/2 height	1/4 height	1/4 height

Reverse: Mechs of perfect maneuverability can switch between forward and reverse movement at no penalty. At good class, the mech must expend 10 ft. of movement to switch to reverse. Mechs of average or worse maneuverability cannot move in reverse.

Turn: The amount of forward movement the mech must make to turn. Mechs with perfect maneuverability can wheel in place, while others must move forward in order to make a turn.

Turn in Place: The amount of speed that the mech can spend to turn in place. Mechs of poor or clumsy maneuverability cannot turn in place; they must move forward in order to turn.

Maximum Turn: The maximum amount that a mech can turn in one round.

Trip Checks: The modifier to the mech’s trip checks. The less maneuverable a mech is, the less balanced it is, and thus easier to trip.

Climb: Well balanced mechs can climb cliff faces, castle walls, and other obstructions. This is made using the pilot’s Mech Pilot skill, as described on page 88. Mechs of perfect maneuverability can do so at no penalty, mechs of good maneuverability have a –4 penalty, and other mechs cannot climb.

Jump: As with Climb, this describes whether a mech can jump, and if so, what penalty is applied. Jumping is described on page 88.

Clearance: How high the mech can step, as described on page 88.

STEAM-POWERED MECHS

Steam-powered mechs use massive steam engines to power their actions. Based on their size, steam-powered mechs have the following base profile.

Power Source: Steam.

Physical Appearance: Steam-powered mechs are large and loud. Their engines generate tremendous noise and heat. All steam-powered mechs are dotted with chimneys and smokestacks that constantly produce steam and smoke.

Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 50%, Orange 25%, Red 10%.

Crew: 25% of a steam-powered mech’s PU must be crew. For smaller mechs this includes a mech jockey and gunners. A mech jockey with the Mechidextrous feat may be able to take over the role of a gunner.

In larger mechs, crew includes a mech commander (high-level mech jockey), assistant pilots (low-level mech jockeys), a navigator, and one or more engineers, as well as coalmen to stoke the fires. In city-mechs, this includes laborers (who shovel coal into furnaces, fabricate spare parts, and clean engine rooms), a fleet of engineers (for everything from major repairs to routine maintenance), and all sorts of support personnel.



TABLE 2-4: STEAM-POWERED MECHS CRITICAL HITS

Roll by Threshold (D%)				Critical Hit
Green	Yellow	Orange	Red	Result
01-25	01-10	—	—	Component damage. Attack causes extra critical damage but nothing more.
26-40	11-25	—	—	Pressure leak. Mech loses 2 Str and 2.5 ft. of speed each round until leak is repaired.
41-55	26-40	01-15	—	Steam pipe damage. Mech is frozen in place for one round until back-up pipes take over. It loses its next action.
				This applies to all onboard weapons and equipment powered by the main steam engine.
56-75	41-55	16-25	—	Arm relay damage. Determine arm randomly. That arm frozen in place until damage is repaired. Weapons on that arm cannot be used.
76-95	56-70	26-35	—	One leg is damaged. Speed is halved; maneuverability drops by one category.
96-98	71-80	36-45	01-10	Gyroscope damage. Mech must make a Reflex save (DC 16) with every move or fall over. Mech suffers a –4 penalty to trip checks.
99-00	81-85	46-65	11-30	Boiler damage. Mech loses power for 1d4 rounds. It can take no actions during that time.
	86-95	66-75	31-50	Out of control. The pilots lose control. For the next 1d4 rounds, determine the mech's movement and attacks randomly.
	96-98	76-85	51-70	Secondary boiler explosion. A secondary boiler explodes, dealing an additional 3d6 points of damage to the mech.
				Back-up boilers make up for the power loss.
	99-00	86-95	71-85	Steam leak. The entire mech is suddenly flooded with waves of scalding steam. All creatures on board have a 50% chance of taking 1d3 points of steam damage each round. Reroll the 50% chance each round. This continues until the leak is repaired.
		96-98	86-95	Controls damaged. The mech's control room is damaged. The mech cannot be controlled until the damage is repaired.
				It cannot walk, use weapons, or do anything else.
		99-00	96-00	Main boiler explosion. The mech's main boiler explodes. It suffers 10d6 points of damage. All creatures on board the mech suffer 1d6 points of damage from flames and steam. The mech loses all power until the main boiler is repaired. Continuing fires deal an additional 2d6 points of damage to the mech per round for the next 1d6+2 rounds.



TABLE 2-5: STEAM-POWERED MECHS

SIZE	STR	DEX	FORT	REF	SPEED	HD
Large	18	10	+2	-2	40 ft.	6
Huge	22	10	+2	-2	40 ft.	12
Gargantuan	26	8	+2	-2	40 ft.	24
Colossal	30	8	0	-4	50 ft.	48
Colossal II	34	6	0	-4	50 ft.	96
Colossal III	38	6	0	-4	60 ft.	144
Colossal IV	42	4	0	-4	60 ft.	192
Colossal V	46	4	0	-4	80 ft.	240
City-mech A	50	2	-2	-8	100 ft.	336
City-mech B	54	2	-2	-8	120 ft.	432
City-mech C	58	0	-2	-8	140 ft.	528
City-mech D	62	0	-2	-8	160 ft.	624
City-mech E	66	0	-2	-8	180 ft.	718
City-mech F	70	0	-2	-8	200 ft.	814

MAN-POWERED MECHS

Man-powered mechs use hordes of toiling slaves to power their actions. Based on their size, man-powered mechs have the following base profile.

Power Source: Manpower.

Physical Appearance: Man-powered mechs lack the smoke-belching chimneys of steam mechs but they share the noise. In the case of man-powered mechs, the noise is the rhythmic pounding of drums, the grunts and screams of the slaves, and the painful squealing of straining gears.

Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 60%, Orange 35%, Red 20%.

Crew: 50% of a man-powered mech's PU must be laborers. These crew members can do nothing but work to provide power; they cannot pilot, navigate, fire weapons, or do anything else. The balance of necessary crew (pilots, gunners, and commanders, as dictated by the mech's design and the crew's capabilities) must come from the remaining PU. Obviously, this means most man-powered mechs use more than 50% of their PU for crew. In smaller mechs, the



mech jockey and gunners must provide some of the mech's power themselves through pedals or treadmills, in addition to the slaves. Larger man-powered mechs include some additional senior-level staff (a mech commander or navigator), but most of the space is dedicated to slave labor.

TABLE 2-6: MAN-POWERED MECHS

SIZE	STR	DEX	FORT	REF	SPEED	HD
Large	*					
Huge	14	10	0	-2	30 ft.	10
Gargantuan	18	8	0	-2	30 ft.	20
Colossal	22	8	-2	-4	40 ft.	40
Colossal II	26	6	-2	-4	40 ft.	80
Colossal III	30	6	-2	-4	50 ft.	120
Colossal IV	34	4	-2	-4	50 ft.	160
Colossal V	38	4	-2	-4	70 ft.	200
City-mech A	42	2	-4	-8	80 ft.	280
City-mech B	46	2	-4	-8	100 ft.	340
City-mech C	50	0	-4	-8	120 ft.	420
City-mech D	54	0	-4	-8	140 ft.	500
City-mech E	58	0	-4	-8	160 ft.	580
City-mech F	62	0	-4	-8	180 ft.	660

*THE SMALLEST OPERABLE MAN-POWERED MECH IS OF SIZE HUGE. SMALLER MODELS DON'T HAVE SPACE FOR THE NECESSARY LABORERS.

CLOCKWORK MECHS

Clockwork mechs use intricate, complex mechanisms to transmit power from a coiled spring to the rest of the mech. Based on their size, clockwork mechs have the following base profile.

Power Source: Clockwork apparatus.

Physical Appearance: Clockwork mechs are the best designed of all the mechanically-powered mechs. They are smooth and sleek. They don't need as much crew as other mechs, nor do they require chimneys or slave quarters. Under normal operation they produce no smoke or steam, and their only audible output is a constant low hum or ticking. Once per week, a clockwork mech must activate its steam engine to wind the central spring, and for this short interval it belches smoke from a single central chimney. The only drawback to clockwork mechs is their fragility (expressed as a low Fort save) – although they are well constructed and difficult to damage, a well-placed blow against the central spring can disable the entire mech.

Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 50%, Orange 25%, Red 10%.

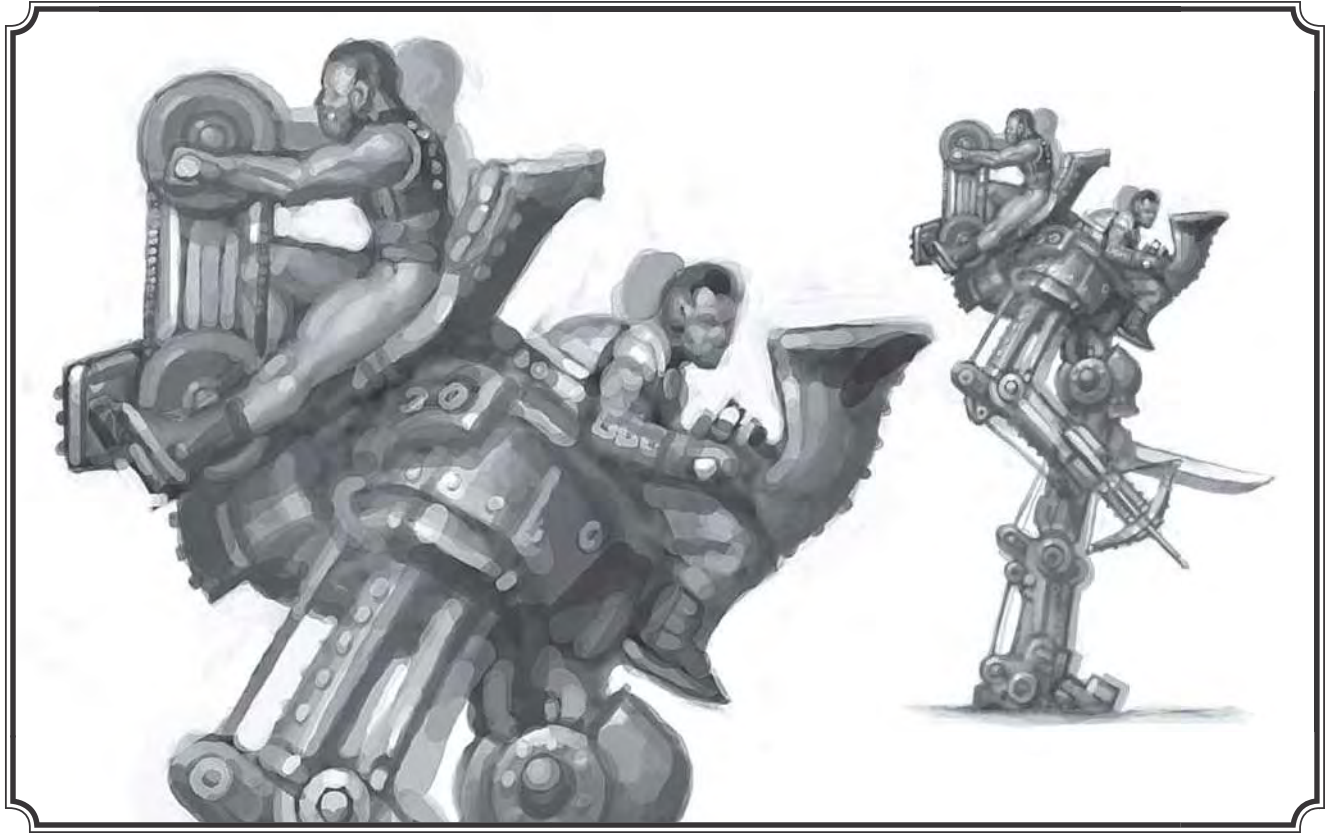


TABLE 2-7: MAN-POWERED MECHS CRITICAL HITS

Roll by Threshold (D%)				Critical Hit
Green	Yellow	Orange	Red	Result
01-30	01-15	–	–	Component damage. Attack causes extra critical damage but nothing more.
31-40	16-25	–	–	Broken cogwheel. Mech loses 2 Str and 2.5 ft. of speed each round until cogwheel is repaired.
41-60	26-35	01-10	–	Impact in rowing pits. The laborers are knocked out of their seats by the impact. Mech is frozen in place until they can get reorganized and start rowing again. It loses power and cannot take any actions for the next 1d3 rounds.
61-75	36-45	11-20	–	Hull breach. The attack goes clear through the hull and impacts in the rowing pits. The mech itself does not take damage, but the damage is instead divided between 1d6 randomly determined laborers. Deduct for hardness as usual.
76-85	46-60	21-30	–	Arm relay damage. Determine arm randomly. That arm is frozen in place until damage is repaired. Weapons on that arm cannot be used.
86-95	61-75	31-40	–	Leg relay damage. Determine leg randomly. That leg is frozen in place until damage is repaired. Weapons on that leg cannot be used. Mech cannot walk and suffers a –4 penalty to trip checks.
96-98	76-80	41-50	01-15	Gyroscope damage. Mech must make a Reflex save (DC 16) with every move or fall over. Suffers a –4 penalty to trip checks.
99-100	81-85	51-75	16-35	Main cogwheel damage. Mech loses power for 1d4 rounds. It can take no actions during that time.
	86-90	76-85	36-45	Out of control. The pilots lose control. For the next 1d4 rounds, determine the mech's movement and attacks randomly.
	91-95	86-90	46-60	Powertrain misaligned. The power output of the laborers is halved. Halve the mech's Strength, Dexterity, and speed until the damage is fixed.
	96-98	91-95	61-80	Controls damaged. The mech's control room is damaged. The mech cannot be controlled until the damage is repaired.
				It cannot walk, use weapons, or do anything else.
	99-100	96-98	81-90	Powertrain destroyed. No matter how hard the laborers work, their manpower isn't properly distributed throughout the mech's gears. The mech is completely immobilized until repaired. Repairs take five times the normal amount of time.
		99-100	91-100	Gear scaffolding destroyed. The scaffolding that supports the huge cogwheels that transfer power throughout the mech collapses.
				Gears come crashing down in all directions. This causes 6d6 points of damage to the mech and another 1d6+3 points of damage each to 2d10 randomly determined crew members. Repairs take ten times the normal amount of time.



CRITICAL HIT

Roll by Threshold (D%)				Critical Hit
Green	Yellow	Orange	Red	Result
01-50	01-25	–	–	Component damage. Attack causes extra critical damage but nothing more.
51-60	26-35	01-10	–	Broken gears. The mech loses 8 Str until repaired.
61-70	36-45	11-20	–	Broken gears. The mech loses 4 Dex and 10 ft. of speed until repaired.
71-80	46-55	21-30	01-10	Erratic spring uncoiling. Mech suffers a –4 penalty to all attacks for 1d4 rounds. Additionally, on any movement action during this period, the mech ends up moving 2d20-20 feet further (or short, depending on the die roll) than where it tried to move.
81-90	56-65	31-40	11-20	Arm relay damage. Determine arm randomly. That arm is frozen in place until damage is repaired. Weapons on that arm cannot be used.
91-100	66-75	41-50	21-30	Leg relay damage. Determine leg randomly. That leg is frozen in place until damage is repaired. Weapons on that leg cannot be used. Mech cannot walk and suffers a –4 penalty to trip checks.
	76-80	51-55	31-40	Regulator damage; massive spring unwinding. The mech's regulator is broken, and the central spring unwinds in a single massive burst of power. The mech is affected as if by a <i>haste</i> spell for 1d4 rounds. Thereafter it loses all power until the damage is repaired and the central spring re-wound.
	81-85	56-60	41-50	Jammed gears. Mech is frozen in place and cannot take any actions for 1d4 rounds.
	86-100	61-75	51-70	Gyroscope damage. Mech must make a Reflex save (DC 16) with every move or fall over. Suffers a –4 penalty to trip checks.
		76-90	71-80	Damage to central spring. The pilots lose control. For the next 1d4 rounds, determine the mech's movement and attacks randomly.
		91-95	81-90	Gear explosion. Shards of sharp metal gears go flying throughout the mech's interior. 2d6 randomly determined occupants take 1d4+1 points of damage.
		96-100	91-100	Central spring severed. Mech loses all power and is completely frozen until damage is repaired. Repairing damage takes ten times normal time.



TABLE 2-9: CLOCKWORK MECHS

SIZE	STR	DEX	FORT	REF	SPEED	HD
Large	18	18	-2	+2	50 ft.	6
Huge	22	18	-2	+2	50 ft.	12
Gargantuan	26	16	-2	+2	50 ft.	24
Colossal	30	16	-4	0	60 ft.	48
Colossal II	34	14	-4	0	60 ft.	96
Colossal III	38	14	-4	0	70 ft.	144
Colossal IV	42	12	-4	0	80 ft.	192
Colossal V	46	12	-4	0	100 ft.	240
City-mech A	50	10	-8	-2	120 ft.	336
City-mech B	54	10	-8	-2	140 ft.	432
City-mech C	58	8	-8	-2	160 ft.	528
City-mech D	62	8	-8	-2	180 ft.	624
City-mech E	66	6	-8	-2	200 ft.	718
City-mech F	70	6	-8	-2	220 ft.	814

Crew: 10% of a clockwork mech's PU must be dedicated to crew, with a minimum of 1. Smaller mechs have only a pilot and one or two gunners. Larger mechs need engineers to keep the clockwork apparatus oiled and functioning.

ANIMATED MECHS

Animated mechs are powered by magic, not machinery. They are essentially enormous, hollow golems that have been endowed with physical mobility and the capacity to obey instructions, but no intelligence or decision-making ability. Based on their size, animated mechs have the following base profile.

Power Source: Magical enchantment.

Physical Appearance: In theory, animated mechs could vary dramatically in appearance. Any material can be enchanted, so any variety of golem could be transformed into a mech. In practice, only the elves have experimented with animated mechs, and they have focused on animating wood. The larger elven mechs could easily be mistaken for treants, though the proportions are more humanoid and the mechs generally sport obvious weapons. Smaller elven mechs look

less like trees, incorporating mithral or adamantine.

Critical Thresholds: Not subject to critical hits.

Crew: 10% of an animated mech's PU must be dedicated to crew, with a minimum of 1. Smaller mechs have only a pilot and one or two gunners. Larger mechs need navigators, a mech commander, assistant pilots, and repairmen.

Animated Mechs Critical Hits
Similar to traditional constructs, animated mechs are not susceptible to critical hits.

They have no central engines or motors, as the magic that powers them courses equally throughout their entire bodies. They are immune to critical hits.

UNDEAD MECHS

Undead mechs are the combined, reanimated remains of several enormous creatures. They are grotesque, ugly combinations of dismembered body parts, bones, ligaments, and partially reanimated zombies. Unlike other undead creatures, they are designed as vehicles. They have hollow spaces within them. In one such space, a necromancer controls every action of the mech, while in other areas, hordes of zombies, skeletons, and other undead are haphazardly piled together, awaiting the command for the mech to disgorge them. Undead mechs are a recent phenomenon, having appeared only since the skeletons of lunar dragons began dotting the continent. No one knows what twisted necromancer took the dwarves' mechanical innovation and turned it into this debased parody.

Based on their size, undead mechs have the following base profile.

Power Source: Necromantic reanimation

TABLE 2-10: ANIMATED MECHS

SIZE	STR	DEX	FORT	REF	SPEED	HD
Large	10	18	0	+2	50 ft.	4
Huge	14	18	0	+2	50 ft.	8
Gargantuan	18	16	0	+2	50 ft.	16
Colossal	22	16	-2	0	60 ft.	32
Colossal II	26	14	-2	0	60 ft.	64
Colossal III	30	14	-2	0	70 ft.	96
Colossal IV	34	12	-2	0	80 ft.	128
Colossal V	38	12	-2	0	100 ft.	160
City-mech A	42	10	-4	-2	120 ft.	224
City-mech B	46	10	-4	-2	140 ft.	288
City-mech C	50	8	-4	-2	160 ft.	352
City-mech D	54	8	-4	-2	180 ft.	416
City-mech E	58	6	-4	-2	200 ft.	580
City-mech F	62	6	-4	-2	220 ft.	644

Size	STR	DEX	FORT	REF	SPEED	HD
Large	14	14	+2	0	30 ft.	5
Huge	18	14	+2	0	30 ft.	10
Gargantuan	22	12	+2	0	30 ft.	20
Colossal	26	12	0	-2	40 ft.	40
Colossal II	30	10	0	-2	40 ft.	80
Colossal III	34	10	0	-2	50 ft.	120
Colossal IV	38	8	0	-2	50 ft.	160
Colossal V	42	8	0	-2	70 ft.	200
City-mech A	46	6	-2	-4	80 ft.	280
City-mech B	50	6	-2	-4	100 ft.	340
City-mech C	54	4	-2	-4	120 ft.	420
City-mech D	58	4	-2	-4	140 ft.	500
City-mech E	62	2	-2	-4	160 ft.	580
City-mech F	66	2	-2	-4	180 ft.	660

Critical Thresholds: Not subject to critical hits.

A mech can be fitted with any kind of armor, though construction costs rise with better armor. Given the armor density and the size of the mech, the armored plates are invariably larger than the impact area of almost any weapon, so the important part is the material, not the arrangement (e.g., banded, scaled, etc.).





Mechs have armor classes based on their size. Because they are generally large and clumsy, their armor is not handled with armor class but instead with a hardness rating. After all, hitting a mech is like hitting the broad side of a barn. Combat isn't about hitting the mech; it's about piercing it. Armor class is still calculated for purposes of attacks, but it is based solely on size.

Typical armors have hardness ratings as follows. Special armors — such as crystal, diamond, and enchanted ivy — are reputed to exist, especially in the Master Repository, but no modern coglayer has constructed a mech with such materials. Remember that the mech's size determines a hardness modifier that is added to the hardness for its armor.

A mech with a mix of armor — for example, 75% iron and 25% mithral — uses the weighted average of its armor types. In this case, its hardness would be 11 (0.75 x 10 plus 0.25 x 15).

MATERIAL	HARDNESS
Flesh*	1
Clay	3
Wood	5
Bone	6
Stone	8
Iron	10
Steel	12
Mithral	15
Adamantine	20

*AVAILABLE ONLY ON UNDEAD MECHS.

Improvements beyond the Base Profile

The standard profiles given above are for a "typical" mech. Of course, no such thing exists. Every mech is individually hand-built. Highpoint has no assembly lines, only master craftsmen. Even when two dwarven coglayers work from the same design, they will produce very different mechs, each customized to the tastes of its builder.

Any mech may vary from the standard profiles described above. Some limits exist,

primarily dictated by the laws of physics. As a rule of thumb, a mech cannot have any attribute greater or lesser than a mech one size class larger or smaller. For example, a normal Colossal clockwork mech has a Strength of 30. A variant couldn't have a Strength smaller than 26 (Gargantuan) or greater than 34 (Colossal II). The reason is simple: A Colossal clockwork mech can't support its own weight with a Strength lower than 26, and can't generate a Strength of greater than 34 without adding additional machinery that will increase its size past Colossal. The same basic concept applies to all of a mech's attributes.

Almost all aspects of a mech may be improved, including payload units and critical threshold. The only aspects that can't be changed are hardness (which is always a function of materials and size), firing ports (which is a function of physical proportions), and crew (which is always dependent on the power source).

The main considerations in improving a mech's profile are cost and difficulty, as described below.

Specialized Traits and Payloads

Armor Plating: A mech can be equipped with extra-thick armor plates that make it more difficult to damage. This can only be added to mechs with metal armor. Such mechs have their hardness increased by +2, but their speed drops by 10 ft. up to size City-Mech A, and by 20 ft. above that. This increases the mech's base cost by 20%.

Combat Spikes: Mechs can be adorned with metal spikes, razor edges, barbs, and other weapons to make them more dangerous in unarmed combat. Mechs equipped with combat spikes deal an extra 1d6 points of damage in unarmed combat. This raises the mech's base price by 10%.

Extra Weapon Mounts: A small combat mech often has extra weapon mounts on the mech's shoulders, back, or head. These give the mech greater versatility in combat, though the limited crew may not be able to use all the weapons in the same round. A mech's extra weapon mounts may not exceed 50% of its base PU. Extra weapon mounts add



PU in increments of 2 at a cost of +10% of the mech's base cost per PU.

Fast Legs: Some mechs deliver extra power to the legs so they'll move faster. The fast legs trait adds 10 ft. to speed for mechs below Colossal size and 20 ft. for mechs of Colossal size or larger. This stacks with the Speed Demon feat. It raises the mech's base cost by 5%.

Gearwright Maintenance: Mechs maintained to the high standards of the Gearwrights Guild are less liable to suffer critical hits. Their critical thresholds are reduced by 5% at each threshold. This requires extra careful building and constant maintenance. It raises the base cost of the mech by 20% and requires an additional 1% of the cost to be spent each year in extra maintenance costs.

Hangars and Mech Fleets: A large mech can hold smaller mechs. These smaller mechs can be used as escape vessels, smaller battle craft, or a fleet of assault mechs. The specifics are up to you when you describe the mech.

A mech stored on board another mech occupies a space equal to twice its payload units. For example, a Huge mech stored on board a city-mech would occupy 8 PU.

Simply storing smaller mechs is only half the problem; a bigger concern is getting them into battle. See page 89 for information on deploying smaller mechs from large mechs while in motion. Installing hangars raises the mech's base cost by 5%.

Heavy Payload: Mechs can be constructed to bear extra weight. A mech with the heavy payload trait can carry up to twice its normal payload units provided they are in the form of cargo rather than weapons or passengers. This represents extra-heavy suspension systems capable of supporting unusual amounts of weight, though space is still just as limited. A heavy payload raises the mech's base cost by 50%. Heavy payload can be stacked with extra weapon mounts, potentially increasing PU by 150%.

Linked Weapons: Weapons with similar functions may be linked. This allows them both to be fired at the same time with the same crew. Linked weapons must always be aimed at the same target.

Magical Effects: Mechs can be magically enchanted just as any other object. The elves

already do this on a routine basis. Their mechs use fireball wands as weapons and are usually enchanted with some sort of protection spells.

When considering spell effects on mechs, keep in mind the mech's size. Casting *protection from elements* on a city-mech isn't going to work. Spells that affect a "creature" cannot affect a creature greater in size than twice the caster's size. For example, a human wizard casting *protection from elements* could affect a Large mech, but that's it. In order to affect a Huge mech, he would have to cast *protection from elements* twice. (Partial protection is no protection at all.) The number of castings doubles at each additional increment. For example, protecting a Colossal mech from the elements requires eight castings of the spell. Those castings must be made consecutively (or simultaneously by different wizards) and declared as combinatory up front, by spellcasters who have the Combine Spell metamagic feat. When the spells are combined they have the effect of only one such spell, but on a very large target.

Secure Crew Quarters: Mechs may be built with secure quarters for crew (and passengers, if the mech has them). This means raiders must get through a solid iron door to get to the crew. The door has hardness 10, 60 hp, and a break DC of 28. The door can be locked but only from the inside; the outside has no keyhole or locking apparatus. Secure crew quarters cost 1 PU and 500 gp for the door apparatus, plus extra PU and another 100 gp for each Medium crew member to be secured. It is possible to secure some crew members and not others. It is also possible to nest multiple layers of secure crew quarters by paying an extra PU for the extra door and an additional 1 PU for each double-protected crew member.

Steady Feet: Some mechs are specially designed for trampling and tripping. They are steady on their feet and hard to dislodge. Mechs with steady feet receive a +4 bonus to all trip checks. Additionally, their safe trample size is increased by one increment (see page 95 for more information on trampling). For example, a Gargantuan mech with steady feet could safely trample creatures up to Medium rather than Small. This raises the mech's base cost by +15%.

Steam Powers: Coglayers can and do incorporate their steam powers into the mechs they build. For most coglayers, the task of building a mech is itself difficult enough, but gearwrights and higher-level coglayers are familiar enough with the process to build in steam powers.

It is perfectly acceptable to combine steam powers with a mech. You could have a mech weapon fitted with an animator and discriminator, or even a mech that has an autopilot of sorts controlled by an automator and other devices.

Remember the mech's size. Fitting steam powers to large weapons or objects may require stacking them to reach the right dimensions. Refer to the individual steam power descriptions.

Steam powers can be applied only to steam powered and clockwork mechs. Clockwork mechs with steam powers are assumed to have the powers customized to fit the clockwork apparatus. They thus can't be applied to normal steam devices without being rebuilt. Man-powered, animated, and undead mechs cannot incorporate steam powers.

Other Specialized Payloads: Most creatures and objects in the d20 rules system include a size descriptor. Generally this can be used as a guideline for the PU of including specialized payloads. If the payload has unusual dimensions or weight, the PU may need to be increased.

CONSTRUCTION AND PRICING GUIDELINES

The first consideration in building a mech is that the designer must meet the design prerequisites. The base prerequisite is the feat Craft Magical Mech (for animated and undead mechs) or Craft Powered Mech (for mechs powered by steam, manpower, or clockwork apparatus). Each of these feats entails certain prerequisites as well.

The designer is not the only person involved in the mech's construction, of course. Dozens, hundreds, or thousands of laborers will be necessary to help build it.

Success in designing a mech is deter-



mined by a Craft (mechcraft) check. A designer does not know whether his design will function properly until after all gold and labor time have been expended to build the mech (more on this below).

Planning Time

The first step is planning the mech — conceptualizing, determining material requirements, drawing blueprints, and so forth. The amount of planning time required, in days, is twice the mech's Craft (mechcraft) check DC (detailed below), reduced by the designer's ranks in Craft (mechcraft). This time occupies the designer and only the designer.

Planning time is required for each kind of mech that a particular engineer wants to build, but is required only once for each mech. Thus, if an engineer were to create three mechs with identical specs, he would only have to invest the planning time once. If another engineer were to make the exact same mech, that other engineer would also have to invest the planning time (which he would spend studying the blueprints, understanding the engine, and so on).

After planning time is over, the designer must remain present on the construction site. He must be present for at least 8 hours of active construction every day. If any day passes where he is not present, the day's labor is wasted. His time is filled overseeing the construction, directing laborers, answering questions, and preventing mistakes.

Labor Contribution

Labor requirements and construction time for mechs is measured in man-hours. A single average laborer can safely contribute 8 man-hours per day. Better laborers can contribute more labor but they often cost more. Daily contribution by laborer type is shown on Table 242.

Overseers: For every ten laborers or fraction thereof (excluding constructs and undead), an overseer is required. The overseer doesn't contribute to the man-hour total but is necessary to keep things running smoothly. Without a full quota of overseers, each group of ten laborers who lack an overseer has its productivity drop by

TABLE 2-12: LABOR CONTRIBUTION

LABORER SKILL LEVEL	DAILY WAGE	DAILY MAN-HOURS	QUALIFICATIONS
Average	1 sp	8	Any able-bodied laborer
Above-average	1 gp	10	5+ ranks in Profession (engineer) or similar skill
Skilled	2 gp	12	10+ ranks
Expert	3 gp	14	15+ ranks
Zombie/skeleton*	—	12	Any mindless undead
Construct**	—	30	Any mindless construct
Overseer (see below)	3 sp/10 men	Special	Leadership score 3+

*ZOMBIES, SKELETONS, AND OTHER MINDLESS UNDEAD ARE FREQUENTLY EMPLOYED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF NECROMANTIC MECHS. THEY AVERAGE HALF THE PRODUCTIVITY OF AVERAGE LABORERS, BUT CAN LITERALLY WORK 24 HOURS A DAY.

**THIS INCLUDES GOLEMS OR OTHER CREATURES ORDERED TO HELP CONSTRUCT A MECH. GENERALLY THEY CAN PERFORM ONLY SIMPLE TASKS, BUT THEY CAN DO THEM QUITE EFFECTIVELY AND FOR NEARLY ENDLESS PERIODS OF TIME. NO MORE THAN 25% OF A MECH'S BUILDING TASKS CAN BE PERFORMED BY CONSTRUCTS; THE REST REQUIRES DETAILED DECISION-MAKING OR FINE DEXTERITY THAT THEY CAN'T HANDLE. THE ABOVE FIGURE ASSUMES THEY ARE WORKING 24 HOURS A DAY ON THEIR MINDLESS TASKS.

25%. For example, a group of twenty laborers needs two overseers. If they lacked both, overall productivity would drop by 25%. If they lacked only one, productivity of half the group would drop by 25%.

It is assumed that at least one overseer can be found in any normal population for any group of ten men that can be found. In special circumstances, however, this may not be the case.

The overseer's leadership score is based on the usual formula: level plus Charisma modifier, plus any modifiers as explained in the DMG.

Overworked Laborers: Laborers who are forced to work more hours eventually become worn down and less productive. For three times the usual wage, a laborer will work double-time, contributing double his usual man-hours. For each day in the first fourteen days of overwork, the laborer must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) or take 1 hp of nonlethal damage. For each day from the fifteenth day onward, the laborer automatically takes 2 hp of nonlethal damage until he collapses. As soon as a laborer takes half his hit points in nonlethal damage, his productivity is cut in half (meaning he'll now have to work a double shift just to produce a normal contribution).

Availability of Labor: Generally, no more than 10% of a population center's labor pool will be above-average or better in quality. No more than 1% will be of expert status.

This small number of experts may still be enough to build small mechs in reasonable time periods, though.

Base Requirements

The base labor and materials costs for constructing a mech, as well as the base DC for a Craft (mechcraft) check, depend on the mech's type and size, as shown in the following tables.

To determine how many laborers are required to produce a mech in a given amount of time, divide the man-hour cost by the daily man-hour contribution (generally 8, as given above). That's how many days of labor are needed. Then divide by the number of laborers available to see how long it will take, or divide by the amount of time you have to determine how many laborers are needed to get a job done in a certain amount of time.

For example, let's say Duerok needed to produce a fleet of Huge mechs quickly. A Huge steam-powered mech requires 960 man-hours. A single average laborer can build such a mech in 120 days of labor ($960 / 8 = 120$). If Duerok needs to have a single Huge mech available within 12 days, it needs to put 10 laborers to work ($960 / 8 / 12 = 10$). If it needs five Huge mechs within 12 days, it needs to have 50 laborers working ($(960 \times 5) / 8 / 12 = 50$).

On the other hand, let's say Duerok has a long-term plan of building another city-mech of size D. With a single average laborer, this takes



122,880 days of building (983,040 man-hours divided by 8 for an average laborer). If Duerok allocates 100 men to the project, they will complete the city-mech in 1,229 days (122,880 / 100 = 1,229), or a little less than three and a half years. 1,000 men could complete the project in 123 days (122,880 / 1,000 = 123).

Once you know the laborers' skill levels and the number of days they will be working, you can compute the gp cost of labor per the daily wage for each laborer type (given on Table 2-12).

Materials costs are based primarily on use of iron. Wood and stone are also used, but the primary cost driver is iron. One pound of iron costs 1 sp, as detailed in the *PHB*. In general, the materials cost multiplied by 10 indicates the number of pounds of iron required to build the mech. For clockwork mechs, multiply by 9 pounds. Necromantic mechs require no iron, just an awful lot of corpses (see below).

Materials costs are strictly material costs. They don't include labor or the cost of acquiring the materials. Transporting 1,536,000 pounds of iron to build a city-mech is going to cost quite a bit, even if your build site is located right next to a mine. Material requirements for city-mechs might also be greater than a region can produce in a year, requiring waiting time to acquire the materials even if labor is available to build them faster.

Once calculated, labor times sometimes seem high. Keep in mind that building a mech is much more complicated than building a house. The mechanisms are intricate and detailed, and most laborers have little to no experience in constructing such designs. Furthermore, the mech's metal infrastructure must be smelted, shaped, cooled, reheated, reshaped, and continually worked until it is in the right position. Warping wood can be just as time-consuming. In a world where workshops for performing these tasks are still uncommon, it takes longer than one would expect.

Steam-powered mechs are expensive and time-consuming. They are difficult to construct at any size.

Man-powered mechs require half the materials and labor of steam-powered

TABLE 2-13: MECH TYPE: STEAM-POWERED

SIZE	LABOR COST (MAN-HOURS)	MATERIALS COST (GP)	MECHCRAFT DC
Large	480	300	30
Huge	960	600	33
Gargantuan	1,920	1,200	36
Colossal	3,840	2,400	39
Colossal II	7,680	4,800	42
Colossal III	15,360	9,600	45
Colossal IV	30,720	19,200	50
Colossal V	61,440	38,400	55
City-mech A	122,880	76,800	60
City-mech B	245,760	153,600	65
City-mech C	491,520	307,200	70
City-mech D	983,040	614,400	75
City-mech E	1,966,080	1,228,800	80
City-mech F	3,932,160	2,457,600	85

TABLE 2-14: MECH TYPE: MAN-POWERED

SIZE	LABOR COST (MAN-HOURS)	MATERIALS COST (GP)	MECHCRAFT DC
Large	240	150	24
Huge	480	300	28
Gargantuan	960	600	32
Colossal	1,920	1,200	36
Colossal II	3,840	2,400	41
Colossal III	7,680	4,800	46
Colossal IV	15,360	9,600	51
Colossal V	30,720	19,200	56
City-mech A	61,440	38,400	61
City-mech B	122,880	76,800	66
City-mech C	245,760	153,600	73
City-mech D	491,520	307,200	81
City-mech E	983,040	614,400	89
City-mech F	1,966,080	1,228,800	99

TABLE 2-15: MECH TYPE: ANIMATED

SIZE	LABOR COST (MAN-HOURS)	MATERIALS COST (GP)	MECHCRAFT DC
Large	480	300	26
Huge	960	600	30
Gargantuan	1,920	1,200	34
Colossal	3,840	2,400	38
Colossal II	7,680	4,800	42
Colossal III	15,360	9,600	46
Colossal IV	30,720	19,200	50
Colossal V	61,440	38,400	54
City-mech A	122,880	76,800	58
City-mech B	245,760	153,600	62
City-mech C	491,520	307,200	66
City-mech D	983,040	614,400	70
City-mech E	1,966,080	1,228,800	74
City-mech F	3,932,160	2,457,600	78



TABLE 2-16: MECH TYPE: CLOCKWORK

SIZE	LABOR COST (MAN-HOURS)	MATERIALS COST (GP)	MECHCRAFT DC
Large	960	800	40
Huge	1,920	1,600	44
Gargantuan	3,840	3,200	48
Colossal	7,680	6,400	52
Colossal II	15,360	12,800	54
Colossal III	30,720	25,600	56
Colossal IV	61,440	51,200	60
Colossal V	122,880	102,400	64
City-mech A	245,760	204,800	68
City-mech B	491,520	409,600	72
City-mech C	983,040	819,200	76
City-mech D	1,966,080	1,638,400	80
City-mech E	3,932,160	3,276,800	82
City-mech F	7,864,320	6,553,600	86

mechs. They are relatively easy to build at smaller sizes but become progressively more difficult as the size increases. It takes an expert engineer to design a city-mech that can be powered by human labor.

Clockwork mechs are much more labor-intensive than other mechs. They require careful, detailed work. Moreover, they are far more expensive, requiring higher quality materials and more of them. All of these factors together make them much more difficult to build.

Animated mechs are rather simple in construction, resulting in a low Mechcraft

DC, but they require precision fitting and top-notch materials in order for the necessary enchantments to take hold. Thus, their labor and material costs are comparable to steam-powered mechs. They also require certain magical components, as detailed later.

Necromantic mechs require very little labor — mostly just to arrange the corpses into the proper positions for reanimation — and their materials are measured in Medium corpses, not gold. The Mechcraft DC is also rather low, but the spellcasting requirements (detailed later) are not.

TABLE 2-17: MECH TYPE: UNDEAD

SIZE	LABOR COST (MAN-HOURS)	MATERIALS COST (CORPSES)	MECHCRAFT DC
Large	240	4	26
Huge	480	8	30
Gargantuan	960	16	34
Colossal	1,920	32	38
Colossal II	3,840	64	42
Colossal III	7,680	128	46
Colossal IV	15,360	256	50
Colossal V	30,720	512	54
City-mech A	61,440	1,024	58
City-mech B	122,880	2,048	62
City-mech C	245,760	4,096	66
City-mech D	491,520	8,192	70
City-mech E	983,040	16,384	74
City-mech F	1,966,080	32,768	78

INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Few mechs have standard profile for their sizes. Most are slightly different in one regard or another. If a mech's Str, Dex, Fort save, Ref save, speed, or HD is different from its size standard, use the following steps to determine the added labor and materials costs. Complete all steps for both labor and materials.

1. Divide the labor cost and materials cost for the mech's size and type by 6. This is the base incremental cost.

For example, a standard Gargantuan clockwork mech has a Strength of 26. A special model built by Habiddy Higgerbuilder has a Strength of 29, which is close to that of a Colossal mech. For step 1 you would divide the labor cost of a standard Gargantuan clockwork mech (3,840) by 6, for a result of 640 man-hours.

2. Find the difference between the mech's standard attribute value and the value for the nonstandard mech. This is the nonstandard difference.

Habiddy Higgerbuilder's mech has a Strength of 29 versus a standard Strength of 26, for a difference of 3.

3. Find the difference between the mech's standard attribute value and the standard value for the next size increment. This is the standard difference.

A standard Gargantuan clockwork mech has a Strength of 26, while a standard Colossal clockwork mech has a Strength of 30, for a difference of 4.

4. Divide the nonstandard difference by the standard difference to get a percentage value. 3 divided by 4 is 75%.

5. The extra cost is that percentage of the base incremental cost (from step 1).

The cost is 75% of 640 man-hours, or 480 extra man-hours. The same percentage applies to the extra gold cost.

The DC of building a mech with incremental improvements is automatically the average of the DCs for a standard mech of that size and the standard mech of one size larger. The DC for building a mech with incremental deficiencies (e.g., lower Strength than usual) is the same as the base DC for that size.



Armor

Once a mech's basic chassis is built, the armor costs are factored in. Applying armor is part of the basic labor requirements of a mech, but it is not included in the materials cost. Armor cost is fixed according to a mech's size, as shown on Table 2-18.

Base Cost

A mech's base cost is defined as the cost of labor, materials, and armor. This becomes relevant when considering improvements to its profile or specialized traits.

Final Cost

The final cost for a mech is determined by adding labor cost, materials cost, and armor cost. The cost of incremental improvements and weapons is then added to the total, as are any specialized payloads. To all this is added a fixed cost, which covers workspace, tools, scaffolding, magical components (where appropriate), and other such things. The fixed cost depends on the mech's type, as follows:

Steam-powered	2,000 gp
Man-powered	750 gp
Clockwork	4,000 gp
Animated	20,000 gp
Undead	10,000 gp

The sum of all of these variables is the mech's final cost.

Animated Mechs

Animated mechs have an additional requirement. The creator must have the feat *Craft Wondrous Item*. If the animated mech will incorporate any magical weapons (as is often the case), the designer must also have the relevant feats (*Craft Wand*, *Craft Magic Arms or Armor*, or others as appropriate). Additionally, the spells *geas/quest* and *polymorph any object* must be cast. If the mech is smaller than a city-mech, *limited wish* is also required; if city-mech sized or larger, *wish* is required.

In addition to the construction time outlined above, animated mechs require additional time for magical rituals. Only the creator can conduct these rituals. The time required varies according to the mech's size:

MECH SIZE	RITUAL CASTING TIME
Large	1 day
Huge	2 days
Gargantuan	3 days
Colossal	4 days
Colossal II	5 days
Colossal III	6 days
Colossal IV	7 days
Colossal V	8 days

City-mech A	9 days
City-mech B	10 days
City-mech C	11 days
City-mech D	12 days
City-mech E	13 days
City-mech F	14 days

Finally, animated mechs are vulnerable to *dispel magic* (see page 96). The elves learned this lesson the hard way after dwarven spellcasters were deployed on board Stenian combat mechs. The *dispel* effect is temporary, but the window of vulnerability is often enough to lose a mech. Some creators now imbue their mechs with magical immunity, similar to that of a golem. This is possible *only* with animated mechs and is a byproduct of their creation rituals.

Granting an animated mech magic immunity raises the cost by 30,000 gp, doubles the length of the necessary rituals, and grants the following benefits:

Magical Immunity (Ex): A mech with this descriptor is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects.

It is not possible to construct animated mechs with built-in spell abilities (such as *protection from evil*) and magical immunity. Note that the magical immunity does not prevent the mech from using magic items (such as a *fireball wand*) provided the item does not affect the mech.

TABLE 2-18: ARMOR COST BY MECH SIZE (IN GP)

SIZE	MATERIAL*	FLESH**	CLAY/BONE**	WOOD	STONE	IRON	STEEL
Large		0	5	10	20	40	50
Huge		0	10	20	40	80	100
Gargantuan		0	20	40	80	160	200
Colossal		0	40	80	160	320	400
Colossal II		0	80	160	320	640	800
Colossal III		0	160	320	640	1,280	1,600
Colossal IV		0	320	640	1,280	2,560	3,200
Colossal V		0	640	1,280	2,560	5,120	6,400
City-mech A		0	1,280	2,560	5,120	10,240	12,800
City-mech B		0	2,560	5,120	10,240	20,480	25,600
City-mech C		0	5,120	10,240	20,480	40,960	51,200
City-mech D		0	10,240	20,480	40,960	81,920	102,400
City-mech E		0	20,480	40,960	81,920	163,840	204,800
City-mech F		0	40,960	81,920	163,840	327,680	409,600

*MITHRAL AND ADAMANTINE ARE NOT LISTED. MECHS ARE RARELY BUILT ENTIRELY OF THESE MATERIALS. MITHRAL COSTS TWENTY TIMES STEEL, WHILE ADAMANTINE COSTS FIFTY TIMES STEEL.

**FLESH AND BONE ARMOR ARE POSSIBLE ONLY ON NECROMANTIC MECHS.

Necromantic Mechs

Necromantic mechs have an additional requirement. The creator must have the feat *Craft Wondrous Item*. If the necromantic mech will incorporate any magical weapons (as is often the case), the designer must also have the relevant feats (*Craft Wand*, *Craft Magic Arms or Armor*, or others as appropriate). Additionally, the spells *animate dead*, *animate objects*, *bane*, *geas/quest*, and *resurrection* must be cast.

In addition to the construction time outlined above, undead mechs require additional time for magical rituals. Only the creator can conduct these rituals. The time required varies according to the mech's size, as with animated mechs.



Making the Mechcraft Check

Once a mech has been constructed, and after all labor has been completed and all gold spent, the creator makes a Craft (mechcraft) check. The check to determine whether the mech is successfully built is made using the creator's Craft (mechcraft) skill. This is similar to an architect building a skyscraper or a mechanic building a race car: although dozens or hundreds of laborers are toiling under his direction, it is the character's planning and technical insight that ultimately determine whether the design is successful. The laborers are assumed to be competent enough to follow his instructions — that's why the designer must be there every day, and why he must employ overseers — so no modifier is needed for construction error. It all comes down to the designer's skill in crafting mechs.

If the check is made, the creator's construction has been successful.

If this check is failed by 5 or less, the mech is inoperable but can be repaired. The creator can spend another 20% of the mech's cost and make another check one month later.

If this check is failed by a margin of 6 or more, the mech's basic design is inoperable. All labor and materials costs are wasted. The materials can be recovered by spending one third of the labor costs necessary to build the mech, but otherwise, the whole project is a waste. A new attempt must start at square one with the planning stage.

It is possible to take 10 or take 20 on this check, but doing so delays all aspects of the mech's construction by a factor of 10 or 20, from planning to labor costs. In most cases, this produces completely unreasonable timespans, unless the creator has an extra 10 to 20 times more laborers than he needs.

BUILDING ONTO AN EXISTING MECH

Most mech jockeys take to modifying their creations, especially adventurers who recover neat parts from defeated mechs. Building onto an existing mech is a simple process. The cost of adding any

new trait, attribute change (such as making the mech stronger), or special payload is calculated according to the standard process (given above). If an addition requires removing an existing trait or piece of equipment (such as a weapon occupying a certain slot), one third of the original labor cost for that piece of equipment must be paid. (If the original per-item equipment cost is not known, the GM can decide that it is 5%, 10%, or more of the overall labor cost.) This covers removal costs. Then the cost of the new piece is added. If necessary, a new Mechcraft check is made, but usually minor changes don't require a check.

Only two changes simply cannot be made to an existing mech, as follows.

First, you cannot change an existing mech's size. This is determined by the basic infrastructure, which cannot be altered without rebuilding the entire mech.

Second, you cannot change an existing mech's power source, except to downgrade it to man-powered. The nature of the power source affects building decisions made when the mech is first constructed. These cannot be altered without rebuilding the mech from the ground up.

Other than that, all aspects of a mech may be modified over time.

Personalizing Mechs

Player characters with mechs are encouraged to personalize them. Aside from customized weapons or payloads, this can cover the full range of appearance. Paint color, pattern, and detail are immediate choices. Do you prefer camouflage, kettle-black with chrome lining, or "red because it makes it go faster"? Ornamental features can include spikes, trophies from defeated opponents, animal skins, totems, firing baskets, cupolas, skulls, chains, chrome, racing stripes, exposed engines, thick armor, living vegetation, kill marks, painted insignia, or customized imagery (such as the shark's teeth on WW2 fighter jets). Since **DragonMech** is set in medieval times, you can also include chivalric heralds, coats of arms, banners, and flags.

Finally, you have the ultimate personalization: a name. Most mech jockeys name their

mechs, especially those that have performed well in battle. Mechs usually aren't named until after several encounters, at which point the mech's name will "reveal itself" in the events of the combat.

In the end, your characters should be left piloting mechs that are known far and wide as theirs and only theirs.

MECH COMBAT

Mechs are extremely difficult to destroy. Their hardness ratings sap the damage of any attacks. Their immense sizes and corresponding high hit dice grant them practically inexhaustible reservoirs of hit points. Luckily, destroying them isn't always the goal. They are extremely valuable to both sides of most conflicts, so capturing enemy mechs is just as important as destroying them. Tripping and entangling mechs are important combat tactics, as are boarding actions.

When destruction does matter, the best most enemies can hope for is to pound, pound, and pound again until the mech has passed its yellow critical threshold, at which point criticals become far more likely. Mechs that all generally do so due to internal critical damage.

Mech combat varies little from the standard combat rules. This book is a role-playing game, not a tactical wargame, so it assumes that most mech combats incorporate no more than a handful of combatants. In other words, it isn't designed for mass mech combat. Future supplements will describe large-scale mech-to-mech combat at a strategic level. For the time being, this section describes how to incorporate mechs into the standard combat sequence without much difficulty.

SUMMARY OF MECH COMBAT ROLLS

Mech initiative = mech's Dexterity modifier + pilot's Dexterity modifier + relevant pilot feats (e.g., Improved Initiative).



TABLE 2-19: SUMMARY OF MECH-RELATED CHECKS

CONDITION	SKILL/ABILITY	BASE DC*	PAGE
Move mech through difficult terrain	Mech Pilot	10	87
Move mech through extremely difficult terrain	Mech Pilot	20	87
Climb in a mech	Mech Pilot	As Climb +4	88
Jump in a mech	Mech Pilot	10 + 5/stride	88
Bull rush in a mech	Mech Pilot	Enemy's bull rush result	88
Dock mech on a city-mech	Mech Pilot	15	88
Avoid being trampled on failed docking	Reflex	5	88
Deploy mech from a city-mech	Mech Pilot	10	89
Pry open a mech's porthole	Strength	28 (break)	92
Climb up a mech's legs	Climb	15	93
Hook a mech with a grappling hook	Ranged touch attack	—	93
Grab hold of a passing mech	Dex/Jump	15	93
Ride a moving mech w/out Mech Rider feat	Balance	10	96
Avoid being trampled after falling off mech	Reflex	10	96
Target a specific visible crew member past 100 ft.	Spot	15	93
Target randomly determined visible crew	Spot	10	93
Avoid mech's called shot to crew compartment	Reflex	Opposed	91
Trip a mech with another mech	Standard trip check	—	94
Right a downed mech	Mech Pilot	20	94
Infantry pull down a mech	Cooperative trip check	—	95
Dodge a mech's trample attack	Reflex/Mech Pilot	15	95
Mech trample a target above its safe range	Reflex	10	95
Dispel animated mech (smaller than city-mech)	Dispel check	26	96
Dispel animated mech (city-mech or larger)	Dispel check	28	96
Dispel undead mech	Dispel check	24	96

*PLUS ANY MODIFIERS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT.

Mech AC = 10 + mech size modifier + pilot's Dex modifier if he has Mech Dancer feat

Mech melee attack modifier = mech's Strength modifier + mech's size modifier + gunner's Dexterity modifier + gunner's mech attack bonus.

Mech ranged attack modifier = mech's Dexterity modifier + gunner's Dexterity modifier + gunner's mech attack bonus.

MOVING A MECH

Moving a mech isn't always as easy as it might seem. Bad terrain can disable even the mightiest of mechs, obstructions can block their passage, and a simple charge can knock one over.

Fuel Sources

Steam-powered mechs require fuel. A Huge mech requires 1 ton of coal for every 24 hours of continuous operation. Each size increment higher doubles the requirement. Thus, for normal 8-hour days, a Huge mech uses 1 ton every three days, while a Gargantuan mech uses 2 tons every three days. A ton of coal costs between 20 and 200 gp, depending on local conditions and availability.

Wood can also be used, but it is less effective. A mech requires three times as much wood as coal. Wood costs 20 to 100 gp per ton (see page 139).

A mech's fuel bins are designed to hold nine days' worth of coal (or three days of wood). Extra space can be converted at the rate of a half-ton per PU.

Difficult Terrain

Difficult terrain is even more difficult for a mech, because if it falls over then it's vulnerable. Terrain as far as mechs is concerned is defined as follows:

Passable: Even plains, light underbrush, roads, bedrock, clifftops, other flat areas.

Difficult: Forests, thick undergrowth, light to moderate hills, snow, shallow sand.

Extremely difficult: Steep slopes, jungle, deep sand or desert, rocky or uneven terrain, mud, swamp.

Note that the size of the mech determines the scale of the terrain that counts as difficult. For example, a one-man mech might have trouble with a soft, sandy beach, but it takes a field of enormous boulders to create difficult terrain for a city-mech. Most city-mechs can ignore even forests and steep slopes; only mountains, seas, or unusually



large objects (such as castles and redwood trees) get in their way.

There is no penalty for going through passable terrain.

Traveling through difficult terrain requires a Mech Pilot skill check every hour (DC 10). Failure by 5 or less means the mech's speed is halved as it picks its way through the terrain. Failure by more than 5 means the mech falls over (see below under "Downed Mechs").

Traveling through extremely difficult terrain requires a Mech Pilot check every hour (DC 20). *Passing* the check means the mech's speed is halved. Failure by 5 or less means the mech's speed is quartered. Failure by more than 5 means the mech falls over.

Running raises the DC by 4. Fighting in melee raises the DC by 2 and necessitates a check every round.

Stepping over Obstructions

A mech's legs can clear obstructions much higher than can the common man. The exact height depends on its maneuverability class, as listed on page 73. Obstructions up to this height can literally be stepped over at movement cost equal to the height but no other necessary check. Obstructions taller than this must be climbed.

A mech's stride is equal to its reach. It can clear this distance with a single step. Greater distances require a horizontal jump.

Running and Charging

A mech's top speed is double its listed speed. With a run action it moves at double speed, no faster. Mechs moving this fast suffer a -2 penalty to all ranged attack rolls, and their maneuverability class is considered one worse while running.

Steam-powered and clockwork mechs can move at double speed for a maximum duration of one out of every three hours. Any longer will overheat their engines. Man-powered mechs can run for only one half-hour out of every six hours. Any faster will start causing nonlethal damage to the laborers at the rate of 1d4 points per half hour. Undead and animated mechs can run indefinitely.

Mechs can charge as normal, though the above conditions apply.

Climbing

Mechs with arms and maneuverability of perfect or good can climb. This requires a Mech Pilot check against the same DCs listed under the Climb skill, except that a +4 penalty is applied to the DC to reflect the limited mobility of the mech, and the mech's maneuverability penalty (if any) is applied to the roll.

Failing a climbing attempt can be devastating. The mech falls. The usual 1d6 damage per 10 feet fallen, up to 20d6, applies. This damage penetrates hardness. In addition, for every 6 that comes up, the mech takes one critical hit (against whatever critical threshold it was in before the fall).

Jumping

Mechs of sufficient maneuverability can jump. Vertical jumps aren't even up for discussion; there simply isn't enough lift in any engine for mechs to make reasonable vertical jumps.

Horizontal jumps are possible with a Mech Pilot skill check. Jumps up to double the mech's stride (a mech's stride is equal to its reach, which is half its height) are DC 10, triple its stride is DC 15, quadruple is DC 20, and quintuple is DC 25. No mech can jump more than five times its stride. A running start of at least equal to the distance to be jumped is required.

The pilot must make a Mech Pilot check, minus any modifiers for the mech's maneuverability class.

If the check succeeds, the mech jumps and lands OK.

If the check fails by 5 or less, the mech falls short but does not fall over.

If the check fails by more than 5, the mech falls short and automatically falls over. Roll 1d6 to determine its facing when it lands (see page 94). The pilot does not get a check to see if he can adjust its position as it falls.

Bull Rushing

Bull rushing isn't advisable in a mech unless you're prepared to go down. After the bull rush is resolved, both the attacker and defender must make Mech Pilot checks to retain their balance upon impact. If either

fails, that mech is downed. The DC for each check is the *other mech's* bull rush result.

For example, let's say a Gargantuan mech with Str 24 (Str bonus +7, size bonus +12) bull rushes a Huge mech with Str 20 (Str bonus +5, size bonus +8). The Gargantuan mech rolls 14, which gives it a result of 33 after bonuses. The Huge mech rolls 8, which gives it a result of 21. The Gargantuan mech pushes back the Huge mech. To keep himself from falling over, the Gargantuan mech must make a Mech Pilot check against DC 21. The Huge mech must make a Mech Pilot check against DC 33.

Obviously, smaller mechs tend to fall over more easily. But with a lucky roll, the smaller mech can lose the bull rush and still watch the attacker fall over. Bull rushing is a dangerous maneuver in a vehicle as clumsy as a mech.

Docking on a City-mech

City-mechs have docking bays where smaller mechs can anchor themselves. Getting onto one of these docking bays is a frightening task. The bays are attached to the city-mech's feet or ankles, meaning they swing huge vertical distances as the mech walks. A boarding mech must time its movement to the city-mech's, then jump onto the docking bay at just the right moment. One misstep can mean being crushed by the city-mech's foot. Only veteran pilots make these docking attempts.

The docking bay drops to within 10 feet of ground level. On even terrain, a mech with at least a 10-foot clearance can simply step onto the mech. Uneven terrain makes gauging the distance more difficult. Note that a mech's vertical clearance depends on its maneuverability and its height, as described above; generally, any mech of Colossal II size or larger can clear 10 feet even if it is clumsy, with the clearance of smaller mechs varying.

A mech without 10 feet of vertical clearance must jump to make the docking bay. This is even more dangerous; if the jump fails, the mech cannot even attempt to dock and must make the Reflex save described below (DC 5) or be crushed by the city-mech.

Once a mech has sufficient vertical clearance to dock (whether through stepping or

mech at all (not even a 5-foot step). This isn't a question of moving and shooting at a penalty; the character simply cannot do both. He lacks the coordination and concentration. In order for the mech to both move and fire in



the same round, a gunner must be controlling the weapons.

With the Mechwalker feat, a pilot can operate one weapon in the same round he moves (provided the cockpit is physically designed to give him access to the necessary controls). He may move the mech up to double its normal speed (a mech's running speed), but if so he suffers a -2 penalty to ranged attack rolls (the usual penalty for a running mech). If the mech is to fire more than one weapon per round, it needs gunners for the excess weapons.

With the Mechdextrous feat, a pilot can operate two weapons in the same round he moves (provided the cockpit is set up to allow this). A -3 penalty applies to both attack rolls. No pilot can operate more than two weapons at once, unless they are linked to fire as one.

Initiative

A mech has a base initiative score determined by its Dexterity. The pilot's modifiers are then added to this:

Mech initiative = mech's Dexterity modifier + pilot's Dexterity modifier + relevant pilot feats (e.g., Improved Initiative).

Only one initiative roll is made for each mech. All characters on board the mech fight on that initiative count. If a boarding action is ongoing and there is combat inside the mech, you may roll a "subinitiative" to determine order of movement inside the mech. Within the greater conflict, however, all actions in the mech are assumed to take place at the same time.

Armor Class

A mech's armor class is determined solely by its size modifier, unless the pilot has the Mech Dancer feat. The mech's Dexterity does not modify its armor class. In the context of mechs, Dexterity has more to do with the ease of aiming a massive mechanical arm than the ability to dodge attacks. Even a "dexterous" mech is a big, clunky machine. Thus, the mech's Dexterity affects its attack rolls but not its AC. Since most mechs have low Dexterity to begin with, this also helps offset the effects of relying on hardness instead of

giving them an armor bonus to AC.

Mech AC = 10 + mech size modifier (+ pilot's Dex modifier if he has Mech Dancer feat).

Because mech armor is so thick (and the mech itself is built of metal), these rules rely more on hardness than armor class for combat with mechs. Besides, mechs are enormous ... they ought to be easy to hit.

Attack Rolls

A mech's attack bonuses are determined slightly differently than with other creatures. First, a few general rules:

- In mech combat, you always add the gunner's Dexterity modifier to attack rolls, whether it's melee or ranged. The gunner's Strength modifiers are never added (though the mech's Strength modifiers are).
- For weapons with a crew, use the highest Dexterity among the crew.
- In mech combat, you don't use base attack bonus. You use mech attack bonus. Some classes have a separate mech attack bonus characteristic (mech jockeys, mech devils, assimilated). All other classes use half their base attack bonus, rounded down, for their mech attack bonus.
- A gunner must be proficient with his weapon or take the usual -4 penalty.
- Note the distinction when these rules discuss pilot (of which there is never more than one per mech) and gunner (of which a mech may have several).

Melee: A mech's melee attack bonus is determined as follows:

Mech melee attack modifier = mech's Strength modifier + mech's size modifier + gunner's Dexterity modifier + gunner's mech attack bonus.

If the gunner is a mech jockey, mech devil, or assimilated character, he has a separate mech attack bonus. Otherwise, his mech attack bonus is equal to half his base attack bonus, rounded down (except for characters with the Mechanized Combat Practice feat). A fighter who trains for decades with every known weapon is awesome in a swordfight, but he's useless with a set of levers and a joystick. The kines-
thetic feel, tactical sense, and raw skill that

result from normal combat have little application to machines the heights of buildings with strange anatomies, timedelayed responses to gunner input, and jerky motions.

No base attack bonus is determined by the mech's hit dice. The gunner's Dexterity modifier is included because mechs are powered by joysticks, handles, and other sorts of controls. It's a lot like playing a video game. The mech's Strength affects how well it penetrates enemy armor, but the gunner's Dexterity affects how accurately he maneuvers those powerful mech arms.

Note that some weapons do not use the mech's Strength (such as buzzsaws). This is noted in the weapon descriptions.

Ranged: A mech's ranged attack bonus is determined as follows:

Mech ranged attack modifier = mech's Dexterity modifier + gunner's Dexterity modifier + gunner's mech attack bonus.

The mech's Dexterity is used because it determines how finely the mech's weapons can be positioned and aimed. The gunner's ability to work the controls (based on his Dexterity) may offset the mech's basic clumsiness.

Multiple Attacks: Classes with mech attack bonuses can receive multiple attacks with mech weapons, per the usual rules. Classes without mech bonuses never receive more than one attack per round with their mech weapons, regardless of base attack bonus or number of attacks.

Mech Profiles: Each mech profile on page 98 includes a base melee attack and base ranged attack entry. These include all modifiers due to the mech. The pilot's modifiers are then added to these to determine the net modifier.

Attacks of Opportunity

Attacks of opportunity between mechs are generally resolved normally, with a few important exceptions.

- A mech firing a ranged mech weapon into melee does *not* provoke an attack of opportunity.
- A mech may not take attacks of opportunity against creatures boarding it or attacking it. The mech does not have the



agility to strike targets on itself (and even if it did, it would risk damage to itself), nor can it react quickly enough.

- A mech's unarmed attacks do not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Grappling

Mechs can not grapple. They are not flexible enough really to restrain one another. Moreover, grappling would invariably result in them both prone on the ground, which nobody wants.

Called Shots

It is possible to target a specific component of a mech — its steam cannon, left arm, right knee, cockpit. Rules for targeting a specific crewmember are described on page 93; in general, a Spot check is necessary to pick out a human-sized creature on a large moving object like a mech.

Targeting larger elements is easier. Any major component of a mech (equal to twice the size of a human or larger) can be targeted with a called shot. Smaller components require a Spot check (DC 10–15, depending on size) in order to pick them out of the whirling morass of potential targets.

Called shots are automatically full-round actions. By pausing to aim its next shot carefully, the attacker provokes an attack of opportunity. Finally, a –4 penalty applies to the attack roll.

If the attack hits, the GM resolves the effects. Generally an attack upon a weapon may cause damage to the weapon, an attack on an arm may damage the arm, and so on. Called shots against the boiler have no additional effect on most mechs, since it is one of the best-armored parts of the mech.

The most effective target for called shots is the cockpit or gunner's ports. In this case the attacking mech specifically tries to damage the mech's interior so that it can hit crew inside. In most cases, only piercing weapons are capable of reaching deeply enough into the mech to damage the crew; some slashing weapons may work depending on the mech's design.

If a called shot against a crew area succeeds, the crew in that area must make opposed Reflex saves with the attacking

mech. This determines their ability to dodge the mech's weapon as it tries to fillet them. Each crew member who passes the opposed save escapes damage. Those who fail, however, split the mech's damage roll with the mech. Half damage from the attack is divided equally between all affected crew members, with the rest going to the mech.

For example, a defending mech has a cockpit with three crew and a separate gunner's compartment with two crew. The attacking mech uses a piercing weapon to strike the cockpit. The attack succeeds and the player rolls 28 points of damage. If any of the crew members fail their saves, 14 points will be divided between them. The three crew members each make a Reflex save, opposed by the mech's single Reflex save. Two of the crew fail. Therefore, each of those two takes 7 points of damage. The remaining 14 points go to the mech, less its hardness of 10. So the mech takes 4 points of damage from the strike, while two crew members each take 7 points.

Basic Mech Combat Summary

Normal pilots can either move or fire a mech.

With the *Mechwalker* feat, a pilot can move a mech in the same round he fires a weapon.

With the *Mechidextrous* feat, a pilot can move a mech in the same round he fires two weapons.

–2 penalty to ranged attacks when running or charging in a mech.

Mech initiative = mech's Dexterity modifier + pilot's Dexterity modifier + relevant pilot feats (e.g., Improved Initiative).

Mech AC = 10 + mech size modifier (+ pilot's Dex modifier if he has *MechDancer* feat).

Mech melee attack modifier = mech's Strength modifier + mech's size modifier + gunner's Dexterity modifier + gunner's mech attack bonus.

Mech ranged attack modifier = mech's Dexterity modifier + gunner's Dexterity modifier + gunner's mech attack bonus.

Called shots suffer a –4 penalty and provoke an attack of opportunity; targeted crew areas receive opposed Reflex saves to escape damage

Critical Hits

Most mechs are machines. As their defenses degrade, their most vulnerable components become exposed. This is dangerous and increases the likelihood that they will suffer critical hits.

In the traditional rules, constructs (a category that includes mechs) are immune to critical hits. This rule was developed in the paradigm of magical constructs such as golems, which are animated lumps of iron or clay with no internal anatomy of which to speak.

Most mechs are different. Like a car, they have a very specific "anatomy" with some parts that are more important than others. You can detach the battery from a running car without slowing it down — but if you damage the alternator, then it's game over. Mechs function similarly, though the parts involved are powered by steam, clockwork components, or manpower.

Animated and undead mechs are immune to critical hits. All other mech types are susceptible. Critical hits to these mechs require critical rolls (as usual). With steam-powered, clockwork, and man-powered mechs, confirmed critical hits that cause at least 1 hp of damage (after accounting for the mech's hardness) also cause additional component damage, based on the critical hit table for each mech power type. These tables are found on pages 74, 76, and 77. This component damage is in addition to the critical hit extra hp damage.

Note that damage from the critical hit tables bypasses a mech's hardness rating. This damage takes place internally, far beyond the mech's hard armored shell.

Critical Thresholds

All mechs have four categories of damage: green, yellow, orange, and red. These critical thresholds are defined by the hit point totals at which the mech becomes more vulnerable. Thresholds are determined by percentage amounts depending on the mech's power source, as described on page 73. For example, a steam-powered mech has the thresholds green, yellow 50%, orange 25%, red 10%. That means that a mech with, say, 100 hit points would enter its yellow threshold when reduced to 50 hp, orange at 25 hp, and red at 10 hp.



Each threshold has a different range of results for critical hits. Green is the least dangerous, while red is generally fatal. Regardless of threshold, every confirmed critical hit against a mech that causes at least 1 hp damage after accounting for hardness results in a roll on the mech's critical hit table, according to its type. Additionally, the mech becomes progressively more susceptible to critical hits as it becomes damaged. Within the yellow threshold, the threat range of all attacks is increased by +1. At the orange threshold, the threat range rises by +2, and it rises by +3 at the red threshold.

Mech Critical Hits Summary

Animated and undead mechs are immune to critical hits.

All other mech types are susceptible to critical hits.

There are four critical thresholds: green, yellow, orange, and red.

Effects of critical hits are more severe at each critical threshold.

Threat range of attacks is increased by +1 at yellow threshold, +2 at orange, and +3 at red.

A confirmed critical hit causing 1 hp or more damage also causes component damage according to each mech type's critical hits table.

CREW

A mech without a crew is useless. Mechs depend on their crews for operation, and a crew depends on its mech for protection. Either without the other is vulnerable — fact that many mech hunters seek to exploit.

Crew Protection

As a general rule, the crew of a newly built mech is well protected. Portholes lock securely. The crew windows are protected by reinforced steel mesh or visorlike slats that give the crew 9/10 cover. (This protection also limits the crew's visibility, so a stealthy opponent who makes it under the mech unseen can go undetected climbing the mech until he either makes a noise or passes

a window.) The best-constructed military mechs, particularly those of the Stenian Confederacy, even have periscopes and viewports so the crew can lock down completely if need be. There's no easy way to target such crew with longbows or steam guns unless they leave their cover for some reason.

Older mechs, particularly those that have been salvaged by the rust riders, as well as poorly designed mechs like those fielded by the orcs, may have much less protection.

Insufficient Crew

Mech crew are considered to be multifunctional, so they can crew weapons even while tending the engines. The pilot is the only one who must have the ability to do something else while attacking. Otherwise, the full mech crew can be counted toward weapon use.

A mech with less crew than its full allotment will have problems operating. A mech always needs at least one crew member to pilot. If the pilot is able to fire weapons, he may. Steam-powered, clockwork, and man-powered mechs then need at least half their total crew allotment simply to keep the engines running. This includes things such as stoking the fires on steam-powered mechs, turning the cranks on man-powered ones, and checking the spring torque on clockwork mechs. Any less than half of the total crew and the engines shut down, stopping the whole mech in its tracks.

Once the engine stops, the crew can still fire weapons that don't depend on the engine, such as catapults or javelins, provided they have sufficient crew. Melee weapons usually require the engines to move the limbs they're mounted on, and mechanically powered weapons (such as bore punchers or steam cannons) obviously require the engine. These weapons cannot be fired without sufficient crew.

Crew members occupied in hand-to-hand combat do not count toward the mech's crew (see below).



BOARDING A MECH

A mech can be boarded in one of several ways.

- By entering through open passages. Some mechs have open tops, glass cockpits, or other easily bypassed entryways.
- By ripping a hole through the surface with a specialized weapon, such as a bore launcher or rust bomb. This allows direct entry into any area of the defending mech that the attacking mech can reach.
- By dealing enough damage to the mech that holes appear in the armor. Except with specialized weapons designed to tear holes, most attacks do not leave entry points large enough for a human. A mighty steam cannon hit might leave a hole only one foot across, just wide enough for the cannonball! A single attack that deals at least 20 points of damage creates a hole big enough for Medium creatures to pass (though it may be 20 feet from the ground!). Additionally, a mech reduced to its orange critical threshold has been damaged enough that the "Swiss cheese effect" allows boarders to find at least 1d4 holes suitable for entry.
- By entering through a mech's portholes. Anyone who manages to climb onto a mech can try to enter through a porthole. A mech that is downed is particularly vulnerable to such boarding actions, whether it was tripped or voluntarily sat down. Portholes are invariably locked. They have a break DC of 28, the same hardness as the mech's armor, and 40 hit points. With most normal-sized portholes, up to four Medium creatures can cooperate in trying to pry it open. This uses the rules for cooperative combined skill attempts, as outlined in the *PHB*: For each additional participant who passes a Strength check (DC 10), the "team leader" adds +2 to his check. Additionally, using a crowbar adds +2 to the Strength check of anyone doing so (which adds only +2 to the team leader's net roll but makes it easier for the others to pass their Strength checks).
- By entering through firing ports. Firing

CONDITION	DC
Target a specific visible crew member (pilot, steam cannon gunner, etc.)	15
Target a randomly determined visible crew member	10



- Boarders can occupy the same PU as crew. If this happens, then all combat on board the mech is automatically grappling until more space opens up. On a mech with full PU, the maximum number of boarders is the same as the number of crew (assuming the boarders and crew are the same size), and all combat is grappling.
- No defender can be flanked, ever. There simply isn't enough room. The insides of mechs are small, cramped quarters where you can barely fit one person into most control areas, much less two. The only exception to this is in specially designed mechs with luxurious quarters.
- All combats are one on one; excess attackers or defenders may not participate in the combat (even with ranged weapons).
- Ranged weapons cannot be used to fire into combats inside a mech. The interior quarters are twisted and cramped, with no room for shots fired more than 10 feet.
- Spells or attacks with area effects hit randomly determined combatants in the general area.
- Mechs may be built with secure crew cabins, as indicated on page 81. In such cases, a boarding party cannot reach the crew unless it breaks through the door. Magnet bombs and rust bombs are often used in these situations.
- Attackers move vertically through the mech (as in, if they are trying to reach the head) at a rate of 10 ft. vertically for every 30 ft. of expended movement. This covers finding and climbing stairs, hatches, and ladders.
- Very large mechs (City-mech A or bigger) are large enough that boarders may need time just to find the crew. These situations should be resolved with at least a general deck plan that is prepared in advance. (After all, how many city-mechs are in your game? Probably no more than a couple, enough to prepare deck plans for.)

TRIPPING A MECH

Knocking a mech over is one of the best ways to disable it. Many mechs have weapons designed to trip their enemies;

flails, chain tentacles, and changlers are among the most common. A pilot can also attempt to trip an enemy mech as a melee attack, though this is dangerous.

A trip attack with a mech is resolved similarly to a normal trip attack, with the following modifications.

- If the trip attack is made with a weapon, follow the usual tripping rules. Apply modifiers for the mechs' maneuverability, their Strength or Dexterity scores (per the usual rules), and their sizes. For easy reference, the table below summarizes trip check bonuses based on a creature's size.

SIZE	TRIP CHECK BONUS
Large	+4
Huge	+8
Gargantuan	+12
Colossal	+16
Colossal II	+20
Colossal III	+24
Colossal IV	+28
Colossal V	+32
City-mech A	+36
City-mech B	+40
City-mech C	+44
City-mech D	+48
City-mech E	+52
City-mech F	+56

- A mech that fails to be tripped can try to trip its attacker, per the usual rules.
- Mechs with detachable flails (or other such tripping weapons) can drop them to avoid the trip. Mechs with built-in weapons cannot drop them, unless the weapons are specially designed for such (e.g., the changle).
- The pilot may opt to use his modifier in the Mech Pilot skill in place of the mech's Strength or Dexterity, if it is higher.
- If a mech is tripped, it is considered downed.

Downed Mechs

A mech can be downed by a trip, by infantry pulling it down, by a critical hit, or by bad terrain. Any one of these can be enough to put it under.

A downed mech isn't a pretty sight. While a human can easily right himself, a mech is awkward and inflexible. Mechs with low maneuverability have difficulty getting up;

others are designed such that they need assistance to be raised.

When a mech is downed, determine its facing by rolling 1d6. The mech pilot can immediately make a Mech Pilot skill check against DC 20 to try to fall into a favorable position; if the check is successful, he may choose to add 2 or subtract 2 from the 1d6 roll.

ROLL	FACING
1-2	Face up
3	Left side
4	Right side
5-6	Face down

The mech's facing determines which weapons it can use and how easy it will be to get up, as described below.

Getting up is determined by a Mech Pilot check against DC 20, modified by the trip modifier for its maneuverability class. As you can see, the check is quite difficult — an inexperienced pilot is often finished once his mech is down. The check can be attempted repeatedly until it is made. Once the check is successful, the process of getting up takes 1d6 full-round actions.

A downed mech is considered prone, though the rule is slightly different than usual. Enemies have a +4 bonus to attack it in melee, but they have no penalty for targeting it with ranged weapons — mechs are large enough that they are still viable targets when on their sides. Note that a downed mech in the wrong position may not be able to counterattack in melee.

Face down: The mech can use only weapons on its rear, or shoulder- and head-mounted weapons that can swivel 360 degrees. No penalty to getting up.

Face up: The mech can use all forward-mounted weapons but cannot fight in melee if its attackers are outside of its reach. For example, a 15-ft.-tall mech with a 5-ft. reach can't even reach its own head or toes, so enemies attacking from those sides are out of its reach. (Always assume the reach is measured from the center of the mech.) Getting up is extremely difficult — the DC is raised by +4.

Left side: Able to use all weapons on its right side and none on its left. Determine randomly which way the mech faces; all



forward-mounted weapons are aimed in that direction. The DC to get up is raised by +2. The mech pilot can choose to put the mech face down or face up instead of trying to get up from a side position; no check is required to change its position in this way.

Right side: As above, but on the right side.

Pulling Down a Mech

One of the most shocking defeats the Stenian Confederacy ever faced was when a horde of orc rabble unexpectedly pulled down an early-model Juggernaut mech, pried open its portholes, and slaughtered the unprepared crew inside. It was after this that Juggernauts were equipped with flame nozzles.

Infantry can pull down mechs using these rules.

- Pulling down a mech requires a trip check.
- Attackers who can stand adjacent to the mech (diagonals included) may try to pull it down with their bare hands (generally by rocking it back and forth). This is a standard action; if the mech moves, the attackers will probably have to follow it to make their attempt. Attackers in such a position are generally vulnerable to trampling. For example, a Juggernaut has a face of 10 ft. by 10 ft., allowing 12 Medium (5-ft. face) attackers to reach it — all of whom could be trampled on the Juggernaut's action.
- Attackers unable to stand adjacent to the mech may use ropes or chains with grappling hooks. They must all be pulling in the same direction or their efforts cancel each other out, but their labor can still be combined with the rocking of creatures adjacent to the mech. Latching on a grappling hook requires a ranged touch attack. Thereafter the creature may pull, joining in the combined skill attempt. The mech may jerk the rope or chain out of the puller's hands by succeeding in an opposed Strength check and simply walking away (For this check, use a modifier for each participant's size as well as the Strength modifier: +1 for Large, +2 for Huge, +4 for Gargantuan, etc.).
- The attackers make their trip check as a cooperative combined skill attempt, as outlined in the *PHB*. The strongest attacker is the "team leader." The other

attackers make Strength checks against DC 10. For each that succeeds, the team leader receives a +2 to his roll.

- The mech makes its check using its Strength bonus, plus the usual +4 size bonus for each size larger than Medium that it is (as listed above under the tripping section). Additionally, the mech applies any bonuses to trip checks due to its maneuverability and construction (e.g., +4 for steady feet, as described on page 8).
- If the horde succeeds in its combined trip check against the mech, the mech is toppled. It is now downed, as described above.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Mechs have unusual structure and weaponry that occasionally demand unusual actions. The following special attacks are available to mechs, as well as to unmounted creatures with the appropriate weaponry

Unarmed Attacks

A mech's "unarmed" attacks are massive fists of metal or stone backed by hydraulic systems capable of producing superhuman strength. They are quite dangerous.

The basic unarmed damage of a mech depends on its size. This is detailed on page 72 and repeated below for reference. Add the mech's Strength modifier to the damage. This is lethal damage.

A mech does not provoke an attack of opportunity when making an unarmed attack.

Size	Unarmed Dmg.
Large	1d6
Huge	1d8
Gargantuan	1d10
Colossal	1d12
Colossal II	3d6
Colossal III	2d12
Colossal IV	5d6
Colossal V	3d12
City-mech A	7d6
City-mech B	4d12
City-mech C	9d6
City-mech D	5d12
City-mech E	11d6
City-mech F	6d12

Trample

Instead of moving, any mech may make a trample attack against any creature or mech within its reach. The trample causes damage as below

Characters within the trampled area may make attacks of opportunity, or forego them in order to dodge the trample. They may attempt to dodge with either a Reflex save or Mech Pilot check, whichever is better. The DC for this save is 15. (Smaller mechs are faster, but larger mechs have bigger feet that require more movement to dodge, so the same number is used for both.) Pilots with the Mechdancer feat may add their Dexterity bonus to the DC necessary for victims to avoid the trample.

A trample victim that successfully dodges the trample may immediately grab onto the mech's leg as a free action. It still must make a Climb check to get up the leg (see page 93).

The "Largest Target" entry indicates the largest size creature that the mech can trample. Note that, based on these sizes, city-mechs can trample smaller mechs. This can be dangerous, however. Trampling a large target can backfire on a vehicle with unstable feet, a category into which many mechs fall. A mech trampling a creature larger than its "Safe Target" size must itself make a Reflex save (DC 10). If the save is failed, the trampling mech is tripped by the trample attack. Regardless of whether the save fails or succeeds, the target is still trampled.

Mech Size	Largest Target	Safe Target	Damage
Large	Tiny	Tiny	1d6
Huge	Small	Small	2d6
Gargantuan	Medium	Small	3d6
Colossal	Large	Medium	4d6
Colossal II	Huge	Medium	5d6
Colossal III	Gargantuan	Large	6d6
Colossal IV	Colossal	Huge	7d6
Colossal V	Colossal II	Gargantuan	8d6
City-mech A	Colossal III	Colossal	9d6
City-mech B	Colossal IV	Colossal II	10d6
City-mech C	Colossal V	Colossal III	11d6
City-mech D	City-mech A	Colossal IV	12d6
City-mech E	City-mech B	Colossal V	13d6
City-mech F	City-mech C	City-mech A	14d6



Dispelling Animated Mechs

Animated mechs are powered by magic. Unless the creator spends the extra time and money to make them immune to magic, they are vulnerable to *dispel magic* effects. Mechs with long-ranged weapons (such as the Roadwalker and its *fireball* wands) are out of danger from the medium-ranged *dispel magic* to begin with, but those built for close combat would be better off with magic immunity. Encounters with wizards powerful enough to dispel a mech's power source are rare, but a single such encounter can be fatal.

Unless the caster states otherwise, a *dispel magic* cast at a mech automatically is a targeted dispel centered on the mystical energy that animates the mech and also affects all mech-mounted magical weapons. This disrupts the mech's ability to walk, turn, move in any way (including open and close crew compartments), aim weapons, and activate weapons and items built into the mech — plus it may also dispel the powers of the weapons themselves, all in one fell swoop.

To find the dispel DC for an animated mech, use the following standard caster levels. Some mechs may have higher caster levels, depending on the creators, but none will have lower. Generally the DC applies both to the mech's power source and to all of the mech's components — *fireball* wands, *dancing weapons*, etc. — unless they were created by different wizards.

- Animated mechs smaller than a city-mech: caster level 15 (dispel DC 26)
- Animated mechs city-mech or larger: caster level 17 (dispel DC 28)
- Undead mechs of any size: caster level 13 (dispel DC 24)

Make one dispel check for the mech's central system, then make additional checks for other magic items on board (such as one check for each of the four *fireball* wands on a roadwalker). A mech whose central system is successfully affected by a dispel spell in this way suffers the following consequences:

- The mech grinds to a halt. It cannot move, turn, or aim weapons in any way. Locked compartments, doors, portholes, cockpits, and other passages cannot be unlocked.
- No weapons may be activated from within

the mech. Weapons whose effects were not dispelled may still be activated manually per their usual terms — e.g., a *fireball* wand could be fired if someone were outside the mech grasping the wand and uttering the command word (though remember that the wand can't be aimed because the arm it's attached to is frozen), or a dancing weapon could be deployed if someone could reach it and command it to attack.

- Any spells that were cast on the mech, such as protection spells, are also dispelled.
- The mech is considered a standing, immobile target. Its effective Dex is 0 (–5 to AC and Reflex saves).
- The mech is considered a helpless defender. Melee attacks against it gain a +4 bonus. It is vulnerable to coup de grace actions, but, of course, this confers no benefit because animated mechs are immune to critical hits.

As with all *dispel magic* spells, the effect lasts for 1d4 rounds, after which the mech recovers.

RIDING A MECH

The rust riders are famous for having only a few rickety, poorly repaired mechs for entire tribes — but managing to fit everyone in the tribe onto the mech. Usually, the tribe members hang off the mech, grasping handholds or leather straps, striking at enemies as the mech passes by.

Riding a mech is like riding an animal, but much, much harder. The mech's movement is jerky and erratic, it takes massive steps, and the force behind its every move is tremendous. On top of all that, removing one hand to make an attack makes it all the more difficult. It's akin to hanging onto the outside of a roller-coaster with only one hand.

Characters attempting to hold onto a mech must make a Balance check each round. The DC is 10 + the mech's speed in mph (see page 71) +4 if the mech is oiled to prevent boarders. If the attack requires lifting both hands off the mech, the DC is increased by 4.

If the check is successful, the character can hang on and release one hand to make an attack (see the Mech Rider feat for details on making such an attack). If the check is failed, the character falls off the mech. He must make an immediate Reflex save (DC 10) or fall under the mech's feet and suffer trampling damage. Either way, he's left in the dust as the mech keeps on walking.

Keep in mind the size of the mech that the characters are riding. It's all well and good to hang 16 people off of a Colossal II mech, but only a few will be at ground level. The rest will be hanging off its torso or arms, well out of reach to strike passing creatures.

A mech can support riders according to its size, as follows. This table indicates the total number of riders and the number that are at ground level (able to strike normal unmounted opponents). Note that riders automatically block as many firing ports as they are in number (e.g., if a mech has five firing ports, the first five riders will automatically block them).

Size	Total Riders	Ground-Level Riders
Large	1	1
Huge	2	2
Gargantuan	4	2
Colossal	8	4
Colossal II	16	6
Colossal III	32	10
Colossal IV	64	15
Colossal V	128	20
City-mech A	256	30
City-mech B	512	45
City-mech C	1,028	70
City-mech D	2,056	110
City-mech E	4,112	160
City-mech F	8,224	240

Note that riding a mech can be done *offensively*. Even if boarders cannot pry open a mech's portholes, they can use their bodies to cover viewports, or can toss grenades through firing ports. A crew member with his viewport blocked is effectively blinded for the purposes of mech movement and attacks. Blinding the pilot of a one-man mech in this way is a heroic thing to encourage your characters to do (provided they understand all the risks, of course).



RANGING SHOTS

Anyone with a ranged weapon may fire a ranging shot to gauge his accuracy. A ranging shot is determined with a normal attack roll. If the attack roll is successful, it causes no damage. Instead, it grants a +2 circumstance bonus to subsequent attacks. This is called the ranging bonus.

If the initial ranging shot misses, it still grants a +1 ranging bonus to subsequent attacks. A second ranging shot can then be attempted. Regardless of hit or miss, the second ranging shot raises the ranging bonus to 2.

A ranging bonus can never be greater than +2. It is lost if the attacker moves in any way, or if he is attacked in melee. Furthermore, the attacker is considered flat-footed as long as he retains his ranging bonus. Attempting to duck or dodge disrupts his aim and eliminates the ranging bonus.

INDIRECT ATTACKS

An attacker with the right kind of ranged weapon can lob a projectile at an opponent he cannot see, hoping to hit him indirectly. This sort of attack is aided immeasurably by a spotter (someone who relays coordinates to the attacker, telling him where to fire), but a spotter isn't always necessary. When you launch a catapult over the castle walls hoping to hit something, or you lob a steam cannon shot into a narrow defile in the distance because you saw an enemy meek charge there, you are making an indirect attack.

Ranged weapons that can make indirect attacks include grenades, bows, crossbows, and slings, as well as those indicated in Table 3-3: Siege Weapons.

An indirect attack can be aimed only at an opponent whom the attacker has knowledge of, either through prior sighting or via

a spotter. The attack roll suffers a -4 penalty if you have a spotter with direct line of sight to the target who is able to relay precise coordinates, or -8 if you have no spotter. If you have no spotter, the attack is automatically aimed at the last point where you saw the enemy.

If an indirect attack misses, it will still land *somewhere*. With explosive attacks and others that have area effects, determine the location of the hit in case someone is within the area. Use the rules in the PHB for grenadelike weapons, except that the distance of deviation for indirect attacks is 2d6 feet per range increment. For arrows, bolts, and other such projectiles, there is no need to determine the location of the hit; a miss is a miss.

Keep in mind that most indirect attacks are fired in an arc-shaped trajectory. You can fire a bow indirectly at a target 200 ft. distant when you're in a cavern with 10 ft. ceilings



REPAIRING DAMAGED MECHS

Damaged mechs can be repaired using the Craft (mechcraft) skill, as described on page 40. Repairs are made according to hit points lost or, in the case of critical hits and special effects, the category of repair. Unless noted otherwise, critical hits resulting from the green or yellow threshold are minor repairs, those resulting from the orange threshold are major repairs, and those resulting from the red threshold are critical repairs.

MECH GALLERY AND TECHNICAL READOUTS

Mechs are now quite common on Highpoint, and a number of standard models have emerged. At the same time, plenty of unique mechs are crafted by ingenious (or crazy) gearwrights. This section describes some of the most common and most interesting mechs.

This section could be organized in a number of ways: by name, by mech size, or even by the race or nation that deploys the mech. We've opted for the simplest solution: alphabetical by name. Table 2-20 offers additional summaries for easy reference.

Explanation of Terms

Mech stats are presented using this format:

Size: The mech's size.

Power Source: The mech's power source.

Payload Units: The mech's PU.

Height: The mech's height.

Space/Reach: The mech's face and reach.

Note that a mech's stride is equal to its reach (half its height).

Crew: This entry indicates the crew necessary to keep the mech functional. In parentheses is the number of crew members required to fire every weapon on board in one round.

TABLE 2-20: MECHS

MECH NAME	FACTION	SIZE	POWER	PRICE (GP)
Barbagula	Irontooth	Huge	Steam	3,000
Bastion	Dwarves (obsolete)	Colossal	Steam	5,624
Daughter, The	Irontooth	Colossal	Clockwork	19,310
Dignitary	Human traders	Colossal II	Steam	13,911
Fangbiter	Irontooth	Gargantuan	Steam	4,250
Incinerator	Dwarves (Stenian)	Colossal II	Steam	11,765
Iron Maiden	Irontooth	Colossal III	Steam	16,639
Janzeter's Amazing Mobile				
Cannon, Mk. I	Dwarves (Stenian)	Colossal III	Steam	40,937
Juggernaut	Dwarves (Stenian)	Gargantuan	Steam	7,788
Lancer (dwarven)	Dwarves (Stenian)	Gargantuan	Steam	10,699
Lancer (elven)	Elves	Gargantuan	Animated	32,390
Mother, The	Irontooth	Colossal IV	Clockwork	61,198
Rodwalker	Elves	Huge	Animated	112,616
Scale Hunter	Dwarves (Stenian)	Colossal II	Steam	19,702
Scorpion	Dwarves (Stenian)	Colossal II	Steam	15,932
Skull Crusher	Orcs	Colossal IV	Manpower	18,301
Slaughtergore	Unknown (unique)	Gargantuan	Undead	20 gp + 16 corpses
Smiggenbopper's				
Perambulatory Orc	Gnomes	Gargantuan	Clockwork	8,702
Talon	Dwarves (traders)	Colossal	Steam	12,400
Totem	Mech tribes	Gargantuan	Manpower	1,988
Verdant Fury	Elves (unique)	Huge	Animated	232,616
Viper	All	Gargantuan	Clockwork	10,756

If the mech has less crew than this number, it cannot fire every weapon, unless it uses special rules indicated in the profile. Most mechs have more weapons than they can fire in one round, for versatility.

Firing Ports: How many members of the crew can fire personal weapons from the mech.

Hit Dice: The mech's hit dice. This is rarely used.

Hit Points: The mech's maximum hit points. Most mechs will have some unpaired battle damage, actually clocking in at less than their hit point entries.

Critical Thresholds: The hit point totals at which the mech drops from one critical threshold to another (e.g., Green, Yellow 264, Orange 132, Red 53 means the mech goes to yellow threshold at 264 hit points, orange at 132, and red at 53). This affects the severity of critical hits.

Base Initiative: The mech's base initiative modifier, which is further modified by the pilot's bonuses or penalties.

Speed: The mech's base speed. Its maximum speed is twice this number. See page 71 for miles-per-hour equivalents.

Maneuverability: The mech's maneuverability class. See page 73 for details on the various maneuverability classes.

AC: The mech's armor class. If the pilot has the Mech Dancer feat, his Dexterity further modifies the mech's AC.

Hardness: A number indicating the mech's hardness and where it is derived from. This number is subtracted from damage inflicted on the mech.

Base melee attack: The mech's base melee attack bonus, before the gunner or pilot's modifiers are factored in.

Base ranged attack: The mech's base ranged attack bonus, before the gunner or pilot's modifiers are factored in.

Unarmed damage: How much damage the mech does with an unarmed blow.

Trample: Details on how much damage the mech does with a trample, and what size



creatures it can trample. See page 95.

Saves: The mech's saves.

Abilities: The mech's abilities (really only Str and Dex).

Mechcraft DC: The difficulty class of the Craft (mechcraft) check needed to design the mech.

Base Planning Time: How long it takes to come up with blueprints for building the mech.

Base Cost: The mech's base cost (which is the, well, base for any modifications).

Total Cost: The total cost to build the mech, including weapons.

Labor Requirements: Total man-hours needed to build the mech.

Construction Time: An estimated construction time based on a reasonable number of laborers. Shorter or longer construction times are possible with more or fewer laborers.

BARBAGULA

Size: Huge

Power Source: Steam

Payload Units: 7 (extra weapon mounts)

Height: 15 ft.

Space/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Crew: 1 (weapons: 2)

Firing Ports: 7

Hit Dice: 12

Hit Points: 66

Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 33, Orange 17, Red 7

Base Initiative: 0

Speed: 50 ft. (fast legs)

Maneuverability: Good

AC: 8

Hardness: 8 (stone)

Base melee attack: +4

Base ranged attack: 0

Unarmed damage: 1d8+6

Trample: largest Small; safe Small; damag@d6

Saves: Fort +2, Ref -2, Will —

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —

Mechcraft DC: 33

Base Planning Time: 66 days

Base Cost: 656 gp

Total Cost: 3,000 gp

Labor Time: 960 man-hours

Construction Time: 12 days (10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)

Options: Extra weapon mounts (2), fast legs

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
1	Crew
6	Onboard weaponry
7	Total

The barbagula is a nasty little mech favored by Irontooth clans (and rust riders, when they can get them). A barbagula has long legs and a light build. Its right arm is equipped with a chandler and its left arm has an oversized lance.

Barbagulas are used to ambush isolated mechs and to fight in packs against more difficult targets. They are built for speed. A skilled mech jockey can execute extremely effective hit-and-run attacks with a barbagula. The lance is used in the initial charge, followed up by a trip attack from the chandler. Once the target is down, it is either boarded or lance-charged repeatedly by other barbagulas.



No consistent design is seen among barbagulas. The basic concept was perfected by the Irontooth clans, who built several variations.

Copycat models have since been seen among other forces, often with iron or steel armor.

BASTION

Size: Colossal
Power Source: Steam
Payload Units: 16
Height: 35 ft.
Space/Reach: 15 ft. by 15 ft./15 ft.
Crew: 4 (weapons: 3)
Firing Ports: 13
Hit Dice: 48
Hit Points: 264
Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 132, Orange 66, Red 26
Base Initiative: -1
Speed: 60 ft.
Maneuverability: Average
AC: 2
Hardness: 9 (stone, Colossal)
Base melee attack: +2
Base ranged attack: -1
Unarmed damage: 1d12 +10
Trample: largest Large; safe Medium; damage 4d6
Saves: Fort 0, Ref -4, Will —
Abilities: Str 30, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 39
Base Planning Time: 78 days
Base Cost: 2,622 gp
Total Cost: 5,624 gp
Labor Requirements: 3840 man-hours
Construction Time: 48 days
(10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
4	Crew
12	Onboard weaponry
16	Total

The bastion was one of the first dwarven models ever to be constructed... and it shows. It is essentially a walking castle. The torso is disproportionately tall and narrow — much

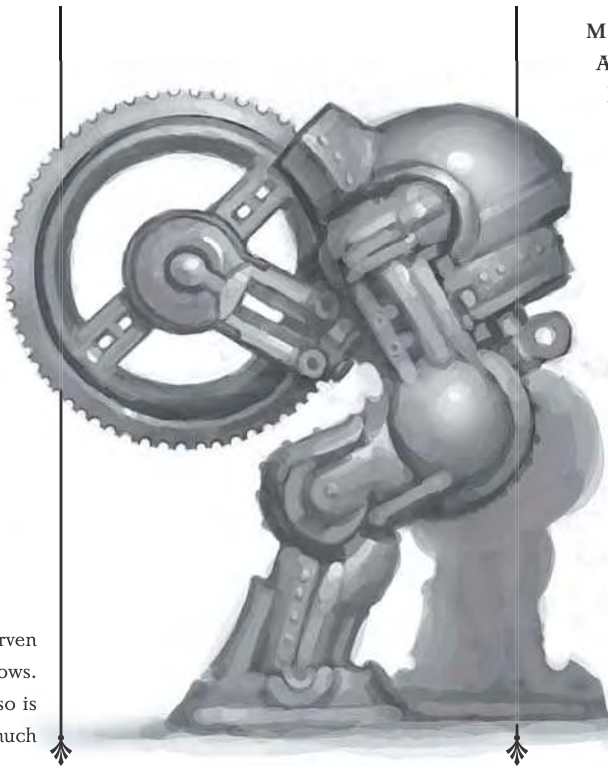


like the castle towers it was modeled on — with squat, heavy legs and short, stubby arms. It has no head per se. The internal frame is iron but the armor is stone, identical to that used in most castles. In fact, if the bastion were to rest itself alongside a castle wall, from a distance it would look like part of the castle.

DAUGHTER, THE

Size: Colossal
Power Source: Clockwork
Payload Units: 18 (extra weapon mounts)
Height: 35 ft.
Space/Reach: 15 ft. by 15 ft./15 ft.
Crew: 2 (weapons: 1)
Firing Ports: 14
Hit Dice: 48
Hit Points: 264
Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 132, Orange 66, Red 26
Base Initiative: 3
Speed: 60 ft.

Maneuverability: Good
AC: 2
Hardness: 13 (steel, Colossal)
Base melee attack: +2
Base ranged attack: +3
Unarmed damage: 1d12 +10
Trample: largest Large; safe Medium; damage 4d6
Saves: Fort -4, Ref 0, Will —
Abilities: Str 30, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 52
Base Planning Time: 104 days
Base Cost: 6,925 gp
Total Cost: 19,310 gp
(does not include weapons)
Labor Requirements: 7,680 man-hours
Construction Time: 96 days
(10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)
Special: Extra weapon mounts (2)





PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
2	Crew
16	Onboard weaponry
18	Total

The daughter is usually deployed in pairs by the mother (see page 109). The daughters harry and harass enemy mechs while the mother pulls them in. Generally the daughters are there only to defend the mother, but they will engage offensively if necessary. They look like walking buzzsaws — the buzzsaw takes up more than two thirds of their height, placed vertically in their torso.

DIGNITARY

Size: Colossal II
Power Source: Steam
Payload Units: 41
Height: 50 ft.
Space/Reach: 25 ft. by 25 ft./25 ft.
Crew: 8 (weapons: 3)
Firing Ports: 27
Hit Dice: 96
Hit Points: 528
Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 264, Orange 132, Red 53
Base Initiative: -2
Speed: 70 ft. (fast legs)
Maneuverability: Average
AC: 2
Hardness: 14 (steel, Colossal II)
Base melee attack: +4
Base ranged attack: -2
Unarmed damage: 3d6+12
Trample: largest Huge; safe Medium; damage 5d8
Saves: Fort 0, Ref -4, Will —
Abilities: Str 34, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 42
Base Planning Time: 84 days
Base Cost: 5,725 gp
Total Cost: 13,911 gp
Labor Requirements: 7,680 man-hours
Construction Time: 96 days (10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)
Special: Fast legs (+20 ft.)

TABLE 2-21: ONBOARD WEAPONS

LOCATION	ARC OF FIRE	WEAPON (DAMAGE, RANGE IN FT., OTHER)	PU	CREW
BARBAGULA ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Left arm	Melee	Large lance (2d6+6/x3)	2	1
Right arm	Melee	Huge changler (1d10+6, +4 to trip checks)	4	1
Total			6	2
BASTION ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Right arm	Melee	Huge axe blade (2x8+10/x3)	4	1
Left arm	180° forward	Gargantuan ballista (3d10/x3, 200)	8	2
Total			12	3
THE DAUGHTER ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Torso	Melee	Colossal buzzsaw (3d12/19-20/x3)	16	1
Total			16	1
DIGNITARY ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Left arm	180° forward	Gargantuan steam cannon (3d10/x3, 950)	8	2
Right leg	360°	Gargantuan flame nozzle (2d8, 50)	8	1
Total			16	3
FANGBITER ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Left arm	Melee	Huge sword blade (2d8+8/19-20)	4	1
Right arm	Melee	Huge barbed sword blade (2d8+8/19-20/x3)	4	1
Total			8	2
INCINERATOR ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Right foot	180° left	Huge flame nozzle (2d8, 30, fire)	4	1
Right foot	180° right	Huge flame nozzle (2d8, 30, fire)	4	1
Torso	90° forward	Huge steam cannon (2d10/x3, 1,000 ft.)	4	2
Left foot	180° left	Huge flame nozzle (2d8, 30, fire)	4	1
Left foot	180° right	Huge flame nozzle (2d8, 30, fire)	4	1
Total			20	6
IRON MAIDEN ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Right arm	Melee	Huge bore puncher (1d10, 5 ft. reach, ignores hardness)	4	1
Right arm	Melee	Huge hooked axe blade (2d8/x3)	4	1
Left arm	Melee	Gargantuan bore puncher (2d8, 10 ft. reach)	8	1
Total			16	3
JANZETER'S AMAZING MOBILE CANNON, MARK I ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Center torso	90° forward	Colossal III steam cannon w/explosive shells (8d12+1d10, 800)	64	3
Total			64	3
JUGGERNAUT ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Right arm	Melee	Huge axe blade (2d8+8/x3)/sword blade (2d8+8/19-20)	4	1
Right arm	180° forward	Medium flame nozzle (2d8, 10, fire)	1	1
Left arm	180° forward	2x linked Medium flame nozzles (2d8, 10, fire)	2	1
Shoulders	360°	Huge steam cannon (2d10/x2, 1,000)	4	2
Total			11	6

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
8	Crew
9	Secure passenger quarters
8	Room for up to 8 Medium passengers
16	Onboard weaponry
41	Total

The dignitary was developed by human traders based out of Edge. It is designed to impress wealthy travelers with the solid protection it affords. The passengers are

secured in what is essentially a large iron vault. The mech's fast legs ensure it can outrun most enemies, and its two simple weapons give it basic protection against most enemies, whether they attack in numbers or singly.

Dignitaries do not include sleeping quarters; they are designed for short hauls. Trips are priced according to time required, generally on the order of 20–40 gp per hour. When city-mechs come near Edge or other trading towns, small swarms of dignitaries will approach them, acting as well defended taxis for those who fear assault.

A number of larger dignitary models incorporate sleeping quarters for longer excursions.

FANGBITER

Size: Gargantuan
Power Source: Steam
Payload Units: 13 (extra weapon mounts)
Height: 25 ft.
Space/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.
Crew: 3 (weapons: 2)
Firing Ports: 13
Hit Dice: 24
Hit Points: 132
Critical Thresholds Green, Yellow 66,

Orange 33, Red 3
Base Initiative: –1
Speed: 40 ft.
Maneuverability: Average
AC: 6
Hardness: 8 (stone)
Base melee attack: +4
Base ranged attack: –1
Unarmed damage: 1d10 + 8
Trample: largest Medium; safe Small; damage 3d6
Saves: Fort +2, Ref –2, Will —
Abilities: Str 26, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 36
Base Planning Time: 72 days
Base Cost: 1,311 gp
Total Cost: 4,250 gp
Labor Requirements 1,920 man-hour
Construction Time: 24 days (10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)



Special: Extra weapon mounts (3)

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
3	Crew
2	Passengers
8	Onboard weaponry
13	Total

The fangbiter is a popular mech type among the rust riders. Whenever they capture a mech they frequently strip off its old weapons and re-equip it as a fangbiter.

The fangbiter fights in two stages. First, it closes for melee. Depending on the nature of the enemy mech, this may involve attacks from the barbed blade in order to hold the enemy mech in position, or may be a straightforward battle from the normal sword blade on the fangbiter's left arm.

The second stage involves the passengers. As do most rust riders, they have the Mech Rider feat. They emerge from the mech's portholes and begin attacking. (The portholes lock behind them automatically and they all have keys.) If there are infantry attackers, up to two rust riders can fight them at ground level. Otherwise, they attack the enemy mech: attempting to board it, hitting it with grenades if they are available, or simply climbing on it and blocking visibility. Depending on the mech's preparations for combat, as many as four rust riders may be already riding on the mech (four being the max that can fit on a Gargantuan mech; see page 96).

INCINERATOR

Size: Colossal II
Power Source: Steam
Payload Units: 32
Height: 50 ft.
Space/Reach: 25 ft.
by 25 ft./25 ft.
Crew: 8 (weapons: 6)
Firing Ports: 21
Hit Dice: 96
Hit Points: 528



Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 264, Orange 132, Red 53
Base Initiative: -2
Speed: 50 ft.
Maneuverability: Average
AC: 2
Hardness: 12 (iron, Colossal II)
Base melee attack: +4
Base ranged attack: -2
Unarmed damage: 3d6 +12
Trample: largest Huge; safe Medium; damage 5d8

Saves: Fort 0, Ref -4, Will —
Abilities: Str 34, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 42
Base Planning Time: 84 days
Base Cost: 5,565 gp
Total Cost: 11,765 gp
Labor Requirements: 7,680 man-hours
Construction Time: 96 days
(10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)

PAYLOAD USAGE	
PU	USE
8	Crew
4	Arm gunners
20	Onboard weaponry
32	Total

The incinerator is a dwarven anti-infantry mech. It is designed to complement other mechs, not to be deployed on its own, as it lacks the weaponry to take on other mechs. It acts as a “wing man” for mechs that are vulnerable to infantry.

The incinerator is named after the four flame nozzles mounted on its feet. They are only five feet from ground level, just the right



height for attacking infantry. The incinerator arms are disproportionately large, particularly its hands, which are in the shape of gigantic fists. Protruding from each hand are two firing ports. Two dwarven gunners sit in each fist, equipped with whatever their mission calls for: crossbows, steam guns, or flasks of burning oil. Their high elevation gives them a good vantage point for firing at nearby infantry, especially as the mech pilot maneuvers the arms into the best possible position.

The mech's fifth firing port is in its torso, next to the steam cannon mounted there. The steam cannon is almost always used for firing at tough-looking or distant infantry targets rather than other mechs, but it is available for antimech use if the need arises.

There is one more distinguishing feature of the incinerator. Its legs are almost perfectly smooth. The muzzles of the flame nozzles extend less than 3" from the mech's legs, and the seams between the armored plates are perfectly snug. This makes the legs extremely difficult to climb, as described below.

Special

The entire surface of the mech is made as smooth and rounded as possible, to minimize the ability of infantry to climb it. Climb checks against an incinerator have a -2 circumstance penalty. Moreover, ranged touch attacks to latch a grappling hook or other climbing device on also suffer a -2 penalty.



IRON MAIDEN

Size: Colossal III
Power Source: Steam
Payload Units: 64
Height: 75 ft.
Space/Reach: 35 ft. by 35 ft./35 ft.
Crew: 16 (weapons: 3)
Firing Ports: 35
Hit Dice: 144
Hit Points: 792
Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 396, Orange 198, Red 79
Base Initiative: -2
Speed: 80 ft. (fast legs)
Maneuverability: Poor
AC: 2
Hardness: 14 (iron, Colossal III)
Base melee attack: +6
Base ranged attack: -2
Unarmed damage: 2d12 +1d6 +14 (combat spikes)
Trample: largest Gargantuan; safe Large; damage 6d6
Saves: Fort 0, Ref -4, Will —
Abilities: Str 38, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 45
Base Planning Time: 90 days
Base Cost: 11,130 gp
Total Cost: 16,639 gp
Labor Requirements: 15,360 man-hours
Construction Time: 96 days (20 avg. laborers plus 2 overseers)
Special: Fast legs, combat spikes

Payload Usage	
PU	Use
16	Crew
32	Boarding party
16	Onboard weaponry
64	Total



The iron maiden is one of the most feared mechs on Highpoint, with good reason. Not only is it operated by the Irontooth Clans (whose mech devil pilots are superior to those from all other mechs), but it is built from the ground up for one purpose: boarding and capturing enemy mechs. Since very few mechs have security crews on board, a single enemy boarder can usually take out even the most heavily defended mech. On top of that, the iron maiden is ferocious in appearance: Its face is a stylized skull, it is covered in jagged spikes, and its

Space/Reach: 35 ft. by 70 ft./15 ft.
Crew: 16 (weapons: 3 plus see below)
Firing Ports: 44
Hit Dice: 144
Hit Points: 792
Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 396, Orange 198, Red 79
Base Initiative: -2
Speed: 60 ft.
Maneuverability: Poor
AC: 2
Hardness: 14 (iron, Colossal III)
Base melee attack: +6
Base ranged attack: +2 (precision aiming)
Unarmed damage: 2d12 +14
Trample: largest Gargantuan; safe Large; damage 6d6
Saves: Fort 0, Ref -4, Will —

body and weaponry are twisted and demonic in appearance.

A fully equipped iron maiden holds 32 raiders plus crew and weapons. Usually the raiders are seated 16 to a bore puncher. They are equipped with daggers, hand axes, and longswords (the former for close-quarter fighting, if necessary), and sometimes magnet bombs as well. The magnet bombs aren't useful for mechs that are to be captured, but for getting inside a mech and rapidly disabling it, they can't be beat.

Iron maiden crew are well aware of the effectiveness of their tactics. They are always armed and armored for close-quarters fighting, in case they themselves should be boarded.

JANZETER'S AMAZING MOBILE CANNON, MARK I

Size: Colossal III

Power Source: Steam

Payload Units: 80 (extra weapon mounts)

Height: 40 ft.

Abilities: Str 38, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 45
Base Planning Time: 90 days
Base Cost: 11,130 gp
Total Cost: 40,937 gp
Labor Requirements: 15,360 man-hours
Construction Time: 96 days (20 avg. laborers plus 2 overseers)
Options: Extra weapon mounts (16), precision aiming

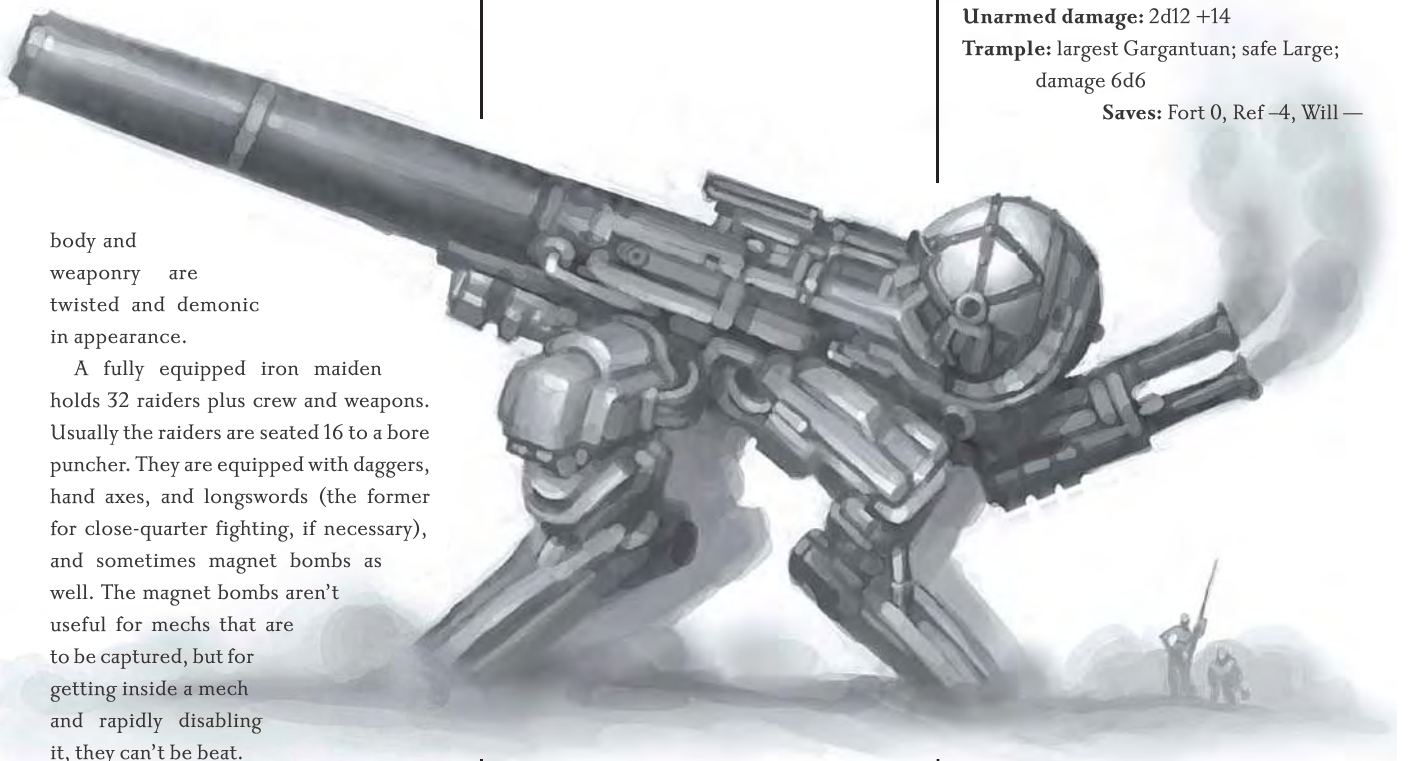




TABLE 2-22: ONBOARD WEAPONS

LOCATION	ARC OF FIRE	WEAPON (DAMAGE, RANGE IN FT., OTHER)	PU	CREW
LANCER ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Right arm	Melee	Huge sword blade (2d8+Str/19-20)	4	1
Head	360°	Wand of magic missile (level 9) (5x 1d4+1, 190)	1	1
Left arm	Melee	Huge lance (2d8+Str/x3)	4	1
Total			9	3
THE MOTHER ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Right arm	180° forward	Gargantuan chain tentacle (2d8, 100)	8	3
Left arm	180° forward	Gargantuan chain tentacle (2d8, 100)	8	3
Total			16	6
RODWALKER ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Left arm, top	180° forward	linked fireball (lvl. 10) wand (10d6, 800, 20 ft. area)	1	1
Left arm, bottom	180° forward	linked fireball (lvl. 10) wand (10d6, 800, 20 ft. area)	1	0
Right arm, top	180° forward	linked fireball (lvl. 10) wand (10d6, 800, 20 ft. area)	1	0
Right arm, bottom	180° forward	linked fireball (lvl. 10) wand (10d6, 800, 20 ft. area)	1	0
Total			4	1
SCALE HUNTER ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Left shoulder	360°	Gargantuan javelin rack (2d8 (x5), 250)	8	2
Left arm	Melee	Gargantuan lobster claw (2d12/19-20)	8	2
Right shoulder	360°	Gargantuan chain tentacle (2d8, 100)	8	3
Right arm	180° forward	Huge steam cannon (2d10/x3, 1,000)	4	2
Right arm	Melee	Huge axe blade (2d8+12/x3)	—	1
Total			28	10
SCORPION ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Left arm	Melee	Huge lobster claw (2d8/19-20)	4	2
Left arm	180° forward	Gargantuan steam cannon (3d10, 950)	8	2
Right arm	Melee	Huge lobster claw (2d8/19-20)	4	2
Tail (rear)	360 degrees	Gargantuan chain tentacle (2d8, 100 ft., ignore hardness)	8	3
Total			24	9/special
SKULL CRUSHER ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Right shoulder	360°	Colossal ballista (4d10/x3, 200)	16	3
Right arm	Melee	Colossal axe blade (3d12+12/x3)	16	1
Left shoulder	180° forward	Colossal catapult (4d8, 400)	16	3
Left arm	Melee	Colossal axe blade (3d12+12/x3)	16	1
Total			64	8
SMIGGENBOPPER'S PERAMBULATORY ORC ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Location	Arc of Fire	Weapon (damage, range in ft., other)	PU	Crew
Right arm	Melee	Huge axe blade (2d8+8/x3)	4	1
Right arm	90° forward	Medium flame nozzle (2d8, 10)	1	1
Left arm	Melee	Huge ballista (2d10/x3, 200)	4	1/special
Total			9	3/special

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
16	Crew
64	Onboard weaponry
80	Total

Janzeter's amazing mobile cannon was the first howitzerlike device constructed on Highpoint. It is one of the oddest-looking mechs in existence. The chassis is long and short, unlike other mechs, and supports a single enormous steam cannon for practically its entire length. Balanced in the exact center of the barrel are two legs that bend backward, like a horse's. At the rear of the cannon rests a large, clear glass dome, laced by iron bands like those on a B-52 bomber, from which the gunners take their aim.

To make the picture all the more bizarre, a thirty-foot-long zeppelin floats from each end of the massive barrel. One crew member mans each zeppelin. The zeppelins help support the weight of the cannon and its huge ammunition supply, which cannot be lifted by the legs alone. When the mech is resting, the legs lock into a backward position and the zeppelins descend. When it is ready to move again, the zeppelins rise up, providing the extra lift necessary for the mech's legs to propel it. They also serve another crucial purpose: keeping the barrel steady while the mech moves. Without both zeppelins, the mech tilts like a seesaw as it walks, giving it an effective Dex of 0 and a speed of 30 ft.

Janzeter's model has since been refined into a four-legged version that does not require the zeppelins (mark II), as well as more reasonably proportioned models that carry weapons more suited to their size (mark III and IV). The original mark I is the classic that established Janzeter's reputation as a top notch coglayer, however, and thus it is worth examination by any student of mechncraft.

The amazing mobile cannon is generally used for guarding strongholds, mountain passes, river routes, and other controlled terrain zones. Janzeter's invention is unwieldy and ponderous to maneuver, but it is nonetheless ten times easier to position than horse-drawn cannons, and far more powerful.



Special

Precision Aiming: Janzeter designed his mobile cannon for use as nothing more than a cannon on legs. As such, he installed a complicated system of different-sized gears that allows extremely precise positioning of the cannon barrel without moving the mech itself. A large wheel allows for big shifts in position (measured in yards), a second small wheel swings the barrel in one-foot increments, and a third wheel shifts its position one inch at a time. As a result, the mobile cannon receives a +4 bonus to ranged attacks (reflected in the profile above) at an additional cost of +2,000 gp. This system works only on mechs whose weapons are housed on the main chassis.

Zeppelin Rangefinding: The zeppelins are usually retracted once the cannon is parked, so as to reduce its profile. They can be raised to a height of up to 300 ft. above ground level, however. From this position they afford a spectacular view of surrounding terrain (especially when the mech is already positioned on a mountain) and can assist the mech in finding targets and firing ranging shots. Additionally, the crew member in the zeppelin can help the cannon fire indirectly by shouting coordinates for targets that the ground-based crew cannot see.

The zeppelin crew is usually equipped with steam guns, which it uses to pick off any infantry that approach the mech.

Critical Hits: Any critical hit that would normally cause damage to the mech's arms instead hits one of the zeppelins, puncturing it and impeding the mech's movement as described above. Crew in a deployed zeppelin that is punctured fall to the ground, taking damage as usual. The zeppelins can be targeted independently; they have AC 12 and hardness 10 (due to multiple

overlapping layers of reinforced canvas). If a zeppelin takes even a single point of damage, it is punctured.

JUGGERNAUT

Size: Gargantuan

Power Source: Steam

Payload Units: 14 (extra weapon mounts)

Height: 25 ft.

Space/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.

Crew: 3 (weapons: 5)

Firing Ports: 14

Hit Dice: 24

Hit Points: 132

Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 66, Orange 33, Red 13

Base Initiative: -1

Speed: 40 ft.

Maneuverability: Average

AC: 6

Hardness: 10

(iron)

Base melee

attack: +4

Base ranged

attack: -1

Unarmed

damage: 1d10

+8

Trample:

largest

Medium; safe

Small;

damage 3d6

Saves: Fort

+2, Ref -2,

Will —

Abilities:

Str 26, Dex 8,

Con —, Int —,

Wis —, Cha —

Mechcraft DC: 36

Base Planning Time: 72 days

Base Cost: 1,391 gp

Total Cost: 7,788 gp

Labor Requirements: 1,920 man-hours

Construction Time: 24 days

(10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)

Options: Extra weapon mounts (4)



PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
3	Crew
11	Onboard weaponry
14	Total

The juggernaut is the archetypal dwarven mech.

As were the earliest dwarven mech prototypes, it is built to resemble a heavyset, 25-foot-tall dwarf, complete with a stylized face and metal beard. Charging into battle at the head of an army, it is inspiring — at least to dwarves, who often use juggernauts to lead virtually any assault, whether or not mechs should be involved. Juggernauts are deployed even in defensive situations, if only to rally the troops.

A juggernaut has no hands. Instead, its arms terminate in rounded, fistlike appendages bristling with weapons. An axe head is built into the sides of its right fist, and a huge punching blade extends from the front. A total of three flame nozzles are built into the arms, one behind the axe head on the right and two on the left fist. Finally, a steam cannon is mounted between the shoulders.

The juggernaut is an all-purpose mech, intended for combat in almost any situation. When fighting other mechs, it uses its steam cannon until it has reached close combat range, then fights with axe and punching blades. Juggernauts generally reserve their flame nozzles for infantry, but in desperate times they are not above turning all three nozzles on full blaze. Even with the risk of explosion, a round or two of three full-blaze flame nozzles will destroy most opponents very quickly.

Special

Weapon Combos: With the left arm, the juggernaut can attack with either its flame nozzle or an axe blade or the punching blade, which is



treated as a sword. The flame nozzle on the left arm cannot be used while also using the melee weapons unless it is left on full blaze.

The driver may operate the arms or the steam cannon. With a full crew, the steam cannon may fire in the same turn the arms also attack.

For construction purposes, the axes and punching blades are considered one weapon. The cost is double the sum of the two weapons' normal cost.

LANCER

STEAM VERSION

Size: Gargantuan

Power Source: Steam

Payload Units: 12

(extra weapon
mounts)

Height:
25 ft.

Space/Reach:

10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.

Crew: 3 (weapons: 3)

Firing Ports: 12

Hit Dice: 24

Hit Points: 132

Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 66,

Orange 33, Red 13

Base Initiative: -1

Speed: 40 ft.

Maneuverability: Average

AC: 6

Hardness: 10 (iron)

Base melee attack: +4

Base ranged attack: -1

Unarmed damage: 1d10+8

Trample: largest Medium; safe Small; damage 3d6

Saves: Fort +2, Ref -2, Will —

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 8, Con —,

Int —, Wis —, Cha —

Mechcraft DC: 36

Base Planning Time: 72 days

Base Cost: 1,391 gp

Total Cost: 10,699 gp

Labor Requirements: 1,920 man-hours
(plus magic items)

Construction Time: 24 days (10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)



Special: Extra weapon mounts (2)

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
3	Crew
9	Onboard weaponry
12	Total

ANIMATED VERSION

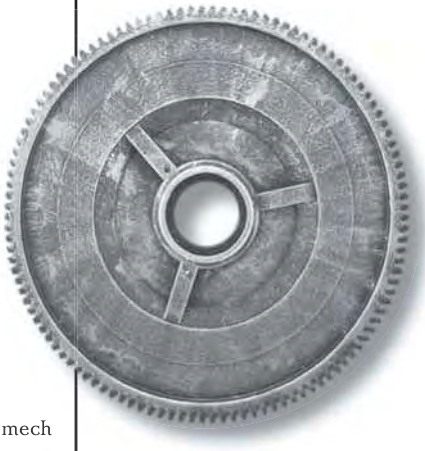
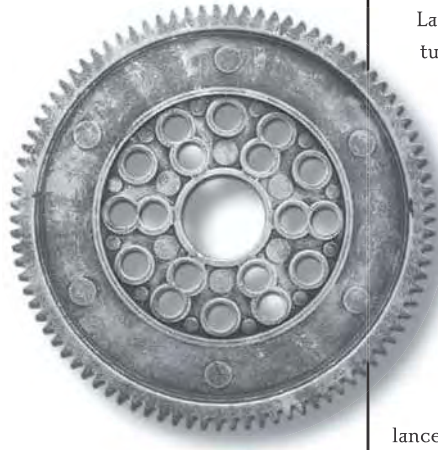
Size: Gargantuan
Power Source: Animated (dispel DC 26)
Payload Units: 10
Height: 25 ft.
Space/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.
Crew: 1 (weapons: 3)
Firing Ports: 10
Hit Dice: 16
Hit Points: 88
Critical Thresholds: Not subject to critical hits
Base Initiative: +3
Speed: 60 ft.
Maneuverability: Good
AC: 6
Hardness: 15 (mithral)
Base melee attack: +0
Base ranged attack: +3
Unarmed damage: 1d10+4
Trample: largest Medium; safe Small; damage 3d6
Saves: Fort —, Ref +2, Will —
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 34
Base Planning Time: 68 days
Base Cost: 5,231 gp
Total Cost: 32,390 gp
Labor Requirements: 1,920 man-hours (plus magic items)
Construction Time: 24 days (10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer) plus rituals (3 days)

Special: —

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
1	Crew
9	Onboard weaponry
10	Total

The lancer is an extremely common mech model among the Stenian military. They did not actually develop the concept; it is modeled after the far less common elven variety,



of which only a few have been sighted. The power source and armor vary between the two models, as does appearance, but otherwise they are nearly identical. Both feature a lance and sword as weapons, plus the crucial distinguishing mark: a *wand of magic missile* embedded in a head-mounted turret.

Lancers are used against normal creatures, not mechs. The powerful close combat weapons can leave devastating wounds, while the *wand of magic missile* is used when attacked by multiple opponents or those who can take a lot of punishment.

The Stenian version of the lancer includes one crew member for each weapon, but the elven version has only a single pilot. He invariably has the Mechidextrous feat.

A typical combat encounter with a lancer begins with *magic missiles* at long range. Once the enemy is in charging range, the mech charges in with its lance. Then it uses its sword blade to finish the enemy off.

MOTHER, THE

Size: Colossal IV
Power Source: Clockwork
Payload Units: 128
Height: 110 ft.
Space/Reach: 55 ft. by 55 ft./55 ft.
Crew: 13 (weapons: 6)
Firing Ports: 51
Hit Dice: 192
Hit Points: 1,056
Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 528, Orange 264, Red 106
Base Initiative: 1
Speed: 80 ft.
Maneuverability: Average
AC: 2
Hardness: 18 (steel, Colossal IV)
Base melee attack: +8
Base ranged attack: +1
Unarmed damage: 5d6 +16
Trample: largest Colossal; safe Huge; damage 7d6
Saves: Fort -4, Ref 0, Will —
Abilities: Str 42, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —

Mechcraft DC: 60
Base Planning Time: 120 days
Base Cost: 55,398 gp
Total Cost: 61,198 gp
Labor Requirements: 61,440 man-hours
Construction Time: 110
(70 avg. laborers plus 7 overseer)

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
13	Crew
64	Hangar space (room for two Colossal mechs or one Colossal II mech)
35	Boarding party or passengers
16	Onboard weaponry
128	Total

Egwerd Turn-screw is a gnome coglayer of great renown ... and infamy. He pioneered the art of clockwork mechs, producing many of the early models. These he sold to the highest bidders, and soon his mercenary inclinations became clear. He left the comfort of his city-mech home for the Irontooth Clans, where he knew his technical skills would let him live like a king. Since then he has indeed been treated like royalty, provided he continues to churn out top-notch mech designs for his hosts. Back in the Stenian Confederacy, he is considered a traitor.

The mother is one such top-notch mech. It is a large, bulbous creation of rather comedic proportions: a large belly, stout legs, and short arms. It has only two weapons — a chain tentacle on each arm — and was thought laughable by the first Irontooth clansmen to see it, just before they were about to order Egwerd evicted.

But Egwerd surprised them. The secret of the mother lies not in its weapons, but in what it gives birth to. Its bulbous torso has hangar space for two Colossal mechs. Working together, the three-mech team is nearly invulnerable. The two “daughter mechs” (described on page 100) each wield a single massive buzzsaw. When in combat to kill, the mother anchors a target and drags it in, while the daughters slice it to ribbons. When in combat to capture, the daughters harass enemy foes while the mother anchors them and draws them into her hangar, then hauls them off.

The mother’s greatest boon is that she doesn’t just kill enemy mechs; she captures

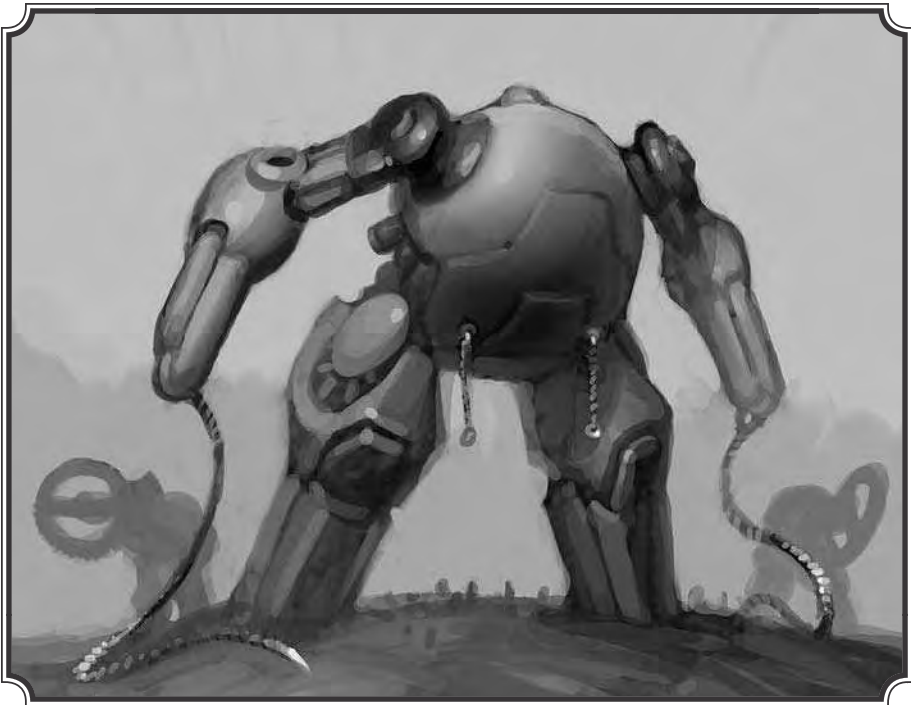
them and brings them home. She is always deployed with two daughter mechs in her hangars, but by the time she returns, they invariably walk alongside her, since her hangars are filled with captured enemies.

Special

Engulf: The mother can engulf enemy mechs. Her hangar bay is designed to open up and scoop in attackers. This is done in one of two ways.

The first way is the simplest: The mother uses her chain tentacles to drag the enemy mech into her hangars. Any mech dragged into the mother’s space is automatically engulfed by her hangars.

The second way is more difficult. The mother must make a successful unarmed melee attack against an adjacent mech, followed by a successful opposed Strength check. The adjacent mech is then engulfed by her hangars.



The rodwalker gets its name from its four arms, which are merely short struts that sup-

port long cylindrical rods. Each rod is constructed of lightweight metals and loaded with 50 charges of the *fireball* spell. They are actually unnecessarily large fireball wands, although they resemble oversized rods because they are designed to be used as clubs if the mech ever has to fight at close range.

Of course, with 200 *fireball* charges, few rodwalkers ever have to enter melee. The rod-walker was the first effective use of offensive magic in a mech and is now fairly common among the elven mech fleets. As with all magically powered mechs, it is susceptible to *dispel magic* effects, but with the *fireball* spell's long range, and the overlapping fields of fire created by teams of rodwalkers, it is rarely in danger.

Certain rod-walker variants use wands charged with spells other than *fireball*, particularly for special missions

Special

The rodwalker's arms can be fired individually, in which case the pilot can fire a maximum of one per round, or in unison, in which case all four are activated at once and must all be aimed at the same target.

SCALE HUNTER

Size: Colossal II
Power Source: Steam
Payload Units: 36 (extra weapon mounts)
Height: 50 ft.
Space/Reach: 25 ft. by 25 ft./25 ft.

Crew: 8 (weapons: 10)
Firing Ports: 23
Hit Dice: 96
Hit Points: 528
Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 264, Orange 132, Red 53
Base Initiative: -2
Speed: 50 ft.



Maneuverability: Average
AC: 2
Hardness: 12 (iron, Colossal II)
Base melee attack: +4
Base ranged attack: -2
Unarmed damage: 4d6 +12
Trample: largest Huge; safe Large; damage 5d8
Saves: Fort 0, Ref -4, Will -
Abilities: Str 34, Dex 6, Con -, Int -, Wis -, Cha -
Mechcraft DC: 42
Base Planning Time: 84 days
Base Cost: 5,565 gp
Total Cost: 19,702 gp
Labor Requirements:

7,680 man-hours
Construction Time: 96 days (10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)
Special: Extra weapon mounts (4), combat spikes, steady feet (+4 to trip checks)

Payload Usage	
PU	Use
8	Crew
28	Onboard weaponry
32	Total

The scale hunter was developed by the dwarves specifically for hunting dragons. It is built to fire on a dragon continuously until



it closes, withstand its charge, then crush the dragon in melee. Dragons that elect to fight with spells or long-distance weapons are met with a barrage of javelins and cannonballs, plus a chain tentacle intended to drag them into range of the lobster claw and axe blade.

Special

The mech's right arm features a huge axe blade with a cannon barrel protruding from its haft. If the steam cannon is fired, the mech may not make an axe blade attack. If the axe blade is used first, however, the mech can fire the cannon unaimed as it swings the blade. If the axe blade hits its target, there is a 50% chance that the cannon will be aimed such that it is directed at the same target. In such a case, the mech can make an immediate attack with the cannon right after the axe blade attack. Otherwise, the cannon shot fires wild and misses.

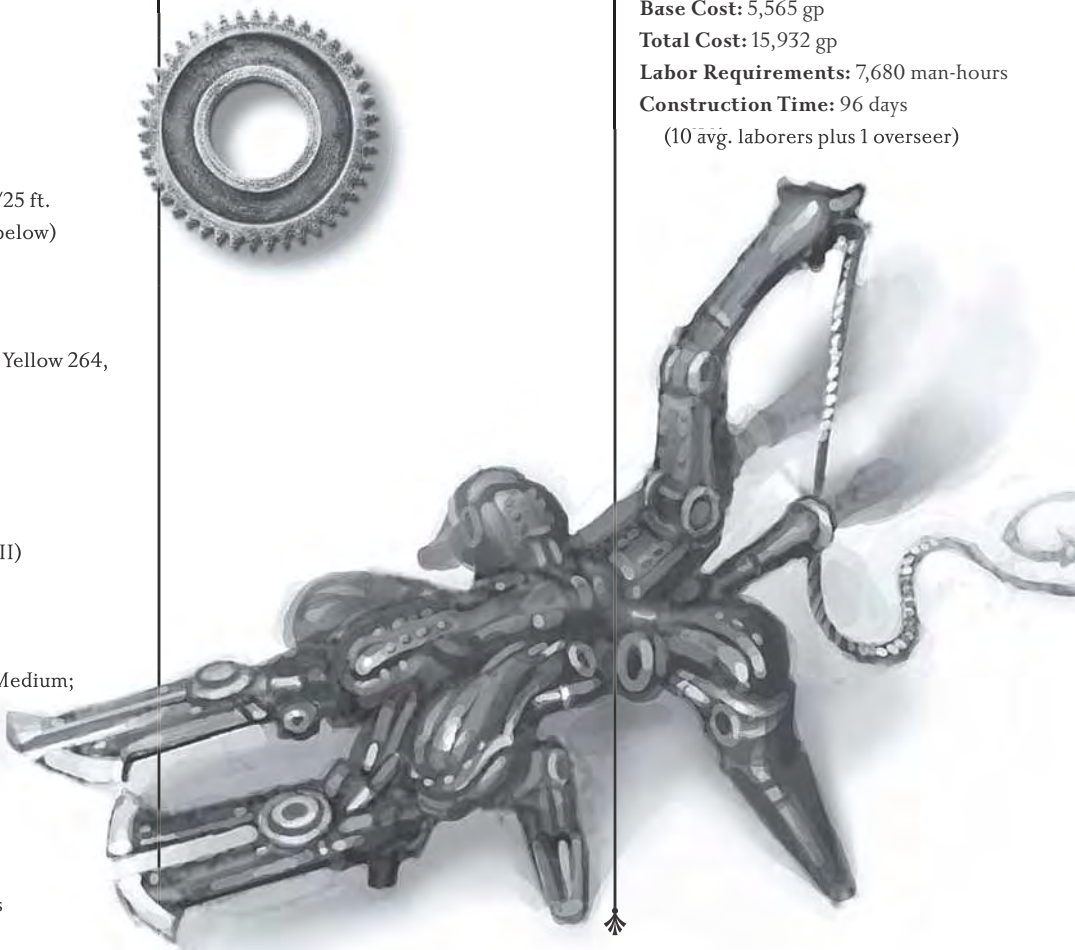
SCORPION

Size: Colossal II
Power Source: Steam
Payload Units: 32
Height: 50 ft.
Space/Reach: 25 ft. by 25 ft./25 ft.
Crew: 8 (weapons: 9 but see below)
Firing Ports: 21
Hit Dice: 96
Hit Points: 528
Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 264, Orange 132, Red 53
Base Initiative: -2
Speed: 50 ft.
Maneuverability: Average
AC: 2
Hardness: 12 (iron, Colossal II)
Base melee attack: +4
Base ranged attack: -2
Unarmed damage: 3d6 +13
Trample: largest Huge; safe Medium; damage 5d8
Saves: Fort 0, Ref -4, Will —
Abilities: Str 36, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 42
Base Planning Time: 84 days

TABLE 2-23: ONBOARD WEAPONS

LOCATION	ARC OF FIRE	WEAPON (DAMAGE, RANGE IN FT., OTHER)	PU	CREW
TALON ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Right arm	Melee	Huge buzzsaw (2d8/19–20/x3, ignore hardness)	4	1
Left arm	Melee	Huge buzzsaw (2d8/19–20/x3, ignore hardness)	4	1
Total			8	2Talon
TOTEM ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Shoulders	180° forward	Huge catapult (2d8, 300)	4	2
Total			4	2
VERDANT FURY ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Torso	360°	4x +1 dancing longswords (1d8+1/19–20, 5 ft.)	4	0
Total			4	0
VIPER ONBOARD WEAPONS				
Right arm	180° forward	Huge steam cannon (2d10/x3, 1000)	4	1
Left arm	Melee	Huge sword blade (2d8+8/19–20)	4	1
Total			8	2

Base Cost: 5,565 gp
Total Cost: 15,932 gp
Labor Requirements: 7,680 man-hours
Construction Time: 96 days
 (10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)



Other: Stability (+2 Balance and trip; see below), above average Strength

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
6	Crew
2	Storage
24	Onboard weaponry
32	Total

The scorpion is a vicious dwarven mech designed for mech-to-mech combat. It is built to destroy other mechs, not capture them. It has a squat, chitinous design stylized to resemble a scorpion. The left arm features a lobster claw with a steam cannon built into its base. The right arm has another lobster claw. A chain tentacle is built into a scorpion-like tail turret that has a 360-degree field of fire. Both weapons are designed to be used at the same time as the accompanying lobster claw.

The scorpion was first deployed by the Stenian Confederacy. Several models were built, but it was soon discontinued in favor of simpler models such as the juggernaut. The scorpion is ferocious in combat and far more dangerous than the juggernaut, but it is expensive and complicated to build. The Stenian military considers it excessive for general use.

Special

Weapon Combos:

If the scorpion fires its steam cannon, it may not use its left lobster claw, since its arm is being steadied to aim the

cannon. If it uses its lobster claw first and scores a hit, however, it may immediately follow up with a free attack with the steam cannon, using the same crew. This attack must be aimed at the opponent hit by the lobster claw.

Stability: The scorpion's low build makes it more stable than other mechs of its size. In addition, it is intentionally built with legs that are nearly solid metal. It is exceptionally heavy for a mech its size and thus very well grounded. A scorpion receives a +2 bonus to Balance and trip checks. This raises the base cost 10%.

SKULL CRUSHER

Size: Colossal IV
Power Source: Manpower
Payload Units: 128



Height: 110 ft.
Space/Reach: 55 ft. by 55 ft./55 ft.
Crew: 64 (weapons: 8)
Firing Ports: 51
Hit Dice: 160
Hit Points: 880
Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 528, Orange 308, Red 176
Base Initiative: -3
Speed: 50 ft.
Maneuverability: Clumsy
AC: 2
Hardness: 16 (iron, Colossal IV)
Base melee attack: +4
Base ranged attack: -3
Unarmed damage: 6d6 +12 (combat spikes)
Trample: largest Colossal; safe Huge; damage 7d6
Saves: Fort -2, Ref -4, Will —



Abilities: Str 34, Dex 4, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —

Mechcraft DC: 51

Base Planning Time: 102 days

Base Cost: 12,410 gp

Total Cost: 18,301 gp

Labor Requirements: 15,360 man-hours

Construction Time: 48 days

(40 avg. laborers plus 4 overseers)

Special: Combat spikes

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
64	Crew
64	Onboard weaponry
128	Total

The skull crusher is a typical orc mech. Most of its crew is slaves, who turn massive wheels in its torso in order to keep it running.

Despite its straightforward construction and simple armament, its combat tactics are fairly sophisticated. The skull crusher targets nomad bands, small settlements, and other isolated communities. The mech itself is there primarily for intimidation; it is the 300 orc warriors who accompany it on foot who do most of the killing and looting.

Skull crushers avoid combat with other mechs as much as possible, but when forced to engage, they simply charge headlong into melee, bringing the axes to bear as quickly as possible.

SLAUGHTERGORE

Size: Gargantuan

Power Source: Undead

Payload Units: 10

Height: 25 ft.

Space/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.

Crew: 1 (weapons: 0)

Firing Ports: 10

Hit Dice: 20

Hit Points: 110

Critical Thresholds: Not subject to critical hits

Base Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft.

Maneuverability: Poor

AC: 6

Hardness: 6 (bone)

Base melee attack: +2
Base ranged attack: +1
Unarmed damage: 1d10 +6
Trample: largest Medium; safe Small; damage 3d6
Saves: Fort +2, Ref 0, Will —
Abilities: Str 22, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis—, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 34
Base Planning Time: 68 days
Base Cost: 20 gp + 16 corpses
Total Cost: 10,020 gp + 16 corpses (does not include weapons)
Labor Requirements: 960 man-hours
Construction Time: 8 days (10 zombie laborers) plus rituals (3 days)

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
1	Crew
9	Storage
10	Total

Slaughtergore is a thoroughly repulsive undead mech that has been sighted wandering the endless plains, near the sight of a major battle between orcs and human nomads. It is suspected that a necromancer visited the location shortly after the battle, animated a work crew, and then assembled his mech on the spot.

Slaughtergore looks like a horrific, restitched humanoid. A grotesque montage of body parts composes the torso, with complete bodies, broken in the middle for joints, making up the limbs. No weapons are visible. It is presumed that the creator intends to add them at a later date and simply did not have the materials at his impromptu construction site to build them.

Slaughtergore has been raiding cemeteries and burial sites across the endless plains but has not initiated any direct attacks on living creatures. In the few combats in which it has been observed, it has fought with unarmed slams before retreating. No one knows what

its motives are or who created it, although it does seem to be culling corpses and keeping certain ones — but no one knows what its criteria for decisions are.

SMIGGENBOPPER'S
PERAMBULATORY ORC

Size: Gargantuan
Power Source: Clockwork
Payload Units: 10
Height: 25 ft.
Space/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.
Crew: 1 (weapons: 3 but see below)
Firing Ports: 10
Hit Dice: 24
Hit Points: 132

Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 66, Orange 33, Red 13

Base Initiative: 3

Speed: 50 ft.

Maneuverability: Good

AC: 6

Hardness: 10 (iron)

Base melee attack: +4

Base ranged attack: +3

Unarmed damage: 1d10 +8

Trample: largest Medium; safe Small; damage 3d6

Saves: Fort –2, Ref +2, Will —

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —

Mechcraft DC: 48

Base Planning Time:

96 days

Base Cost: 3,422 gp

Total Cost: 8,702 gp

Labor Requirements:

3,840 man-hours

Construction Time: 48 days

(10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)

Other Prerequisites: Pilot must have at least 2 steam powers to operate ballista

Special: Steam powers (automator + animator) attached to ballista

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
1	Crew
9	Onboard weaponry
10	Total





Smiggenbopper's Perambulatory Orc is the result of an early experiment in clockwork mech technology. Although its interior is a positively fantastic example of clockwork technology, its exterior is intentionally unfinished. It was designed by Pobloppy Smiggenbopper, a gnome cog-layer with a rather unusual sense of humor, as a way to frighten orcs. The entire mech resembles an oversized metal orc, somewhat comical in appearance. Its right arm holds a huge axe (with a hidden flame nozzle for back-up); in its left arm is a ballista built to resemble a crossbow held by the mech's oversized hands.

The Perambulatory Orc was somewhat effective. It did indeed frighten several orc tribes on their first encounters with it, when they invariably mistook it for a powerful orc god. After a few encounters, however, they made the connection to the gnome and dwarf foot soldiers who usually followed behind, and now they fear it only for its mortal abilities (such as the very large axe that hurts quite a bit when it hits).



Smiggenbopper and his associates went on to build several more perambulatory walkers, styled in different forms (dwarf, gnome, giant, etc.). Because the automatically reloading ballista requires a pilot skilled in steam powers, however, they were never commissioned en masse by the Stenian Confederacy or other mechs, and are now quite rare.

Special

Steam Powers: The ballista has been modified to reload automatically. After firing each round, the automator + animator steam powers reload a new spear as a standard action. It can thus fire every round even with only one crew member.

TALON

Size: Colossal

Power Source: Steam

Payload Units: 40 (extra weapon mounts, heavy payload)

Height: 35 ft.





Space/Reach: 15 ft. by 15 ft./15 ft.
Crew: 4 (weapons: 2)
Firing Ports: 32
Hit Dice: 48
Hit Points: 264
Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 132,
Orange 66, Red 26
Base Initiative: -1
Speed: 50 ft.
Maneuverability: Average
AC: 2
Hardness: 11 (iron, Colossal)
Base melee attack: +2 (+0 with buzz-
saws)
Base ranged attack: -1
Unarmed damage: 1d12 +10
Trample: largest Large; safe Medium;
damage 4d6
Saves: Fort 0, Ref -4, Will —
Abilities: Str 30, Dex 8, Con —,
Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 39
Base Planning Time: 78 days
Base Cost: 2,782 gp
Total Cost: 12,400 gp
Labor Requirements:
3,840 man-hours
Construction Time: 48 days
(10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)
Special: Extra weapon mounts (8),
heavy payload

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
4	Crew
8	Onboard weaponry
12	Storage or passengers
16	Sleeping area
40	Total

The talon is a specialized transport mech built to fend for itself. It was developed by a

group of independent dwarven mech operators whose back-road trade routes were profitable but extremely dangerous. Prior to the talon, most mechs were built for either combat or transport, not both. The talon combines those functions. It is expensive for its size, but that's okay — the traders can afford it.

A talon is built for transporting goods or passengers (whichever currently pays the best), and includes sleeping space for passengers. Along with the crew, up to four passengers can sleep comfortably, or up to 12 uncomfortably. When the mech has no passengers, the sleeping area is put to use ferrying goods.

The talon tries to stay away from combat but is equipped with the most effective bang-for-the-buck if fighting is unavoidable. A pilot will generally run from ranged weapons, if the terrain permits a favorable escape, or run toward the target if he has no escape route, hoping to close for use of the buzz-

saws. Talons rarely face organized mech opposition, so they don't have to worry about long-range firefights against disciplined enemies. Their com-

bats usually involve solitary or paired rust riders or Irontooth clansmen, or whatever monsters inhabit the terrain they travel through.

TOTEM

Size: Gargantuan
Power Source: Manpower
Payload Units: 10
Height: 25 ft.
Space/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.
Crew: 6 (weapons: 2)
Firing Ports: 10
Hit Dice: 20
Hit Points: 110
Critical Thresholds: Green,
Yellow 66, Orange 39, Red 22
Base Initiative: -1
Speed: 30 ft.
Maneuverability: Poor
AC: 6





Hardness: 5 (wood)
Base melee attack: +0
Base ranged attack: -1
Unarmed damage: 1d10 +4
Trample: largest Medium; safe Small; damage 3d6
Saves: Fort 0, Ref -2, Will —
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 32
Base Planning Time: 64 days
Base Cost: 656 gp
Total Cost: 1,988 gp
Labor Requirements: 960 man-hours
Construction Time: 12 days
(10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)

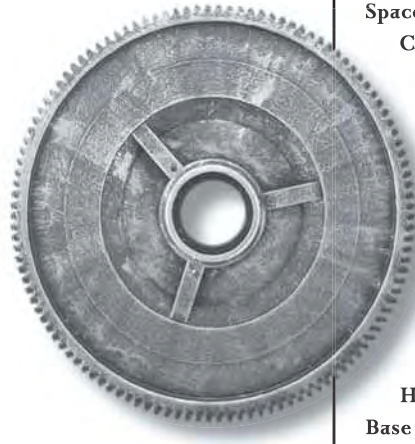
PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
6	Crew (5 laborers + pilot)
4	Onboard weaponry
10	Total

The itinerant mech tribes take any mech they can find, fix it up as best they can, and then live out of it. (These tribes are described in more detail on page 169.) The totem is not a specific mech per se but could be considered representative of what a mech tribe might use. It was originally steam-powered but was discarded after being heavily damaged in battle. The mech tribe found it in this condition. Lacking the facilities and technical expertise to repair it, they stripped out the steam engine and put in an oar-like apparatus by which a human crew could power it. The original steam-powered weapons were chucked to make way for the larger crew, and the iron armor (which was already substantially damaged and rusted) was peeled off to reduce the weight. Finally, a simple weapon, one that the tribe could understand, was installed: a catapult.

A totem mech such as this will not survive an encounter with a better-made mech. It can barely penetrate the hardness rating of any iron-armored mech in its size category. It is used primarily to defend the mech tribe from raiders of all kinds, and for hunting large beasts that provide a good many meals.

In combat, the totem mech lofts catapult shots for as long as possible, then closes



with unarmed attacks. It is poorly equipped for battle, because it doesn't have enough crew to move and fire at the same time! After allowing for the necessary laborers to keep the mech moving, and the space required for the catapult and pilot, there's no room left for two gunners on the catapult. In order to fire the catapult, two of the laborers must leave their posts to man the weapon – or, if the pilot has the Mechwalker feat, only one laborer must leave his post to help the pilot fire, but being one laborer short still leaves the mech without enough manpower to move. The totem would be far more effective in combat if it had a weapon with a crew requirement of 1, but most mech tribes can't afford such expensive equipment.

A totem mech is usually decorated according to the beliefs of its tribe, hence the name. It is stylized to resemble an eagle, bear, dragon, or whatever other creature the tribe reveres. It is painted in ceremonial patterns and sometimes features streamers or flags.

VERDANT FURY

Size: Huge
Power Source: Animated (dispel DC 26)
Payload Units: 5
Height: 15 ft.
Space/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Crew: 1 (weapons: 0)
Firing Ports: 5
Hit Dice: 8
Hit Points: 44
Critical Thresholds: Not subject to critical hits
Base Initiative: 4
Speed: 50 ft.
Maneuverability: Perfect
AC: 8
Hardness: 15 (Mithral)
Base melee attack: +0
(+14 with Juna as pilot)
Base ranged attack: +4
Unarmed damage: 1d8 +2
Trample: largest Small; safe Small; damage 2d6
Saves: Fort 0, Ref +2, Will —

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 18, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —

Mechcraft DC: 30

Base Planning Time: 60 days

Base Cost: 2,616 gp

Total Cost: 232,616 gp (including magic items), 263,876 with magical immunity

Labor Requirements: 960 man-hours (plus magic items)

Construction Time: 12 days (10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer) plus dancing weapons, *robe of blending*, and rituals (2 days)

Other Prerequisites: Dancing weapons and *robe of blending* have separate construction time and XP cost.

Special: Hide +21 (+4 natural, +15 *robe of blending*, +4 Dex, -2 size)

PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
1	Crew
4	Onboard weaponry
5	Total

Verdant Fury is a unique elven mech frequently sighted in the forests of Heréal. It is manned by Juna Darkwalker, an elven ranger (Rgr 12, Dex 14) who watched his grove be destroyed by the lunar rain. He and his former adventuring companions constructed four mechs, one for each of them, and returned to their homelands to guard against the rising tide of chaos.

Verdant Fury is a 15-foot-tall mech of the most elegant proportions. It is slender and graceful, with a torso only barely large enough to contain Juna. Its mithral armor is hidden by an outer layer of bark pulled from dead trees, giving it the appearance of a tall, narrow, walking tree. Clinging vines grow from soil pots built directly into the mech, wreathing it in a camouflaging greenery. (In fact, it has been mistaken for an unusual treant more than once.) It has no visible weapons, but its slender arms clearly move with strength and power.

Verdant Fury fights with four magically enchanted +1 dancing longswords. These are sheathed in hidden tubes in its torso and are deployed at Juna's command. His preferred strategy is to hide until an enemy is within striking range, then engage with the mech's unarmed attack (a simple slam). One dancing



Special

Dancing Weapons: Verdant Fury is designed to fight creatures, not mechs. It would stand little chance in a mech-on-mech battle, but is well equipped for weeding out orcs, lunar minions, and other enemies of the forest. Its *dancing* weapons fight at Juna's base attack bonus plus their enchantment bonus (+13/+8/+3). They stay within five feet of the mech, dancing for up to four rounds and then requiring four rounds of rest, exactly like normal *dancing weapons*.

Hide: Verdant Fury has one other enchantment: The properties of a *robe of blending* were built into its hide during construction. Additionally, it is designed with bark-skin and vinery to blend into the forest, granting it a natural +4 bonus to Hide checks when in forested terrain (where it is always found).

VIPER

Size: Gargantuan

Power Source: Clockwork

Payload Units: 10

Height: 25 ft.

Space/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.

Crew: 1 (weapons: 2)

Firing Ports: 10

Hit Dice: 24

Hit Points: 132

Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 66,
Orange 33, Red 13

Base Initiative: 3

Speed: 60 ft. (fast legs)

Maneuverability: Good

AC: 6

Hardness: 12 (steel)

Base melee attack:
+4

Base ranged attack:
+3

Unarmed damage:
1d10 +8

Trample: Largest Medium; safe Small; damage 3d6

Saves: Fort -2, Ref +2, Will —

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —

Mechcraft DC: 48

Base Planning Time:
96 days

Base Cost: 3,462 gp

Total Cost: 10,756 gp

Labor Requirements:

3,840 man-hours

Construction Time:
48 days

(10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseer)

Special: Fast legs (+10 ft.)

PAYLOAD USAGE

PLJ	Use
1	Crew
1	Open
8	Onboard weaponry
10	Total

The viper is one of the most common clockwork mechs. First built by an eccentric dwarven coglayer in Edge, it quickly caught on as a great mech for one-man owner-operators. It is rarely seen in military service, but a number of variants have been built to guard trading caravans and dignitary mechs. The extra space allows the pilot to sleep on board if he desires, which is more than welcome these days.





PLATE 4 *As mechs have evolved,
so too have weapons designed to destroy them.*



EQUIPMENT

THE COGLAYERS OF HIGHPOINT PRODUCE A NEVER-ENDING VARIETY OF INTRIGUING NEW EQUIPMENT. THIS CHAPTER INTRODUCES SOME OF THOSE ITEMS.

SCARCING GOLD

The new classes presented in this book receive starting gold as follows.

CLASS AMOUNT (AVERAGE)
Clockwork ranger	6d4 x 10 (150 gp)
Coglayer 10d4 x 10 (250 gp)	
Constructor	6d4 x 10 (150 gp)
Mech jockey 5d4 x 10 (125 gp)	
Stalker	5d4 x 10 (125 gp)
Steamborg 6d4 x 10 (150 gp)	

WEAPONS

The weapons listed below are organized by name, with the various sizes listed under each weapon name. Many of the weapons are designed for use only on mechs. Sizes designed for use by a normal humanoid are prefaced by “personal”; those designed for smaller creatures (usually coglings) are designated as “cogling.”

Weapons larger than size Colossal III are not built on a regular basis. Such weapons are considered unique, requiring an exotic weapon proficiency all of their own. Unique weapons cannot be acquired on the open market; they must be custom-built. Players can build their own version of a unique weapon only by acquiring the plans, studying the original, or devoting substantial research time to researching the design.

The weapon statistics that follow use size category conventions common to the 3.0 edition of the d20 rules. Because

mechs come in so many sizes, it is necessary to present stats for weapons in the same range of sizes. The number of hands required to use the weapon depends on the size of the weapon and the size of the wielder. Treat a weapon as one-handed if it is the same size as the wielder. A weapon that is smaller than its wielder is light. A weapon that is one size increment larger than the wielder requires two hands. Weapons two or more size increments larger than the wielder generally cannot be used.

A weapon’s size category isn’t the same as its size as an object, but for purposes of mech payload usage (measured in payload units, or PU), a weapon occupies space based on its size category. For example, a Medium lobster claw is sized for Medium characters, but is actually a Tiny object. If placed on a mech, however, it still takes 1 PU as if it were a Medium object. Why? Because building a weapon into a mech usually requires more than just the weapon. It takes weapon mounts, additional steam engine capacity, and seating and controls for the crew.

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

Axe Blade: Many mechs wield gigantic axes, whether hafted and held in the hand or welded directly onto the arm. These are the stats for axe blades of various sizes. Some have one blade while others have two, some have curved edges while others are straight, and some are hooked and others are not. Certain specialized versions may have other uses, such as hooked axes that can draw an opponent near. See the entry for the hooked axe for more information.

Ballista: The crew of a ballista must perform two separate tasks: loading the spear and winding the rope. It is impossible to perform both at once. A ballista with full crew can fire every round. With less than a full crew, reduce its firing rate by one round for every missing crew member. For example, a Huge ballista missing one crew member could fire only once every other round.

Barbed Blade: Any sword blade may be barbed at extra cost. This increases its damage on critical hits (without affecting the threat range) and can be used to trap opponents. For example, a Huge barbed sword blade would have a critical rating of 19–20/x3.

Any target damaged by a barbed blade must make a Reflex save (DC 18) or be caught on the barbs.

The attacker can choose to leave the blade in the barbed opponent or hang on to it. If he hangs on to it, the target cannot move beyond the attacker’s reach unless he succeeds in an opposed Strength check, which wrests the blade from the attacker’s hand. Mech devils may attempt

TABLE 3-1: GRENADES

WEAPON CO	ST D	AMAGE	BLAST RADIUS	RANGE INCREMENT W	EIGHT
Magnet bomb*,**	150 gp	4d6	0 ft.	10 ft.	2 lbs.
Pressure bomb**	50 gp	2d6	10 ft.	10 ft.	1 lbs.
Rust bomb**	500 gp	Special	5 ft.	10 ft.	1 lbs.

*THIS WEAPON IGNORES A MECH’S HARDNESS RATING.

**THIS WEAPON CAN MAKE INDIRECT ATTACKS (SEE PAGE 97).



TABLE 3-2: MECH WEAPONS – MELEE AND RANGED

WEAPON CO	ST D	AMAGE	CRITICAL	RANGE W	HEIGHT T	YPE	CREW	PU
Axe Blade								
Huge	120 gp	2d8	x3	—	40 lbs.	Slashing	1	4
Gargantuan	250 gp	2dl2	x3	—	65 lbs.	Slashing	1	8
Colossal	900 gp	3dl2	x3	—	130 lbs.	Slashing	1	16
Colossal II	2,500 gp	5dl2	x3	—	230 lbs.	Slashing	1	32
Colossal III	5,000 gp	7dl2	x3	—	400 lbs.	Slashing	1	64
Barbed Blade	x3	Same	+1x	—	Same	Piercing	Same	Same
Bomb Launcher								
Huge	250 gp V	aries V	aries	40 ft. (max)	30 lbs. V	aries	1	4
Bore Puncher*								
Huge	400 gp	1dl0	x2	Melee, 5 ft. reach	35 lbs.	Piercing	1	4
Gargantuan	1,200 gp	2d8	x2	Melee, 10 ft. reach	45 lbs.	Piercing	1	8
Colossal	3,000 gp	4d6	x2	Melee, 15 ft. reach	60 lbs.	Piercing	2	16
Colossal II	5,000 gp	3dl2	x2	Melee, 20 ft. reach	120 lbs.	Piercing	2	32
Colossal III 7,	000 gp	5dl2	x2	Melee, 30 ft. reach	250 lbs.	Piercing	3	64
Buzzsaw*								
Huge	2,000 gp	2d8	19–20/x3	—	600 lbs.	Slashing	1	4
Gargantuan	4,000 gp	2dl2	19–20/x3	—	1,200 lbs.	Slashing	1	8
Colossal 7,	000 gp	3dl2	19–20/x3	—	2,400 lbs.	Slashing	1	16
Colossal II	10,000 gp	5dl2	19–20/x3	—	4,800 lbs.	Slashing	1	32
Colossal III	13,000 gp	8dl2	19–20/x3	—	9,600 lbs.	Slashing	1	64
Chain Tentacle*								
Gargantuan	1,400 gp	2d8	x2	100 ft.	1,000 lbs.	Piercing/Bludgeoning	3	8
Changler								
Huge (+4)	120 gp	1dl0	x2	—	150 lbs.	Bludgeoning	1	4
Gargantuan (+6)	360 gp	2d8	x2	—	225 lbs.	Bludgeoning	1	8
Colossal (+8)	1,600 gp	4d6	x2	—	425 lbs.	Bludgeoning	1	16
Colossal II (+10)	3,600 gp	3dl2	x2	—	750 lbs.	Bludgeoning	1	32
Colossal III (+12) 7	,200 gp	5dl2	x2	—	1,300 lbs.	Bludgeoning	1	64

Escape Artist checks (DC 18), which allow escape without wresting the blade from the attacker's hand.

Once the attacker lets go, the target can rip out the barbed blade, causing damage equal to half the original attack. The target cannot heal or be repaired until the blade is ripped out.

Bayonet: A bayonet must be fixed to a ranged weapon with a barrel, such as a flame nozzle, steam gun, or steambreather. A nyone proficient with such a ranged weapon is automatically proficient with bayonets affixed to them. Because the bayonet is fixed to the weapon's barrel, it can be wielded at the same time as the ranged weapon; furthermore, its PU is incorpo-

rated into that of the larger weapon. A bayonet used in melee is treated exactly as dagger, with one special exception: a creature stabbed by a bayonet is perfectly positioned for the attached ranged weapon to be discharged safely. A character who hits a target with his bayonet can proceed to make ranged attacks against that target without provoking attacks of opportunity from that target. These ranged attacks still provoke attacks of opportunity from other creatures who threaten the attacker. Once the target is hit with the bayonet, the character can continue to make ranged attacks without incurring an attack of opportunity until the target creature moves out of melee range.

Bomb Launcher: A bomb launcher is loaded with grenades, which are launched out in a wide spray at nearby targets. It is effective against hordes of attacking infantry, as well as mechs that fight in melee. It is extremely expensive, as the grenade ammunition is costly.

A bomb launcher fires up to five grenades per round. The attacker determines how many are fired each round. Each grenade is fired somewhere in the forward arc, determined by rolling 1d6. With 12:00 being straight ahead (as on a clock face), a 1 indicates a shot at 10:00, 2 is 11:00, 3–4 is 12:00, 5 is 1:00, and 6 is 2:00. Each grenade encounters the first target in its way, or explodes at the max range of 40 ft. If



TABLE 3-2 CONTINUED: MECH WEAPONS – MELEE AND RANGED

WEAPON CO	ST D	AMAGE	CRITICAL	RANGE W	EIGHT T	YPE	CREW	PU
Explosive Shells	x3	+1d10	x2	Same	Same	Piercing	Same	Same
Flame Nozzle								
Huge	300 gp	2d8	x2	30 ft.	45 lbs. F	ire	1	4
Gargantuan	600 gp	2d8	x2	50 ft.	90 lbs. F	ire	1	8
Colossal	1,500 gp	2d8	x2	80 ft.	150 lbs. F	ire	1	16
Colossal II	2,500 gp	2d8	x2	120 ft.	300 lbs. F	ire	1	32
Colossal III	6,000 gp	2d8	x2	180 ft.	500 lbs. F	ire	1	64
Flail								
Huge	30 gp	1d12	19–20/x2	—	30 lbs.	Bludgeoning	1	4
Gargantuan	90 gp	3d6	19–20/x2	—	45 lbs.	Bludgeoning	1	8
Colossal	400 gp	5d6	19–20/x2	—	85 lbs.	Bludgeoning	1	16
Colossal II	900 gp	4d12	19–20/x2	—	150 lbs.	Bludgeoning	1	32
Colossal III	1,800 gp	6d12	19–20/x2	— 2	60 lbs.	Bludgeoning	1	64
Hooked Axe	x2	Same	Same	—	Same	Slashing	Same	Same
Lance								
Large	30 gp	2d6	x3	—	30 lbs.	Piercing	1	2
Huge	90 gp	2d8	x3	—	50 lbs.	Piercing	1	4
Gargantuan	200 gp	2d12	x3	—	85 lbs.	Piercing	1	8
Colossal	600 gp	3d12	x3	—	160 lbs.	Piercing	1	16
Colossal II	1,800 gp	5d12	x3	— 27	0 lbs.	Piercing	1	32
Colossal III	4,400 gp	7d12	x3	—	450 lbs.	Piercing	1	64
Lobster Claw								
Huge	1,000 gp	2d8	19–20/x2	—	30 lbs.	Bludgeoning and Piercing	2	4
Gargantuan	2,000 gp	2d12	19–20/x2	—	60 lbs.	Bludgeoning and Piercing	2	8
Colossal	3,000 gp	3d12	19–20/x2	—	90 lbs.	Bludgeoning and Piercing	2	16
Steambreather								
Huge	175 gp	2d8	x2	30 ft.	60 lbs. F	ire	1	4
Gargantuan	600 gp	2d12	x2	40 ft.	120 lbs. F	ire	2	8
Colossal	1,000 gp	5d6	x2	50 ft. 2	40 lbs. F	ire	2	16
Sword Blade								
Huge	120 gp	2d8	19–20/x2	—	30 lbs.	Piercing	1	4
Gargantuan	250 gp	2d12	19–20/x2	—	50 lbs.	Piercing	1	8
Colossal	900 gp	3d12	19–20/x2	—	100 lbs.	Piercing	1	16
Colossal II	2,500 gp	5d12	19–20/x2	—	175 lbs.	Piercing	1	32
Colossal III	5,000 gp	7d12	19–20/x2	—	300 lbs.	Piercing	1	64

multiple grenades travel on the same arc, all attacks are considered to happen simultaneously (meaning that if a target on that arc is killed by the first grenade, the next grenade to travel that arc will also explode where it was, potentially wasting the shot).

The shooter has no control over the angle or distance of each grenade. Their trajectories are always determined randomly.

Bore Puncher: A bore puncher is a simple application of steam-powered hydraulic

technology. The weapon itself is a long spike sheathed in a cylindrical case, powered with a steam engine at the base of the case. The steam engine builds up pressure to just below its breaking point, then releases it all as a massive hydraulic burst. The release of so much pent-up pressure launches the spike down the cylindrical shaft. The shape of the spike channels its power perfectly, sending it through armor with such ease that it ignores hardness. It is anchored such that

it leaves the shaft far enough to punch a hole in whatever is nearby, then is retracted. A bore puncher is treated as a melee weapon with reach, though it can attack any square within its reach.

Bore punchers are close-combat weapons capable of punching repeated holes in the same point on an enemy mech. The benefit over traditional weapons is that the bore puncher facilitates boarding enemy mechs. A bore puncher attack that



TABLE 3-3: SIEGE WEAPONS – RANGED

WEAPON CO	ST D	AMAGE	CRITICAL	RANGE W	EIGHT T	YPE	CREW	PU
Ballista								
Huge	500 gp	3d6	x3	120 ft.	200 lbs.	Piercing	2	4
Gargantuan	750 gp	5d6	x3	180 ft.	250 lbs.	Piercing	2	8
Colossal	1,000 gp	7d6	x3	250 ft.	300 lbs.	Piercing	3	16
Colossal II	1,400 gp	5d10	x3	300 ft.	350 lbs.	Piercing	3	32
Colossal III	1,800 gp	6d10	x3	350 ft.	450 lbs.	Piercing	3	64
Catapult**								
Huge	550 gp	3d6	x2	150 ft.	250 lbs.	Bludgeoning	2	4
Gargantuan	800 gp	5d6	x2	200 ft.	300 lbs.	Bludgeoning	5	8
Colossal	1,100 gp	6d6	x2	250 ft.	350 lbs.	Bludgeoning	5	16
Colossal II	1,500 gp	7d6	x2	300 ft.	450 lbs.	Bludgeoning	6	32
Colossal III	2,000 gp	8d6	x2	400 ft.	500 lbs.	Bludgeoning	6	64
Javelin Rack								
Huge	1,000 gp	2d6 (x3)	x2	200 ft.	350 lbs.	Piercing	2	4
Gargantuan	2,000 gp	2d8 (x5)	x2	200 ft.	450 lbs.	Piercing	2	8
Colossal	3,000 gp	2d10 (x8)	x2	200 ft.	650 lbs.	Piercing	2	16
Steam Cannon**								
Huge	3,000 gp	2d10	x3	1,000 ft.	200 lbs.	Piercing	2	4
Gargantuan	4,000 gp	3d10	x3	950 ft.	300 lbs.	Piercing	2	8
Colossal	5,200 gp	4d10	x3	900 ft.	400 lbs.	Piercing	3	16
Colossal II	6,500 gp	6d12	x3	850 ft.	500 lbs.	Piercing	3	32
Colossal III	8,000 gp	8d12	x3	800 ft.	600 lbs.	Piercing	3	64
Unique Weapons								
City Killer	100,000 gp	12d12	x3	1,000 ft.	1,200 lbs.	Piercing	6	128
Viper Fang*	60,000 gp	4d20	x4	Melee, 20 ft. reach	900 lbs.	Piercing	1	128

penetrates the enemy mech's hardness — regardless of damage inflicted — can be left in place to allow boarding. Boarding can begin immediately (and usually does, since the boarding party is seated right behind the bore). A maximum of six creatures can pass through a hole in a full round, half as many in half a round. If the enemy mech does not move in its following turn (whether by choice or because it is tripped or held in place by a barbed blade, hooked axe, or other weapon), no attack roll is necessary to continue the boarding process. Otherwise, the bore must be launched again.

Bore punchers are always mounted on mechs. They can punch holes large enough for creatures two sizes smaller to pass through. For example, a Huge bore puncher can create a hole suitable for one Medium creature. The pressure that

drives the bore can be regulated carefully by a trained operator, in order to minimize damage caused to the mech about to be boarded (and presumably captured). The operator can choose how many dice to roll for damage, but this must be declared before making the attack roll.

Note that a bore puncher left in place from one round to the next can also be used for the receiving mech to send boarders into the attacking mech, provided it has troops positioned properly and no boarders are blocking their way in.

Buzzaxe: Developed by ferocious steam-borg warriors, the buzzaxe is a modified greataxe. A line of vibrating steam-powered teeth is set a half-inch back from the razor-sharp axeblade. The initial wound is magnified as these teeth tear into the target. These mighty weapons do even more damage than the standard

greataxe on which they are based.

Buzzsaw: The buzzsaw is the most devastating application of steam engine technology. Buzzsaws are driven by massive steam engines that are far more powerful than they need to be. This results in the sharp, toothed blades spinning at horrific speeds, capable of ripping through the heaviest armor. Requiring only a single engineer to operate, they are efficient and deadly far beyond their size. They are also enormously expensive and extremely heavy.

Buzzsaws are specially designed for sawing through metal. They automatically ignore the first 10 points of hardness on any target. Because they are powered independently, the wielder (whether mech or man) does not add its Strength bonus to their attack or damage rolls.

An enemy that simply comes into contact with a mech-mounted buzzsaw



TABLE 3-4: EXOTIC WEAPONS – MELEE AND RANGED

WEAPON CO	ST D	AMAGE	CRITICAL	RANGE W	EIGHT T	YPE	CREW	PU
Bayonet								
P ersonal (Small)	10 gp	1d4	19-20/x2	—	1 lb.	Piercing	1	Special
Buzzaxe								
Cogling (Medium)	60 gp	1d12	x3	—	12 lbs.	Slashing	1	1
P ersonal (Large)	80 gp	2d8	x3	—	18 lbs.	Slashing	1	2
Buzzsaw								
P ersonal (Large)	450 gp	1d10	19-20/x3	—	40 lbs.	Slashing	1	2
Chattersword								
P ersonal (Large)	120 gp	2d6+1d3	x3	—	20 lbs.	Slashing	1	2
Flame Nozzle								
Cogling (Medium) 2	40 gp	2d8	x2	10 ft.	20 lbs. F	ire	1	1
Personal (Large)	290 gp	2d8	x2	15 ft.	30 lbs. F	ire	1	2
Lobster Claw								
P ersonal (Medium)	300 gp	1d10+4	19-20/x2	—	12 lbs.	Bludgeoning and Piercing	1	1
Signal Flare								
Medium	20 gp	1d6	x2	100 ft.	2 lbs. F	ire	1	2
Steam Gun								
Cogling (Medium)	300 gp	1d8	x2	160 ft.	6 lbs.	Piercing	1	1
P ersonal (Large)	350 gp	1d10	x2	200 ft.	8 lbs.	Piercing	1	2
Steambreather								
Cogling (Medium)	300 gp	1d10	x2	15 ft.	25 lbs. F	ire	1	1
P ersonal (Large)	350 gp	1d12	x2	20 ft.	40 lbs. F	ire	1	2

must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or take full damage. If the mech is grappling or connected to an enemy, it may make an opposed Strength check to pull the enemy directly into the path of the buzzsaw, in which case no save is allowed. This attack is brutally effective when combined with weapons that let the mech pull enemies into close range.

Catapult: The crew of a catapult must perform two separate tasks: loading the bucket and winding the rope. It is impossible to perform both at once. A catapult with full crew can fire every round. With less than a full crew, reduce its firing rate by one round for every missing crew member. For example, a Huge catapult missing one crew member could fire only once every other round.

Many catapults in Highpoint have been souped up by ambitious coglayers. Some feature spring-based tension or even compact, folding pendulums.

Chain Tentacle: The chain tentacle is

a specialized weapon designed to entangle and immobilize small mechs. It is a heavy, stout chain 500 feet long with a large, barbed spear point at one end. It can be used in two ways.

The first method uses the tentacle as a spear. On a hit, the attacker reels in the tentacle, drawing the smaller mech into striking range. This method does not require the tentacle to pierce the mech fully, only for it to embed far enough for it to gain a hold, so it ignores the mech's hardness but cannot do more than 1 point of damage. (The chain tentacle may also be launched to cause normal damage, in which case it will not embed but does factor in an enemy mech's hardness.)

The second method uses the chain as a flail, in a trip attack. The chain is wrapped around the target's legs in an attempt to trip it.

The attacker must declare how he is using the chain tentacle before rolling his attack. On a successful spear attack, the target is chained to the attacker. The chain is imme-

diately tightened and the target may not move outside the radius of the attack range until he escapes. The attacker can attempt to drag the defender closer (and vice versa!) as a movement action. Escaping the chain and dragging an opponent closer are resolved with opposed Strength checks. Even if the defender loses the opposed roll, if his check is high enough (DC 28), he breaks the chain and is free. A dragged opponent is pulled half its normal movement toward the attacker.

On a successful flail attack, the attacker may attempt a trip, as with a flail. He receives a +2 bonus to his Strength check due to the extra length of the chain, which wraps around an opponent's legs several times. He may *not* drop the chain if he loses the Strength check.

Some coglayers have experimented with larger chain tentacles designed for use against larger mechs, but no chains are strong enough to contain the strength of the city-mechs.

Changler: A changler, or chain tangler,



is a mass of ten long chains attached to a mech's arm. Each chain is as long as the mech is tall. They can be reeled in partially so as not to trip the mech. On attacks they are fully extended and flailed against an opponent's legs in a trip attack.

The number and length of attacking chains grants a bonus to your check when making a trip attack, as indicated in the weapon stats. The chains are designed to detach under sufficient pressure. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can avoid the trip by detaching 1d4 chains. As long as at least one chain remains, the weapon can be used as normal.

Changlers can also be used effectively by cooperative attackers. If you are the second or subsequent attacker to make a trip attack on your target this round, you receive a +2 bonus to your trip check.

Chattersword: A chattersword is a primitive version of the modern chainsaw. It is a greatsword equipped with rows of teeth that saw in a constant rotation, powered by the steam engine at its base. It causes gruesome wounds that are very slow to heal.

Damage from a chattersword takes place in two phases. The weapon causes 2d6 points of damage on a successful hit. These wounds are torn and jagged, and open even further as the victim moves. If a victim sustains damage and makes any vigorous motion (which includes practically any combat action) within the next ten rounds, he must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) on the first round in which he moves. On a failed save, the ragged chattersword wounds have torn open even further and cause an additional 1d3 points of damage.

City Killer: This is the largest steam cannon known to exist. Built by Shar Thizdic's forces as a symbol of their might, it is now being installed in their first city-mech. It has been fired only twice in test shots, and the incalculable amount of steam pressure necessary to launch its massive cannonballs has raised concerns about what might happen if it misfires. It could conceivably bring down the entire city-mech. The mere existence of the weapon is considered by



CHATTERSWORD

STEAM CANNON

SWORD BLADE



BARBED SWORD



many Stenian generals to be an act of war: Why build such a weapon except to attack their city-mechs? The ramifications of its construction remain to be seen.

Explosive Shells: Any steam cannon may be equipped with explosive shells. They spray shrapnel in all directions upon impact. All creatures within a radius of 20 ft. take 1d10 damage, with a Reflex save (DC 20) for half. Note that the steam cannon's main target takes normal steam cannon damage plus 1d10, while targets within the blast area take *only* 1d10 damage.

Flail: Flails may be used to make trip attacks against other mechs. As with normal flails, a mech may drop its flail (if possible) to avoid being tripped by an opponent on their own trip attempt.

Flame Nozzle: Flame nozzles are primitive flamethrowers. A dangerously combustible mixture of mineral spirits and natural oils is held in a canister, which is worn on the back in man-portable versions. With the pull of a trigger, this fuel is channeled through an aiming tube into the path of a pilot flame, which ignites it in an immolating blaze. The size of the weapon affects the area, not damage, since the flames are the same temperature regardless of how much fuel is set a blaze.

A flame nozzle attack is cone-shaped. Its range increment is its maximum range. All creatures in the area suffer the indicated damage due to the heat and flame. Additionally, they may catch on fire. They can make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid igniting. Creatures on fire immediately take an additional 1d6 points of damage and continue taking damage each round until they succeed in another Reflex save to extinguish the fire. Attempting to put out the fire is a full-round action.

The canister full of volatile chemicals is a viable target. The man-portable version has hardness 10 and can be pierced with 10 hit points of damage. A pierced canister explodes. The person wearing the canister takes 6d6 damage and automatically catches on fire. All creatures within 30 feet of him take 3d6 damage (Reflex save at DC 15).



for half) and may also catch on fire (Reflex save at DC 15 to avoid).

A flame nozzle can fire 15 shots before the canister must be re-fueled. Re-fueling is expensive — it costs one quarter of the flame nozzle's original cost .

A flame nozzle normally fires a single, targeted burst of chemicals, but if the fuel pump is left on it will spew flames indiscriminately. This isn't advised for safe use but is sometimes quite handy. If the player opts to leave the fuel pump on (known as "full-blazin' it"), the flame

nozzle fires twice each round, once at the beginning of the player's turn (before any movement or attacks) and again after all the player's movements and attacks. This consumes three times the normal amount of fuel (meaning a fully loaded canister can sustain a full blaze for only 5 rounds) and runs the risk of igniting the canister itself. On any attack roll of a natural 1, the fuel canister explodes. This destroys the flame nozzle, deals 6d8 points of damage to the user (whether mech or man), deals 2d8 points of damage to everything within half the nozzle's range increment, and also causes any other flame nozzles within the affected area to explode .

Putting a flame nozzle on full blaze requires a standard action, as does taking a flame nozzle off of full blaze .

Hooked Axe: An axe of any size may be hooked backward at the points. This hook is used to trap opponents and draw them near.

A hooked axe has the same stats as a regular axe of its size. On a successful hit, the target must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or be hooked. A hooked target cannot move beyond the attacker's reach. It may still make attacks as normal. It may try to escape with a free action each turn; make another Reflex save or Escape Artist check (DC 15) to determine the success of

STEAM GUN



RUST BOMB



SIGNAL FLARE



A personal lobster claw is worn like a glove. A small engine powers the claw. The user attacks by catching the enemy within the claw's arc then quickly activating the engine with a button inside the glove. This locks the pincers together almost instantly.



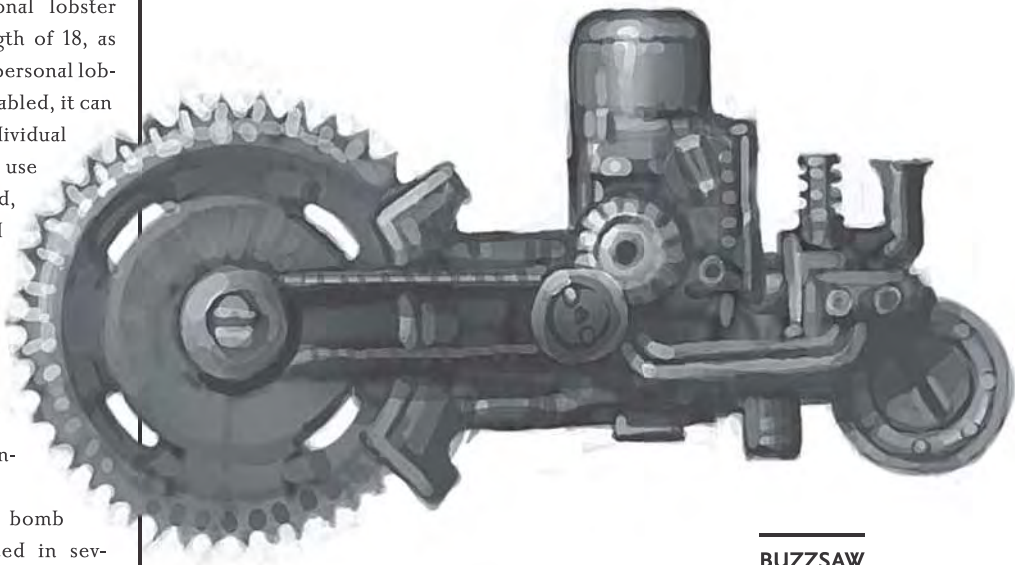
Because the compression force of the lobster claw is powered by an engine, the wearer's Strength modifier does not apply to attacks or damage. Personal lobster claws have an effective Strength of 18, as indicated in their damage. If a personal lobster claw is for some reason disabled, it can still be swung as a club. An individual wielding a lobster claw cannot use any other weapon in that hand, but mechs are often designed with a small projectile weapon built into the base of the lobster claw.

A target hit by a lobster claw must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or be caught by it. Once caught, the target is considered grappled.

Magnet Bomb: A magnet bomb is a pressure bomb ensconced in several powerful magnets. The blast is tightly focused to maximize armor penetration. Thus, it has no effective area of effect, even though it is a grenade, but it automatically penetrates material hardness when properly applied. If the user throws it at a metal object and succeeds in a ranged touch attack roll, the magnet bomb has a 50% chance of properly sticking to the target. Once stuck, it can be removed only with great effort (Strength check, DC 25). Whether or not it attaches, it explodes 1–10 rounds after the throw. The duration is set by the attacker as part of the throw action. Magnet bombs can also be planted directly onto a target with a touch attack, in which case they automatically stick.

A magnet bomb does not automatically make a hole big enough for a human to pass through. See page 92 for details on boarding.

Pressure Bomb: A pressure bomb includes a mix of highly flammable chemicals surrounded by a layer of water, in turn surrounded by nails, barbs, sharp stones, and other debris. The chemicals are ignited via a wick prior to being thrown. (This counts as part of the attack action.) The burning chemicals heat the water to its bursting point, whereupon it explodes. The ensuing explosion showers the deadly



BUZZSAW



FLAIL



AXE BLADE



HOOKED AXE



debris over a wide area.

Rust Bomb: A rust bomb is an extremely difficult-to-manufacture mundane item that has gained widespread use only with the growing prevalence of mechs. It is a simple pressure bomb made of wood and filled with a fine dust. The main component of the dust is a rust-inducing agent derived from the glands of rust monsters. Other components keep the rusting agent from clumping and help carry it on the wind so it spreads widely.

Attacks with rust bombs are touchy attacks. When the rust bomb explodes, all metal within the blast radius is immediately affected as if it had been hit by a rust monster. This creates huge holes in a mech's armor and is extremely useful for boarding parties.

Signal Flare: This isn't a weapon per se, but a useful device for coordinating mech activities. It's a steam-powered fuse that burns a bright red. It is immediately obvious from a distance of 1,000 ft. in the dark and 500 ft. in daylight; beyond that, a Spot check (DC 10) will reveal it. City-mechs often fire signal flares to indicate where they will be stepping, so smaller mechs can make docking attempts.

Steam Cannon: A steam cannon is very much like the traditional medieval cannons we know: a stout barrel for firing cannon balls. It uses steam pressure to launch the cannon balls, however, and the cannonballs themselves do not explode; they are useful only insofar as the impact of their collision.

Larger steam cannons actually have *shorter* ranges than their smaller counterparts. The reason is simple: Whereas traditional cannons can simply add more gunpowder to create a larger blast, steam cannons can't just "add more steam." A limit exists to how much steam pressure can be safely maintained, and the large steam cannons have reached this limit. The size of their projectile increases faster than the launching power of their steam engine.

Steam Gun: A steam gun is a fantastic steam-powered rifle. It fires sling bullets with an excellent range. The weapon itself



has a four-foot-long barrel with a stock on the end. A small steam engine sits between the stock and barrel. The user fires it like a normal rifle. It has some quirks, however. The sling bullet is launched via a steam pressure method, and it takes time to build up the steam pressure. The steam gun can be fired only once every other round.

A steam gun can also fire stones, which cause 1d6 damage, or handfuls of pebbles, nails, and other loose rubble, which cause 1d4 damage. Firing anything other than a normal sling bullet incurs a -1 attack penalty.

Steambreather : A steambreather fires a hissing cloud of scalding, white-hot steam. An unprotected creature is boiled alive in seconds.

A steambreather attack is cone-shaped. Its range increment is its maximum range. Attacks from a steambreather count as fire attacks.

Medium and Large steam breathers are man-portable. They consist of a backpack water reservoir with a steam-powered pump at its base. A hose extends from the pump to a long-barreled mouth that requires two hands to wield. Steambreathers of size Huge, Gargantuan, and Colossal consist of the same parts but must be mounted on mechs.

A steambreather can fire 10 times before its water reservoir is exhausted. Steambreathers are extremely heavy because they require so much water. When its water supply is exhausted, a steam breather weighs one third of its starting weight.

Sword Blade : This category includes any large sword blade, whether it's sharp on one or both sides, curved or straight, or otherwise unusual.

Viper Fang: Viper Fang is a modified bore launcher developed for damaging (rather than boarding) well armored mechs. The bore itself is larger but much more streamlined. It lacks the hollow space for boarders and, in fact, cannot be used for boarding. The shaft has been shortened, reducing its reach but increasing the force with which it strikes opponents. It is the perfect weapon for puncturing enemy hulls, but it has never been used. The builder, a dwarven gear-



MAGNET BOMB



PRESSURE BOMB



wright named Hepe f, died shortly a fter its completion, and it now sits forlornly in his laboratory, awaiting commissioning by some city-mec h that can use it .

ARMOR

Gearmail: Armor made of tiny gears and cogs sewn together. Usually the gears are scrap parts no longer usable for their original functions. From a distance, gearmail looks like a poorly made suit of scale mail or chainmail. Up close, it's clearly a jerry-

TABLE 3-5: ARMOR

ARMOR	COST	ARMOR BONUS	MAXIMUM DEX BONUS	ARMOR CHECK PENALTY	ARCANE SPELL FAILURE	SPEED (30 FT.)	(20 FT.)	WEIGHT
Light armor								
Pilot's armor	60 gp	+3	+7	–1	10%	30 ft.	20 ft.	15 lbs.
Medium armor								
Gearmail	40-70 gp	+4	+3	–4*	25%	20 ft.	15 ft.	35 lbs.
Heavy armor								
Hydraulic armor	3,500 gp	+10	+0	–8*	50%	30 ft.*	20 ft.*	200 lbs.*

*SEE DESCRIPTION.



rigged effort. Gearmail is not the work of professional armorers, but the product of resourcefulness among peoples who lack proper armor but have no shortage of excess engine parts. It is common among clockwork rangers and coglings.

The scrap parts used to make gearmail are invariably coated in grease from the times when they were used for their intended functions. This makes the wearer slippery. Grapple checks against someone wearing gearmail suffer a -2 penalty. Note that this is a penalty subtracted from the attacker's grapple check, not a bonus added to the wearer's grapple check. It's not any easier for him to grapple, but it's harder for others to hold onto him.

This greasy coating increases the armor's check penalty by an additional -2 for Climb checks, but reduces the check penalty by 2 for Escape Artist checks. If a trained armorer were to make gearmail, he could clean it thoroughly to remove the grease. But this isn't an option for the people who regularly wear this kind of armor.

Gearmail is rarely bought and sold. It's usually built by scavengers in gear forests for their own use. The listed cost is the range that they might demand to sell a suit.

Hydraulic Armor: Hydraulic armor is the medieval equivalent of powered armor. The user wears a metal frame that must be custom-fitted to his physique when the armor is built. (If characters find discarded hydraulic armor, they have only a 25% chance that the armor will fit a creature of the same size.) Tubes and wires are coiled about the frame, which is in turn encased in a solid iron shell. Mounted on the back of the shell, protected by an iron hood, is a clanking steam engine that coughs forth black smoke incessantly.

The iron shell completely encloses the wearer, much like a suit of full plate mail. It includes a helmet, gloves, and boots. The iron shell is thick and durable, far heavier and denser than even the strongest plate mail, and provides a staggering $+10$ bonus



GEARMAIL

HYDRAULIC ARMOR



to armor class. It is remarkably inflexible, however, granting a -8 armor check penalty and a max Dexterity bonus of +0.

Even though hydraulic armor is heavy, its weight is offset by the steam engine, which generates hydraulic pressure to amplify the strength of the wearer's limbs. Hydraulic armor always feels as if it weighs one tenth of what it really does; for purposes of encumbrance, that's all that matters. Furthermore, the wearer is able to move at full speed due to the muscular amplification (though he may still run only triple his normal speed). If the wearer is on a horse or a rickety rope bridge, however, then the full weight of the armor will certainly become an issue!

Due to the hydraulic power coursing around the wearer's limbs, his effective Strength is increased to 20 while wearing the armor. The armor also includes a number of built-in steam powers, some custom developed for the hydraulic armor. These include:

- **Air filter.** As long as the helmet is on and the visor closed, the wearer receives a +4 bonus to saves against any kind of gas or airborne poison.
- **Visor shades.** The visor darkens rapidly in response to bright light. While the visor is down, the wearer receives a +4 bonus to saves against blindness. For effects that do not normally allow a save, he now receives one.
- **Slam attack.** The heavy fists of the armor can be used to make slam attacks. The wearer is never considered unarmed. He can make a slam attack at his usual base attack bonus, for damage 1d6 plus his Strength modifier, with which he is always considered proficient.
- **Stability.** The heavy, grounded nature of hydraulic armor grants the wearer a +4 bonus to defending against bull rushes



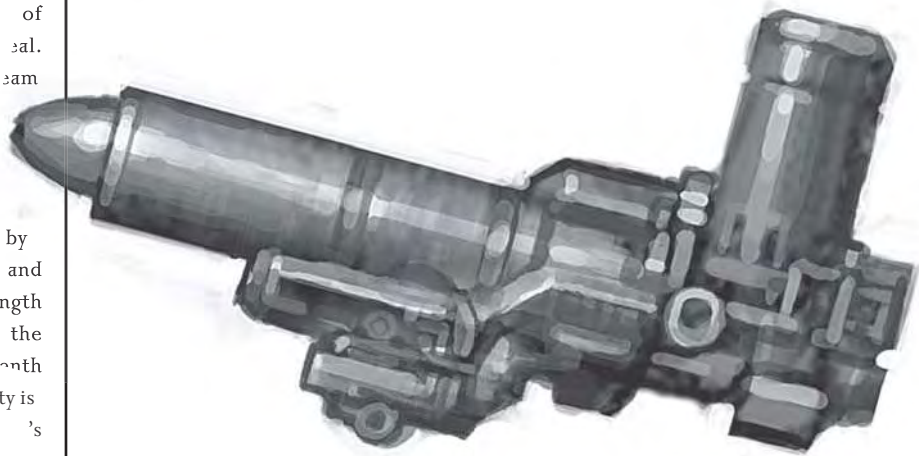
(as if he were unusually stable).

- **Steam powers.** The steam engine of the hydraulic armor can also be used to run steam powers.
- **Concealment.** The massive bulk of hydraulic armor is difficult to conceal. As if that weren't enough, the steam engine constantly pours forth smoke. The wearer suffers a –8 penalty to Hide checks.
- **Jumping.** The hydraulic armor offsets its own weight in a jump by transferring power out of the arms and augmenting the wearer's leg strength even more. For jumping purposes, the hydraulic armor counts as one-tenth its weight, no armor check penalty is rolled, and the wearer uses the suit's Strength of 20.

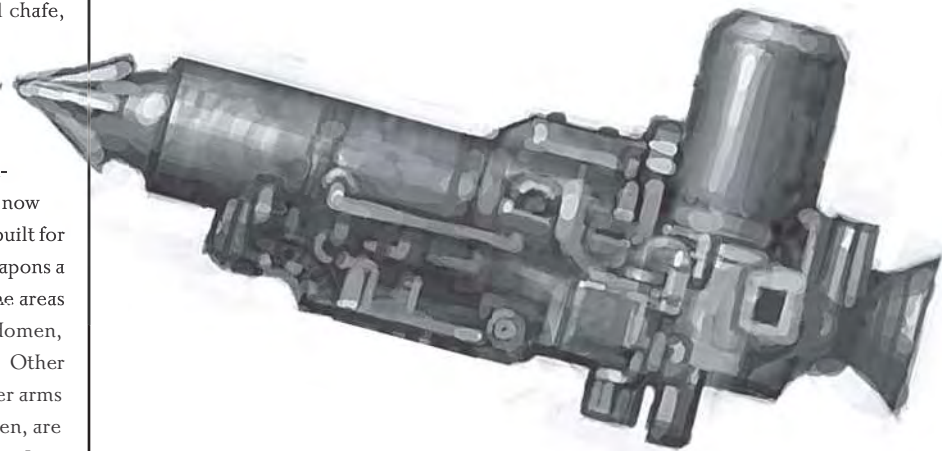
Learning to use hydraulic armor requires its own specialized feat slot: **Armor Proficiency (hydraulic)**. It takes 15 minutes, with assistance, to don hydraulic armor.

Pilot's Armor: The inside of a mech cockpit is anything but comfortable, as every mech jockey has learned. The mech's jarring motion causes armor to start chafing very quickly, resulting in an extremely uncomfortable ride (and possible injury). Anything more durable than padded armor will chafe, but mech crew worried about boarders or (worse still) mech weapons penetrating their hull need the best armor they can get.

Enter pilot's armor. Specially developed by the Stenian Confederacy and now widespread among mech jockeys, it is built for comfort and protection against the weapons a mech jockey most commonly faces. The areas most subject to chafing — thighs, abdomen, buttocks, and ribs — are all padded. Other areas are covered in leather. The outer arms and legs, plus the chest and abdomen, are covered in steel studs (as studded leather armor), but the whole back of the armor is just comfortable strips of padded and leather armor with no studs. Steel bars jointed at the elbows and knees run lengthwise down the outside of the legs and arms, offering protection from large weapons and any kind of slashing attacks.



BORE PUNCHERS





UNUSUAL ITEMS

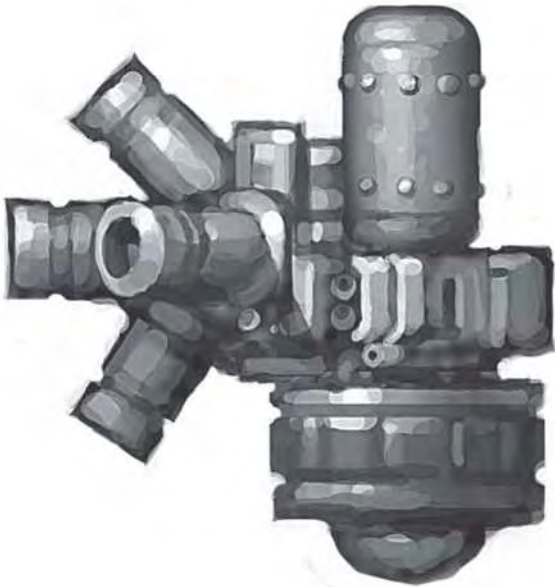
Fruits and Vegetables: The fields and orchards of Highpoint have been laid waste, and

STEAMBREATHER

ter would rather enjoy the luxury o f eating such food and drink rather than selling it !

Gearplugs : Gearplugs resemble a telephone made o f cast iron. One end has an earpiece an d mouthpiece, w hich are connecte d to a comp licated box with a thick black cable. Coming out o f the other end o f the b ox is a series o f plugs with sharp metal ends. The metal ends are plugged into a ny steam engine. Through an a dvanced process, t he user can t hen instruct t he engine on w hat to do. For most engines, t his is limite d simply to saying “start,” “faster,” “stop,” or the like. However, wit h intelligent engines or others capable o f taking commands, this allows for com munication .

Mensite : Mensite is a rare metal found in lunar asteroi ds. It is easy to quarry but di fficult to locate. Mensite was first dismiss e d as use less, since it is re latively brittle an d has an extreme ly low me lt-ing point. These soon became points o f endearment, h owever, after it was learned that in its liquid form it will mix with water- an d oi l-based so lutions, inc luding magical potions. Combined with potions and a lloyed with ot her meta ls to ma ke it stronger, mensite is extremely use ful for building constructs wit h magical proper-



BOMB LAUNCHER



STEAM CANNON

ties. Magic users, especially the elves o f L’arile Nation, will trade two pounds o f gold for a pound o f mensite .

Stethoscope e: A stethoscope is built with the finest cra ftsmanship available.



CATAPULTS



This petite metal listening device makes it easier to hear what's going on in an engine, granting a +1 bonus to checks in any engineering or mechanic skill related to fixing or disabling a device (including Disable Device, Craft (mechcraft), and Profession (engineer)).

Wisp Cloak: These nonmagical cloaks are worn by the Wisps, a nomadic tribe of the endless plains. The cloak is made of a camouflage-patterned fabric and includes numerous deep but small-mouthed pockets designed to hold dirt. The wearer plants long ivies in these pockets, and once they are grown he is literally cloaked in living vegetation. This grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Hide checks in wilderness areas. A wisp cloak is inexpensive but requires three months of growing time before it is effective; alternatively, a fully grown cloak can be purchased for triple the usual price. The ivies in a wisp cloak must be watered and cared for as a plant.

Wood: This is scrap wood used to power a steam engine. The price varies according to local conditions. Generally wood costs one half of what coal does.

MECH-RELATED MAGIC ITEMS

Blood-powered Engines: An experimental drow mech captured by the dwarves of Duerok features a blood-powered engine. It literally runs off of living creatures, which are sucked dry by the engine. This horrific process is semimagical in nature, requiring certain enchantments when created as the drow did, but some coglayers have found ways to duplicate the processes with a blood pump (see page 56). These devices are banned in the Stenian Confederacy, Duerok, and most other civilized lands.

Ethereal Catapult: An ethereal catapult is designed to penetrate mech armor. It is a normal catapult that has been enchanted to transform its projectiles into ethereal matter when launched. The shooter designates a target, and the projectiles immediately transform back when

they have breached the target. The ... effect against mechs is devastating: The catapult launches an ethereal projectile that manifests (becomes “hard”) once it’s already inside the mech, bypassing its armor and causing severe damage.

Ethereal catapults make touch attacks — armor bonuses to AC don’t matter. They bypass all hardness and, because they manifest *inside* the target, have a threat range of 17–20. Any weapon can be enchanted thus, but so far the effect has been limited to catapults.

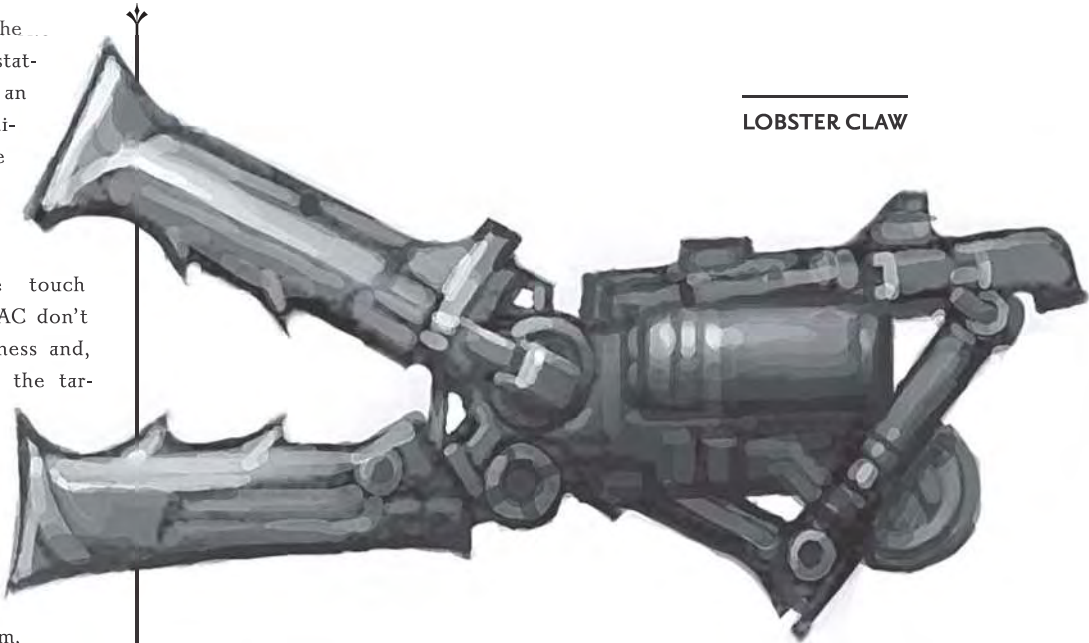
Strong transmutation; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *blink*; Price 70,000 gp + cost of weapon.

Intelligent Engines: Rumors exist of eccentric steam mages who have used the same magic that creates intelligent swords to imbue their steam engines with sentience. These steam engines are fully self-aware, capable of guiding and piloting mechs with no human input. One such “ghost mech” walks the endless plains, searching for the orc brigands who killed its creator like any other common mech jockey.

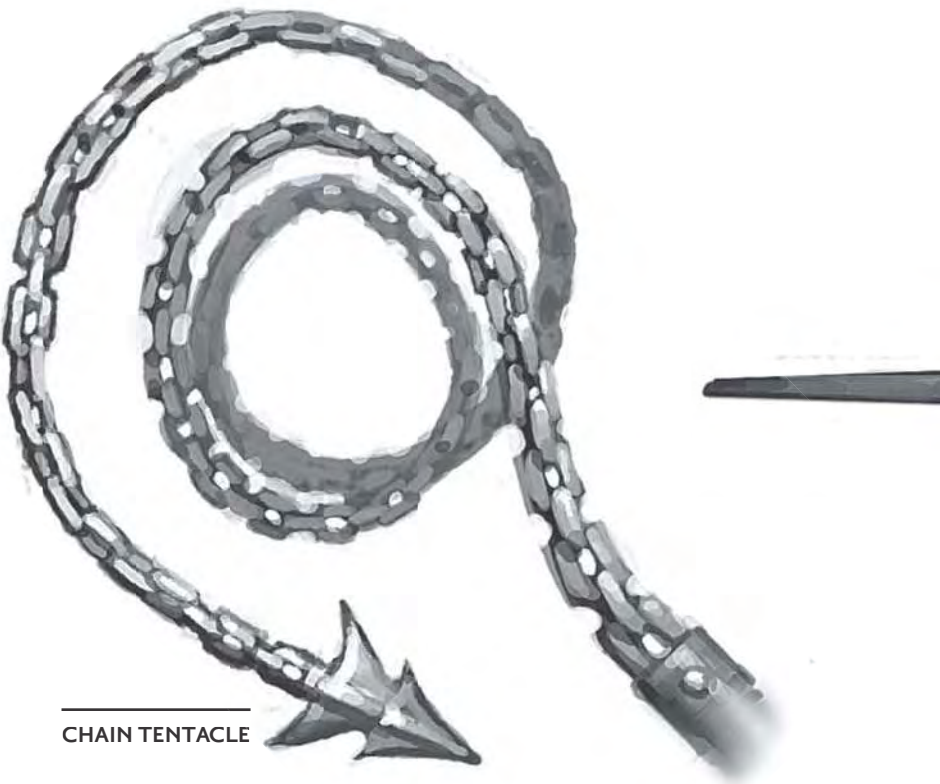
An intelligent engine must be enchanted as a magic item, per the usual rules. In all respects it is just like any other intelligent item. It may have the ego to overcome its creator, or may acquiesce to his demands.

Magnetized Ring Gates: These have so far not been used in battle, but the Tannan-riel elves are extremely excited about the potential applications. They appear to be a set of unusually large *ring gates* (like those described in the *DMG*), almost three feet in diameter. One is anchored in place on a mech. The other is launched via a catapult. The launched gate has been enchanted to adhere magnetically to the first metal item it touches (generally a mech, of course).

Once the second ring gate is secured to the side of an enemy mech, the weapon’s power becomes clear. The *magnetized ring gates* allow an object put through one to



LOBSTER CLAW



CHAIN TENTACLE



PLATE 5 *The battles on Highpoint's surface
reflect a much larger divine conflict.*



THE WORLD OF DRAGONMECH

HIGHPOINT

Highpoint is a continental landmass in the game world called **DragonMech**. The many residents of Highpoint refer to the world at large by a number of names in several different languages, but we will keep it simple by referring to it simply as **DragonMech**.

Other landmasses are to the east and west, but Highpoint remains the undeniable focus. In all the lands affected by the lunar rain and lunar dragons, only the residents of Highpoint have evolved an effective defense mechanism: the mech. Over the centuries to come, the world will be reshaped by what happens on Highpoint.

The world of **DragonMech** is subject to one particularly unusual environmental feature, in addition to its collapsing moon: widely varying seasonal water levels. The seas around Highpoint (and throughout the entire world) rise and fall by more than 30 feet over the course of the year. This is caused by wide seasonal temperature swings near the poles, which trap and then release huge quantities of arctic ice on a regular cycle. It is more than simple tidal action, which of course is present as well. The close presence of the moon has massively altered tidal patterns, which only further exacerbates the seasonal water levels.

The implications of the seasonal water levels, combined with the altered tidal influence, have shaped the course of life on Highpoint in three ways. First, stable settlements beside waterways are impossible. Coastlines shift by huge distances, back and forth, over the course of the year. This inability to establish permanent settlements in naturally advantageous places contributes to the planet's intensely nomadic lifestyle.

Second, amphibious life is more common. One humanoid race, the slathem, lives in cit-

ies that are underwater for half the year and above water the other half. Among the more common races are amphibious variants of elves, humans, and dwarves, as well as a number of other creatures. Of the races that have established permanent settlements, many are amphibious.

Third, land forms change over the course of the year. Certain land bridges appear only during the low-water months. Vast floodplains vanish under the sea for six months at a time. As a result, trade routes are highly seasonal.

Thus the reason for Highpoint's name: Of all the continents, it is, on average, the greatest distance above high-water sea level. The continent itself is actually a series of stacked plateaus with a mountain range at the top. The lowest plateau shelf, to the west, is an enormous desert floodplain called the Wet Desert. Half the year it's a shallow saltwater ocean; the other half, it's a parched expanse of sun-heated sand. The easternmost shelf is higher than the western one, such that the eastern coastline is a single, unbroken cliff stretching for nearly a thousand miles. Historically, the cliffs been tall enough to resist even the highest floodwaters, leaving the easternmost plateau dry for the entire year. Since the lunar rain, however, enhanced tidal action has brought the peak water levels over the cliff edges for the first time.

The eastern reaches are the most populous. The most inhabitable area is the endless plains, a vast expanse of gentle hills covering the easternmost plateau. The next plateau to the west is the flatland, in contrast to the roughlands which abut it still further west. The great Boundary Peaks divide the roughlands into two. Weather patterns send most of the continent's moisture to the east of the Boundary Peaks, meaning the western regions are hot and dry. They descend through three plateaus of scrub, rocky hills, dry savanna, and hostile desert into the Wet Desert, the

bottommost plateau that is deluged with seawater for six months each year.

One other terrain feature has significantly shaped Highpoint, and that is the Endless River. The Endless River remains at a fairly constant elevation relative to sea level over the 2,000 miles it runs. Since Highpoint itself varies drastically in elevation, this means the Endless River runs underground for more than half of its length. During the low-water months, the Endless River is a navigable underground water route. During the high-water months, it is a raging whitewater that only a fool would enter. The 1,000 miles of underground channels its waters have carved beneath the plateaus of Highpoint are the entry points for a vast underdeep realm.

CLIMATE AND SEASONS

As a rule of thumb, eastern Highpoint is temperate to warm, while western Highpoint is warm. The east is moist, with some very wet tropical areas in the northern forests and wet swamps to the south. The west is consistently dry, even during the high-water months, which bring only saltwater, not fresh water. The very southernmost reaches are noticeably cooler than elsewhere, though still temperate overall.

The residents of Highpoint divide their years into only two seasons: low-water and high-water. This is not the same as a dry and a rainy season, since the source of the water isn't rain. In eastern Highpoint, the difference in seasons is greatest for the cultures along the Endless River, the borders of which expand by more than five miles as the floodplains are filled. Lakes and other rivers are also affected, though not as dramatically. In western Highpoint, high-water affects the entire region, as the Wet Desert is completely flooded.

In our vernacular, high-water corresponds to spring and summer, while low-water corresponds to fall and winter. The winter months know snow in eastern Highpoint, particularly in the more southern regions, but the dry skies of the west bring only icy, howling winds.



TIMEKEEPING

The Stenian Confederacy uses the old Duerok system of timekeeping, which has its roots in underground settlements under constant siege. This is the most prevalent system on Highpoint, especially since most of the nomadic human tribes use no system of time whatsoever.

The Stenian system has six weeks per month and six days per week, over the course of seven months, for a total of 252 days per year. The days are Diggon, Axon, Digget, Suron, Suret, and Surol.

Diggon: First day of the week. Among the underground dw arven strongholds, it was traditionally the first day of digging in their never-ending quest to expand their holds. It also included general communal activities for those incapable of or unneeded for digging. On mechs now it is usually a day of communal activity, which can include making repairs, shoveling coal, cleaning, or other such things.

Axon: Second day of the week and traditionally the day of martial training. Still used on many mechs to practice fighting drills.

Digget: Third day of the week and the second day of digging (or communal activity).

Suron: Fourth day of the week and first day of personal work, which varies according to the trade of each person.

Suret: Fifth day of the week and second day of personal work.

Surol: Final day of the week and third day of personal work. In centuries past, when Duerok was strong and well defended, this eventually became a day of rest. Since the start of the lunar rain, however, that tradition has disappeared. It is once more a day of work.

The seven months follow the natural cycle of high-water and low-water, as follows:

Arie: The first month of the year is when the waters are at their midpoint. It is roughly equivalent to spring.

Cammerce: The waters of the Endless River rise as the second month appears. Near the end of the second month is when

the endless traders traditionally arrive in Duerok. (They reach Edge shortly thereafter; see page 161.) This is a time of excitement, visitors, and news from afar.

Highwater: The point at which the waters peak.

Duerok: A month of holidays. The hard-working dwarves of Duerok have only six holidays, all of which take place in this month. By now, the traders have left and it is time to relax. The six holidays (one per week) honor dw arven virtues: thrift, discipline, clan, honor, strength, and valor. Nowadays, the holidays are recognized but no one stops working. Times are simply too dangerous.

Flero: By this time the waters have begun to recede.

Jealo: A time of want. The bounty of high-water is slowly being consumed.

Lowwater: The waters of the Endless River are at their nadir. Everyone looks forward to them rising again and bringing the excitement of Cammerce.

LUNAR CYCLE

The moon is literally the largest object in the sky at all times. Depending on the landscape, it occupies as much as three fourths of the sky. Visible even during the day, it is an oppressive reminder of the world's problems.

The moon still follows a regular cycle, but since it is so close to the planet, the full surface is visible at all times. Parts or even all of the surface may be shaded, but they are still visible, and on the night of a full moon, the reflective qualities of the massive satellite make the night literally almost as bright as the day.

Lunar Rain

In the hundred-odd years that the lunar rain has poured down upon Highpoint, its nature has changed considerably. In the early years, it was a veritable bombardment. Huge meteors crashed to the surface each night, blasting the ground into a fine dust. Almost nothing could sustain such a beating, and those creatures that didn't seek shelter were killed. The few

that weren't flattened were instead excoriated by the thick particulate mist of red-hot debris that fell with the large meteors.

The surface world was destroyed by the lunar rain. Most vegetation was reduced to mere stumps. Cities and towns were largely flattened, unless they were built under the lee of a cliff, in a narrow-mouthed canyon, or in some other relatively protected location. By bizarre luck, a few settlements survived in a still-habitable state, but they are the exception, not the rule.

By the time the lunar rain forced the surface world underground, it also began to let up. It wasn't long before much of the moon's surface had been ripped clean off, leaving only solid bedrock exposed. That bedrock was too strong for the planet's gravity to tear off. Over the course of a decade, the pace of the rain slowed. Soon the large meteors were extremely rare. After a while, the excoriating haze was rare, too.

Now the meteor rain is largely sustainable. On most nights it is like a heavy sandstorm dumped from the sky: a thick, soupy particulate mist that scrapes at the skin. It is painful and can be deadly to the unprotected, but most surface dwellers know how to handle it. Of course, the occasional meteor storm still occurs, which is none too pleasant, but such occurrences are rarer and rarer.

When characters embark on wilderness treks, randomly generate the nature of the lunar rain each evening, according to Table 4-1. Add +4 on a full moon.

MAJOR REGIONS

Looking at a surface map of Highpoint, it has four main areas, reading from east to west: the endless plains, the flatland, the roughlands, and the western deserts. But the wide range of elevations in Highpoint necessitates defining its regions in three dimensions. A cross-section map would reveal five elevations of civilization: the moon, which is close enough to interact with the planet's surface; the surface, which encompasses the four main areas named above; the subsurface, which is the areas within a half-mile

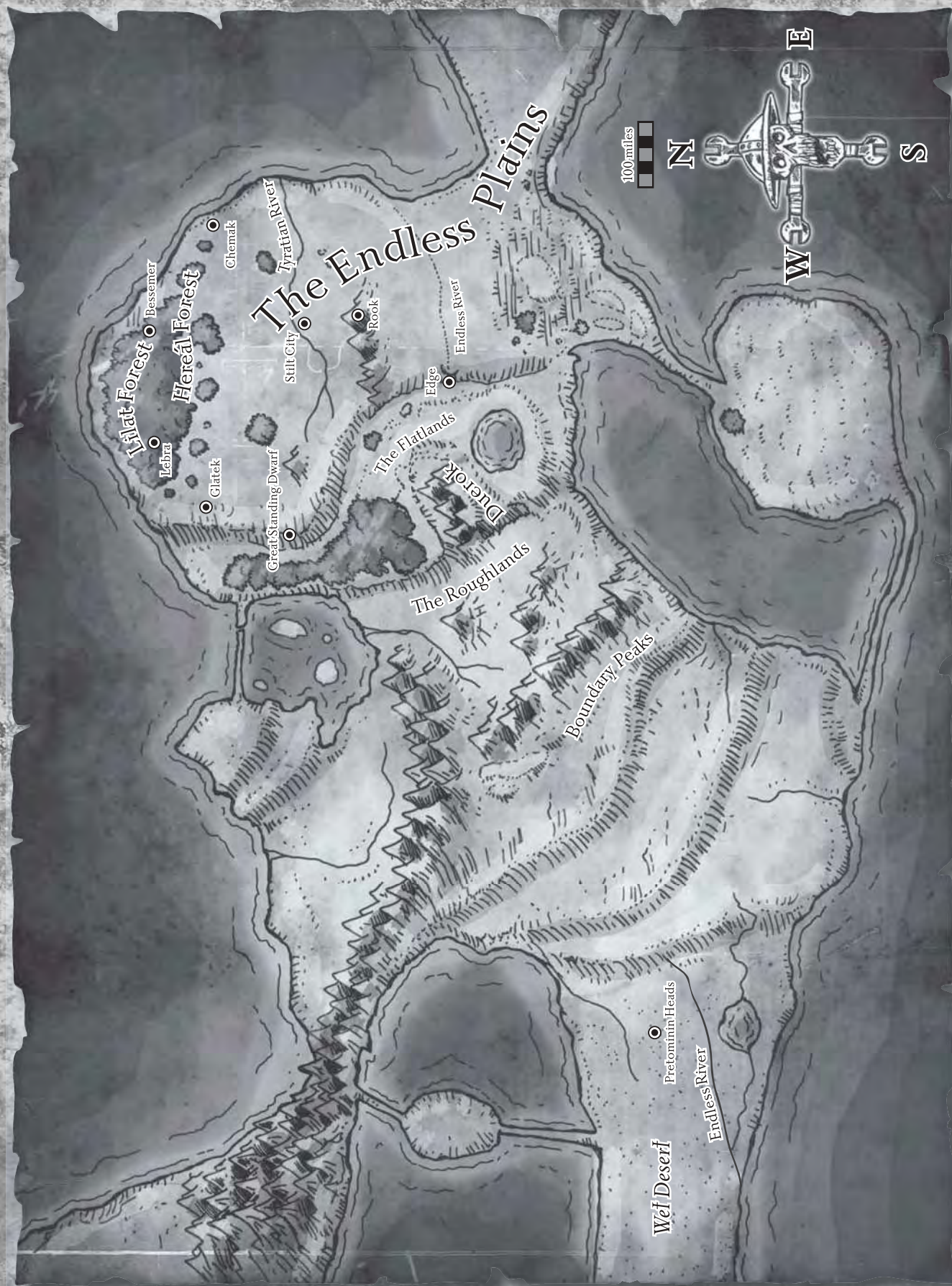




TABLE 4-I: LUNAR RAIN CONDITIONS

ROLL (D20)	LUNAR RAIN CONDITIONS
	No lunar rain. Such evenings are extremely rare. In cities, they are celebrated with dancing, drinking, and general merriment under the clear sky.
2–16 P	ainful haze. Lunar particulate matter falls from the sky. Someone standing outside feels like he’s being sandblasted. It is abrasive and painful, but usually not deadly. Characters wearing any armor of +1 or better protection, or creatures with natural armor of +2 or better, are undamaged. Other creatures suffer 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per hour of exposure. All creatures have a 1% chance each evening of being hit by a small meteorite that causes 1d6 points of damage. Exposed armor, vehicles, and buildings suffer scuffing and minor damage that must be repaired at least once every six months.
17–18	Small meteor shower. The sky is ablaze with shooting stars. As the painful haze, above, but in addition, all exposed creatures have a 25% chance per evening of being struck by a small meteorite that causes 1d6 points of damage.
19–20	Large meteor shower. As above, but the sky is literally glowing with shooting stars, and their constant impact creates a resonant booming sound in the distance. Every so often, a huge boulder hits the ground. All sane creatures take cover. All exposed creatures have a 25% chance per hour of being struck by a meteorite. If struck, roll 1d6. On 1–4, they suffer that much damage. On 5–6, roll 1d6 again and add the result to determine damage. If the second roll is 5–6, roll yet again, and so on.
21+	Meteor storm. Cover isn’t enough — you need to be underground to be safe! It’s like a fireworks show at close range. The sky is full of fire, the ground is booming, and there is no safety. Anyone exposed at all takes 1d3 points of damage per hour from the dense, grating particulate matter. In addition, he must make a Reflex save (DC 20) once every half hour or be hit by a meteor. If hit, he takes damage determined by rolling 1d10 and squaring the result (e.g., a roll of 3 means 9 points of damage, while a roll of 10 means 100 points of damage).

of the surface or the Endless River’s underground boundaries, and includes places like Duerok and other dwarven strongholds; the underdeep, which is the region below the subsurface; and the Stygian depths, deep, deep down, beneath even the underdeep, an alien realm that no surface dwellers knew until their flight from the lunar rain forced them ever deeper into the earth.

Prior to the lunar rain, the surface world interacted routinely with the subsurface, which was heavily populated with dwarves, orcs, and other underground civilizations. Trade and warfare occurred at the edges of the plateaus and along the borders of the Endless River. The underdeep world rarely ventured into the subsurface, much less the surface world, and the Stygian depths were unknown.

After the lunar rains began, much of the entire surface world tried to cram itself into the subsurface. Thanks to the plateau structure of Highpoint, a much greater underground area was available to accommodate them than on any of the planet’s other continents. Even so, it wasn’t enough room. The subsurface dwellers defended their entry points against the refugees. Most were overwhelmed, and the surface world crowded into the subsurface. The defeated subsurface races were either exterminated or forced further underground, where they encountered and warred with the denizens

of the underdeep. The victorious surface dwellers soon found their victories hollow as successive waves of surface-dwelling refugees followed behind them, pounding their new subsurface homes. Wave after wave of defeated surface dwellers was subsequently pushed into the underdeep. Eventually even the underdeep was at war, and it was then that displaced underdeep residents traveled so far into the earth that they encountered the Stygian depths. These hellish regions even now remain a place of mystery, for very few visitors there have returned to tell their stories. But their mere existence is now established as fact, where for eons it was considered fiction.

A HIGHPOINT GAZETTEER

A gazetteer of Highpoint is, in fact, a very melancholy undertaking. The world has changed so drastically over the preceding half-century that many of what would have once comprised the most notable locations are now utterly ruined. Even the subsurface and underdeep, which were never directly exposed to the lunar rain, have been

upturned in the ensuing chaos. What’s left of the meteor-pocked surface is now divided into loosely organized mech-ruled kingdoms, or mechdoms, wherein the notable locations are the highly mobile city-mechs themselves. The few remaining surface settlements are veritable fortress-cities, enclosed in massive stone walls powerful enough to resist the lunar rain and repulse the lunar dragons.

Thus, this gazetteer will describe the damaged remnants of continental Highpoint and the mobile mechdoms of the new surface world. Mechs are uncommon in the chaotic melee that is still the subsurface and underdeep, so descriptions of those areas will be left for another time — as will coverage of the moon, which influences the world dramatically but is for now still another planet.

THE NOMADIC PEOPLES

Before delving into the details, we should establish a crucial fact that will contribute to your understanding of Highpoint. Civilized life on Highpoint has always been itinerant. Three factors contributed to this. First, the erratic water levels made permanent civilizations near primary water sources impossible, and the extreme changes in natural resources between low-water and high-water encour-



aged mobility. Second, the massive herds and bountiful wild plant life of the precatastrophe endless plains made hunting and gathering just as productive as settled agriculture. Finally, the preponderance of humans and orcs in the endless plains made some degree of wandering almost inevitable, as both of these races are short-lived, impatient, and constantly in motion.

Of all the races, only the elves and dwarves maintained extensive permanent civilizations, the dwarves thanks to their subsurface regions that were only marginally affected by the seasons, and the elves due to their more sedentary proclivities. The grand forests of the northern endless plains are home to a greater settled population (mostly elven villages) than the rest of the endless plains combined. Similarly, the dwarven strongholds of Duerok are home to a greater settled population than the rest of the flatland and roughlands combined. Around these islands of stability, humans, orcs, and even a great number of elven and dwarven nomads swirl in constant motion.

Or, more aptly, *swirled* (past tense), since these surface civilizations have now been largely reshaped. Nonetheless, Highpoint's inherent restlessness made the transition to the new mechdoms surprisingly natural. Many of the tribes that once wandered the endless plains with spear in hand now wander the same areas in iron-clad mechs. The mechdoms and loosely affiliated mech tribes are, in the most basic political and social sense, no great change for most inhabitants.

Nonetheless, on this nomadic world, permanent settlements *did* exist. Among sedentary tribes, the basic unit of civilization was a city-state, rather than a kingdom. These scattered city-states often depended heavily on the nomads, in some cases utilizing nomadic water traders to survive the low-water months. At the same time, they required extensive protection against other nomads and were often organized around ancient, impregnable fortifications.

While the nomads transitioned easily to life on a mech, only the well armored city-states still remain on the surface. Sequestered

in their powerful bunkers and unassailable castles, they are protected from all but the worst meteor storms. The lunar dragons are a threat, as always, but even they give pause when faced with a well defended castle.

The biggest threat to these remaining city-states is water. Although some are located near natural supplies year-round, the low-water season strands others. The city-state of Chemak is a notable example: Since the disappearance of the surface nobles, Chemak has constructed enormous, well guarded reservoirs in order to survive the low-water months.

CONTINENTAL HIGHPOINT

The Endless Plains

The endless plains were once the epicenter of Highpoint. If a war was fought, it was there. If an invention was created, it was there. If you wanted adventure and novelty, change and surprises, the endless plains were where you went.

The endless plains were divided into three principle regions. The northern tip was the great temperate and tropical forests, primarily settled by elves but with no lack of humans, orcs, and goblins. From there to the Endless River were rolling hills and grasslands, interspersed with the occasional mountain, forest, and lake. This area was the heart of the endless plains, a swirling morass of nomadic cultures that constantly traded and warred. South of the Endless River, the grasslands gave way gradually to swamps and lake lands.

No great kingdoms existed in the endless plains. A few city-states ruled their surrounding areas, and loose tribal alliances created what could be called nations, but no entity ever approached the status of kingdom, much less empire.

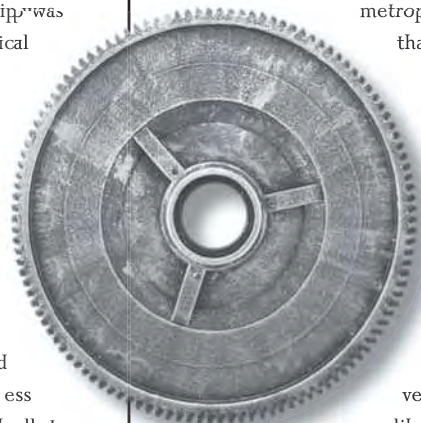
Now, the endless plains are a smoldering wasteland. The central region is forsaken and bleak. What's left of the landscape has been ruined by lunar dragons and the burrows they dig. The swamps and lakes of the southern regions are filled with rising levels of lunar sludge and sediment. The northern forests were most resistant to the lunar rain but were nonetheless damaged by the lunar dragons. Many of the mighty oaks and elms have been shattered or toppled. Those still standing are being eroded into stumps with every evening's lunar rain.

Over the entire endless plains, the nomadic human peoples built only a dozen large, permanent cities. Many were destroyed; four still stand. The four surviving cities are Gatek, Edge, Stilt City, and Chemak.

Gatek

Gatek sits in a sheltered valley just below the bluffs of the western plateau. It sprang up from natural trade lanes between the slathem, humans, and elves: It is equidistant from the elven forests to the northeast, the slathem cities to the west, and the human tribes to the southeast. Its economically important position led naturally to a permanent settlement of traders, middlemen, and merchants.

At its peak it was a thriving metropolis of more than 5,000 permanent citizens, plus thousands more traders and nomads at any given time. Now it is about half that size. Gatek is a vertical city, but unlike our modern vertical cities, Gatek goes *down* under the earth. Over thousands of years of trading, the amphibious slathem carved out an underground channel to the city by enlarging a naturally occurring labyrinth of corridors connecting Gatek to the seas to its north and west. When completed, these corridors





opened into the ocean below sea level and were flooded. The slathem then used them as an underground expressway to Glatek.

These corridors are flooded year-round, but when they reach Glatek they ascend in a series of vast high-ceilinged natural caves. At ground level, Glatek sits 30 feet above high-water sea level and 60 feet above low-water sea level, meaning the caves underneath it have from 30 to 60 feet of usable air space, depending on the season.

As a result, most buildings in Glatek are only one story high but are at least three stories deep. Some are much deeper. This underground area is called the “bottomcity.” The city’s “docks” are floating platforms in the bottommost areas of the bottomcity. Slathem swim directly to the docks, do their trading, and leave without ever seeing daylight.

As a trade center and thus a point of concentration for wealth, Glatek was long used to defending itself. Its unique layout situated its valuables and warehouses in the bottomcity, safe from ground attack. Nonetheless, the city council constructed a series of three powerful walls. The first, or “old wall,” was built some 700 years ago. It is twenty feet high and was once the wall of a castle at the city’s center. It now provides an “inner perimeter,” since the city has since expanded beyond. The second, or “new wall,” is twelve feet high and surrounds the entire city. In days past, the areas outside the new wall were filled with the tents and campgrounds of nomadic traders.

The third, or “flat wall,” is 400 years old, the same age as the new wall. It is not a wall proper but a stone floor covering all the city’s thoroughfares. In effect, it is a flat, solid stone wall one foot deep, sealed by the best stone craftsmen exactly as a wall would be sealed. Tunneling into the bottomcity areas requires breaking through this flat wall, or breaking into a building where the bottomcity is otherwise accessible. Since only residents have access to buildings leading into the bottomcity (including the few public staircases, which are always well guarded), only residents and acknowledged guests can reach the bottomcity.

As a result of the flat wall, any building

older than 400 years has a floor set about one foot lower than street level. Buildings newer than 400 years — about a third of the city, mostly outside the inner perimeter — are built on top of the flat wall. The presence of the flat wall is general knowledge but is not immediately obvious, since the wall has cobblestones and normal road materials set into it. Unless someone specifically asks or overhears other discussion, or unless one sets foot in an older building with a lower floor level, it is not noticeable.

The city’s design proved eminently useful during the lunar catastrophes for a number of reasons. The bottomcity provides protection during the lunar rains. The steep inner perimeter wall is a perfect refuge from which to repel lunar dragons, especially since the city put in place a battery of swivel-mounted ballistae. The underground slathem waterways provide a source of water. (Saltwater though it is, with proper treatment it is drinkable.) And the slathem themselves can provide seafood for trade, although relations between the slathem and the city’s rulers were permanently damaged when the slathem exploited the situation to charge what many considered to be utterly unreasonable prices.

As a result, Glatek still stands. The areas beyond the inner perimeter have been heavily damaged by dragon raids and are occupied primarily by scavengers and refugees who aren’t admitted into the inner perimeter. The inner perimeter is now heavily guarded at all times, against both dragons and surface raiders. Glatek’s reputation for wealth persists and it has had to resist not just tribal nomads but the occasional mech clan as well. But it stands nonetheless, with its inner perimeter intact and the bottomcity unharmed.

The bottomcity is an arrangement of large underground caverns filled with scaffolding of various materials. The shallow caverns, as well as the upper heights of the deeper ones,

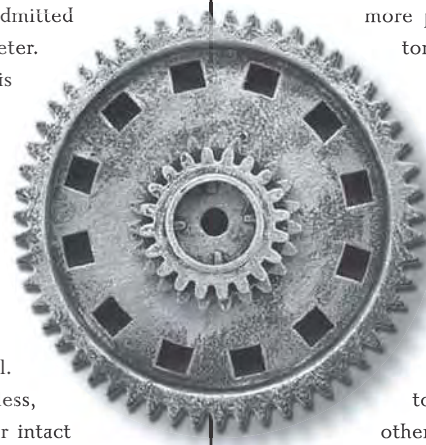
have multilevel basements descending from their ceilings, sometimes held in place by huge wooden timbers or metal braces. The bottoms of the larger caverns (at least those above high-water sea level) have multistory buildings which stretch up to almost touch the bottoms of the basements above them. Bridges and walkways connect all levels of these truly three-dimensional urban areas. The bottommost areas, flooded from the high-water flood line to the low-water line, are mostly floating docks and fixed slathem residences, and below that are more slathem areas.

In an unusual development, Glatek’s “undercity slums” are, in fact, above ground. The bottomcity is the wealthiest part of town, especially the bottomcity centermost under the inner perimeter. The docks are controlled by the well-to-do slathem middlemen and brokers who distribute slathem trade goods into the upper areas, and thus are anything but seedy. The city’s slums are the surface areas, which become progressively worse as one gets closer to the perimeter. Beyond that is the refuge of scavengers and refugees.

The city is ruled by the same merchant council that has always ruled. All of the council members are human. The merchant council is a purely commercial organization; membership is ostensibly hereditary, but mercantile power is a much more powerful deciding factor.

Newly wealthy traders always manage to secure a spot (usually by threatening to cut off their suppliers or customers, depending on who’s on the council), and traders ruined by misfortune always seem to resign (thanks to the other members’ threats to bankrupt what little they have left if they don’t).

All members of the council are wealthy residents involved in one of the city’s major commodities — or at least, one of the city’s





former major commodities, since most are no longer commercially viable. Herbs, spices, fine fabrics, and delicate elven creations no longer flow from the northeast forests, nor do grains, fruits, livestock, and hides flow from the endless plains, nor seafood and shells from the slathem to the west. The principal commodities now are metal, spare parts, and weapons from the flatland; the inferior but serviceable hides and preserved meat of sea creatures captured by the slathem; slaves and meat from the endless plains; and timber from the humans and elves. Times have changed.

Glatek sits far beyond the borders of both the Stenian Confederacy and the Legion, but both factions consider it a prize. Even in today's wrecked society, the city is a major commercial hub, and much money stands to be made by whoever controls it. L'arile Nation trades actively with Glatek and considers it an ally, not a potential conquest.

Area: Two square miles (horizontal area)

Population: 3,000 permanent residents; 500–1,000 itinerant traders; 500–1,000 scavengers and refugees

Composition: Permanent residents: 70% human, 15% half-elf, 5% elf, 5% slathem, 5% others; itinerant traders: 33% human, 33% elf, 33% slathem

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Edge

Edge is nestled at the base of a great cliff beside the thousand-foot-tall waterfall where the Endless River emerges from the underdeep. Whereas some cities are built on opposite banks of rivers, Edge is built on opposite banks of the waterfall. The city literally rises along the face of the cliff. It has flat areas at its top and base but most of its area is vertical

Edge evolved through a natural convergence of the surface races of the endless plains and the subsurface races that dwell along the underground stretches of the Endless River. The chief obstruction to their trade was the waterfall itself, which was a major impediment to the transport of goods. A variety of solutions evolved: hand-chiseled staircases of nearly vertical dimensions, rope and-pulley systems, gnome inventors with

complex mechanical elevators, and magical flying devices. One old legend even talks about a dwarf who built a long-gone elevator powered by steam siphoned from the waterfall itself. The better solutions were all funded by tolls, the tolls sustained the toll-takers and their families, and over time Edge became, essentially, a vertical mercantile highway.

Now Edge is just that: a vertical mercantile highway. Within a mile of the waterfall in either direction are hundreds of routes up the cliff, including all of the options described above. The simplest are half-orc porters, who will lug goods up and down the nearly vertical staircases for a small fee (plus the staircase toll, of course, paid each way up and down). The most expensive are the gnomish and dwarven elevator contraptions, and the occasional wizard with fly spells. One ambitious dwarf even set about carving a set of normally proportioned stairs inside the cliff, all the way to the top, through which he now admits foot traffic for a modest toll. As you may have surmised, Edge's chief industry is the transport of goods up and down a 1,000-foot-tall cliff.

Over the years, the cliff itself has been hollowed out to make room for settlers, and struts have been embedded in it to support hanging houses parallel to the cliff face. Now the entire cliff is honeycombed with dwellings. Many of these are occupied by the porters, toll-takers, and tinkers who tend to the various vertical transportation routes. The rest house shops, inns, and all the various craftsmen and specialists that would spring up around any settlement.

The physical layout of Edge is narrow and vertical. Landings dot the rise from base to top, and the "buildings" honeycombing the cliff maintain a consistent depth of roughly 20 feet into the cliff. Residences hangin

from struts set into the cliffs are usually no more than one or two rooms. Countless rope bridges make horizontal travel quite easy for the locals, but they don't all hang at the same height; traveling any significant horizontal distance necessarily entails a lot of vertical movement as well. That's for locals, mind you; toll-payers are usually restricted to the vertical passage they paid for.

No public thoroughfares go from top to bottom. Locals can always travel freely through the routes of their friends or relatives, but all outsiders have to pay their way through. Climbing is an option, but it's a long, sheer climb, made all the worse by the waterfall's mist, which coats the ascent, and of course any climbers will be ridiculed

all the way up, to the point of locals throwing vegetables and produce at outsiders selfish enough to deny them their livelihood.

The base of the waterfall is home to a sprawling dock district, with warehouses, inns, taverns, and auction houses. Goods are stored, bought, sold, and shipped here, both before and after crossing the waterfall. The top of the waterfall is an enormous cave mouth. The narrow natural bank of the Endless River has been widened substantially on both sides to make room for boats unloading after their journeys through the underdeep. This upper landing is not as large as the one at the base of the waterfall, however, simply because its area is limited by cave walls. Some dwellings are behind the waterfall itself, including the church of Fhurlin, the most powerful entity in Edge.

Edge's existence is made possible by the vital importance of trade along the Endless River. The Endless River flows underground for a thousand miles. Over this distance it connects all the major settlements of the underdeep, from the dwarves and goblins to the derro and drow. Not all of this connec



tion is positive, of course; the river is used as much for war as for trade. But much of it is used for trade, and many of the underground societies send their offerings downstream to Edge, where they fill their great demand for the products of the endless plains. Hides, livestock, spices, seeds, vegetables, and more are brought to Edge from the endless plains, where they are exchanged for the products of the underdeep: fungi, metals, gems, and rare stones. These supplies go up and down beside the waterfall at Edge in an endless cycle, by which the residents of Edge make their living.

A visit to Edge is an experience. Nothing compares to the sight of 50 half-orc porters hauling live, squealing hogs two at a time up a staircase 1,000 feet tall, or a precariously balanced pulley-powered rope elevator lowering basket after basket of ore, or a shrewd halfling telling you only one gold piece more will let you use a slide at the top of his staircase that will save you the effort of walking back down, or a strange gnome on spring-wrapped stilts proudly describing his new invention that will get you to the top in a jiffy. You can find other ways to the top, of course — the cliff face extends for hundreds of miles in both directions, and there are places to pass — but outside of Edge it's always a dangerous uphill trip, and paying a mere one silver piece for the use of a staircase with halfling lemonade vendors at landings along the way is a good deal from most people's perspective.

Despite the lunar catastrophes, traffic at Edge has slowed only a modest amount. The initial onset of the lunar rains sent a huge flow of refugees into the underdeep, and many passed through Edge on their way. Edge itself has barely enough room to house its own residents, so



it was spared the battles fought at most entrances to the underdeep. Instead, its chief misery was a loss of tolls, as wave after wave of refugees overwhelmed the staircase guards and simply ascended wherever they saw fit. Over time the flow of refugees slowed and normal trade resumed, and the city's residents were once more able to exert control over the staircases and elevators that provide their sustenance.

The lunar dragons have not been a major problem in Edge. Although the reasons aren't entirely clear, the residents attribute this to three causes: First, secure in their cliffside homes, they're hard to get to. Second, the preponderance of caravan guards among the traders visiting Edge means the dragons are met with a large fighting force whenever they do appear. Finally, the residents of Edge think their god, Fhurlin, has protected them. Unlike the rest of the planet, religion remains strong in Edge.

Edge hosts a huge festival at the end of each low-water season. The arrival of the endless traders marks its traditional beginning. Although it was disrupted for several years during the onset of the lunar rain, it has now begun again. Nomads from across the endless plains journey hundreds of miles to meet the traders and see what they have brought, and now some mech tribes make the trip, too. Mechanical parts and supplies are entering the trade economy more and more, and the endless traders often arrive with cargoes of questionably obtained but highly desirable mech parts.

Edge is "governed" by the church of Fhurlin, the god of roads and travel. Fhurlin is known by many other names across the world, including Fharlan, Fhlarnghn, and Flaryngn. His church's ability to "govern" is used loosely in this case. Edge has

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TOPSIDE

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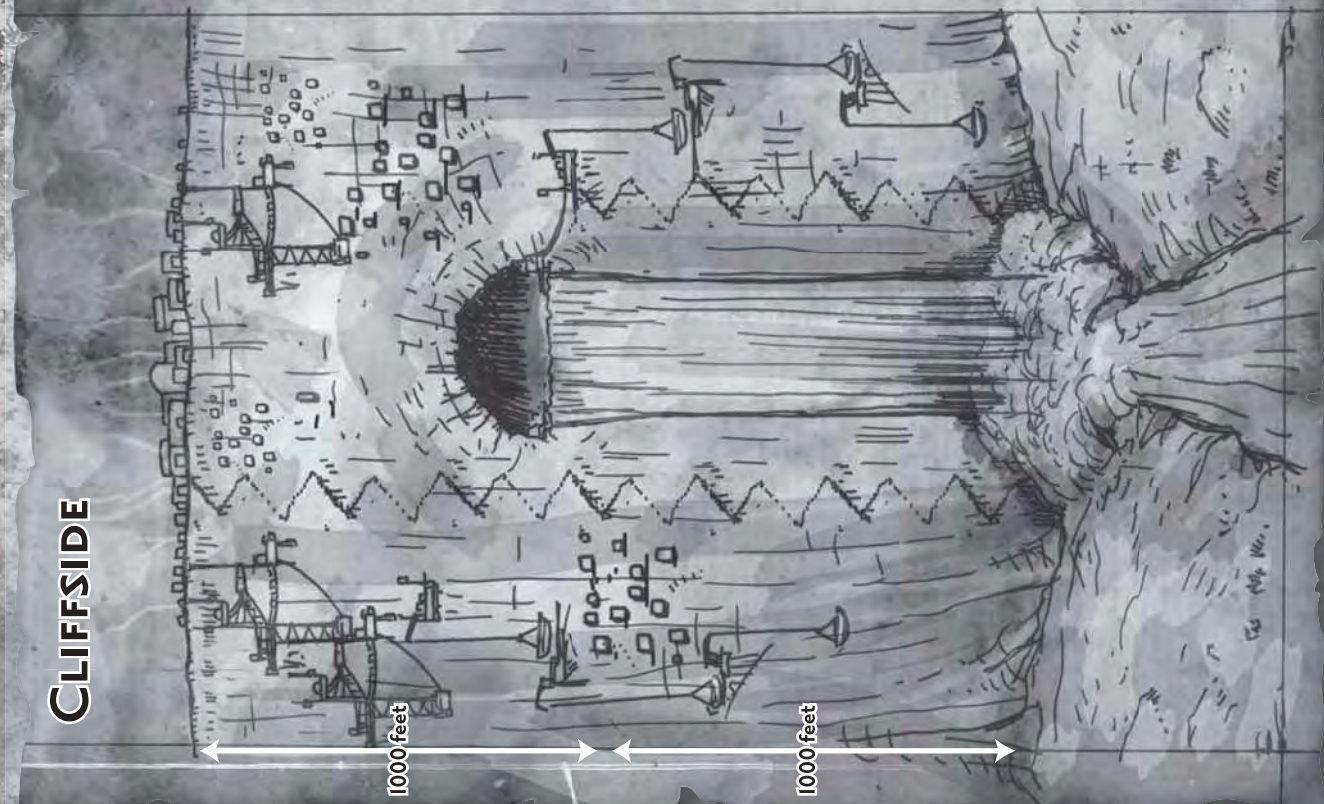
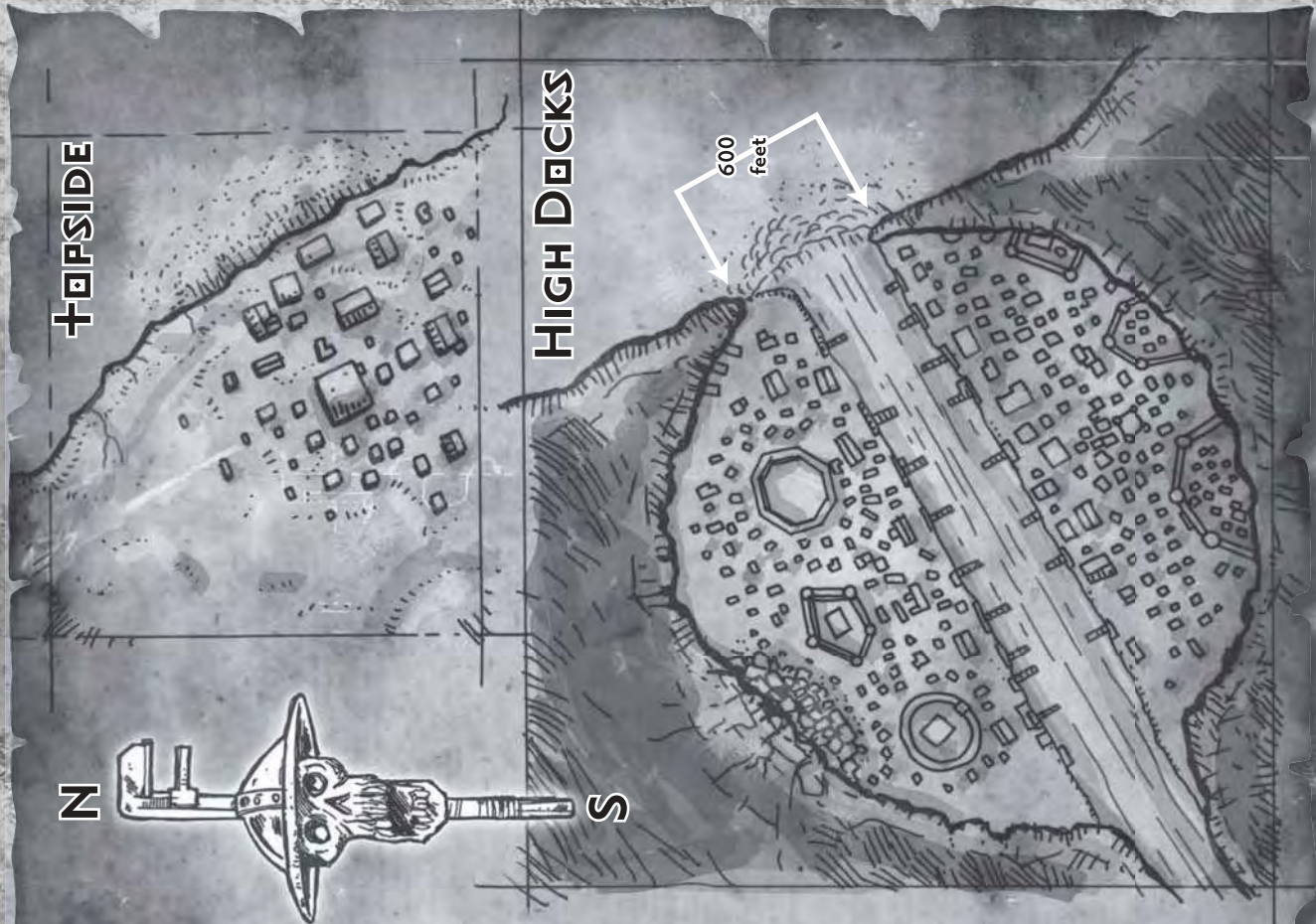
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always had a fractured, volatile political base. As a focal point for opportunists and wayfarers, and a place that a great number of parties have an interest in keeping open for travel, Edge has always been resistant to any organized government. The toll-takers can fund their own private guards, and the city's proximity to the waterfall makes most city services easy to solve ("just dump it over the edge, eh?"). The myriad variety of travelers (and, consequently, toll-takers) from across the underdeep and surface realms prevents any sort of consistent outlook on politics.

After the failure of a number of attempts at government — ranging from collective councils to mercant strong-arming to military takeover — the church of Fhurlin emerged almost unnoticed as the most powerful force in the community. Despite all other disagreements, Edge's residents have one thing in common: an affinity for the life of the traveler and trader. Nearly three-fourths of the population worships Fhurlin in one form or another, and many tithe regularly. The church is the common link between residents, and from them to passers-by, and is generally recognized as the town's governing authority. Over the years, its "parish guard" has become the de facto town guard. The head cleric of Fhurlin is effectively the city's mayor, though his powers are limited to maintaining order and settling disputes and his funding is contingent on the unpredictable whims of tithing. In effect, Edge is a very democratic city, for though the church itself selects its head cleric, the city's residents determine his budget, and unpopular decisions are usually changed after the ensuing decline in tithing revenues.

Area: One square mile (horizontal area)

Population: 1,300 permanent residents; 200–400 itinerant traders

Composition: Permanent residents: 35% human, 30% dwarf, 15% halfling, 10% half-orc, 10% gnome; itinerant traders: 40% human, 40% dwarf, 15% halfling, 5% other

Alignment: Neutral

Stilt City

Stilt City is a tiered city on the edge of the Tyratian River. To the locals, the city is called Tyrat, but outsiders have called it StilCity for so many generations that the name has stuck.

Stilt City is built on the Tyratian flood plains, so close to the river that it is completely submerged when it floods during the high-water months. The city has answered this natural obstacle with a unique solution: a tiered design supported by stilts. The city's lowest level, ground level, is farmed during the low-water season. The second level, supported by a system of stilts and latticework, is raised twenty feet above the lower level. During low-water, the second-level latticework is kept clear, to allow sunlight to filter through to ground level.

When high-water comes, the farmers of Stilt City carry reeds and mud to the second level. The latticework is strengthened and woven reed mats are arranged to help hold a foot-deep layer of mud. Then this layer of mud is planted and farmed as the floods engulf the ground below. The farmers have specially bred certain varieties of rice to produce exceptionally long roots, long enough to hang into the water below. The water levels slowly rise, eventually reaching to just above the height of the second level.

At this time the rice is harvested. By the time the floods begin to subside, the woven reed mats have rotted, and the mud from the second level slides back to ground level, where it is mixed with the rich alluvial deposits and replanted for the low-water season.

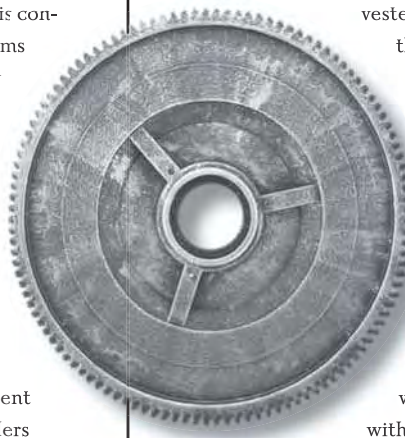
The third level of Stilt City is thirty feet above ground level. It is the residential and business district. Most farms will have one or two third-level dwellings, but most of the

third level is concentrated at the city's core, in a nonagricultural area dedicated to government, military, religious, and commercial districts. Because the third level is never flooded, it is built much more solidly than the lightweight latticework of the second level. While most farmers use poles or logs as the stilts to support their residences, the city center is built on huge stone pillars, which support wooden, brick, or stone buildings at the third and sometimes second level. At the heart of the city is an imposing stone keep, raised to the height of the third level, from which the king rules.

The city's unique design generates a prodigious agricultural output. Its tiers allow it to remain productive year-round. Given that it's one of only a few stationary agricultural societies in the endless plains, Stilt City controls the market for miles around. Twice a year, near the end of each of its two growing seasons, it hosts a huge market week where nomads from hundreds of miles around come to trade for its fruits, vegetables, grains, and spices. The rest of the year, a coterie of middlemen expands outward from Stilt City, trading dried and preserved foodstuffs.

The only downside to the stilt design is that it creates an undercity, both literally and figuratively. The areas directly under the city center are never farmed. Because of the natural shelter they afford, the first and sometimes even second levels of the city center are home to all sorts of vermin and squatters during low-water. The city guard fights a constant battle against such riff-raff, a battle that is only somewhat successful. The city doesn't have enough guardsmen to attend to the city's mundane affairs and chase off squatters. Moreover, any time a farm is abandoned, its second-level latticework becomes a home for squatters until high waters and disrepair eventually wash it away. Most such squatters are merely roughneck nomads, but cases of small goblin tribes, dire animals, and even an ankheg down there have been known.

Stilt City has a feudal system headed by King Lorshay, an unambitious man terrorized by the challenges of modern survival. Many generations ago, King Lorshay's visionary





ancestors claimed the area, built the city center, and pioneered the stilt farming system. By medieval standards, the fact that the entire city center is suspended thirty feet above ground level is a stunning achievement; nothing else is like it in the world. The King commands a strong military, funded by taxes on the farmers in his domain, and the city center serves also as a keep in which to house his forces. A small coterie of secondary nobles rules the areas around Stilt City, some from traditional dwellings (located on hills, of course), others from their own smaller stilt colonies.

Today, however, King Lorchay is an old man whose habits of luxury have been put to the test. Under assault from lunar rain and lunar dragons, he doesn't know what to do. Stilt City has suffered heavily at the hands of the dragons, which routinely rip through the fields in search of prey. The latticework provided some early camouflage, but the dragons have learned, and now they routinely shred the latticework to find what's underneath. The King's forces have successfully kept them away from the city center, but can repel them from the fields only with heavy losses. On top of that is the lunar rain, which makes upkeep on the city's infrastructure all the more difficult.

Stilt City's productivity has declined markedly in the past generation, and it has lost much of its population as residents have fled to more sheltered areas. Those who stayed are mostly the farmers with fields closest to the city center, where they can seek shelter when under attack. It remains to be seen how much longer the city will last.

Area: Fifteen square miles (entire barony); one half square mile (city center)

Population: 3,000 permanent residents: 500 in city center; remainder in farming districts

Composition 90% human 5% elf 5% half-elf

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Chemak

Chemak is an impregnable fortress-city. It sits at the far eastern edge of Highpoint, between the Tyratian River to the south and the forests to the north. Those natural

boundaries have long marked the edges of the orc expansions that the native humans have contended with for millennia. Thousands of years ago, a human warlord named Chemak organized several tribes into a single fighting force, which he led in an epic campaign against the orcs. Claiming a huge area for his human followers, he built his personal castle where Chemak now stands. He fostered a militaristic society dedicated to discipline and self-defense, an attitude initially contrary to the humans' nomadic lifestyle but which became widely accepted after its success in repelling the orcs was repeatedly demonstrated.

Times change, and though Chemak's domain withstood the orcs for generations, they eventually grew strong enough to do battle once more. Now most of the city's history is lost to time, with only two clear memories remaining: the name of Chemak, and the constant war with the orcs. The city of Chemak expanded on the castle at its core and eventually came to be what it is now: a militaristic fortress-city that answers all threats with crushing force.

The city of Chemak is the most heavily fortified city on Highpoint, possibly in the whole world. At its center is a huge castle towering nearly 150 feet into the sky — taller than some mechs. The castle is surrounded by six concentric walls at two-hundred-yard intervals, with a series of eight straight "axis walls" dividing each concentric ring into eight sections. Each section of each ring has only four entrances, via a gate on each wall of the section. In times of invasion, the defenders can make successive retreats through the walled city sections, creating a practically endless series of defensible bastions.

In one battle that is now legend, a large orc force led by the warlord Therug attacked the city soon after the construction of the third concentric ring. The Chemak defenders sent all civilians into the central castle, then lured Therug and his orcs through a "breach" in the outer gate. As soon as the orc force was through the breach, the defenders sealed the four entrance gates and spread out on the walls overlooking that section of the

city. With the orcs trapped, the Chemak forces then burned that section of their own city to the ground. Any orcs that survived the flames were slaughtered by archers on the walls. The

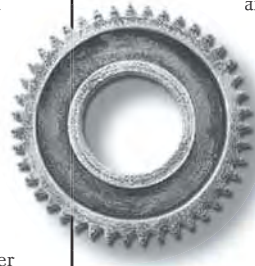
fire was easily contained by the walls, and at the cost of a mere 1/3

of their city, the Chemaks were able to annihilate the orc force completely. This strategy has since become known as "a Therug fire."

The Therug fire technique illustrates an important aspect of the Chemak mindset, handed down from Chemak himself and best expressed in an old Chemak adage: "Sacrifice a finger to save the thumb, sacrifice the thumb to save the hand, sacrifice the hand to save the whole, and sacrifice the whole to destroy the enemy." The Chemak are ruthless warriors who subvert individual needs to the greater good. Their society is founded on military codes, and their outlook on the world is essentially hostile.

It has taken the residents of Chemak close to three thousand years to build their city to its current form. The amount of stone required for the fortifications long ago exceeded what's locally available; Chemak's main import for as long as anyone can remember has been workable stone. The city is now far beyond what is necessary for protection from the orcs. No one would even consider attacking Chemak now. It is the best protected city in the known world, to the point where no reason exists to continue building it — but the residents nonetheless do so. Repairing and expanding the fortifications has become almost a religion, carried on by the city's military for no reason other than it is all they know how to do. Except for the old, young, and disabled, the entire city is required to serve in the military, alternating between active and reserve duty, meaning roughly 60% of the city's population is on active duty at any time.

Since the onset of the lunar rain, this obsession with building has paid off. Chemak stands completely unaffected by the world's tragedies. The solid stone construc-





tion resists the worst of the lunar rain's abrasion, and the high, close-set walls keep most of the particulate matter from reaching the residential buildings below. Chemak long ago set up defenses against aerial assault, and these have since proved useful against the lunar dragons, which, after constant defeats, have simply stopped attacking Chemak.

Chemak is governed by a hereditary king who can trace his lineage to the original Chemak himself. A council of generals handles day-to-day governing, dividing the city and its surrounding lands into districts. The generals are treated as nobility, but it is a meritocratic nobility, for advancement is largely contingent on success in the military.

The current king is Krecham IX. In reality, the line to Chemak himself is blurred at a number of points where powerful generals claiming spurious heritages sparred over thrones left vacant by kings without heirs. The history of Chemak is filled with bloodless military coups (and a few bloody ones, too).

Despite its impregnable walls, Chemak rules a fairly limited domain. Its military tactics have always been defensive, and its generals have never succeeded in expanding its zone of influence, but not for lack of trying. Every few generations, another general decides Chemak should rule Highpoint and puts together an army to give it a go. These invasions routinely fail, often for the same two reasons. First, no other major population concentrations exist to be taken near Chemak. Little benefit comes from conquering nomads; they simply move away, and you're left with empty ground and a hungry army. Second, expansionist campaigns are limited by the high-water season and its floods. Stilt City has proved this point repeatedly, as countless invading forces over the years have retreated rather than be stranded there for six months at a time. At times, Chemak's influence has been felt as far as five hundred miles away, but these expansionist periods always give way.

Area: One hundred square miles (current domain); one square mile (city itself)

Population: 3,500 permanent residents (inside the city)

Composition: 75% human, 10% elf, 5% half elf, 5% halfling, 5% other (but no half-orcs)

Alignment: Lawful neutral

The Ruined Cities

Edge, Stilt City, Glatek, and Chemak are the luckiest cities on the endless plains, for they still thrive. The other major population centers have been destroyed by the lunar dragons. Their ruins are now home to monsters, scavengers, looters, treasure-seekers, adventurers, cults, lunatics, and refugees, who are still preyed upon by the dragons that return periodically.

Three of the most important ruined cities are Bessemer, Rook, and Lebra.

Bessemer: Bessemer, the tree city, was a glorious place of supernatural beauty. Elves composed the city from living trees, which were guided over thousands of years to grow into a living framework. The delicate interlocking branches housed artisans, craftsmen, musicians, performers, mages, and artists. Below the tree city were elven and human farmers who cultivated small plots.

Unfortunately, Bessemer was built for beauty, not security. Its mages saved themselves but not the city, which was too delicate to resist the dragons. Bessemer is now a thicket of twisted, charred trees, some standing, most flattened. It is occupied by the worst sort of forest life, including the haunted forest rats, with some elven refugees still sheltered under its collapsed branches.

Rook: Rook was a mountain metropolis nestled among one of the few mountain ranges on the endless plains. It was an ancient city that had traded gems, wool, ores, and other mountain byproducts with the nomads for as long as anyone could remember.

In an unfortunate twist of fate, the mountains around Rook are the highest point in all the endless plains, and it was there that the lunar dragons first sought to roost. Rook had always relied on the vertiginous precipices of its surrounding terrain for protection,

but the ravines were no help against dragons used to such conditions. Rook was one of the first cities to be laid to waste by the invading dragons. Now the wind whistles through its battered ruins and empty mines, and more than one dragon nests there.

Rook has one other claim to fame: Shar Thizdic. The charismatic leader of the Legion was born in Rook to a long line of sheep herders. His humble

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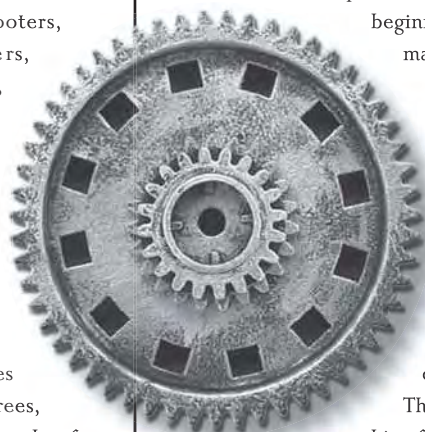
his fellow yemen

to make a stand while the

city's aristocracy made plans for flight. Shar's ragtag army of farmers, herders, miners, and tradesmen surprised an overconfident dragon that had come to raid the city. They ambushed it and launched several volleys of razor-sharp grappling hooks before it could take to the wing. It lifted off but was hauled back to earth by ropes held fast by hundreds of peasant warriors, who then set upon its thrashing, bound form with pikes, hatchets, and pitchforks. The dragon was fatally wounded, and although it escaped on the wing, it was soon found dead not far away.

But it would prove to be a hollow victory for Shar. The mortally wounded dragon collapsed from the sky directly atop his family's cottage. All of his family was crushed beneath its dying weight. The next day, five dragons arrived on a revenge mission. They utterly destroyed the city, toppling its buildings to the very foundations. Shar Thizdic was one of the few survivors. He fled to the endless plains as his home, family, and community smoldered behind him.

Lebra: Lebra was a quiet city in the heart of the Lilat Forest. It was home to the halls of





the White Congress, the preeminent mages' association of the elves. The White Congress kept its library in a magnificent marble building in the center of Lebra. In fact, Lebra's economy depended in large part on magic, as the White Congress and the mages who frequented its concerns were the reason the rest of the city existed. Farms, shops, and craftsmen settled in Lebra primarily to provide for the needs of the wealthy mages and the adventurers who visited them.

The library of the White Congress was reputed to be quite small. The building housing the tomes was enormous, but those privileged enough to have seen the library (which included many a barkeep, if you believed them) attested to the fact that it was merely two hundred volumes or so. Each book was at least two feet thick, however, if not more, and usually had pages measuring three or more feet wide. Aside from that, the magical books had their own arcane energy, which manifested as they were read. Some books would float, others produced light; others displayed an illusion concerning what was being read. It was said that a room was built for each book, and so great was the knowledge contained in each room that most mages in the White Congress read no more than eight or ten of the books in their lives.

Lebra was well prepared for the coming of the dragons, seeing how it was stocked to the brim with powerful wizards, but their abilities had limits. The city's natural defenses were drained, the lunar rain had already weakened it from above, and the dragons attacked again and again. The dragons had left Glatek and Chemak alone after the cities defended themselves, but not Lebra. It seemed as if they had a particular interest in the library. Their attacks elsewhere were haphazard, but they were coordinated and persistent when it came to Lebra.

In a final, desperate move, the surviving members of the White Congress called down some unimaginable enchantment ... and the great library suddenly disappeared. Then the wizards left Lebra to be destroyed by dragons.

No one knows what happened to the

library. It is rumored that the White Congress itself does not know. In truth, in order to protect their greatest treasure, they entrusted a powerful extraplanar creature with keeping the library safe. They reasoned it would be safest if not even they knew where it was. This mysterious extraplanar denizen now protects the library, somewhere unknown to anyone. The same barkeeps who once walked inside the library say the library will reappear in Lebra exactly 501 years after it disappeared ... assuming the current land-lord doesn't break his promise, of course. The White Congress has until that 501st year to rid the planet of dragons and make it safe for the library's return.

The ruins of Lebra are a popular adventuring site. The predominance of magic prior to the city's destruction means its remains are littered with more than their fair share of magic items. And persistent rumors say that a side effect of the library's vanishing act is mysterious portals that, if activated, will take one to the library's extradimensional home. But the portals are rumored to be very, very small

Nomads of the Endless Plains

The cities were not the only places where many people lived. The endless plains were known for their tribes of nomadic humans, some of which reached great numbers. Perpetually mobile, they fared well against the dragons, for they had no homes to destroy. Some outran the dragons, others avoided them, others stood and fought. The lunar rain ultimately didn't harm them, for they could not escape from that. Some of the nomadic tribes still wander, though their ranges are restricted to areas with boulders, hills, forests, caves, and other places of protection from the sky. The rest have fought their way underground.

Prior to the catastrophes, the five largest tribes were these. All still have surfaced

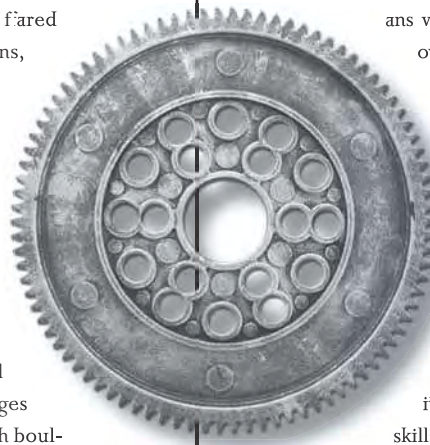
representatives, as well as factions that went underground.

Stavians: The Stavians are fast riders. The tribe is divided into two competing clans: those who ride horses and those who ride dusk devils, the insectoid creatures brought to Highpoint by the dusk runners (see page 160). Many, many centuries ago, the two Stavian clans were one and the same. When some tribesmen tried to domesticate the dusk devils, the others retreated into conservative tradition, insisting that horses were the mark of a true Stavian. Now the two clans are bitter rivals, each claiming their own mount is the mark of a true Stavian. The Stavians are the largest of the nomad tribes, with some four thousand tribesmen spread between many bands.

All Stavians are incredible riders. They are raised on the backs of their mounts, trained to ride before they can walk. Tribes are always on the move, camping in the same place for never more than a week. They survive by foraging and hunting small game. They respect no political boundaries, even those of dangerous enemies; they believe the whole world belongs to all its people, and the worst crime a man can commit is to block the passage of his neighbor.

Stavians are fundamentally peaceful and rarely express aggression toward other creatures. When forced to battle, Stavians value speed and agility over all else. They strike fast, rely on maneuverability to outflank and confuse their opponents, and retreat in the face of any concerted defense. Their combat tactics always emphasize their riding ability, showcasing amazing skills and incorporating maneuvers possible only on horseback: fast charges, constant harrying, circling maneuvers, and channeled stampedes of native animals.

Stavian culture and art is based on their



Stavian culture and art is based on their

tory of riding. Disputes are resolved by races, obstacle courses, and other contests of mounted ability. Crafts requiring fixed implements (such as pottery and its kilns, or blacksmithing and its forges) are absent among them. Instead they focus on crafts that can be completed from the back of a horse. They are famous for their weaving and leatherworking, especially the costumes they create for their mounts. They trade with peoples across the continent and are known everywhere.

Each Stavian band is led by a shaman (cleric) and headman (fighter). Due to tribal training and many years of hunting practice, a number of the tribe's males will be low-level fighters. Arcane magic users are rare.

Human characters of Stavian origin treat Ride as a class skill, regardless of their professions. Additionally, they receive a +2 bonus to all Ride checks. Their class-based weapon proficiencies are limited to weapons that can be used from the back of a mount, regardless of their class' normal benefits. This excludes all Large weapons. Additional proficiencies must be purchased as feats.

Thurd: The Thurd are violent, simple-minded crossbreeds. The endless plains have always housed legions of orcs, and it was inevitable that some would mate with their human neighbors. Surprisingly, *many* such matings occurred, but the offspring

were usually rejected by the tribes of both parents. Over many generations were thus born the Thurd.

The Thurd are a tribe of self-propagating half-orcs. Most are second-, third-, or fourth-generation crossbreeds, whose ancestors are half-orc for that many generations back before a purebred human or orc can be found. They have reached the point

half-orc, which they apply only to first-generation crossbreeds.

Unfortunately, the Thurd have done little to escape their heritage, and they live as orcs do. They are hunters and raiders, preying on both human and orc tribes just as they themselves are preyed upon by their orc forebears.

The Thurd have a culture of reptile wor-

ship. No one remembers how this originated, but it is now deeply ingrained. Their gods have reptilian shapes and their totems are always reptilian. They prefer to wear reptilian hides, and their chieftains are always cloaked in ferocious snake-headed cloaks.

Each Thurd band is led by a chieftain (mid-level barbarian). Many members of the band will be low-level barbarians. They are usually accompanied by some purebred humans and orcs, who may be sympathizers, lovers, or slaves.

Wisps: The Wisps are a tribe of human wanderers, with some half-elf representation.

Always on foot,

they are masters of camouflage, concealment, and silence. They travel in widely dispersed groups, communicating with hand signals and mirrors. They always spot others before they themselves are spotted. They wear clothes that blend in to the terrain. Their cloaks incorporate special pockets designed to hold dirt and sod, into which are planted long ivies so they



where they no longer consider themselves crossbreeds. For all practical purposes, they are their own race of creature. They acknowledge this with the word Thurd itself, which is a noun describing the race of people whose *ancestors* are orcs and humans, *not* someone whose direct parents are orc and human. The Thurd still retain the word



are literally clothed in living vegetation. They survive by gathering and some hunting, but their impact on the local environment is so negligible that they are very difficult to track.

Wisps have a reputation for appearing out of nowhere. They'll melt out of the underbrush to trade or warn off intruders, then disappear just as fast. People from the flatland consider them supernatural, but the tribes of the endless plains know they are nothing more than exceptionally skilled rangers.

The Wisps are the smallest of the major tribes, but their reputation is known to everyone. They are prized as trading partners, for they always bring the rarest goods to swap: uncommon spices, rare fungi, obscure gems, and exceptional plant specimens. Sometimes it seems as if they have no mundane items. But they choose their trading partners carefully and generally keep to themselves, a skill which they're very good at.

Wisps are found most often in the northern forests and the plains just below them. Almost every adult in a wisp band will have at least one class level as a ranger. More experienced wisps will also have one or two levels as rogues. A Wisp band is led by the most experienced member.

Human characters of Wisp origins always treat Hide and Move Silently as class skills, regardless of the professions they choose. Additionally, they receive a +1 bonus to all Spot checks. They do not receive the 4 extra skill points usually awarded to humans at first level. They do receive the additional skill point at each subsequent level.

Gur: The Gur are seasonal farmers. While almost all other nomads are hunter-gatherers, the Gur are an agricultural people. Some tend naturally occurring fruit or vegetable groves, which they harvest before moving on. Others farm fast-growing crops, usually in two cycles. During low-water, they sow dry crops on the banks of fertile waterways. When high-water comes, they rapidly travel to dry ground, then farm wet crops at the

fringes of the flooded areas. Because they produce their own food, they are invariably the best-fed of all nomads.

The Gur are highly valued among the nomad tribes for the variety of food they can offer. Most other tribes have very limited food choices, but the Gur always have an abundance of domestic crops. Each Gur tribe will specialize in one or two seasonal crops, but by trading with several tribes of Gur, any nomad can secure a good variety for his meals.

Arcane magic runs high among the Gur, perhaps due to their food surpluses, which let them support tribe members who do nothing but study magic (usually focused on improved food production). The Gur have developed a whole school of agricultural magic, including spells that improve the yield of seeds, eliminate pests, and exterminate weeds.

The Gur are almost all human, with a few elves living among them. They are a very populous tribe concentrated in the regions beside the Tyrtian River, Endless River, and southern swamps.

Hypsies: The hypsies are a tribe of half-ling traders and performers. Each hypsy band is a noisy, colorful wagon train that brings excitement wherever it goes. Hypsies travel with all manner of exotic creatures, including tamed beasts and enslaved or charmed monstrous humanoid. Individual families specialize in unusual skills — acrobatics, fire-eating, animal handling, knife-throwing — and they put on shows wherever they go. Canny hypsy traders personify *caveat emptor*, for they barter endlessly for the best deal and are known to pass fake magic items as real ones.

New People

In every catastrophe, some people will change their ways to survive. Highpoint has seen a number of such survivors.

Worm Farmers: The worm farmers are the strangest of them all. Before the catas-

trophe, the several varieties of giant worms indigenous to Highpoint were considered annoying vermin. They were attacked when seen, for they had the potential to destroy a farmer's fields completely in mere hours, but were otherwise ignored. The worms, which resemble the earthworms we know but are as long as forty feet, travel in packs just below the surface. As they devour the roots of plants, they sometimes leave surface furrows, much like gophers, and it is by these furrows that they were hunted.

After the lunar rains began, desperate farmers took shelter in the tunnels left behind by the worms. Thanks to this close proximity, the farmers learned more about the worms than ever before, including the startling discovery that the worms don't actually devour roots. They devour *the earth itself*, including roots or anything else that happens to be within it. They excrete any plant and mineral residue, as well as most of the soil's nutrients, retaining the dirt itself and a variety of nutrients peculiar to their own strange anatomy. They actually metabolize the dirt. In other words, the worms didn't compete with humans for plant matter; they competed with the plants for the dirt itself. Strangest of all, the worms' excrement was suitable for a variety of purposes, depending on the soil: sometimes metalworking, in areas with high ore concentrations; sometimes even human consumption, in areas with lots of roots, since it consisted primarily of digested plant matter in a soup of highly concentrated nutrients.

Thus were born the worm farmers. Initially these nomads simply followed the worms in their tunnels, living off their byproducts. The worms, which are unintelligent and fairly oblivious, weren't bothered in the slightest. The farmers were primarily humans and halflings, but included some orcs, dwarves, and elves (whose elven egos were quite distressed with their newfound occupation). Now, after several generations, worm farmers have begun to herd their worms and breed them for adaptations most useful to the farmers: specifically, "deep-divers," which stay away from the surface and don't leave furrows, and "shakers," whose natural



self-defense mechanism is a sonic attack. As worm farmers have proliferated, they have created an entire economy living ten to thirty feet beneath the soil. Territorial “worm wars” have occurred, and some human worm farmers are even losing pigmentation and developing darkvision as they adapt to their moist, dark, dirty homes.

Tortogs. The tortogs are a race of stout, stolid humanoid whose time has come. Tortogs stand about five feet tall but are very, very broad. Their legs are as wide around as a man’s chest. Their broad, snub-nosed faces lack necks and in many ways resemble the face of a tortoise. They have a natural body armor of thick, overlapping bands, like that of an armadillo, which covers their entire body.

Tortogs are slow and unwieldy, though tremendously strong. Since the lunar rain they have found themselves to be in high demand, for one simple reason: They are effectively immune to the rain’s effects. Short of a full-blown meteor storm, the lunar rain simply can’t penetrate their thick body armor. They are still

vulnerable to the lunar dragons, so they’ve adapted to occupy a unique niche: They travel at night, when the lunar rains are strongest and the dragons are generally sedentary.

Once confined to the western deserts, tortogs are now proliferating. Some act as messengers and traders, but most are scavengers and raiders. Surface dwellers let their guard down at night — literally so in many cases, since the guards come indoors — and the tortogs count on this fact. They are now despised as brigands by most surface settlers.

Dusk Runners. In times past, the world of **DragonMech** was home to innumerable nomad cultures, some of which wandered the entire world. These world-walkers were seen only once in a generation, when they brought amazing goods and fantastic tales from far-flung lands. Now these nomads have been largely destroyed.

The dusk runners are the last of the true world-walkers. They travel the globe in a perpetual westward trajectory, rising at dawn and bedding down at dusk to wait out

the lunar rain. Their steeds are the ferocious dusk devils, multilimbed insectoids native to the other side of the globe. Dusk devils are tremendously fast and tremendously strong; they can move at twice a horse’s running speed for days at a time and can lift up to ten times their own body weight. They have been known to outrun even dragons.

Dusk runners are called such because they love to “run the dusk.” This impressive sight is seen only rarely in Highpoint, whenever the dusk runners happen to come through. With the lunar rain at their heels, they spur their dusk devils to maximum speed and race across the open plains, challenging the meteor-laden twilight to catch up with them. Of course, it always does, but their mad, headlong charges before the lunar rain are a sight to behold.

These days, dusk runners are rare as always. When they come through, entire cities grind to a halt for parties and trading. Dusk runners are never trusted but always welcome, for they bring novelty and amazement to a



world sorely lacking such diversions.

Endless Traders. The endless traders are named after the Endless River, which they traverse once a year. They start at high-water in Edge or even further east, from whence they travel overland to the west, crossing the Boundary Peaks and descending southward to the westernmost mouth of the Endless River, where it first enters the subsurface. On a normal journey, they reach this point just as low-water begins. There they buy boats and salt from slathem of the Wet Desert, whose economies have come to depend on supplying these traders.

The traders then sail the entire distance of the Endless River, retracing their steps underground and in the opposite direction. Along the way they trade the goods accumulated on their surface journey for the products of the subsurface. They always trade at a profit, of course. By the time they emerge at Edge near the end of low-water, they are laden with objects and foodstuffs available only underground. Then they sell their boats and begin the cycle again.

The endless traders are as old as Highpoint civilization itself. Ever since the banks of the Endless River were colonized, someone has supplied their trade needs, and the endless traders trace their origins back to the earliest such traders. Several tribes of endless traders actually exist, but outsiders make little attempt at distinguishing them. They are a culture unto themselves, with their own pidgin trade language and secretive magical rituals centered around selling. By most accounts, this magic is nothing more than illusions to make goods seem more valuable than they really are. But the few outsiders admitted to their hearths testify otherwise. They've witnessed the conjuration of f saleable items out of nowhere, the transmutation (not illusion) of defective goods into perfect condition, and, on some occasions, consultation with otherplanar forces on matters surely considered mundane by any other society, such as the highest price at which a vegetable can be sold before buyers will turn away

The Orc Hordes

The endless plains have been home to nomadic orc hordes for as long as anyone can remember. Disorganized, chaotic, violent, and stupid, these brutes have been the chief impediment to the progress of civilization. While the humans advanced from tribes to cities, the dwarves built monumental strongholds, and the elves crafted tree cities over thousands of years, the orcs remained ... simply orcs. No advancement in orc society has come for as long as anyone can remember.

Until now. Mechs mean different things to different people, and to orcs they mean brute force, pure and simple. Unlike elven magic or dwarven stonework, mechs have an immediate, obvious use and don't require aged experts to master. Anybody can steal a mech, and, as the orcs have proven, almost anybody can build a mech, though the craftsmanship is a different matter entirely.

Impressed by the power of the mechs, the orc hordes of the endless plains have embarked on a plan to build their own fleets. The initial phase consisted entirely of capturing enemy mechs. Then the orcs tried to build their own. Amazing as it may seem, orc engineers exist, though they are never as skilled as their dwarven or human counterparts. Lacking advanced metalworking, stonecunning, or magic with which to build their mechs, the orc engineers resorted to an old standby: slaves.

The orc mechs are huge, clunky affairs powered by slaves. The slaves turn wheels, row oars, crank levers, and do all manner of other laborious tasks in order to provide the mech's power. Depending on the size of the mech, merely a dozen slaves may

be cranking levers in a galley, or thousands toiling to turn massive cogs in the bowels of a city-mech.

This reluctant, inefficient power source, combined with the low state of orc engineering, means orc mechs are slow, sluggish, and underpowered. But they're still mechs. An orc mech may not be a match for an equal-sized dwarf mech, but it can take out most organic creatures,

and certainly can't be beat by a tribe of Stavians. Orc mechs are considered easy targets by the Irontooth Clans and Legion, but they're still avoided, since orc mech jockeys are prone to dangerous behavior — such as ramming attacks and even suicide collisions.

From the orc's perspective, it's well worth destroying his own mech if he can capture a better one in exchange. As a result, much of the orc mech tactics revolve around breaking into an enemy mech and sending swarms of orcs to kill the crew from the inside, leaving the mech intact for takeover. Thus, the ramming attacks. Orc mechs are usually equipped with massive spiked fists that are hollow and filled to the brim with orc warriors. On a successful ram, the spike penetrates the enemy mech and the orcs inside board it, fighting their way through the underdefended mech innards to the head, where they slay the mech jockey and take over the mech.

The orc hordes pose a unique threat to Highpoint. They've always been trouble, first as nomadic raiders, then as the nastiest creatures trying to seek shelter underground. Now they've adapted to surface life and developed mechs that make them uniquely dangerous. Luckily, the hordes remain disorganized, chaotic, and stupid. Only a dozen or so functioning orc mechs exist, and they don't cooperate. But if ever a great leader were to unite them, all of the endless plains would be in danger.

The Flatland

The flatland is a great swath of rocky terrain between the endless plains and the roughlands. Mechs were first developed on the flatland, and it was there that the earliest dwarven mech jockeys tested their mettle against lunar dragons. The ancient dwarven stronghold of Duerok still stands, and its offspring, the Stenian Confederacy, controls most of the flatland. But the real place for adventure remains the endless plains, for there the enemies of the dwarves gain power and plot their own mechanized invasions.

The flatland is separated from neighboring regions by towering cliffs and enormous mountains. To get to the endless plains, one





must negotiate vertical faces as much as 3,000 feet high. They are a major impediment to trade and transportation that have been slowly conquered over many, many centuries. Many trails now traverse the cliffs, all of them laced with switchbacks and steep ascents. None is easy, but they allow for travel — at least on foot.

Getting a mech across the cliffs is another matter entirely. The Stenian Confederacy is content with that remaining the status quo, since the cliffs provide a substantial natural barrier. Other factions are not. The Irontooth Clans and rust riders want new territories for raids, especially areas not under

the protection of the Stenians. The Legion is reputed to be developing routes to the flatland for the ultimate purpose of invasion.

As a result of these actions, it is now possible to get a mech up or down the cliffs. Several “staircases” can be negotiated by expert mech jockeys (Mech Pilot, DC 30, failure means a fall of 1d10x100 feet). The Stenian Confederacy devotes special attention to guarding these passages but does not catch every mech that goes through.

Most of the flatland is now dominated by the mechs: the Stenian Confederacy, Irontooth Clans, rust riders, and mech tribes are common here. They are

described below. What remains of the old, sedentary culture is few and far between. Some notable locations are these:

Duerok: The oldest and greatest of the dwarf settlements, located alongside the Endless River in the western flatlands near the beginning of the roughlands. It is a massive stronghold, housing more than 300,000 dwarves over the course of a seemingly endless underground labyrinth. Smaller protectorates once stretched out in all directions, but most fell during the wars following the lunar rain. Duerok itself has seen both land area and population shrink by almost half over the past decade, as the clan leaders



retreated to more defensible positions and attrition cost them life after life. Though Duerok's relations with the Stenian Confederacy are often upset by differing attitudes on traditional clan rule, even a fool recognizes that the Stenians are Duerok's best hope for survival.

Vermil: Vermil is the center of worm farming on the flatland, and the largest worm farmer settlement anywhere. This bizarre "city" is an endless maze of worm-built tunnels, with no organization whatsoever. No tunnel is flat; they intersect in some places while passing over and under each other in others. Vermil has no central market, nor any other centralized area. The myriad local worms tend to herd together (locating each other through some sort of "worm radar" or specialized tremorsense), and the location of the largest herd tends to be where the elders, mercenaries, merchants, and traders are. Vermil is notable not just for its strangeness but for its might; the worm farmers have discovered that they can strand a mech by digging tunnels around it, and Vermil is their first attempt to leverage their growing power. Most mechs are hesitant to come anywhere near this place due to the thin, fragile nature of the ground crust, criss-crossed as it is by endless tunnels.

Great Standing Dwarf: Depending on whom you listen to, this oddity is a gift from Dotrak or simply an ancient curiosity. In one section of the cliff between the flatland and the endless plains, a thousand-foot-tall dwarf has been carved from the rock. The dwarven figure is stylized with sharp edges and flat surfaces. As far back as anyone can remember, it has been a strange relic with no remembered purpose. The legends of Duerok say it is a relic of ancient times, carved as a reminder that all dwarves come from the earth. But since the Second Age of Walkers has begun, a new interpretation has arisen: It is a carving of a mech, left to remind the world of what passed long ago. Some proponents of Dotrak even claim it is a mech, magically transformed to stone and melded with the rock. A number of adventurers have journeyed to the Great Standing Dwarf intent on finding the secret entrances

to its interior, but none has returned with anything promising.

Edge: Edge is the point where the flatland meets the endless plains. It has already been discussed in detail, but it is worth pointing out that extensive settlements exist on Edge's high side, fanning out into the flatland.

The Roughlands and Boundary Peaks

The Boundary Peaks are tall mountains that cut Highpoint in two. To the east are advanced cultures occupying the flatland and endless plains. To the west are empty barbarian lands. The area immediately surrounding the Boundary Peaks is called the roughlands, for obvious reason: It is a massive, unbroken stretch of irregular, boulder-strewn ground. No trade routes or easy trails go through the roughlands. The terrain is too irregular for mechs to traverse. The only outsiders to cross the roughlands are the endless traders, who make an annual transcontinental trek. They must vary their routes each year, thanks to the freak flash floods that originate in the Boundary Peaks and change the landscape every few months. It is an arduous journey, but the endless traders continue to make it. Some people whisper that they know something no one else does — that the Boundary Peaks house an advanced civilization that hides itself from the world — but most people scoff at such nonsense.

The Wet Desert

The Wet Desert is the westernmost peninsula of Highpoint, known to the rest of the continent as merely a distant curiosity. Except for the desert's own residents, the endless traders are the only sentient creatures to see the area. Few are the men who have reason to venture there, though the Pretominin Heads may change that.

The name of the Wet Desert originates in its unusual circumstances. It is the lowest point on Highpoint, the only area of the continent to sit below the high-water line. For half of the year, the entire western peninsula is underwater. For half of the year, the peninsula is a scorched, lifeless desert. Even under normal circumstances, the cli-

mate would render it a desert, but the barren low-water months are further exacerbated by the extensive salt deposits left behind by the retreating sea. Not only does it have no water, but the ground itself leeches moisture from those who walk it. Thus the wasteland has earned its appellation.

Those seasonally deposited salt deposits are valuable, very valuable. Salt is so plentiful in the first months of low-water that one can literally scrape it from the rocks of the desert. The endless traders start each year's new journey by buying huge quantities of salt from the denizens of the Wet Desert. Then they set sail on the Endless River, plying that salt for a thousand miles in darkened realms where it is a precious commodity.

No mechs are in the Wet Desert, for it has no civilization capable of building them. Even the wandering nomads of the endless plains are more advanced than the frightful creatures populating the Wet Desert. The most populous of the desert tribes are the zuleps, a species of humanoid dinosaur that has a barbaric, warlike culture. The zuleps are so violent they would choose civil war over peace just to have something to do. Alongside the zuleps live a variety of other primitive creatures, including insectoids, horrid reptilian creatures, and ferocious, solitary dragons.

If you believe the eastern loremasters, necromancers' lairs and long-lost ruins are buried alongside the zulep camps, but no one has ventured out to look for the truth. Anksleg, a renowned endless trader, probably summed it up best: "Were it not for the salt, no sane creature would venture to that scorched, parched, violent tract of lifelessness. And even with the salt, no endless trader will travel out of sight of the great cliffs. Nothing but misery is to be found in the Wet Desert." Suffice it to say, no human, dwarf, or elf has ever set foot in the westernmost expanses of the Wet Desert — at least, no one has done so and returned to tell of it.

The Wet Desert may receive new visitors soon. An ancient relic known mostly to endless traders and eastern loremasters is getting renewed attention since the advent of the mech. This relic is the



Pretominin Heads, named for the tribe of zuleps that lives in its regions. The Pretominin Heads are a series of massive sculptures of dwarven heads. They vary in size, but the smallest is more than thirty feet wide. Buried under sand and rubble at the edge of the Wet Desert, they have long been considered nothing more than curiosities. But the gearwrights claim they are the heads of buried mechs from the long-lost Age of Walkers.

The first head sits just at the base of the cliff beside the Wet Desert. The next one is a half-mile west, and they continue at such spacing well into the desert. Only four have been seen by western travelers, but the zuleps say more may be found further into the desert. Those within the high-water mark are caked in rust but largely intact — an extraordinary feat for iron that has spent half of every year soaked in saltwater.

Many an adventurer now speaks of traveling to the Pretominin Heads and trying to enter one, perhaps to discover a buried

mech beneath. Why would a mech be buried in the sand? How would one even bury a mech? How did the mechs travel so far west? What ancient technical secrets are hidden inside? Questions abound. The Gearwrights Guild has talked frequently of the heads but has no interest in sponsoring an expedition. “Why should we prove what we already know?” they ask.

Anksleg, the endless trader, claims to have seen the Pretominin Heads up close. “The zuleps stay away from them,” he says, “but they’re quite protective — it took a healthy bribe to get close. We just did it for curiosity’s sake, many years ago. Are they mechs? I don’t know. But I do know it is easy to scrape the salt from their smooth metal sides.”

MECHDOMS

A new kind of political entity has arisen in Highpoint: the mechdom. Whereas traditional kingdoms are defined by fixed

political boundaries, mechdoms are fluid territories defined solely by a mech’s ability to keep order. The largest mechdoms are policed by multiple city-mechs capable of keeping even lunar dragons at bay. Each city-mech governs a large swath of territory, which it patrols and protects in exchange for tribute from the locals.

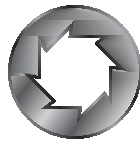
A smaller mechdom may literally be nothing more than the area in the immediate vicinity of a handful of mechs. The smallest mechdoms are unruly nomads who stick close to a lone mech for the protection it provides. Some mechs welcome this for the trade and protection from ground forces that it provides; others consider the nomads to be parasites and leeches getting a free ride from the hard work of the mech-dwellers.

The largest mechdom is the Stenian Confederacy, a collection of five city-mechs and a veritable fleet of smaller mechs dedicated to establishing order in the flatland. The Iron-tooth Clans compete with the Stenians for dominance of the flatland and have expanded



into the endless plains as well. The L'arile Nation unites many of the elven mechs in the northern forests. Found almost everywhere are the unpredictable rust riders.

THE STENIAN CONFEDERACY



"With order and stability come peace and tranquility."

The Stenian Confederacy is an alliance of mechanized walkers dedicated to bringing order to the flatland, through force if necessary. Founded by dwarves of Duerok heritage, Stenians are convinced that the only way to weather the catastrophes is with an organized society working as one. While most humans see the collapse of social institutions as a result of the planet's catastrophes, Stenians see it as one of the causes. In their minds, the repercussions of the lunar rain would have been far less traumatic if a strong, organized government had existed to plan and facilitate migrations into the underdeep (or, as they tacitly acknowledge only among themselves, organize a concerted defense against the surface dwellers).

The driving force of the Confederacy is to bring order to an ever-larger territory. The five city-mechs are constantly enlarging the fleets of mechs that serve under them, so as to secure and patrol larger domains. Some people even talk of building a sixth city-mech. Though Stenians view their actions as noble, they are fundamentally driven by an urge for self-preservation, for they believe order will prevent future catastrophes.

The Stenian Confederacy was formed by a strong alliance between five like-minded city-mechs. They serve as homebase for a vast fleet of smaller mechs. All Stenian mechs are strictly regimented, and mech crews live like military officers. Since a city-mech can travel more than 400 miles in a day of solid move-

ment, the five city-mechs patrol large swaths of territory. Each has more than 40,000 square miles to its name. These "safe zones" are incredibly safe by current standards. They are situated in a rough pentagonal shape which is defended by the smaller mech armies. The total area patrolled by the Stenians is more than 200,000 square miles, a vast territory by any medieval standard.

Outside the "safe zones," the Stenian lands aren't particularly safe. Aside from the inescapable lunar rains and occasional incursions by lunar dragons, no shortage exists of the usual fantasy monsters ready to wreak havoc. Moreover, the general disorder and breakdown following the catastrophes have led to bandit gangs, marauders, and petty warlords across the continent, not to mention rust riders, the Irontooth Clans, and other mech-based raiders.

Nonetheless, the Stenian lands are safer than almost anywhere else. Just as a policeman in a ghetto deters crime when he is present, so does a Stenian mech patrol. Sweeping through their territories on a regular basis, the light patrols act as mobile police, guard, judge, jury, and executioner. Those who find deep-seated problems, such as a particularly intractable warlord or orc tribe, will request heavily armed reinforcements who are left behind to fight a prolonged battle while the patrol continues on its route. Eventually, all patrols report back to one of the city-mechs, which act as the nerve centers of the entire confederacy.

The city-mechs themselves have become more than simple military headquarters. They are now social and political centers, as well. As the surface world threats subside, they are slowly becoming less militarized. On-board farmers and craftsmen are being replaced by wealthy merchants and political patsies, who do whatever they can to secure the prestigious (and safe) housing on a city-mech. In a strange twist of fate, the Stenian Confederacy is actually attracting new citizens out of the subsurface and underdeep. These refugees are a mix of commoners looking for some protection and aristocrats seeking to spend their wealth on safety.

Unfortunately, the order and relative stability of the Stenian Confederacy come with

a price. The Stenians rule their territory with an iron fist. Their patrols are both loved and feared. When "in the field," the mech patrols have final say in all matters of justice. They can execute a petty thief for stealing one copper piece if they deem it necessary to maintain order. To make matters worse, the patrols are not immune to corruption, and the racial differences between the patrols (which are primarily dwarven) and the surface population (which has more humans than dwarves) sometimes lead to tension.

The city-mechs swear allegiance to the Confederacy, in which all five are supposedly equal. But they are not, and the bickering between them, though always orderly, is not always confined to merely political channels. All the major ruling powers are fundamentally lawful, so their means are never destabilizing, but they are not necessarily good. For example, one city-mech may choose not to eliminate raiders but instead to chase them into the territory of its neighbor. Decisions to expand the territory governed by the city-mechs are always contentious. Although the primary consideration is military might (expressed in terms of available mech patrols), secondary considerations always include bickering over which city-mech gets the larger territory.

The five city-mechs are Durgan-lok, Nedderpik, Lokag, Thuron, and Gorla. Durgan-lok was the first operational city-mech ever to be built and, although aging, is by far the most distinguished mech in the fleet. Among the aristocrats, a residence on Durgan-lok is far more prestigious than one anywhere else. This has led to its own share of problems, as bidding wars erupt and the city-mechs more and more become the province of the wealthy rather than true havens for the oppressed.

Despite its problems, however, the Stenian Confederacy is still an overwhelmingly positive force in the world. It has brought order and safety to a large area that previously had none whatsoever. It can repel even the lunar dragons from its safe zones and keeps the rest of its territory largely safe, as well. The fact that it has internal squabbling is, in one sense, a good thing: It means time exists to pay attention to something other than the



pressing urges of survival.

All religions are tolerated in the Stenian Confederacy, which itself has no official religion or patron deity. The atheism engendered by faith in steam technology is taking hold, however, and most mech-dwellers are either atheistic or worshippers of Dotrak.

Each Stenian city-mech is commanded by two co-officers: the mech commander and the policy commander. The mech commander is in charge of all daily operations relating to the mech and its military fleet. This includes repairs and construction, where it will travel and what areas the fleet will patrol, and all aspects of military operations. The policy commander is sometimes a single person, other times a council. It is in charge of interaction with the rest of the Stenian mechs, diplomacy in regard to outside entities, and laws and policies concerning taxation, military service, housing allocation, and crime.

Beneath each of these commanders is a large organization with many, many layers of middle management. The five mech commanders are the gearwrights responsible for constructing each of the five founding city-mechs. No established succession plan exists for the mech commanders, though in the event of a death, the Gearwrights Guild (which is quite powerful on all the mechs) will probably end up deciding the new candidate.

Area: Approximately 200,000 square miles

Population: 18,000 in city-mechs; another 10,000 in smaller mechs; approximately 300,000 on the surface

Composition: Mech-dwellers: 75% dwarves, 20% gnomes, 4% halflings, 1% humans. Surface-dwellers: 25% dwarves, 25% gnomes, 35% humans, 15% others.

Alignment: Lawful neutral

THE IRONTOOTH CLANS



"Metal is power."

To the Irontooth Clans, the mech is the ultimate weapon, and he with the most powerful weapon lives the longest. The Irontooth are dedicated to securing power by building bigger, stronger, and deadlier mechs, through whatever means possible. If such a thing as "barbarian mech jockeys" could exist, the Irontooth would be they.

The founding Irontooth were dwarves scarred by the devastation of their clans. Seeing their engineering skills as the only means to survive, they turned their backs on the "failures" of traditional dwarven society (at least as they saw it) and sought "power through metal" to ensure their future survival. Their rebellious sentiments and chaotic nature left them amenable to living arrangements unheard of among other dwarves, including small social units, a nomadic lifestyle, and even multiracial clans — half-orcs are now common on their mechs, as are humans and gnomes.

The Irontooth Clans are indeed plural; the Irontooth have no single centralized government. They are organized into clans of three to six small to medium-sized mechs which range across the flatland and nearby areas of the endless plains.

Although they all fly the flag of the Irontooth and share a similar perspective on survival, they are otherwise completely disorganized. Like a wolf pack, they will unite against outsiders but frequently fight among themselves. Nonetheless, conflicts among Irontooth are not nearly as

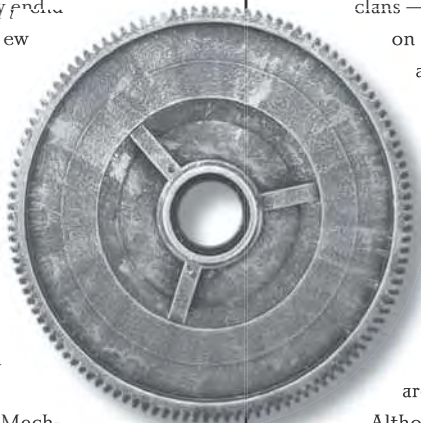
brutal as their battles with outsiders, as they settle them via ritualized mech combat.

These ritualized combats, or "jousts" as they are called, are one of the best training venues available for mech jockeys. Jousts are used not only for resolving conflicts but also as training and entertainment whenever the excuse arises. Nearby clans meet regularly for jousting, and any sort of holiday, victory, or other celebration is often an excuse for clans from far and wide to congregate for a joust.

Jousting mechs use only close-combat weapons, which they dull with thick layers of clay or hide, then coat with a thin layer of wet dye. They strike real blows but at half-power, enough to leave a dent and a dye stain. The low-power levels minimize the advantages of larger, stronger mechs, and a joust with mismatched mechs can still be won by the better pilot. The winner is decided when observers (by general raucous consensus) decree one mech to be inoperative. Disagreement between partisan observers often leads to "joust riots," which themselves are part of the entertainment.

The jousts are extremely valuable for training pilots. Despite their bawdy lifestyle and chaotic nature, Irontooth mech jockeys are considered the best in all the mechdoms. It is not unheard of for mech jockeys from other mechdoms to compete in the jousts, provided a sufficient truce or neutrality can be achieved. This is almost always granted, at least for the duration of the joust, since the Irontooth love such events. Officially, the outsider always loses, since no Irontooth observer will judge the joust in his favor, but privately, some of the best outside pilots have been offered membership in an Irontooth clan after a well fought joust.

Most members of a particular clan are related by blood ties, but many clans will take on like-minded members of other races if they have something to offer. In these clans, the power always rests with the dwarves, but the other races are respected and treated as equals. A clan is ruled in name by the eldest male, although in practice the strongest of his children is often the real power. Mechs are considered the property of the clan, not





of individuals. The clan's ruler will claim the best mech, with others distributed according to clan rank. A mech may change hands due to inheritance, the death of its previous owner, or, in some cases of even rank, challenges as adjudicated by jousts.

The Irontooth survive by a combination of raiding and protection rackets. They have little loyalty to those they "protect" and their protection disappears quickly in the face of a real threat. The various clans relocate frequently, and often the only distinction between a raid and a protection arrangement is the length of their stay.

The name Irontooth comes from the mechs themselves, which are ornamented with spikes, studs, barbs, and no shortage of razor-sharp serrated edges. They are by far the most viciously designed mechs currently in operation, in many ways the martial artists of mechs. Irontooth pilots practice a discipline called mech fu and are able to use their mechs to inflict damage at close quarters in ways no other pilots could manage. The skill of their pilots has earned them the nickname "mech devil" among other mechdoms.

On top of that, each Irontooth mech is a case study in customization. No two are alike. Individual mechs feature custom-built weapons of a startling variety. Many are designed with aesthetic intentions to resemble skeletons, giants, dragons, and other motifs. Some are astoundingly beautiful; others are revoltingly deadly.

All Irontooth are accomplished tinkers, and most have at least one level as a mech jockey or coglayer. Because of their open-mindedness, steam borks are fairly common, too

Area: No fixed area; roam over most of flatland and nearby areas of endless plains

Population: Roughly 10,000 scattered over approximately 50 clans

Composition: 60% dwarves, 10% gnomes, 15% humans, 10% half-orcs, 5% others

Alignment: Neutral

L'ARILE NATION



"Answer hard with soft and soft with hard."

The L'arile Nation is a loosely organized band of elven mechs occupying the remnants of the Lilat and Heréal forests, in the northern endless plains. When the dangers of the lunar invasion became clear and word the dwarven mechs reached the forests, the elves embarked on an epic campaign to transplant their treetop villages into walking fortresses. Their tall, lithe mechs bear little resemblance to the squat, heavy creations of the dwarves, even less so when one considers that the source of their locomotion is magic, not steam

Each village built one or more mechs to house its hundred-odd residents. In most villages a single, ancient tree had long sheltered the residents, and rather than watch that tree slowly be killed by the lunar rain, the elves elected to use its wood to build their mechs. Each village then planted a sapling from that tree in the heart of the mech, where elven woodsmen now tend to its every need. The elves hope that someday the lunar rain will end and they can abandon their mechs, plant the sapling, and grow a new village from the remnants of their old.

In the wake of the disasters suffered by the elves of the northern forests, the L'arile philosophy is one of avoidance and prevention. They know too well the price of conflict, as their shattered sylvan villages can attest. Now they have become "mobile villages," able to avoid a threat as easily as confront it. When the enemy is strong, they slink away into the forests, disappearing from sight. When the enemy is alone or weak or vulnerable, they launch massive coordinated strikes, seeking complete annihilation.

Thus, L'arile combat tactics focus on

stealth and long-ranged weapons. They have developed an impressive array of camouflage techniques, both magical and mundane. They make use of some fairly large mechs, but few are city-mechs, as dispersion and concealment are integral to their philosophy. In the tall forests (or at least what's left of them), it is possible to conceal one of the treelike elven mechs — at least from a distance — and the L'arile travel in widely separated groups to minimize the chance of detection. Using magical means, they observe and predict the movements of the lunar dragons, planning their movements accordingly.

The L'arile mechs are tall and lanky, built to resemble trees for both aesthetic and practical reasons. Most have terraced sides where living undergrowth has been cultivated as camouflage. Some mechs even have large trees growing from their shoulders and heads, usually the offspring of the grand old tree that once housed the arboreal village now living on the mech.

Life on a L'arile mech is much like life in the elven forests once was. Few in number and simple in ambition, the elves rarely have conflicts among themselves. Decisions are made informally, by the eldest or most accomplished elves, and dissension is rare.

Many elves of the northern forests did not have the chance to build a mech before their villages were destroyed. L'arile mechs with extra space readily accept these refugees. Wherever possible, the L'arile protect elves still living on the surface. In general, they have a very positive relationship with the denizens of the forest, both elven and other.

The flagship of L'arile Nation is the city-mech Tannanliel. Tannanliel is generally independent but is very protective of its elven allies and is actively allied with the rest of L'arile Nation.

Area: Approximately 15,000 square miles

Population: Roughly 10,000 in mechs; another 30,000 still scattered in the forests

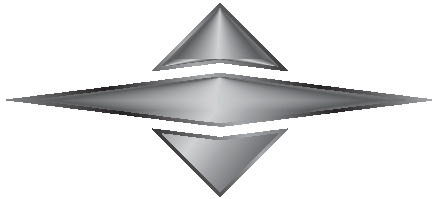
Composition: 96% elves, 3% half-elves, 1% others

Alignment: Neutral good





THE RUST RIDERS



"Hit him again! Huh huh!"

What happens when a mech jockey goes bad? If he takes his mech with him, he likely joins the rust riders, a bickering, nasty band of outlaws, bandits, outcasts, and speed freaks who roam all areas of Highpoint.

The rust riders are known as such only by outsiders. They call themselves "the gang," "the boys," or other such names. But "rust riders" is a very suitable name, for their mechs are often poorly maintained and visibly rusty. Lacking connections, knowledge, mines, foundries, and wealth, the rust riders are already at a disadvantage when it comes to maintenance, but an even bigger stumbling block is their essential laziness and irresponsibility. They are, after all, bums and outcasts. Despite their numbers, they are never able to muster the organized, disciplined labor forces necessary to build new mechs, much less effect major repairs on old ones.

The rust riders survive by raiding and plundering. They are essentially scavengers.

Surface dwellers are acceptable targets but mechs are even better, since a raided mech provides both supplies and spare parts — and, depending on the condition of the target after the battle, possibly a commandeered mech. Lone or unprotected mechs from other mechsdoms are considered ideal targets.

The rust riders always travel as a single,

huge group, mainly for reasons of self-preservation. They always have between 20 and 30 mechs in the gang. Lone outlaws looking for companions are the main source of new mechs; mechs are lost as broken-down mechs are left behind, along with their occupants, free to rejoin if they can catch up.

Life among these penned savages is nothing short of uncivilized. Bullying is commonplace, no law exists but the sword, and personal disagreements are settled with blood. Their nature is essentially chaotic, and were it possible to survive outside each other's company, they would. But the group offers a necessary protection in this difficult age, so they stick together.

Being accepted as a rust rider is a relatively simple process. As with any outlaw gang, you just have to hang with the crowd and take a few knocks. If you can defend your possessions and survive your compatriots, you're accepted as tough enough for the crowd.

The one major advantage of being a rust rider is learning their "fight on the run" techniques. As a group of outlaws always under threat of capture, they have developed a number of techniques for fighting from moving mechs. From their pilots' improved accuracy while moving to their crews' ability to strike blows on nearby targets from a moving mech, the rust riders are renowned for their on-the-hoof techniques.

Hit-and-run is their specialty, and anyone who lives with them

long enough will become quite good at it.

The Stenians attack rust riders on sight.

Area: None
— nomadic

Population:
Estimated at approximately 5,000 people, organized in gangs of 20-30 mechs

Composition: 40% humans, 25% dwarves, 15% half-orcs, 10% orcs, 10% others

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

THE LEGION

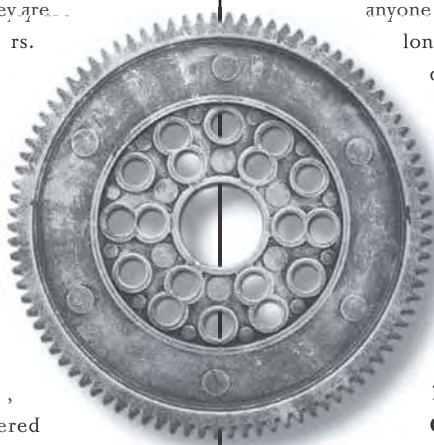


"United we stand, united we conquer."

The Legion is a militaristic mechsdom of growing power centered in the endless plains. Led by the fiery human warlord Shar Thizdic, the Legion espouses one and only one virtue: military might. With his polemic speeches, optimistic ambition, natural charisma, and tragic personal history, Shar Thizdic has persuaded dozens of scattered nomadic tribes to work together. He is building the largest human army ever known on Highpoint, a feat attributable to him and him alone. He is a rare leader, the kind that arises only once in a thousand years, and now is his time. It remains to be seen what his "success" will mean to the rest of the world.

The Legion is organized into a single large army. The largest units are chapters. Currently nine chapters operate, each consisting of 2,000 combatants, as well as several hundred additional support personnel and noncombatants (mostly families). In theory, each chapter lives in a city-mech with an affiliated nomadic tribe. In practice, the Legion has constructed only two city-mechs so far, one of which is assigned to Shar Thizdic and his direct companions. All but one chapter are scattered throughout a variety of smaller mechs until their city-mechs are completed.

The structure of the chapters is perhaps Shar Thizdic's greatest triumph. Rather than be organized around existing tribal loyalties, each chapter is composed of fighting men drawn from a dozen or more tribes. The nomadic, family-oriented tribes of the endless plains have never before divided in this way. But Shar Thizdic's silver tongue has brought many a miracle, not least of them this, and the advantages of such a structure are obvious — at least to him. Tribal loyalties are splintered, the only common loyalty among each chapter is to the Legion, and the discipline and fighting efficiency achieved





by this are incomparable. The chapters are the most effective fighting force the humans of the endless plains have ever known.

The nine chapters are named by Shar Thizdic in honor of what he calls the "Fighting Virtues." They are Honor, Valor, Strength, Ferocity, Friendship, Loyalty, Speed, Discipline, and Insight. Despite their names, they are trained identically. Officers are rotated between chapters to ensure consistency and, more importantly to Shar Thizdic, to guarantee loyalty to him rather than a particular chapter.

Shar Thizdic's stated ambitions are simple: to build a fighting force capable of retaking the endless plains from the lunar dragons. But some unsettling signs of his true intentions surface. He has never publicly stated as much but is clearly pro-human to an extreme, going so far as to ban non-humans from living on chapter mechs. He delights in telling ancient legends claiming humans once owned all of Highpoint and were the progenitors of the other races. And the training he gives his chapters covers a lot more than simply fighting lunar dragons.

Nonetheless (or perhaps consequently), he is rabidly popular among the human tribes, who are following him eagerly. He rules like a king and is worshipped like a god. To outsiders, he is considered a major threat. The Stenian Confederacy views him with growing alarm, and L'arile Nation, with its typical long-term view, is already strategizing for the conflict that he will inevitably bring.

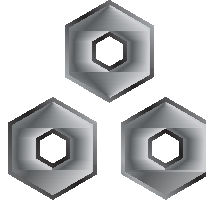
Area: Central endless plains

Population :
4,000 on city-mechs, 8,000 more on smaller mechs, 80,000 surface dwellers in affiliated tribes

Composition :
100% humans

Alignment: Lawful neutral (tending toward lawful evil)

MECH TRIBES



"It's my turn to sleep on board!"

While the aforementioned mechs are the largest organized political entities among the mech-dwellers, many, many others exist. Any nomadic tribe lucky enough to capture or purchase a mech will often crowd on board, choosing to live in squalid, cramped conditions aboard a ~~sle~~ mech rather than sleep unsafely on the surface.

These small groups, whose lives are centered around one or sometimes two mechs, are called mech tribes. Some mech tribes are affiliated with others, usually based on family ties, but can rarely bring more than three or four mechs together in one place. They are fundamentally nomadic tribes that, through good fortune or brute force, have managed to get hold of a mech.

A mech tribe is a strange sight. In the middle of a scraggly band of nomads is the mech, usually a fairly small one that wasn't hard to capture. Hanging out of every available opening — and sometimes hanging onto the outside of the mech itself — are

people of the tribe. They may look completely ferocious in their native or traditional garb. A herd of goats and cows is tethered to the mech's waist or ankle via long cords. A few wagon-towing horses trudge alongside the mech, while a bevy of children tromps along underfoot. Periodically, the mech's weapons will let loose a blast toward a distant target, just so the kids can guffaw at the explosion.

How these tribes get hold of mechs varies. Sometimes they repair damaged or deserted mechs that they come across. In some cases they ride in jury-rigged contraptions that even the rust riders have abandoned. Other times they trade for their mechs. But usually, they steal them. Although it seems unthinkable that a bunch of spear-wielding tribesmen could take down a mech, they can if they can get inside and slay the crew. And that happens, especially on small mechs when the crew stops to sleep at night without properly scouting their surroundings.

A tribe that includes a mech always has at least one member with basic proficiency in mech repair. (If it didn't have such a member to begin with, he shows up quickly and claims family connections as soon as he hears of the captured mech!) But even if the resident "expert" is extremely competent for a mech tribesman, he still has no easy source of replacement parts. In general, tribal mechs are never in good repair.

It is not unheard of for a mech tribe to live in its stationary, broken-down mech for extended periods while the tribe searches for supplies to restart it. The mech is just too valuable to give up. In some cases, the tribe will strip out the original, nonfunctioning steam engine and install a manual engine similar to those found in orc mechs — great wheels or oars that, when turned or rowed, power the mech's gears. The existence of these manual power sources has created a market for slaves among some mech tribes.

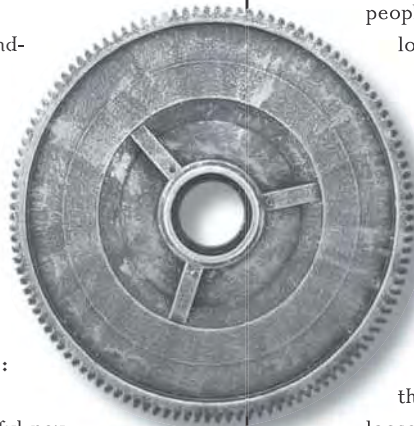
Stenian patrols and soldiers of the Legion automatically stop and question mech tribes whenever they are sighted, working on the assumption that if they are using a mech, it was probably stolen.

Area: Anywhere on the endless plains and flatland

Population: Usually 10–40 people per mech, with extended family groups in other tribes of up to four times that number

Composition Any, depending on the tribe

Alignment: Usually lawful or neutral





THE CITY-MECHS

The flatland's even terrain and proximity to the dwarves of Duerok made it the perfect training ground for mechs. The early experimental combat mechs engaged their first dragon opponents here on the flatland. Their quick success prompted rapid evolution, and now the immense city-mechs stride across the same land, keeping even the dragons at bay.

The mechs rule the flatland. They are becoming common on the endless plains, as well. The mech kingdoms, or mechdoms, are rapidly usurping the power of traditional governments. Even those mechs not part of a mechdom wield surprising influence. Alliances with them are courted by the mechdoms and the traditional power structures. Most dwarven mechs are affiliated somehow with Duerok or the Gearwrights Guild. Many elven mechs are loosely connected via L'arile Nation, and almost all are informally allied with dwarf or human mechs of similar alignment, with the notable exception of the Legion, which eschews nonhumans. The human mechs are almost all part of the Legion. Orc mechs are still few but are a potential threat far in excess of their number. They have loose ties to the tribes that built them but, like most orc war bands, will come to each others' aid only if the odds and plunder are good.

Most powerful of all, though, are the city-mechs. With the population of a city, the firepower of an army, and the mass of a small mountain, they are military machines without peer. Almost a dozen completed city-mechs now walk the flatland, as do a few on the endless plains. Many more are in various stages of completion. And mech builders everywhere are constantly striving to create ever-larger models.

By traditional standards, a more appropriate name for the city-mechs would be "village-mechs" or "town-mechs." No city-mech has a standing population greater than 4,000 residents, far short of the 5,000 to 12,000 residents that would normally make up a town. Nonetheless, they are the largest self-

contained mobile populations in existence, and among the largest permanent settlements in a world where most cities have been destroyed. Those two facts have earned them the appellation city-mech.

The best known of the city-mechs are the first four that were built and the one most recently finished. The first four are Durgan-lok and Nedderpik, the first two city-mechs ever built, both dwarven in origin; Tannan-liel, the only elven city-mech; and Rebirth, the first human city-mech, built and now occupied by Shar Thizdic and the Legion. The most recently finished city-mech — and currently the most notorious — is Haven, the Legion's second city-mech.

DURGAN-LOK

"And that's how Parilus saved the dwarves."

Durgan-lok was built out of desperation. The lunar dragons were running rampant over the surface world. Surging hordes of refugees pressed at every entrance to the subsurface. The lunar rain was destroying the dwarves' trading partners. Chaos, death, and disaster threatened from every quarter.

Then came Parilus, a stooped, white-haired dwarf claiming to be the eldest of the Master Gearwrights. Only the most ancient dwarves remembered the Gearwrights Guild, which was only a legend passed on from their own grandfathers' grandfathers.

Parilus claimed to have journeyed more than a thousand miles through underdeep tunnels. He left the Master Repository, the great library where the eldest gearwrights stored their sacred knowledge, when he heard of Duerok's troubles. In eons past, Duerok had aided the Guild, and Parilus would repay the favor.

Parilus brought with him four massive tomes, each more than two feet thick, with stamped metal pages covered in technical diagrams. In normal times he would have been dismissed as a crazy old tinkerer, but in this desperate age he was the only one who laid claim to a workable solution.

Hundreds of thousands of man-hours later, the first dwarven mech jolted its way to

the surface. Sereg, a dexterous warrior personally trained by Parilus to be Duerok's first mech jockey, guided his small mech toward the first lunar dragon he saw. The dragon ravaged the mech, shattering its legs with a few tail slaps and promptly beheading it. Sereg was lost in the wreckage, but so too was the dragon, which was fatally cleaved by a final blow from the mech's oversized battleaxe. Sereg became a hero, hundreds of other warriors clamored to pilot the next mech, and Parilus soon had all the resources of Duerok at his disposal.

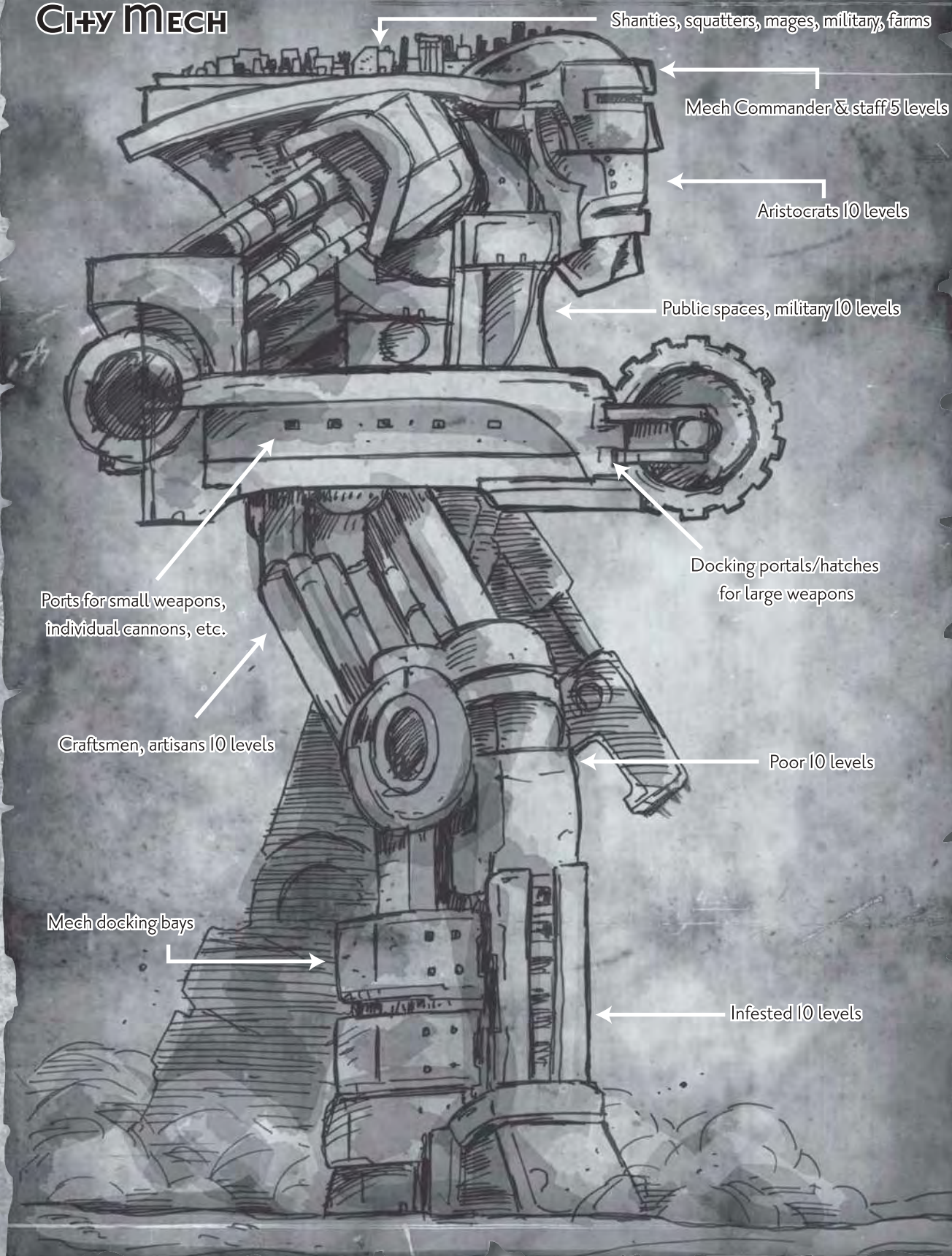
Parilus divided his labor force in two. Under the instruction of master blacksmiths and novice coglayers hastily instructed by the junior gearwrights Parilus had brought with him, the first half churned out progressively more advanced battle mechs, which were soon beating back the lunar dragons with some degree of success.

The second half was relocated to the largest cave Duerok could muster, where they were set to work under a shroud of secrecy. Each worker knew what his finished component should look like, but not what it was for or how it would be used. Parilus himself personally directed the construction. Some workers grew jealous of the other group, whose battle mechs were regularly fighting glorious combats against the lunar dragons while they labored in obscurity.

Then Parilus ordered the now-operational fleet of battle mechs to clear a one-mile-wide area of the surface. They must defend this area with their life, he said. The second group of laborers, now thrust into the spotlight, began hauling their components to the protected zone. Huge scaffolds were constructed, massive pulleys began lifting pieces into place, and the marvel of Durgan-lok was born.

Stories of the huge mechanical dwarf spread like wildfire. From the deepest drow to the wildest woodsman, every creature in Highpoint heard of this fantastic invention. The dwarves had built a mechanical walker so large that even a lunar dragon could not challenge it. Defended against raiders by a fleet of smaller battle mechs, it soon carved a "safe zone" out of the ruins of the flatland.

CITY MECH





For the first time, a place existed where even the lunar dragons feared to tread.

Parilus slipped away soon after the completion of Durgan-lok. With no goodbyes, he took his four metal tomes back to the Master Repository. Three junior gearwrights stayed behind to carry on the tradition of the Gearwrights Guild. Parilus was hailed as a hero, and in admiration, the first dozen or so mothers to give birth on Durgan-lok named their male sons Parilus.

Durgan-lok was the first city-mech ever constructed. It is fully self-sufficient. Built to include areas for agriculture, livestock, living quarters, tradesmen, specialists, administrators, a military garrison, a small marketplace, and even civilian passengers, it can produce everything it needs. The only commodities sometimes lacking on Durgan-lok are quality fuel and metals for repair, but

both of these are raw materials easily located through prospecting or mining.

Designed in a way that only a dwarf could love, Durgan-lok is laid out exactly as if it were a mountain stronghold. It features lots of vertical faces, tunnels, crawlspaces, and enclosed areas. Durgan-lok is not recommended for claustrophobes — but dwarves love it. It is essentially a walking dwarven stronghold.

Physically, Durgan-lok is the smallest of all the city-mechs. It is squat and wide, composed of an iron skeleton with stone armor. It's as close as a city-mech can get to being a walking castle. It measures roughly 500 feet in height. Since it's designed for dwarves, it can fit a lot more useful space into its 500 feet of height than a human-scaled city-mech, and has a permanent population of around 950 dwarves. Parilus did not reveal all his secrets

when he built Durgan-lok; he left the dwarves quite a bit to learn on their own.

In name, Durgan-lok is part of the Stenian Confederacy, but in many respects it remains an extension of Duerok. It still follows the Duerok clan leadership model and is extremely protective of its homeland.

NEDDERPIK

*"You want the Gearwrights to save you?
Fine. Then go live with them."*

After Parilus' departure, the revived Gearwrights Guild rapidly grew in power. The Guild's contributions are what ultimately saved the dwarves, but in the process much of the traditional dwarven power structure was alienated. Once-mighty axe warriors were now seconded to dexterous pilots; the

advice of clerics went unheeded when it interfered with the engineers' whims. When the Gearwrights proposed the construction of a second city-mech that would be entirely outside the control of Duerok, the undercurrents crystallized into a public rift.

Nedderpik, the second city-mech, was intended from the start to be fully independent of Duerok. The simmering resentment that erupted alongside its construction cemented its independence and set the wheels in motion for the creation of the Stenian Confederacy, whose founding members were Nedderpik and Durgan-lok.

Nedderpik was designed and built by the Gearwrights' Guild with a pioneer homestead approach. All those who participated in its construction would have a place on it — but they would be required to leave Duerok behind forever. Where Durgan-lok still maintained strong connections to Duerok, the residents of Nedderpik would be true pioneers, accepting the Gearwrights Guild as their ruler and braving life on the flatlands in a new stronghold unlike any that had preceded it.

Nedderpik is a radical departure from the technology of Durgan-lok. Where Durgan-lok was firmly planted in the "let's build a mobile castle" school of design (a concession some say Parilus had to make for the dwarves to accept the idea of a city-mech), Nedderpik is truly a mechanized walker. Its designers severed the tie to traditional geographic connections and designed a fully functional walking city. Its interior, although scaled to dwarves, doesn't feel like a misshapen dwarven stronghold. Instead, it incorporates the structure of the mech to best protect its inhabitants.

Living quarters and vital areas are in the centermost regions. The outer areas are the shops, work areas, farms, and livestock. The upper levels are intentionally set aside for the aristocracy (a distinction that wasn't built into the design of Durgan-lok and had to be retrofitted to its quarters), while the bottom levels (above the hangars)





are built like a true city sewer or dungeon — they are dangerous areas, used for engine rooms, refuse, and sewage, sealed and well protected from the rest of the mech, and designed to provide a buffer from ground-level invaders.

Where Durgan-lok was populated by dwarven traditionalists with strong hereditary ties to the clan culture, Nedderpik is far more independent. It is governed by a council charged with representing the interests of the “crew.” Considering the close quarters on board the mech and the ease with which a mutiny could occur, the council is quite representative. It includes a strong faction from the Gearwrights’ Guild, as well as a clan leader and a military appointee.

In a sense, the “crew” of Nedderpik really are pioneers, frantically trying to escape the warfare of the dwarven strongholds, hoping for a new kind of life aboard a city-mech. Nedderpik is ruled by dwarves but open to any race willing to accept the Guild; its population includes a sizable gnome contingent, as well as many halflings and a few humans. (More humans might join except that life in the low-ceilinged design is cramped, to say the least.) A sense of idealism runs through the mech’s corridors; the crew knows they’re at the cutting edge of a whole new kind of life.

Nedderpik stands a little more than 1,200 feet tall. It is squat and broad, like all dwarven designs, but uses far more metal than stone in its construction and thus has more available space. It supports a permanent population of more than 3,500 dwarves, gnomes, halflings, and humans.

TANNANLIEL

*“Our forests are dead.
But they live in Tannanliel.”*

The traditional seat of power among the elves of Highpoint has always been the great northern forests of the endless plains. As the Lilat and Heréal were razed by the lunar rains, the elven villages built small mechs to house saplings from their great trees that had long sheltered them, then embarked on these mechs to wait out this

turbulent period in the planet’s history.

Most elven mechs were small affairs, housing perhaps a hundred or so elves, depending on stealth and speed to survive. But one great mage, among the most powerful of the already powerful elven wizards, vowed to take the fight to the enemy. The arch-mage Tannan, with the aid of several of his distinguished colleagues, shaped the still-living wood of a Lilat grove into a veritable conduit for magical energy. This magical walking tree construct is the mightiest of the elven mechs. It is “the walking tree of Tannan,” or, in the sylvan tongue, Tannanliel.

Tannanliel is the first and only elf city-mech. It is taller than any other mech from any other race, measuring almost 2,200 feet tall at the top of its highest towers. Graceful and thin, it looks like the consummate elven design, at once resembling a sleek tower, an ancient tree, and a powerful magical construct.

Tannanliel is built entirely of enchanted trees, their still-living roots, limbs, and trunks bound together in architectural form to match Tannan’s vision. These trees still live, drawing nourishment from the earth whenever the mech halts for the night, repelling intruders with the vines that live on their exterior, growing and repairing themselves as directed by Tannan.

Tannanliel’s internal structure reflects the elven attitude. Its vertical levels are not divided according to use or function, but rather according to a magical hierarchy. The entire mech is ruled by the five arch-mages who built it. They reside in the mech’s highest levels, within its head and in the living tree-towers that reach high off its shoulders and back. Protected by Tannan’s magic, these tree-towers repel the lunar rain with pitiful ease.

Below them are the residential quarters of the rest of the mech’s mages, according to their ranks within the Order of Tannanliel, a recently organized mages’ council devoted to the magic of golems, constructs, and, of course, mechs. The Order is responsible for keeping the mech running. It occupies the mech’s arms and upper torso.

The next tier includes ranks of warriors, archers, and other defenders of the mech. Most are drawn from the dozen or so elven

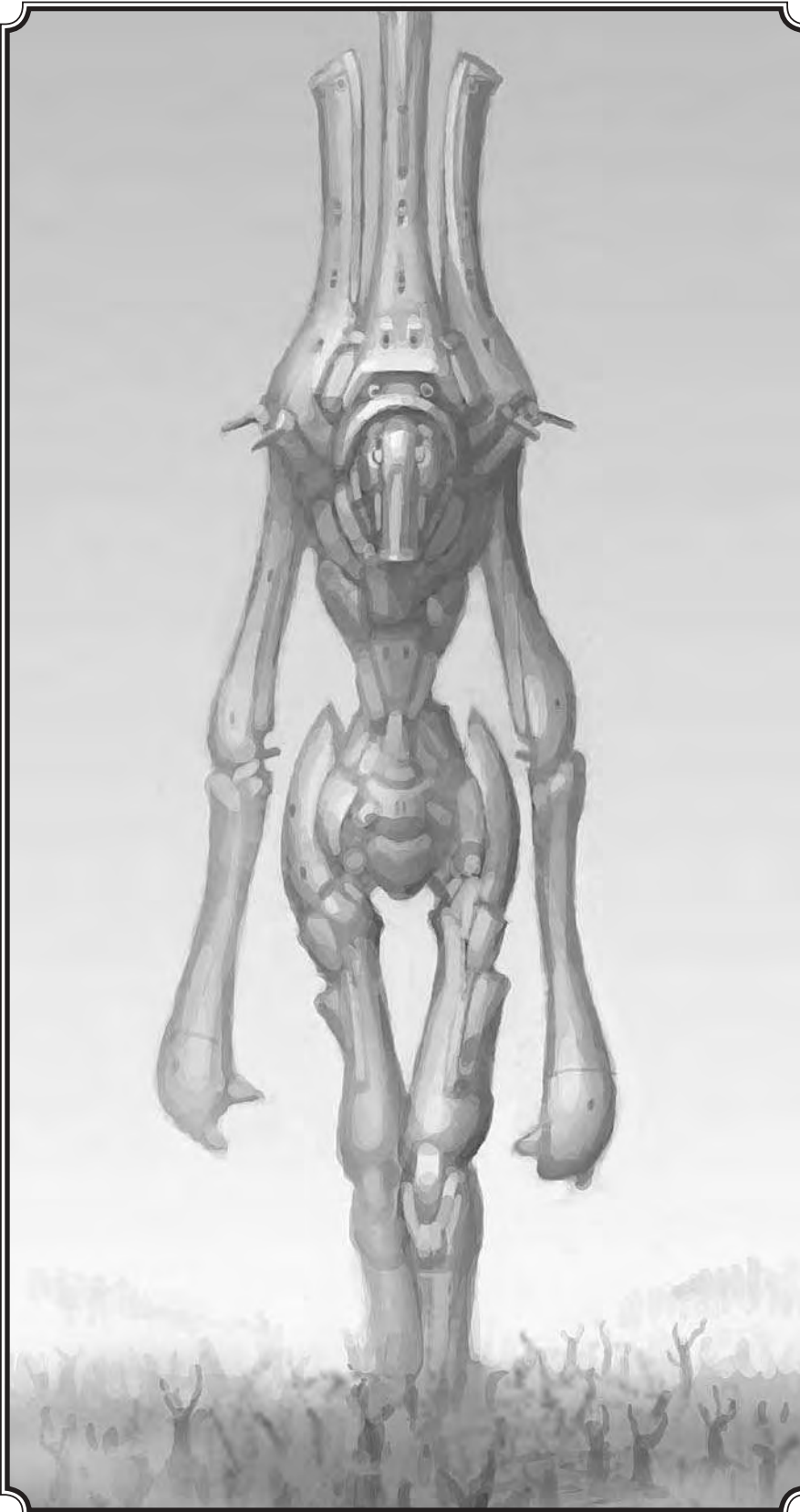
villages that have taken refuge on Tannanliel. Tannan accepts any and all elves who need protection, though once they are on board he requires them to contribute to the mech’s defense, and, in the long term, hone their magical abilities to the point where they can construct their own mechs.

Because the magical operation of Tannanliel is so much more efficient than the steam-driven engines of the dwarves or the blatantly wasteful labor systems of the orcs, the elves have far more space to devote to living quarters, and far more room for specialists trained in something other than steam mechanics. Thus, Tannanliel includes a fairly large military force housed in its middle torso.

The lower torso and thighs are home to tradesmen and other specialists: the carpenters and blacksmiths who keep things running. Finally, in the rest of the leg area, the elven peasants live, farming small protected terraces hanging off the mech’s legs.

Tannanliel has little to fear from the outside world. It is perhaps the most powerful mech in existence. Its very structure is alive, capable of growing and of healing wounds. It is a single massive artifact, a conduit of magical energy through which Tannan and his legions of mages can launch batteries of fireballs and other spells at attacking creatures. No lunar dragon has stood against it — nor, for that matter, has any other creature.

But Tannanliel is vulnerable from the inside. Tannan himself is inextricably linked to the mech. His will controls it, directs it, and sustains it, though the magical energy required is so great that he frequently calls upon other great spellcasters to aid him. As the months go by, Tannan appears more and more drained. Some rumors say that the burden of sustaining Tannanliel is too great. Some say he accepted favors from powerful extraplanar creatures to build Tannanliel, and those favors are now being called in. Others say the strain of Tannanliel is simply too great for one elf to bear. But one thing is certain: Tannan’s intentions and behavior are indisputably noble. Everything Tannanliel has done has been to aid the elves, be it by fending off dragons or taking in a never-ending



stream of elven refugees. It is an engine of vengeance that the enemies of the elves have learned to fear.

REBIRTH AND HAVEN

*"No dragon will ever again claim
the life of a man."*

Shar Thizdic's powers of persuasion are so great that he built a city-mech with them. His flight from Rook left him not just homeless but without family or friends in unfamiliar terrain being scoured by hostile forces. He talked his way into employment with a tribe of nomadic Gur, then spent the next several years bouncing between tribes of Gur, Stavians, and endless traders. He even spent an extended period underground, seeking refuge with a burgeoning band of worm farmers. His magnetic personality brought him welcome wherever he went, and the people listened to his ambitious plans for retaking the endless plains. The fires of revenge burned within his heart, and he gave voice to anger that all the nomads felt. But what could he do that had not already been tried?

Shar became an informal envoy between disparate tribes. He traveled constantly, visiting old friends, making new ones, and forging ties between historically separated peoples. He was the consummate diplomat, making relationships where none had existed before. He wielded the friendship of thousands of nomads — but what could he do with it? Together they could stand against a handful of dragons, but not the army that walked the land.

Then word reached Shar of the fabulous mechanical walkers being built by the dwarves of Duerok.

For the first time in his life, Shar sought out dwarves. Though an insular upbringing had biased him against the demihumans, a bias that was further reinforced when the dwarves defended their mountain enclaves against humans rather than coming to their aid, he now had use for them. He traveled to Edge, where he made contact with a number of traditional engineers. They, too, had heard of what Parilus was doing, but



they were no gearwrights. “Still,” said Shar, “could you find a way to build one of these walkers?” “If the price were right ... probably,” answered the dwarves.

Shar returned to the plains, where his silver tongue swayed the tribes one by one. He convinced them to congregate in one place, where they could build a mech under the direction of the dwarves. Never would they work for the dwarves, though. The dwarves might have the knowledge, but they would work for the humans. Together Shar and the tribes would raise the first great city-mech of the endless plains, and the humans would be reborn.

Shar’s vision didn’t go quite as planned. The nomad tribes weren’t particularly disciplined, and the most basic concepts of engineering were far beyond them. The dwarves chafed at the poor treatment they received. Despite being the masterminds behind the whole project, they were treated like servants, an attitude that was encouraged by Shar, who seemed to have some gripe against them. The early mechs were one failure after another. Some tribes grew disillusioned and left. Attrition wore away the others as the dragons continued their rampages.

Then Shar’s people finally finished a working mech.

The first success energized the tribes, who arrived from miles around to ride the “human-built” mech. Shar certainly didn’t downplay the pride in human accomplishment, even though the designs were entirely the work of dwarven engineers. As the tribes marveled at the walker they had built, Shar was also careful to avoid pitting the mech against the dragons. It was a symbol he could not

afford to see destroyed. He rushed production on several more of the small mechs, while at the same time, unknown to most of his people, he formalized his enslavement of the dwarves, who had long ago ceased working voluntarily. His engineers were now loyal only under threat of death.

Thus were born the beginnings of the Legion, a chapter that culminated in the completion of Rebirth, the Legion’s first city-mech. Rebirth is the least advanced of all city-mechs now walking. It was designed by engineers under duress, was constructed by unskilled labor, and is maintained by self-taught coglayers. Humans played a more important role in its construction than with prior Legion mechs — largely because most of the dwarven engineers were killed in one way or another before Rebirth was completed — and their lack of expertise shows. Rebirth has routine mechanical failures, is powered in large part by hard labor (usually contributed by Legion military men or enslaved orcs), and would certainly lose any battle with another city-mech.

That said, it is backed by thousands of devoted tribesmen and a fleet of smaller

BEAUTY HAS PASSED

The most depressing result of the Lunar rain is the end of natural beauty. Where sylvan forests once reached to the sky, ashen tree trunks now waste away. Where green plains once rolled into the horizon, gray pockmarked wastes now scar the land. Where variegated flowers once blossomed, charred bones feed the worms.

The sight of beautiful things is now treasured more than it ever was. The peoples of all Highpoint cultures welcome any trader carrying colored beads, vibrant fabrics, or rare plants that survived the catastrophe. Beautiful flowers now sell for hundreds of gold pieces. Industrious halflings cultivate pockets of greenery wherever they can, selling the turf or blossoms to nobles and homesick elves. Many gnomes have turned their tinkerer’s interest to primitive hydroponics, attempting to cultivate greenery in the drab steel-gray world of a city-mech.

For an adventurer or opportunist, the quest for beauty can be a real occupation. Many areas have regrown since the Lunar rain became less dangerous, but greenery is still far rarer than it used to be. Where once a king would pay a fortune for an exotic blossom, now a city-mech’s ruler will pay a fortune simply for a bouquet of daffodils. Characters who once lived in sylvan areas, or whose older relatives still remember the romantic days of woodland life, may be personally motivated to seek out a surviving grove or flowering tree. Old growth can still be found in some gullies and stream banks, rocky inclines, the lees of fortunately placed hills, and the rare shelters created by advantageous arrangements of outcroppings, cliffs, and enclosed spaces.

mechs — and it’s the most powerful human entity walking the endless plains. Tannanliel is the only force on the endless plains that could confront it, but Tannanliel stays in the traditionally elven areas of the northern forests.

Rebirth is, first and foremost, a symbol of resurgent human power. With Rebirth and its mech fleet, the tribes have pushed back the dragons. Shar Thizdic has consolidated his power, using Rebirth as his mobile citadel. Its fame has drawn more and more tribes-



men, who still arrive from distant parts with every passing day. Shar is well aware of Rebirth's limitations, an awareness he shares with no one. Let the tribesmen think they are all powerful. With their backing and Shar's leadership, they soon will be.

Haven is the most recent accomplishment of the Legion. It is the second human city-mech. The dwarves of the flatland and the elves of the northern forests are far more worried about Haven than Rebirth. Rebirth was symbolic but weak. With Haven, Shar's coglayers learned from their mistakes. It corrects the weaknesses of Rebirth and is, in fact, on par with some of the weaker dwarven city-mechs. It is a huge accomplishment for a young race with no gearwright heritage. If they continue such rapid progress, the Legion's fourth or fifth city-mech may rival the best creations of the dwarves.

Rebirth and Haven are both tall city-mechs. Rebirth stands 900 feet tall, while Haven tops in at 1,300 feet. Each houses a population of a little more than 2,000 humans.

IMPORTANT ORGANIZATIONS

This section describes some of the important organizations of Highpoint. Others described elsewhere in this book include the College of Constructors (see page 47) and White Congress (see page 157).

THE GEARWRIGHTS GUILD

The Gearwrights Guild is an ancient order of dwarven engineers, technicians, and coglayers. It exists to further research in the mechanical sciences, known to its members as the gear-driven arts. The Guild's fortunes have waxed and waned over the years; it has been powerful at times and practically nonexistent at other times, according to the vicissitudes of the age. Now, with the coming of the lunar rain and the advent of the

mech, the value of technical knowledge has increased exponentially, and the gearwrights have grown powerful once more.

Though many believe the current age to be the first time that mechs have walked the earth, the gearwrights claim otherwise. According to them, the steam engine predates even the elves. Long before the gods gave magic to the elves, they say, the dwarves were using steam-powered mechanical walkers to dominate the surface world. They retreated underground only after elven wizards finally mastered the arcane arts. When these primitive mechs were finally outmatched by the great wizards, the dwarves stopped developing steam technology in favor of perfecting the fighting and divine arts in their cramped underground quarters. Lest the knowledge be forgotten entirely, a handful of dedicated engineers formed the Gearwrights Guild, which has preserved the ancient knowledge for millennia.

Not everyone believes this account, least so the elves. Even many dwarves consider the gearwrights' claims to be nothing more than a thinly veiled bid for legitimacy. After all, steam technology is widely misunderstood and still distrusted. A claim of primal origins might be nothing more than the gearwrights' attempt to seem authentic.

But some signs indicate that the gearwrights might not be lying at all. First is the Guild library, known as the Master Repository. This seemingly prehistoric relic of an older time is vast beyond comprehension, with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves lining narrow corridors over an area nearly as tall and wide as a large town. Every book in the library focuses on the gear-driven arts in some form or another, but the topics are hopelessly vast. A brief sampling:

- *A Detailed Analysis of Piston Length with Respect to Refining Mechanized Bipedal Motion*
- *Simulating Draconic Flight with Mechanical Wings*
- *Powering Steam Engines with the Blood of Magical Beasts*
- *A Survey of Steam Tanks across the Dwarven Kingdoms*
- *Improving Shafi Wrapback Time in the Mark XI Cogular Engine, Goranian Model*

• *Constructing a Clockwork Elf*

The majority of the Master Repository's volumes are printed using a Gutenberg-like device that the Guild makes available to its members. Even so, by conservative estimates, the time required to study, collect, and print the millions of volumes it contains is more than 50,000 years. The few volumes to have made it out of the Master Repository (usually via theft or bribed gearwrights, as the library is closed to outsiders) hint at this great age. They are printed on stamped metal plates, capable of lasting much longer than any paper book. Their languages vary, covering a gamut of variants that could be dialects but could just as likely be historical derivatives. And their publication dates are always listed in two formats. One is a mysterious Guild system, consistent between volumes but unlike any modern system of dating. The other format varies according to whatever calendar was used by the governing dwarf society at the time and includes formats generally recognizable to outsiders. Using the familiar formats to triangulate the Guild system, it is clear that, if the Guild system is accurate, some of the tomes were published tens of thousands of years ago.

The physical location of the Master Repository is another clue to its age. It lies deep down in the underdeep, deeper than any other dwarven settlement. The general vicinity of the Repository is common knowledge, though the specifics are well hidden, not only by secrecy, but also by the bewildering passageways of the underdeep, the horrible creatures that dwell therein, and the gearwright guards (both living and constructed) that defend the passages. The route is fundamentally dead: an underground causeway through layer after layer of utterly abandoned ruins. Some of these barren areas are old dwarf or duergar cities, others completely alien. But one thing is common to all: The deeper one goes, the older the ruins, and the Repository is deepest of all.

The Master Repository notwithstanding, another sign of the Guild's age is the walkers. The Guild claims that it has relics of the Age of Walkers, as its members call the premagical era where dwarven mechs



ruled the surface. Some of these odd-looking walkers were the first mechs to walk the surface world after the lunar rain. Their design is archaic and unusual, incorporating dwarven imagery from before the memory of any living society. Detractors claim this is merely cosmetic deceit. But the Gearwright mechs are indisputably better than any other mechs, bar none. They use hidden technologies, not shared outside of Guild circles. Are these ancient secrets or modern innovations? No one outside the Guild knows for sure, but it is certain that no other faction has duplicated them.

The last clues to the Age of Walkers are the most compelling of all: ancient walkers buried underground like ruins of a bygone age. In the past, these strangely shaped underground dungeons were considered nothing more than that: unusual dungeons. Now scholars are revisiting some of the known dungeons to determine whether they are, in fact, the inner passageways of ancient, buried mechs. The Pretominin Heads, a series of gigantic metal heads half-buried in the sands above the Wet Desert, are rumored to have catacombs beneath them. Could these be ancient mechs mired eons ago in the sand? According to the human sage Lizicus, the great Standing Dwarf of the flatland cliffs may be no statue at all, but an ancient mech turned to stone. Now no shortage of adventurers remember dungeons that seemed mundane at the time but which, in retrospect, seemed to have a generally humanoid shape, albeit underground. And the deepest ventures into the Stygian depths have brought back reports of impossibly ancient hangars holding prehistoric mechs in pristine condition, many of them constructed in networks of caverns so large the mechs could almost walk to the surface.

According to the Gearwrights Guild, these are no mysteries at all, but testaments to the power and history of the steam engine. The Guild claims the steam engine can rival even the most powerful magics, given the right circumstances, and the lunar rain is a sign that the Second Age of Walkers is now at hand.

The guild is structured as any other guild, though the rewards of knowledge available to those at higher levels are substantial.

Apprentices and journeymen make up the lower ranks. Above them are guildsmen proper, known as gearwrights. Five ranks of gearwright exist, with the guild officers above them.

Three divisions of equally ranked guild offices administer to guild affairs: the Repositors, who manage the guild's knowledge resources; the Maintainers, who manage the guild's physical resources (such as active mechs); and the Cogulors, who draw on the Repositors and Maintainers to engage in active research. Two ranks exist within each of these offices (e.g., senior repositor and junior repositor). At the very top of the guild are the Master Gearwrights, of whom never more than three exist. They are the most experienced representatives of each office, and together they set the Guild's policies on all things both internal and external.

The Guild is so old, and its secrets so great, that members become exposed to progressively more knowledge as they advance. At the very top, the Master Gearwrights' understanding of steam engine technology (and physics and engineering in general) is mind-boggling. They are able to design mechs that are exponentially more efficient than anything else walking the world today. Their methods are true to the steam engine, and although they may utilize arcane components, they do so according to the principles of physics, not magic. Yet they rarely do more than design these extraordinary mechs, and for good reason: The knowledge is theirs and theirs alone. A working model could easily fall into the wrong hands.

That's not to say that the Guild doesn't have its own mechs. Quite the contrary, it has some of the most powerful mechs walking today. Nonofficer gearwrights are free to wander the world, and many do so in their

own highly advanced mechs. But the knowledge leap from their designs to those of the Master Gearwrights is such an order of magnitude that the Masters are not worried.

In the past, the Guild's numbers have ranged from only a few dozen to many thousands.

Reliable reports say that the Master Repository itself supports the population equivalent of a small town, so in its years of weakness the Guild probably retreated to the Repository. But now the Guild's services are needed.

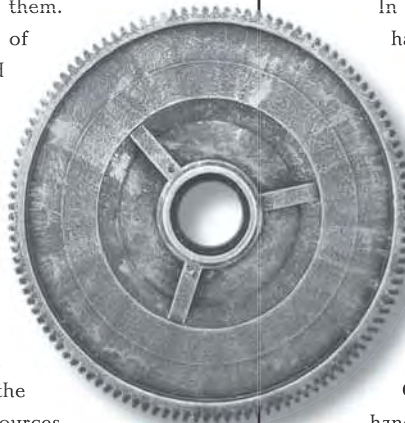
Generals and kings will pay handsomely for a well constructed mech, and coglayers everywhere clamor for the chance to learn the Guild's secrets. The Guild is rapidly growing. Few large mechs are without at least one gearwright on board; city-mechs are proud to boast of a small library maintained by resident gearwrights. But gearwrights swear loyalty only to the Guild. Currently their strength is such that they are granted freedom of passage by most sovereigns, even in wartime ... but the wings of fortune are fickle.

Joining the Gearwrights' Guild is a huge step in the career of any coglayer. For more information on the gearwright prestige class, see page 29.

THIEVES' GUILDS

Only so many places exist to hide in the cramped spaces of a city-mech. The underworld survives there with the unsettling knowledge that, with enough effort, the authorities can *always* locate them. Yet dishonest dealing is an innate aspect of the human condition, and no society lasts long without breeding some variation of a thieves' guild. Mechs are no exception.

The thieves' guild is generally active in the affairs of many mechs, though not from the perspective you might imagine. Diplomacy and power brokering are more important than stealth and secrecy when dealing with an insular





mech government. Many a thief's guild enjoys a transactional relationship with the mech commander, operating almost as an unofficial extension of his political power. In exchange for regulation of slums and the undercity, control of serious crime, and a steady flow of information, the government overlooks the guild's minor thefts and extortion — some of which can be quite profitable.

For the mech commander, this is a necessary evil. The outside world is dangerous enough without having to deal with domestic crime. An alliance with the thieves' guild keeps them under his control (nominally) while letting his forces focus on external threats. If the poor are subject to extra "taxes" or wealthy visitors occasionally are robbed — well, so be it. In the world of **DragonMech**, that's the lesser of two evils.

This relationship between government and the guild isn't public. In fact, most of the guild itself is unaware of it, as is the mech commander's staff. Few residents would tolerate such a deal were it known. It becomes apparent only by situation: Mysterious political pressure ends the guards' investigation into a series of merchant burglaries, against the protests of the guards; the strange coincidence that right before the visiting baron was robbed, the city-mech guard was alerted to the sighting of a lunar dragon and had to be diverted from protecting him. The guild generally understands the delicacy of their position — in effect, their protection depends on keeping crime to a level the population deems tolerable — so they don't let things get out of hand. In some cases, the guild punishes crime more ruthlessly than the law. Rogues who break ranks and start a crime spree will find themselves put out of commission very quickly by the guild itself.

In effect, this limits crime to a managed system of burglary, extortion (primarily protection rackets), and monopolies. One guild, on a Stenian city-mech, profits by control of the local blacksmith trade. Thanks to the organization of the guild, the blacksmiths now charge more than three times what they used to, with a healthy cut of that finding its way into the guild's hands (and would-be discount blacksmiths disappearing in the

night). Another specializes in luring wealthy individuals to social events whenever the mech stops at a town, then pickpocketing the crowd. Still another is nothing but a middleman, fencing stolen goods imported from other mechs.

This may leave rogue characters wondering what they're to do. Minor pickpocketing and other petty crimes will be ignored for a while, but no guild will tolerate serious crime or extended sprees. Characters have two options: connect with the guild, or practice their trade outside areas in its control. Alternatively, they could fight the guild, but that's almost guaranteed to be a losing battle.

THE STALKERS

The role of a rogue has changed. Where once he spent his time plotting entry to guarded keeps and defended villas, he now must devote the same energy to entering mechs. Certain rogues now specialize in this difficult task, and an informal term has arisen to describe them: stalkers.

Stalkers are not organized in any formal way. As practitioners of a newly developed art, they generally know each other and are connected socially. Most stalkers were mentored by older stalkers when they were just starting out.

Stalkers are feared by mech commanders, who see them as dangerous shadows able to bypass carefully constructed defenses. A single skilled stalker with good timing can enter a mech at ground level, make her way to the control room, kill the mech commander, and walk the mech off a cliff before anyone knows any better. It has been known to happen.

Of course, even while mech commanders fear enemy stalkers, they also make connections with those who can be used to strike at their enemies. Stalkers are now firmly embedded in the culture of the mech. They are the ninjas of **DragonMech**: stealthy warriors able to topple a thousand-foot-tall metal behemoth with a single well-placed dart.

The distinction between a rogue and a stalker is fairly minor, but they are indeed two separate classes. Stalkers are described on page 21 as a variant rogue class.

DRAGONMECHS

The DragonMechs are a special unit of the Stenian Confederacy dedicated to battling lunar dragons. Membership in the DragonMechs is a point of pride, and the unit carefully selects its members, who are called dragon hunters. Normally 10 dragon hunter mechs are active, all piloted by the best mech jockeys in the Confederacy. All DragonMech pilots are at least 14th-level mech jockeys, and most have spent some time training with the Irontooth Clans — a punishable offense among the rank-and-file but an informal prerequisite among the DragonMechs.

The DragonMechs pilot a variety of mechs. They train in group tactics and are especially deadly in pairs or trios. When deployed, they pick mechs that complement each other — for example, one may have weapons to ensnare or entangle a dragon while his partner has piercing weapons that can damage a netted dragon without breaking the net. The unit has a wide range of mechs at its disposal and can commandeer mechs from other units at will.

In the military hierarchy of the Stenians, the DragonMechs are a special unit that reports directly to the top. They are outside the usual chain of command and have great discretion to undertake missions as they see fit. This lets them react quickly and adeptly to reports of lunar dragons. After an engagement they can assess the situation and decide whether to regroup or pursue a dragon's cohort to its lair.

The DragonMechs are celebrities among the Stenians. Little boys on every mech dream of someday battling dragons as a DragonMech





PLATE 6 *There is no shortage of
monstrous opponents in DragonMech*



CREATURES

THE CHANGES AFFLICTING HIGHPOINT HAVE BROUGHT MORE THAN JUST MECHS TO THE SURFACE. NEW CREATURES HAVE APPEARED, WHETHER DROPPED FROM THE MOON OR BROUGHT FORTH BY MECHANICAL RESEARCH. WHAT'S MORE, HIGHPOINT WAS ALREADY HOME TO A VARIETY OF UNUSUAL LIFE FORMS. TAKEN TOGETHER, THESE NEW CREATURES PRESENT GREAT POTENTIAL FOR ADVENTURE.

LUNAR CREATURES

Lunar creatures are a new creature type. Highpoint's moon is large, and the range of lunar creatures is as diverse as that of the Earth. All lunar creatures share certain traits, however. These are primarily due to two factors: first, their completely alien psychology, and second, their extraterrestrial origin. Creatures with the lunar subtype have the following traits:

Alien Psychology: Lunar creatures think in strange patterns. They are still rational, but their thought processes and nervous systems are built differently. Terrestrial creatures have a hard time recognizing patterns in these bizarre mentalities. Lunar languages are themselves hard enough to learn; reading the mind of a lunar creature is practically impossible — but it can be done.

Due to their alien psychology, lunar creatures receive a +10 bonus to saves against all mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), all mind blasts and other psionic attacks, and all attempts to detect their thoughts, read their minds, or otherwise penetrate their consciousness.

Elemental Attacks: Lunar creatures always take half damage from air, fire, and water attacks, or no damage on a successful save. They take double damage from earth-based attacks and magic. The lunar creatures themselves are not composed of traditional

terrestrial elements. They seem to be made of something similar but subtly different, which does not respond to elemental influence in the same way as terrestrial creatures.

Physical Requirements: Lunar creatures must breathe air just as terrestrial creatures do. They also must eat, though the nutrients they extract from food are totally different from what we extract. They do not drink water, but it is said they require a different form of sustenance that terrestrial creatures cannot see.

Lunar Physiology: The exact physiology of a lunar creature varies according to its species, but all share certain things in common. They all have skin that is interlaced with corrugated or ribbed tubes, like abnormally large blood vessels. The tubes undulate slightly and are disturbing to watch. Lunar creatures have oily, opalescent blood that is a creamy semitranslucent white in color.

Immunity to Lycanthropy: Lunar creatures cannot under any circumstances be affected by lycanthropy. From what limited research has been conducted, it appears they already have a form of lycanthropy in their blood, a version that does not provoke any sort of shape changing, and what surface-dwellers know as lycanthropy may be a mutated form of the original lunar trait.

Lunar Detection Check: Clerics and paladins of terrestrial deities may automatically sense if a creature is of lunar origin. They must already be aware of the creature. Roll

1d20 and add the cleric's level and Wisdom modifier. On a roll of 15 or better, the cleric successfully determines if a creature is lunar in origin. This is a flash of insight provided by the cleric's deity in its war against the lunar gods and requires no effort on the cleric's part. The GM should make the check.

LYCANTHROPES

The close proximity of Highpoint's moon makes control of lycanthropy difficult. All Control Shape checks on Highpoint suffer a -5 penalty. Checks while in the presence of a lunar creature have an additional -1 penalty.

NEW CREATURES

CLOCKWORK PUPPET

WARDER, MEDIUM CONSTRUCT

Hit Dice: 2d10+20 (31 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 14 (+4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14

BAB/Grapple: +1/+2

Attack: Slam +2 melee (1d6+1)

Full Attack: Slam +2 melee (1d6+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Construct

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -5

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 1/2

Treasure: See text

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: As clockwork puppet

SHOCKER, LARGE CONSTRUCT

Hit Dice: 3d10+30 (46 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 40 ft.

AC: 15 (-1 size, +6 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 15

BAB/Grapple +2/+9

Attack: Slam +5 melee (1d8+3 and 3d4 electricity) or shock +2 ranged touch (3d4 electricity)

Full Attack: Slam +5 melee (1d8+3 and 3d4 electricity) or shock +2 ranged touch (3d4 electricity)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Construct

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -5

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: See text

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: As clockwork puppet

A wide variety of clockwork puppets are

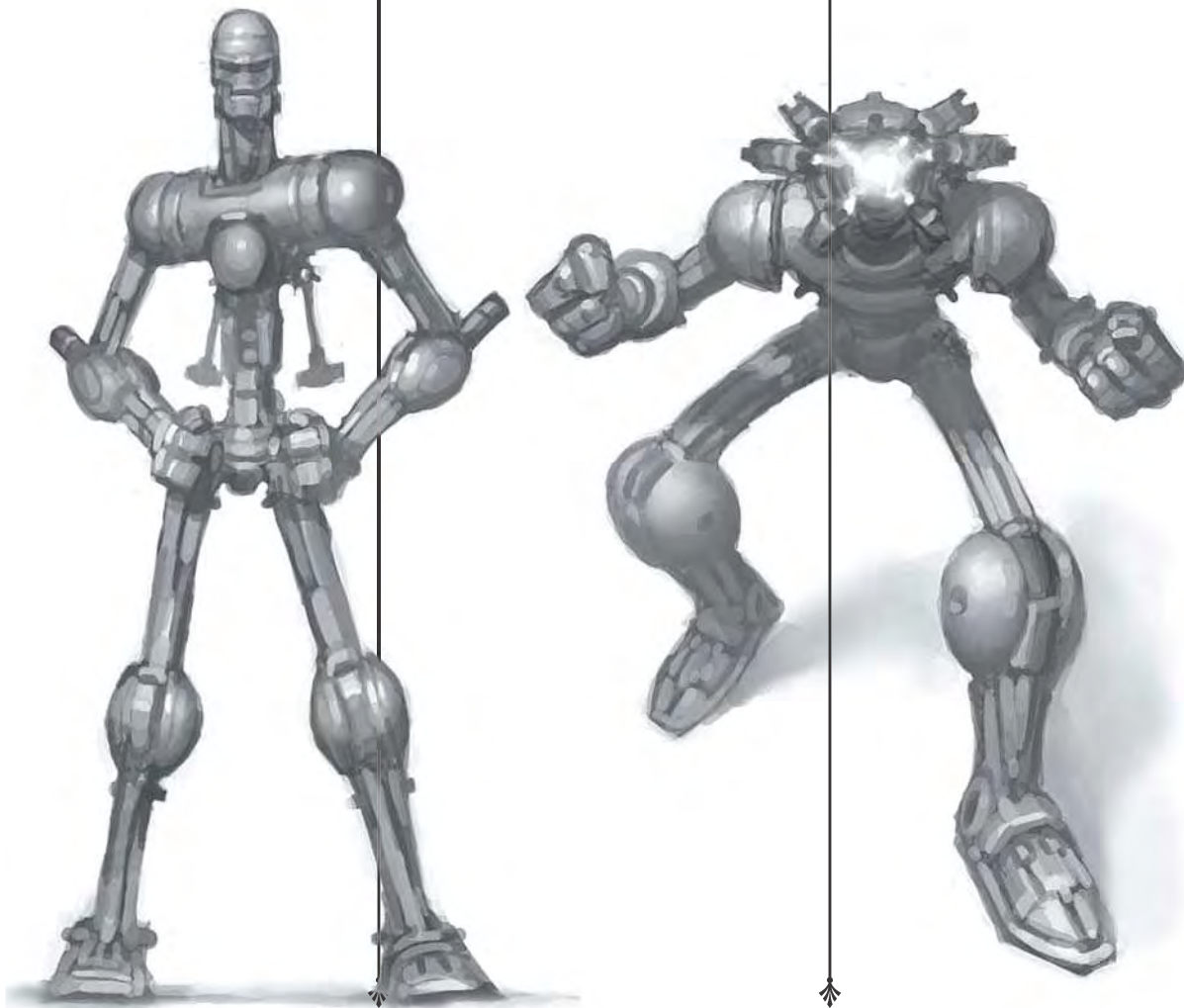
in use, built by as many imaginative coglayers. This section describes two of the more common models. If they have treasure, it is whatever they were built to guard.

Warder

The warder is a specialized construct used to warn away trespassers. It is a tall, lanky robotic-looking creation with a face carved into a very stern expression.

A warder always guards a fixed area. It will never leave that area. A warder states a predetermined warning in a loud voice to any creature that passes within twentyfeet. If something tries to pass, it attacks. It will not pursue those who flee; it will even stop attacking if trespassers back off past twentyfeet.

Warder: clockwork puppet (x4) + noise-maker + discriminator.



Shocker

The shocker is a basic assault construct, built to attack enemies with an electrical shock. Shockers are usually built to attack anyone who comes near, though they may be designed with a discriminator to be more useful.

The shocker's ranged shock attack is an electrical attack with a range of 10 feet. It is also wired to deliver the shock on impact in melee. Make the slam attack first; if that hits, the slam transmits the shock damage as well. If the slam misses, make a second attack to see if the ranged shock attack hits.

Shocker: clockwork puppet (x8) + spark generator + amplifier + amplifier.

COGLING

WARRIOR

SMALL HUMANOID (HALFLING)

Hit Dice: 1d8 (4 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 20 ft.

AC: 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 12, flat-footed 14

BAB/Grapple: +1/-4

Attack: Longsword +1 melee (1d8-1); or heavy crossbow +3 ranged (1d10)

Full Attack: Longsword +1 melee (1d8-1); or heavy crossbow +3 ranged (1d10)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: –

Special Qualities: Cogling traits

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10,

Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 11

Feats: Gearstride

Skills: Climb +0, Hide +8*, Jump +2, Move Silently +5

Environment: Gear forests

Organization: Scouts (2–4 plus coglayer), squad (5–10 plus coglayer crew), or band (11–40 plus noncombatants and clockwork ranger leader)

Challenge Rating: 1/2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually neutral

Advancement: By character class

COGLAYER

SMALL HUMANOID (HALFLING)

Hit Dice: 3d4 (8 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 15 ft.

AC: 17 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +4 gearmail), touch 13, flat-footed 15

BAB/Grapple: +1/-4

Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4–1); or dagger +5 ranged (1d4–1); or cogling steam-breather +4 ranged (1d10)

Full Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4–1); or dagger +5 ranged (1d4–1); or cogling steam-breather +4 ranged (1d10)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.





Special Attacks: Steam powers

Special Qualities: Cogling traits,
3rd level cloglayer

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 15, Con 10,
Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 10

Feats: Alertness, Gearhead, Gearstride

Skills: Climb +0, Craft (blacksmithing) +9,
Craft (mechcraft) +12, Disable Device
+10, Hide +8*, Jump +0, Knowledge
(steam engines) +12, Knowledge (mechs)
+9, Listen +6, Mech Pilot +5, Spot +6,
Move Silently +7

Environment: Gear forests

Organization: Solitary, crew (2–4), or part
of cogling band

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually neutral

Advancement: By character class

CLOCKWORK RANGER

SMALL HUMANOID (HALFLING)

Hit Dice: 5d10 (28 hp)

Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 18 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +4 chain shirt)
(+1 Dodgefeat vs. one opponent),
touch 14, flat-footed 15

BAB/Grapple: +5/+1

Attack: Battleaxe +4 melee (1d8/x3); or
heavy crossbow +9 ranged (1d10)

Full Attack: Battleaxe +4 melee (1d8/x3)
and handaxe +4 melee (1d6/x3); or heavy
crossbow +9 ranged (1d10)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Spells, Favored
enemies: +1 vs. vermin, +2 vs.
constructs

Special Qualities: Cogling traits,
5th level clockwork ranger

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +3

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11,
Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 10

Feats: Dodge, Endurance,
Gearstride, Improved Initiative,
Track, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills: Climb +0, Handle Animal +6, Heal
+4, Hide +11*, Jump +0, Listen +1,
Move Silently +7, Search +1, Spot +4,
Use Rope +3, Survival +5

Environment: Gear forests

Organization: Solitary or as cogling leader

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually neutral

Advancement: By character class

Coglings are feral halflings who dwell in gear forests. They are rapidly diverging from their halfling root stock as they change to meet their new environment. Constant toil in the hot, polluted bowels of vast engine rooms has twisted their outlook on the world, making them less trusting and more hostile than normal halflings. They are hardier and fiercer, less connected to the world outside the gear forest, and extremely protective of their homes.

Coglings look like abnormally pale, white-skinned halflings coated in grease and sludge. Their regular environment exposes them to no shortage of sludge as it is, and when scouting or making war they coat themselves in oil to help them hide in the gearforest.

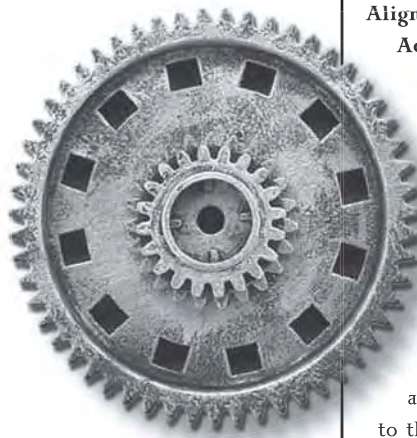
Combat

Coglings are always encountered in gear forests, where they skulk about unseen. While their coglayers repair leaks and keep the engines running, the cogling warriors stalk intruders. They attack in the most dangerous areas of the gear forest, where an intruder is most likely to slice himself to ribbons by falling into a mass of gears. Sometimes a single volley of crossbow bolts is all it takes to send an enemy running into an oil slick that will do him in. If forced to enter combat, coglings steer fights to areas where they can claim at least one-half cover from the gear forest's obstructions.

Coglings raise domesticated grease lizards. They position the lizards' dens in places to be defended, and animal handlers frequently fight with grease lizards by their sides.

Steam Powers: A typical cogling coglayer has eight steam powers. Usually they use them to build the following device:

The Black Immolator: A specialty of the coglings, the black immolator is a vicious clockwork puppet that detonates itself in a





- Additional +1 bonus to Reflex saves (total of +2 when combined with the halfling's usual +1 bonus to saves): Coglings grow up in an extremely dangerous environment. Those who live to adulthood have learned to react to the unexpected on a regular basis.
- Low-light Vision: Coglings are raised in the poor light of the gear forest. They can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, gear forests, and similar conditions of poor illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Coglings do not receive the usual halfling bonus to saving throws against fear, nor do they receive a bonus to Listen checks.
- Automatically receive Gearstride feat.
- Favored Class: Clockwork ranger.

Initiative: +2



Speed: 20 ft., burrow 5 ft.
AC: 16 (+2 Dex, +4 size), touch 16,
flat-footed 14

BAB/Grapple: +0/-17

Attack: Bite touch -1 melee
(1d2-5 plus rust)

Full Attack: Bite touch -1 melee
(1d2-5 plus rust)

Space/Reach: 1 ft./0 ft.

Special Abilities: Rust

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2,
Will +0

Abilities: Str 1, Dex 14,
Con 10,

Int —, Wis 8, Cha 1

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +8,
Listen +6, Spot -2

Environment: Any land or
underground, near metal

Organization: Mass (2-10),
Swarm (11-100), or Colony
(101-1,000)

Challenge Rating: 1/8

Treasure: No coins; normal goods and
items; no nonmagical metal

Alignment: Neutral

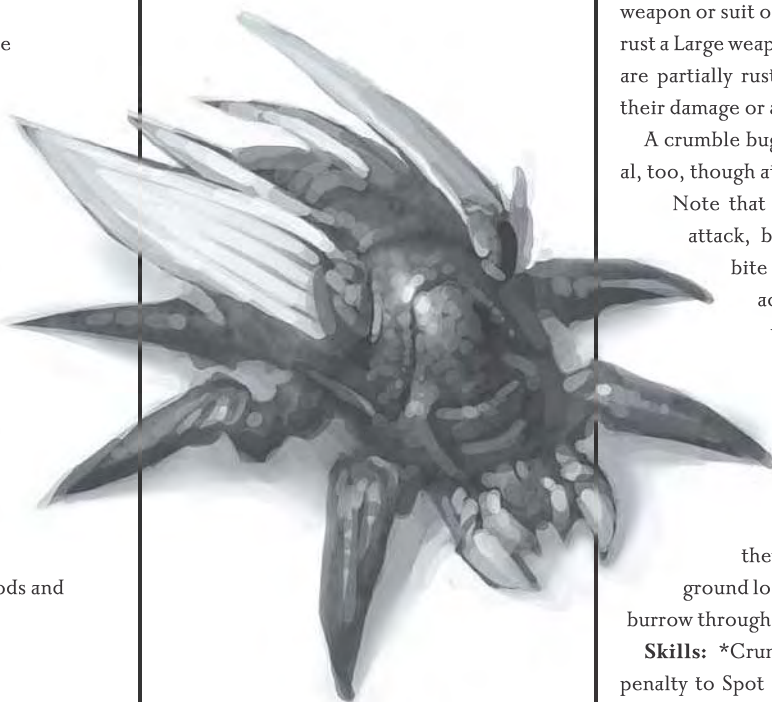
Advancement: —

Crumble bugs are multilegged, foot-long metal-eating insects. They are feared by mech-dwellers, who kill them on sight. Many mechs have cats, dogs, and other domesticated pets specially trained to sniff out and slay these vermin. Luckily, crumble bugs reproduce slowly and have small appetites. They are usually discovered before they do too much damage.

Combat

Crumble bugs are slow to react to intruders. They are always found with their heads buried in their current metal snack. When attacked, they mill about in confusion. Half counterattack while the remaining half flee. Those who stay to fight will themselves flee after 1d4 rounds.

Rust (Ex): Crumble bugs exude a slow-acting, specialized acid that rusts metal, rendering it suitable for their digestion. Individually, they are too small to rust large objects, but in numbers they can endanger an adventurer's gear. Each successful



crumble bug bite rusts an area about equal to its own body size (24 square inches). As a Diminutive creature, that means it takes two bites to rust a Tiny weapon, four bites to rust a Small weapon, eight bites to rust a Medium weapon or suit of armor, and sixteen bites to rust a Large weapon. Weapons and armor that are partially rusted lose 1/4, 1/2, or 3/4 of their damage or armor bonus, as applicable.

A crumble bug's rust affects magical metal, too, though at one-fourth the usual rate.

Note that the rusting bite is a touch attack, but only the crumble bug's

bite can convey the rusting acids. This means metal weapons can be used to attack a crumble bug without risk that they will rust on contact.

Burrow: Crumble bugs dig tunnels in areas of dense metal, be they thick mech walls or underground lodes. When under attack they burrow through their tunnels to protection.

Skills: *Crumble bugs receive a racial penalty to Spot checks because their heads are always found buried in the metal they are eating.

Illegal Crumble Bugs

Not only are crumble bugs killed on site aboard mechs, but it is generally illegal to raise them or harbor them. They are like an assassin's tools: If you own them, you can't be up to any good. Consequently, many thieves do own them. On most

mechs, the thieves' guild keeps a small swarm of crumble bugs, as do disreputable coglayers. These have many uses: sabotaging enemy coglayers, blackmailing the mech crew ("do it or we'll unleash the crumble bugs ..."), and covering up intentional damage to the mech.

Rare indeed is the crumble bug invasion that isn't planned

DRAGON, LUNAR

TRUE DRAGON

Climate/Terrain: Any land or lunar

Organization: Solitary or pack (2–5)

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 5; very young 7; young 9; juvenile 11; young adult 14, adult 16; mature adult 19; old 21; very old 22; ancient 24; wyrm 25; great wyrm 27

Treasure: None

Alignment: Usually chaotic evil

Lunar dragons are huge, hulking behemoths that look like they could never get into the air. Their bodies are husky and rounded, not at all lean or lithe like terrestrial dragons. Their physiology resembles rhinoceroses or elephants rather than cats or reptiles. For their age, they are always much larger than terrestrial dragons. Their skin is

a creepy, unhealthy white, ribbed by a sea of writhing blood vessels. A ring of horns surrounds their faces, which are dominated by massive, asymmetrical maws of teeth pointing in all directions. Their torn, unkempt wings seem too small for their bodies, and in fact they are, for their flying ability is restricted when on Earth.

Lunar dragons do not maintain lairs. They wander aimlessly, destroying whatever they encounter. They often kill to eat but seem to hate the taste of the terrestrial creatures they must now content themselves with eating. They place no value on gold, silver, or magic items and do not hold onto or store the spoils of their conquests. They seem to have a natural resistance to the lunar

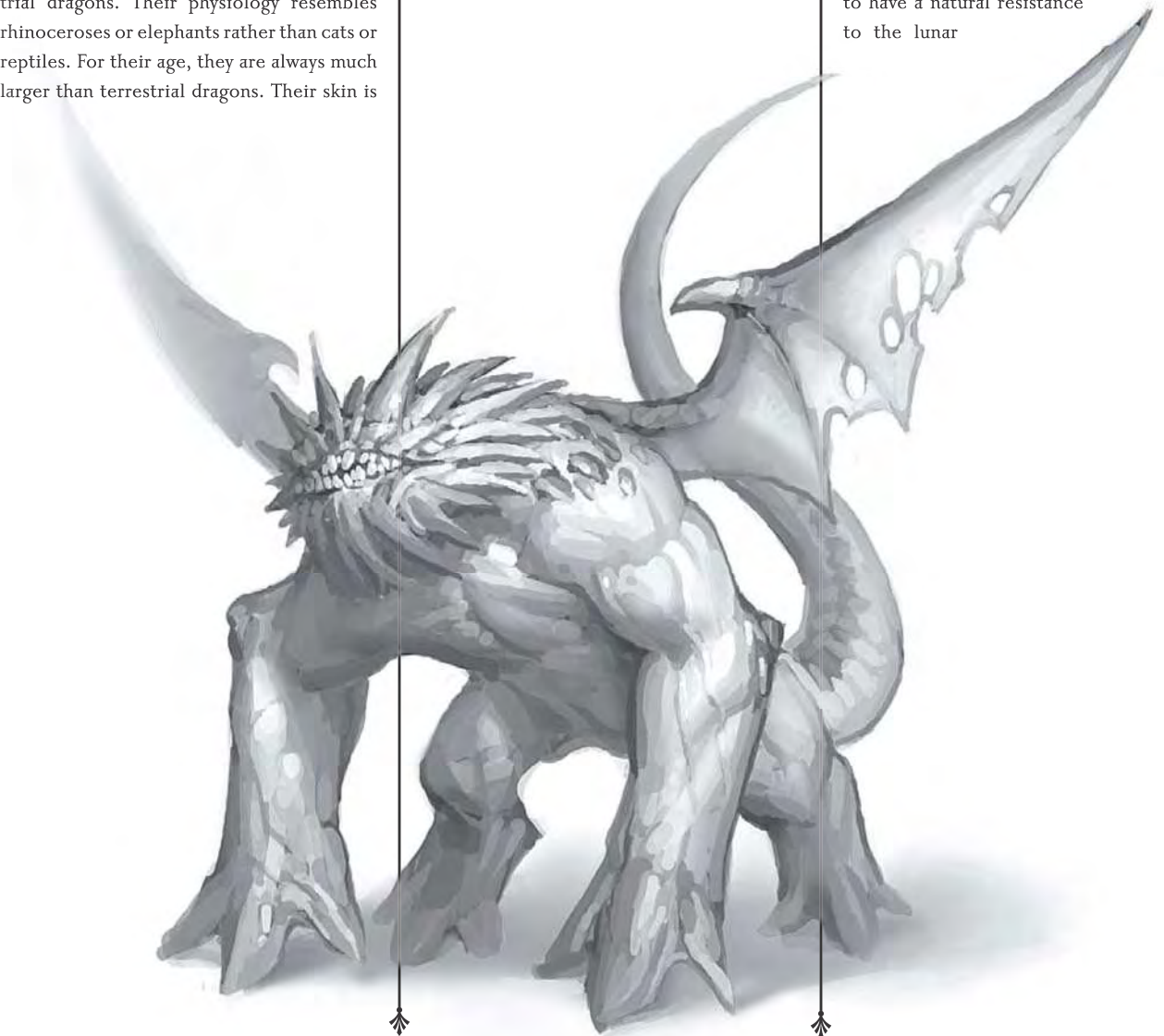




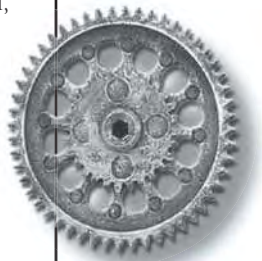
TABLE 5-1: LUNAR DRAGONS BY AGE

Age	Size	Hit Dice	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	BAB/Grapple	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Frightful Presence DC
Wyrmling	M	11d12+33 (105)	21	10	17	10	14	16	+16 / +16	+10	+7	+10	4d10 (18)	—
Very young	L	14d12+42 (133)	25	10	17	12	14	16	+21 / +25	+12	+9	+11	6d10 (20)	—
Young	L	17d12+68 (179)	29	10	19	12	16	18	+26 / +30	+14	+10	+14	8d10 (22)	—
Juvenile	H	20d12+100 (230)	31	10	21	14	16	18	+27 / +35	+17	+12	+15	10d10 (24)	24
Young adult	H	23d12+115 (265)	33	10	21	14	18	20	+34 / +42	+18	+13	+18	12d10 (27)	27
Adult	H	26d12+156 (325)	35	10	23	16	18	20	+38 / +46	+21	+15	+19	14d10 (28)	28
Mature adult	H	29d12+203 (392)	39	10	25	16	20	24	+43 / +51	+23	+16	+23	16d10 (31)	31
Old	G	32d12+256 (464)	41	10	27	18	20	26	+47 / +59	+26	+18	+24	18d10 (34)	34
Very old	G	35d12+315 (543)	43	10	29	18	22	28	+51 / +63	+28	+19	+25	20d10 (37)	37
Ancient	C	38d12+380 (627)	45	10	31	20	24	30	+55 / +71	+31	+21	+28	2210 (39)	39
Wyrm	C	41d12+451 (718)	47	10	33	22	26	32	+59 / +75	+33	+22	+30	24d10 (41)	41
Great wyrm	C	44d12+528 (814)	49	10	35	24	28	32	+63 / +79	+35	+23	+32	26d10 (43)	43

rain, and when it becomes too strong for even them to handle, they burrow into the earth to create temporary dens.

This is the most common variety of lunar dragon. Other types have been sighted, but they are still rare on Highpoint. The relationship between the different kinds of lunar dragons is unknown.

Lunar (Ex): Lunar creatures suffer half damage from most elemental attacks (air, fire, and water), or no damage on a successful save. They take double damage from earth-based attacks and magic. They receive a +10 bonus to saves against mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), mind blasts and psionic attacks, and detect thoughts due to alien psychology.



Breath Weapon (Su): A lunar dragon has a breath weapon that is a cone of lunar energy. It looks like a burst of white fire. No terrestrial equivalent exists, and the breath weapon bypasses all resistance to fire, cold, electricity, and other such forms; only blanket energy resistance can repel it.

DRONOG

DRONOG

LARGE ABERRATION (LUNAR)

Hit Dice: 4d8+8 (26 hp)

Initiative: -2

Speed: 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

AC: 15 (-2 Dex, -1 size, +8 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 15

BAB/Grapple: +3/+11

TABLE 5-2: LUNAR DRAGON ABILITIES BY AGE

Age	Speed	Initiative	AC	Special Abilities	Caster Level	SR
Wyrmling	60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor)	+0	20 (+10 natural), touch 10, flat footed 20	Lunar, breath weapon	—	—
Very young	60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor)	+0	22 (-1 size, +13 natural), touch 9, flat footed 22		—	—
Young	60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor)	+0	25 (-1 size, +16 natural), touch 9, flat footed 25		1st	—
Juvenile	60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor)	+0	27 (-2 size, +19 natural), touch 8, flat footed 27		3rd	21
Young adult	60 ft., fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	+0	30 (-2 size, +22 natural), touch 8, flat footed 30		5th	23
Adult	60 ft., fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	+0	33 (-2 size, +25 natural), touch 8, flat footed 33		7th	25
Mature adult	60 ft., fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	+0	36 (-2 size, +28 natural), touch 8, flat footed 36		9th	27
Old	60 ft., fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	37 (-4 size, +31 natural), touch 6, flat footed 37		11th	28
Very old	60 ft., fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	40 (-4 size, +34 natural), touch 6, flat footed 40		13th	30
Ancient	60 ft., fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	39 (-8 size, +37 natural), touch 2, flat footed 39		15th	31
Wyrm	60 ft., fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	42 (-8 size, +40 natural), touch 2, flat footed 42		17th	33
Great wyrm	60 ft., fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	45 (-8 size, +43 natural), touch 2, flat footed 45		19th	35

Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d8+6)
Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d8+6)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Mental static
Special Qualities: Lunar
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +0
Abilities: Str 19, Dex 7, Con 15, Int 4, Wis 8, Cha 8
Skills: Climb +8, Listen +3, Spot +3
Environment: Any land or underground
Organization: Herd (4-12) or work detail (1-8 plus 1-2 lunar skinstealers)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: None
Alignment: Neutral
Advancement: —

DRONOG

W/LUNAR SKINSTEALER

LARGE ABERRATION (LUNAR)

Hit Dice: 8d8+8 (44 hp)

Initiative: -2

Speed: 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

AC: 15 (-2 Dex, -1 size, +8 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 15

BAB/Grapple: +3/+11

Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d8+6)

Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d8+6)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Mental static, host domination, camouflage, neighbor domination
Special Qualities: Lunar
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +4
Abilities: Str 19, Dex 7, Con 10, Int 20, Wis 8, Cha 14
Skills: Bluff +26, Climb +8, Disguise +25, Hide +14, Listen +3, Spot +3
Environment: Any land or underground
Organization: Work detail (1-2 plus 1-8 undominated dronogs)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: None
Alignment: Chaotic neutral
Advancement: —

Dronogs are slow, stolid beasts of labor. Their natural state is unknown, but when encountered on Highpoint they are inevitably under the control of lunar skinstealers. Scholars speculate that a longstanding host-parasite relationship may exist between the two creatures.

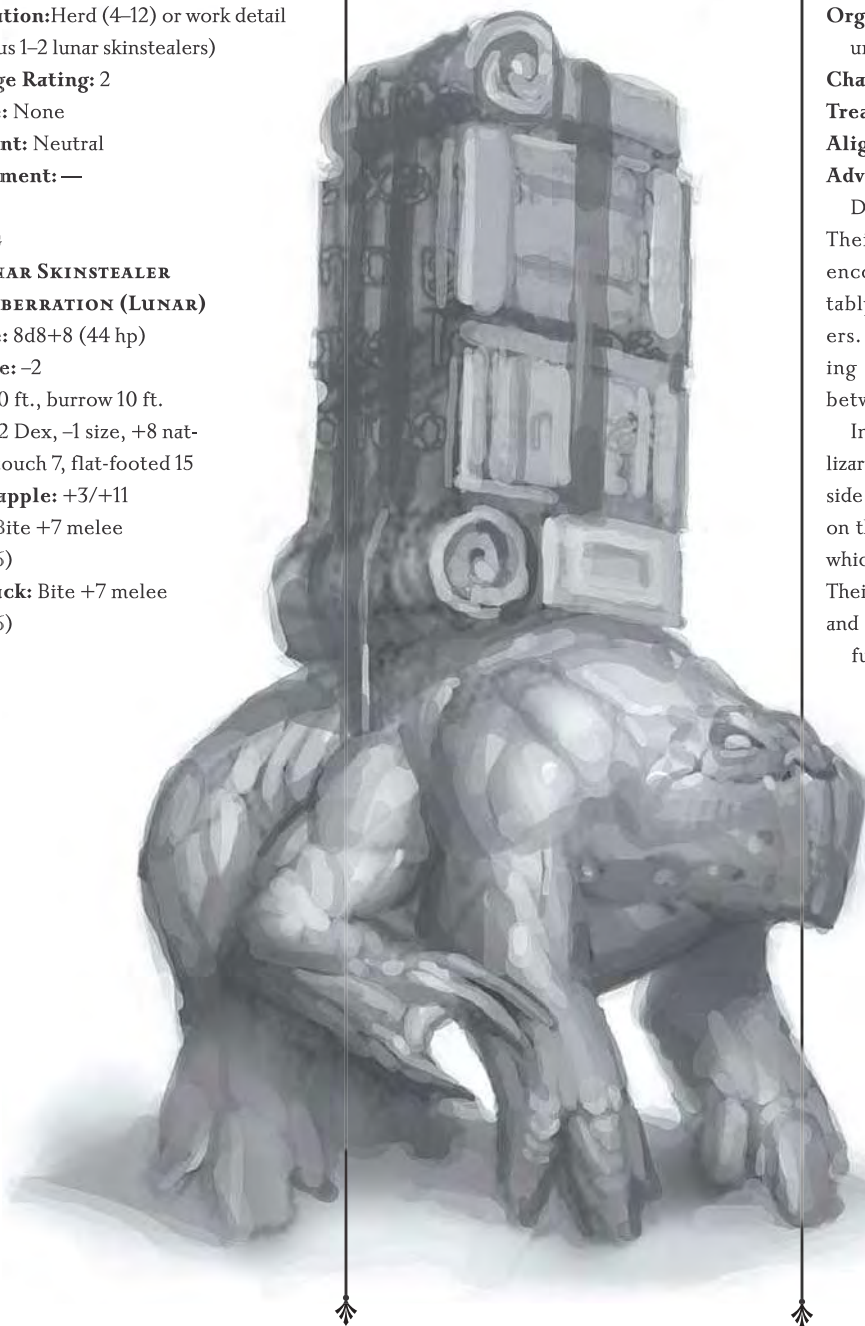
In structure, dronogs resemble sprawled lizards but they have five legs, three on one side and two on the other. The middle leg on the three-legged side has a grasping hand which is used when it's not helping to walk. Their bodies are a chalky gray with large pores and several exposed apertures of unknown function. They have practically no necks and thick, angular heads with large mouths full of dull teeth. Ribbed, intestinal cords are visible beneath their skin, occasionally breaking through the surface.

To surface dwellers, dronogs are grotesque, ugly creatures.

Combat

Dronogs in the wild burrow about consuming minerals from the soil. They are hostile and aggressive, charging anything that comes near.

When under the control of lunar skinstealers, dronogs are usually put to work serving the schemes of the skinstealers.



Mental Static (Ex): Dronogs communicate with a limited form of empathy or telepathy. Their mental transmissions are silent to lunar creatures but can be heard by terrestrial creatures, and they are disturbing. This field of mental static extends fifty feet in all directions from a dronog at all times. Any terrestrial creature that comes within the static field immediately feels its thoughts becoming jumbled and disoriented, even if it can't see the dronog.

The Intelligence of affected creatures within the dronog's mental static is automatically reduced by 1d4 points. Lost Intelligence is restored the moment the creature leaves the affected area or when the dronog dies. There is no save.

Additionally, it is difficult to use any Intelligence-related skill, cast a spell, or do anything else that requires concentration while in the area of this mental static. Doing so requires a Concentration check (DC 12) before the action is attempted. Failure means the creature wastes its action trying but fails to summon the necessary concentration. Spells thus disrupted are not wasted, however.

Lunar (Ex): Lunar creatures suffer half damage from most elemental attacks (air, fire, and

water), or no damage on a successful save. They take double damage from earth-based attacks and magic. They receive a +10 bonus to saves against mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), mind blasts and psionic attacks, and *detect thoughts* due to alien psychology.

Dronog w/Lunar Skinstealer: This is the profile of a dronog dominated by a lunar skinstealer. For full details on the lunar skinstealer's abilities, see its entry.

DUSK DEVIL

TRUE

HUGE ABERRATION

Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (60 hp)

Initiative: +3

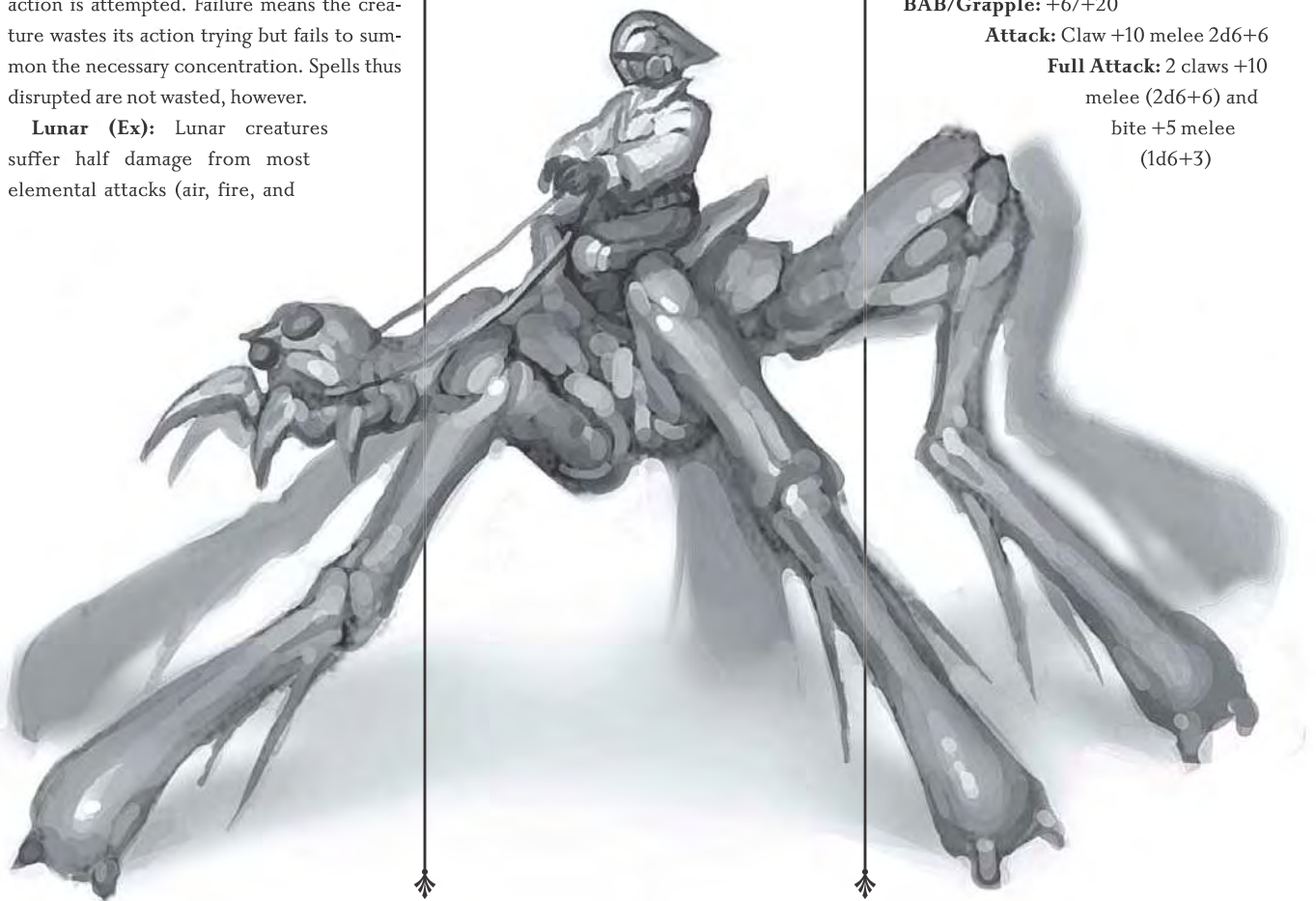
Speed: 80 ft.

AC: 19 (+3 Dex, -2 size, +8 natural), touch 11, flat footed 16

BAB/Grapple: +6/+20

Attack: Claw +10 melee 2d6+6

Full Attack: 2 claws +10
melee (2d6+6) and
bite +5 melee
(1d6+3)





Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Dust storm

Special Qualities: Dust sight, fast run

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +7

Abilities: Str 22, Con 16, Dex 17,

Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +9, Hide -5, Jump +9, Listen +4, Spot +4

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: As mounts or solitary or hunting pack (2-5)

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually neutral

Advancement: 9-18 HD (Gargantuan)

STAVIAN

LARGE ABERRATION

Hit Dice: 4d8+8 (26 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 50 ft.

AC: 17 (+3 Dex, -1 size, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14

BAB/Grapple: +3/+11

Attack: Claw +6 melee (1d6+4)

Full Attack: 2 claws +6 melee (1d6+4) and bite +1 melee (1d6+2)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Dust storm

Special Qualities: Dust sight, fast run

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5

Abilities: Str 18, Con 14, Dex 17,

Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Climb +7, Hide -1, Jump +6, Listen +3, Spot +3

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: As mounts or solitary or hunting pack (2-5)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually neutral

Advancement: 5-8 HD (Huge)

Dusk devils are insectoid mounts.

The legendary dusk runners ride true dusk devils, while the Stavian tribes of Hi-point have domesticated a smaller version.

Dusk devils are aptly named. They are six-legged, chitinous monstrosities covered in clicking parts, twitching feelers, and sharp hairs. They are proportioned like daddy-long-legs — a small body supported by long, sturdy

legs that carry the body more than eight feet off the ground. Hairs on their feet are constantly pitter-pattering the dirt around them, creating a swirling cloud of dust that is always present. Little consistency is seen in their appearance aside from basic insectoid traits and the universal disgust they invoke in humans. The smaller Stavian variety is the size of a large horse, while true dusk devils can be twenty or more feet in length.

It is unknown how the dusk runners first came into contact with them, or how they managed to train them. Their use of dusk devils certainly contributes to the awe in which other cultures hold them.

Their usual mode of arrival — charging into a town out of nowhere right as dusk falls — makes their mounts all the more fearsome. Most scholars agree that the dusk devils are extraplanar creatures, though their exact origin point is a matter of dispute.

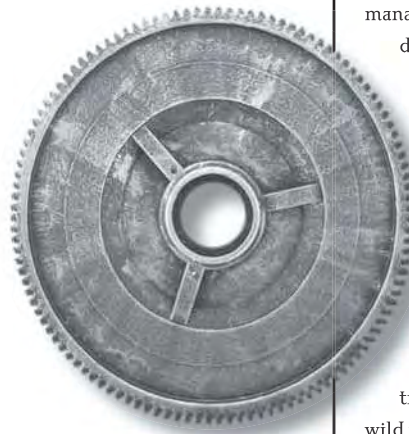
Dusk devils outside of human control are rare but not unheard of. In the wild they are most active at sunrise and sunset, and are rarely encountered when the sun is not close to the horizon. They forage as any large insectoid would, attacking humans when hungry. Their society is simple hunting packs. It is unknown how they organize themselves when in large numbers.

Combat

Dusk devils move at incredibly fast speeds. When in motion, their legs are a blur. They rely on this speed to mount surprise ambushes, moving from cover into melee before their enemies realize what's happening. Their main attack is stabbing motions from their front legs, which are barbed with tiny, sharp hairs.

Bite (Ex): A true dusk devil that successfully hits the same target with both of its claw attacks will spear the target and lift it high enough to be bitten. This additional bite attack is a +10 melee attack doing 1d6+6 damage. The target is dropped once bitten.

Dust Storm (Ex): The twitching antennae on a dusk devil's feet generate a constant storm of small dust devils. As a full-round



action they can churn up the soil beneath their feet, producing a small dust storm. This works only in terrain with loose soil or sand, such as a grassland, desert, sandy caverns, or other rough terrain. True dusk devils can produce a dust storm that covers an area 40 feet by 40 feet, centered on the dusk devil, while the Stavian variety can cover an area of only 10 feet by 10 feet. All creatures within are considered to have one-half concealment, but this does not affect the dusk devil (see below).

Dust Sight (Ex): Dusk devils can see normally in fog, storms, and dust. They suffer no concealment penalties when attacking other creatures in such conditions.

Fast Run (Ex): Dusk devils are extraordinarily fast. When they run, they move five times their normal speed.

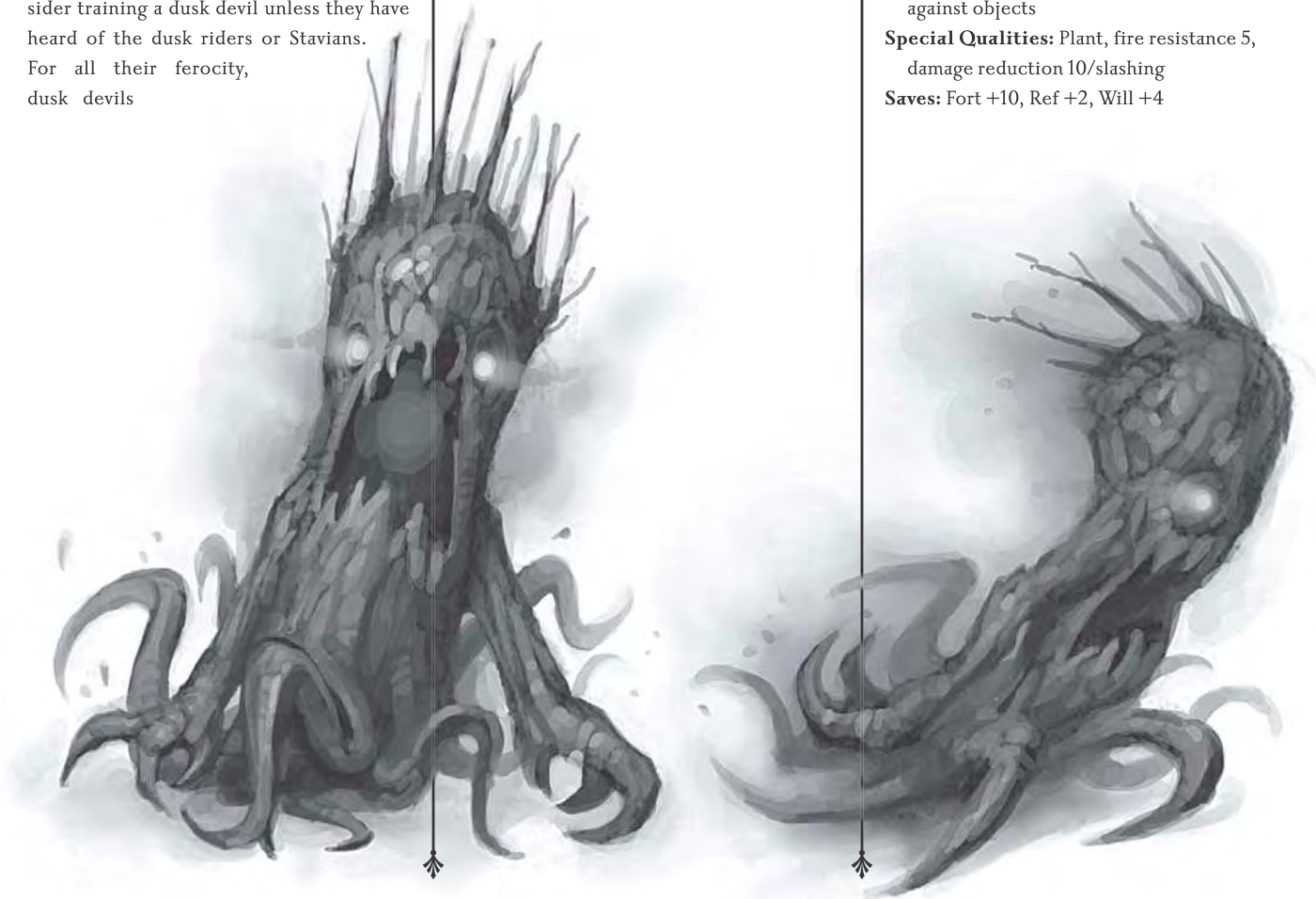
Training

It's unlikely that the characters will consider training a dusk devil unless they have heard of the dusk riders or Stavians. For all their ferocity, dusk devils

are surprisingly amenable to domestication, leading some scholars to conclude they were once the servants of some extraplanar race. Training a dusk devil takes two months and requires a Handle Animal check (DC 32 for true dusk devil, DC 27 for Stavian variety).

FORESTRATI

HUGE PLANT
Hit Dice: 7d8+35 (66 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 18 (–2 size, +10 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 18
BAB/Grapple: +5/+22
Attack: Slam +12 melee (2d6+9)
Full Attack: 2 slams +12 melee (2d6+9) or thrown rock +3 ranged (1d8+9)
Space/Reach: 15 ft./15 ft.
Special Attacks: Trample, double damage against objects
Special Qualities: Plant, fire resistance 5, damage reduction 10/slashing
Saves: Fort +10, Ref +2, Will +4





Abilities: Str 29, Dex 10, Con 21,
Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 12

Skills: Hide -8,
Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +6,
Listen +7, Sense Motive +7, Spot +7,
Survival +4

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually neutral evil

Advancement: 8-16 HD (Huge);
17-21 HD (Gargantuan)

Lilat and Heréal, the great forests of the northern endless plains, withstood all calamities for untold centuries — until the lunar rain. The lunar fragments scorched the sylvan groves as meteorites splintered mighty oaks and particulate rain abraded away what was left of the underbrush. Some areas survived, especially if they were lucky enough to be protected by a hill or other natural terrain feature. But most of the forests were destroyed, to varying degrees. Some areas were thinned out; others were reduced to vast fields of charred stumps.

The treants that once guarded these blasted zones were driven insane by the destruction of their groves. They are now the forestrati, a race of evil, twisted treants much like their good brethren but altered in important ways. They look like blackened, charred treants, with impact wounds across the surface of their bark. Their fingers are twisted and curled in horrid claws. Their mouths are wide and gaping, while their eyes are lifeless and dead.

Forestrati are thoroughly deranged. All traces of their former charity and goodwill have been destroyed, as have all aspects of their respect for nature. They don't even want revenge; they simply want to destroy. Their intelligence is like that of an animal's: For all their rational power, they have little comprehension, and their 12 Intelligence is used entirely for destructive purposes. They are no longer introspective in any way, pre-

ferring instead to rampage unchecked. Some have even taken to eating meat.

The elves of the northern forests avoid forestrati, or kill them if they are able. They have little alternative. The psychotic ex-treants attack living creatures at will, taking great pleasure in wreaking the same kind of havoc they were subjected to.

Combat

Forestrati are similar to treants in many ways. They have two main differences. First, they have lost the ability to animate trees. Second, rather than being vulnerable to fire, they have developed a resistance to it. The constant scorching of the lunar rain left them with a charcoal coating that is hard to light. For weapons, they frequently carry sacks of lunar rocks (range increment 50 ft.), with which they pelt enemies until they are in range to fight melee.

***Skills:** Forestrati no longer resemble normal trees. They receive no bonus to hiding in forested areas.

GREASE LIZARD

GREASE LIZARD

MEDIUM ANIMAL

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 hp)

Initiative: -1

Speed: 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

AC: 13 (-1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 9,
flat-footed 13

BAB/Grapple: +1/+4

Attack: Bite +4 melee (1d4+3)

Full Attack: Bite +4 melee (1d4+3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Fire vulnerability

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 8, Con 13,
Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 2

Skills: Hide 0*, Listen +2,
Spot +2

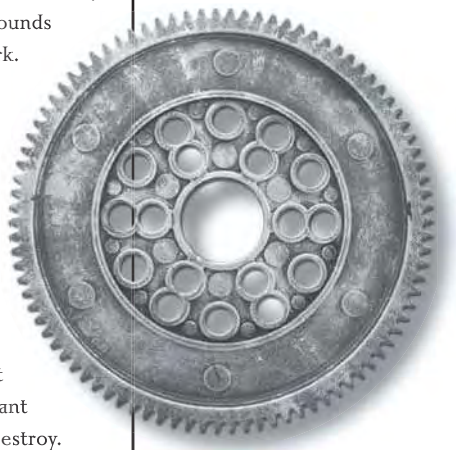
Feats: Gearstride

Environment: Gear forests

Organization: Solitary or colony (4-9)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: None





Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 3–6 HD (Large)

DIRE GREASE LIZARD

LARGE ANIMAL

Hit Dice: 6d8+18 (45 hp)

Initiative: –1

Speed: 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

AC: 13 (–1 size, –1 Dex, +5 natural),
 touch 8, flat-footed 13

BAB/Grapple: +4/+14

Attack: Bite +9 melee (1d10+6)

Full Attack: Bite +9 melee (1d10+6)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Qualities: Fire vulnerability

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +2

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 8, Con 16,
 Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 2

Skills: Hide –2*, Listen +3, Spot +3

Feats: Gearstride

Environment: Gear forests

Organization: Solitary or colony (4–9)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 3

HD (Medium)

Grease lizards are bow-legged, sprawling reptiles that look like five-foot-long crocodiles. Their skin is a dark brown or gray but is rarely visible under a thick layer of oil. They are at home in piles of engine sludge.

Combat

Grease lizards are feared within the gear forests because of their ability to hide. They lurk unseen in puddles of sludge, lunging out unexpectedly when prey passes nearby.

Fire Vulnerability (Ex): Grease lizards are coated in oil and other flammable engine byproducts. They suffer double damage from fire attacks.

Skills: *Grease lizards receive a +12 bonus to Hide checks when submerged in their native environment.

IRON SHAMBLER

MEDIUM CONSTRUCT

Hit Dice: 1d10 (5 hp)

Initiative: –1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 17 (–1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 17

BAB/Grapple: 0/+4

Attack: Slam +4 melee (1d6+4)

Full Attack: Slam +4 melee (1d6+4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Construct

Saves: Fort +0, Ref –1, Will +0

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 8, Con —,
 Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

Feats: Gearstride

Environment:

Any land and underground

Organization: Any

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement:
 2–5 HD (Medium),
 5–10 HD (Large)

Iron shamblers are clumsy humanoid-shaped creatures built from animated metal parts. They are the result of *animate gears* spells. Most will be found under the control of a wizard or clockwork ranger, but some are left to wander.





Any pile of junk metal can be used to create an iron shambler. They are usually built from rusty, bent, unusable parts — the pieces rejected by coglayers and blacksmiths. It takes at least 200 pounds of scrap metal to create a 1 HD iron shambler.

Combat

Iron shamblers wade into combat mindlessly, striking out at anything that lives.

Construct (Ex): Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Gearstride (Ex): Iron shamblers have the Gearstride feat. They may move at their normal rate through gear forests without suffering any additional hazard.

LUNAR SKINSTEALER

UNHOSTED
MEDIUM ABERRATION (LUNAR)
Hit Dice: 4d8 (18 hp)
Initiative: -1
Speed: 10 ft.
AC: 9 (-1 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 9
BAB/Grapple: +3/+7
Attack: Face grapple +5 touch (special)
Full Attack: Face grapple +5 touch (special), 4 hooks +1 melee (1d2)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Improved grab, host domination
Special Qualities: Lunar
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 8, Con 10, Int 20, Wis 4, Cha 14
Skills: Bluff +26*, Disguise +25*, Hide +14*, Listen +2, Spot +2
Feats: See below
Environment: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary or gang (2–4)



Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Advancement: —

HOSTED

MEDIUM ABERRATION (LUNAR)

Hit Dice: 4d8 plus host

Initiative: As host

Speed: As host

AC: As host

BAB/Grapple: As host/As host with
minimum Str of 18

Attack: As host

Full Attack: As host

Space/Reach: As host

Special Attacks: Host domination,
camouflage, neighbor domination

Special Qualities: Lunar

Saves: Fort and Ref: as host; Will +4

Abilities: Str, Dex : as host, Con 10,
Int 20, Wis: as host, Cha 14

Skills: Bluff +26*, Disguise +25*,
Hide +14*, others as host

Feats: See below

Environment: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary or gang (2–4)

Challenge Rating: 2 + host

Treasure: As host

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Advancement: —

Lunar skinstealers are parasites that resemble walking skates or stingrays. In their natural state, they are like huge flaps of skin, measuring 6 to 8 feet per side, barely two inches thick. One side of the skin is a rough, chalky gray. The other side is a field of innumerable tiny hooks, like a strip of Velcro. They move by undulating along the ground like a worm, though they can

stand upright and flail about. They are rarely seen in their true form, however

A lunar skinstealer survives by wrapping its skin around host creatures. It overwhelms a host's nervous system until it can control its body. They are most often encountered in this state, wrapped around a host and camouflaged from detection.

The cultural or societal basis of lunar skinstealers is unknown. They cannot communicate with terrestrial creatures in any intelligible fashion. They are frequently encountered in domination of the mindless dronogs, however.

Skinstealers by themselves are not particularly dangerous opponents. Their real danger lies in their ability to take over other creatures and use them to pursue nefarious agendas.

Combat

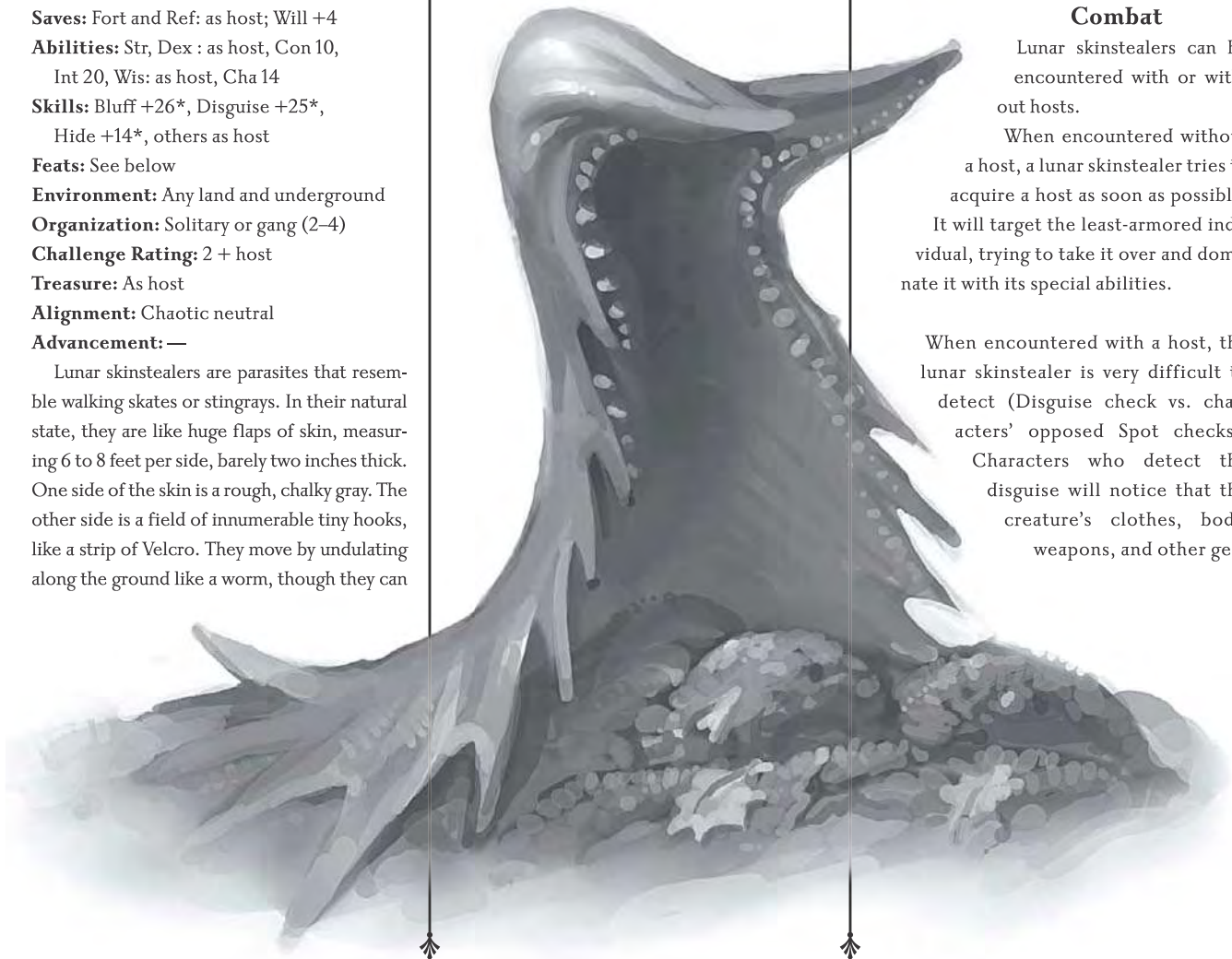
Lunar skinstealers can be encountered with or without hosts.

When encountered without a host, a lunar skinstealer tries to acquire a host as soon as possible.

It will target the least-armored individual, trying to take it over and dominate it with its special abilities.

When encountered with a host, the lunar skinstealer is very difficult to detect (Disguise check vs. characters' opposed Spot checks).

Characters who detect the disguise will notice that the creature's clothes, body, weapons, and other gear





appear to be one single solid skin rather than discrete objects.

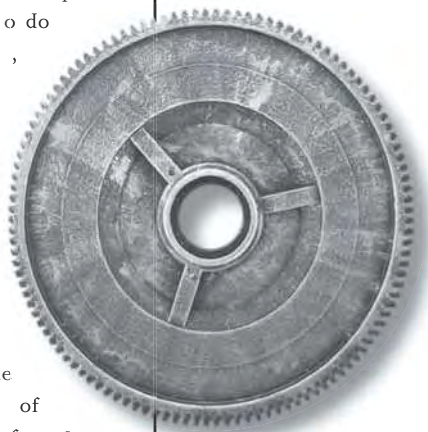
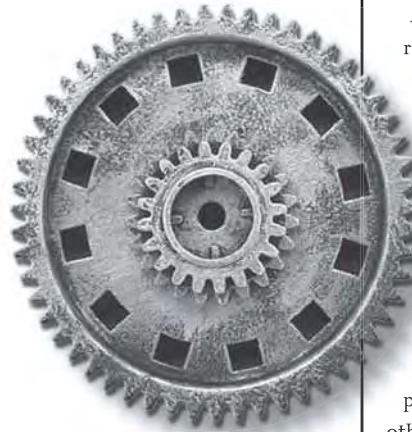
The skinstearer's hooks inflict minor damage, though it doesn't use them for wounding. Most of the time, it "pulls its punch" and uses them to assist in its grappling. It can choose to latch on with a hook attack without causing damage, using them only to assist in its grappling. For each successful hook attack against a target, the skinstearer gains a +1 bonus to grapple checks. If it chooses, a skinstearer may use all of its hook attacks each round to cause damage in a grapple.

Improved Grab (Ex): A skinstearer's primary attack is to throw itself at an opponent's face. This works only against creatures with exposed faces; others are immune. If the touch attack successfully hits the target's face, the skinstearer automatically initiates a grapple. Additionally, it may immediately attempt a host domination.

Host Domination (Su): As a free action, a lunar skinstearer that has grappled an opponent's face may attempt to dominate it as if by the spell *dominate person*, as cast by a 10th-level caster (DC 15). No common language is needed, due to the skinstearer's native domination abilities. Once the target fails this save, it cannot attempt another unless it is forced to do something against its nature, but it receives no more than one new save per day. This is a supernatural power which is not blocked by spell resistance or similar effects.

Once the attack succeeds, the skinstearer's body drapes over the host and melts to its shape. The effect is similar to a slab of cheese melting over a hunk of meat. The skinstearer camouflages itself so it looks exactly like the host, rendering its envelopment nearly undetectable.

The skinstearer's physical stats become the host's stats. Its skin surrounds the host creature, putting it between the creature and damage. Slashing and bludgeoning



attacks deal full damage to the skinstearer, hurting the host only after the skinstearer is dead. Piercing attacks deal half damage to the host and half damage to the skinstearer.

A creature dominated by a skinstearer retains the use of its mind, but the skinstearer taps into its nervous system and controls its body. It feels like being trapped in a body that won't obey your commands. The character remains conscious and receives sensory input but has no physical control.

A *detect thoughts* spell (or similar ability) that manages to bypass the lunar creature's natural resistance to such effects reveals two distinct thought processes. One is the dominated host. The other completely alien process belongs to the skinstearer.

Because they generally take damage before their hosts, skinstearers with long-term hosts will strive to avoid combat. If it looks like combat is unavoidable, a skinstearer will run, or seek a new host with ranged weapons or spells, then attack from afar. A dead skinstearer peels off its victim and collapses to the ground.

A skinstearer that loses control of its host will attempt to dominate it a few times more. If it fails to do so, it will use its grappling position to cause hook damage each round until the host is killed.

As soon as a skinstearer has dominated a host, its Wisdom rises to the host's normal Wisdom score. It taps into the host's nervous system and shares all of its knowledge. When it loses the host, its Wisdom drops back to its usual low.

Camouflage (Ex): A skinstearer that has grappled and dominated a victim may camouflage itself as a free action. Its entire body wraps around the target and hooks on, perfectly mimicking the target's color, texture, and shape, albeit growing its dimensions by about a half-inch in all directions. Of course, once this is complete the skinstearer can't remove the host's sword from its scabbard (for example) without peeling back its own sword-mimicking skin to give it access to the real sword.

Neighbor Domination (Ex): A lunar skinstearer that has successfully dominated

a host may sap that host’s mental abilities to try to dominate new hosts. It uses the host as a prism or mental focus to transmit its domination abilities to nearby creatures. By temporarily draining one point of the host’s Wisdom, to a minimum of 1, the skinstealer may cast *dominate person* as a 10th-level caster (save DC 15, 200 ft. range, duration 10 days). Unlike its host domination, a common language is needed, but the skinstealer can tap into the host’s brain and communicate in any language it knows.

Skinstealers frequently dominate as many neighbors as possible simply to keep their host’s Wisdom low, weakening its defenses. Lost Wisdom regenerates at the rate of one point per day. The skinstealer’s Wisdom does not drop as the host’s does.

Lunar (Ex): Lunar creatures suffer half damage from most elemental attacks (air, fire, and water), or no damage on a successful save. They take double damage from earth-based attacks and magic. They receive a +10 bonus to saves against mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), mind blasts and psionic attacks, and *detect thoughts* due to alien psychology.

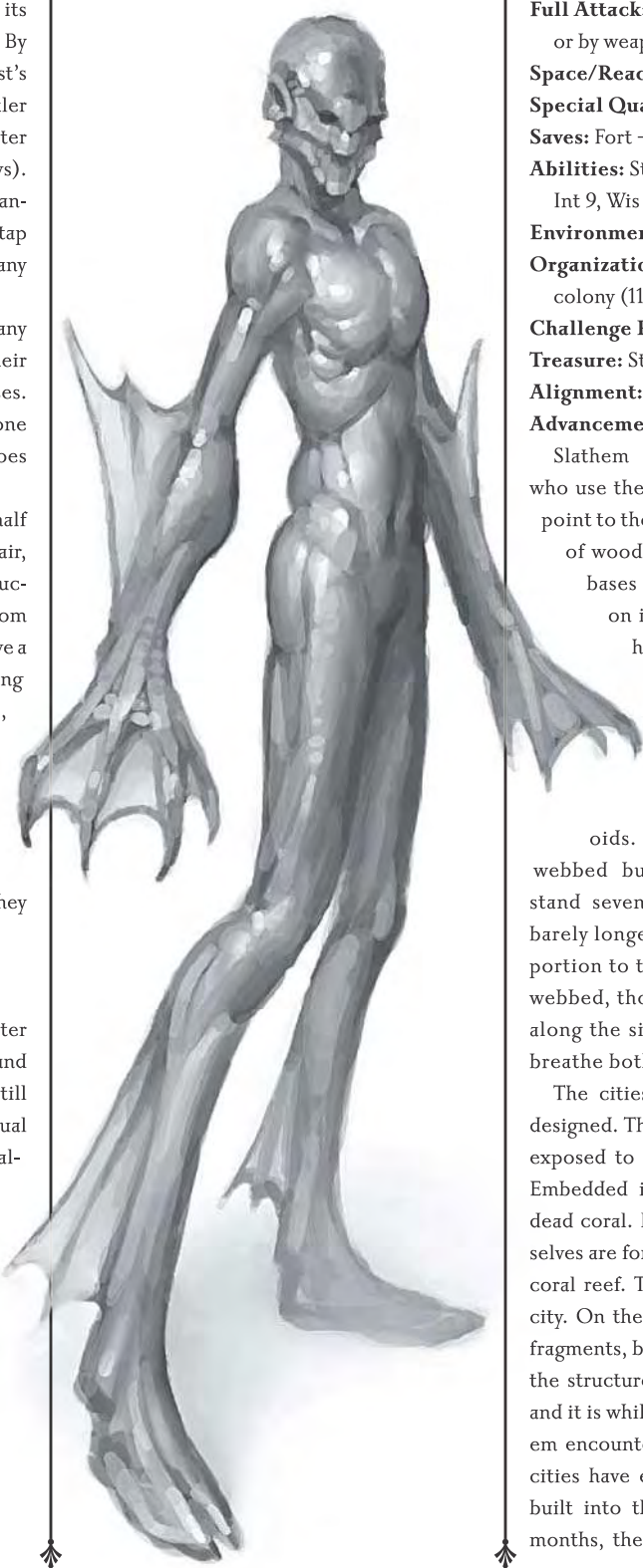
*** Skills:** Lunar skinstealers receive a +10 racial bonus to Disguise and Bluff checks. Due to their camouflage ability, they receive a +10 bonus to Hidechecks.

Skinstealer Characters

Skinstealers do not advance in character classes; rather, they take over others and leech off them as they advance. They are still highly intelligent creatures with individual personalities and ambitions. Most skinstealers worship Seroficitacit (see page 64). A skinstealer has a 10% chance of having the feat Seroficitacit’s Changes.

SLATHEM

MEDIUM HUMANOID
Hit Dice: 1d8–1 (3 hp)
Initiative: –1
Speed: 30 ft., swim 30 ft.
AC: 9 (–1 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 9
BAB/Grapple: +0/+1



Attack: Slam +1 melee (1d3+1) or by weapon
Full Attack: Slam +1 melee (1d3+1) or by weapon
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities: Amphibious
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 8, Con 8, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 14
Environment: Any land or water
Organization: Solitary, school (2–10), colony (11–100), or city (101+)
Challenge Rating: 1/3
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually neutral
Advancement: By character class

Slathem are amphibious sea-dwellers who use the seasonal water levels of Highpoint to their advantage. They live in cities of wood, bone, and stone, mounted on bases of coral. Their cities are built on islands that are above water for half of the year and below water for the other half, thanks to the seasonal water patterns around Highpoint.

Slathem are soft, bulbous, wet-skinned humanoids. Their long-fingered hands are webbed but still very dexterous. They stand seven feet tall, but their legs are barely longer than a human’s, short in proportion to their height. Their feet are not webbed, though they have retractable fins along the sides of their legs. Slathem can breathe both air and water.

The cities of the slathem are strangely designed. They rest on sandy islands that are exposed to sunlight for only half the year. Embedded into these islands are reefs of dead coral. In many cases the islands themselves are formed from the slow decay of the coral reef. The coral forms the base of the city. On the coral are huts built from coral fragments, bones, wood, and stone. Much of the structures must be replaced every year, and it is while trading for supplies that slathem encounter land dwellers. Some slathem cities have extensive sewers and dungeons built into the coral bases; during the dry months, the upper levels are dry while the

lower levels (filled with the greatest riches) are still submerged.

For six months of the year, slathem cities are buried under about 40 feet of water. During this time the slathem can access their rooms in three dimensions — it's simple to swim from one floor to the one above. For the next six months of the year, however, observers will notice slathem clambering awkwardly from one level to the next, as their buildings are not built with stairs. The most prestigious dwellings are located at ground level, so their owners have easy access all year round.

SMOKING DEAD

SMOKING SKELETON
MEDIUM UNDEAD
Hit Dice: 2d12 (13 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 14 (+4 natural),
 touch 10, flat-footed 14
BAB/Grapple: +1/+2
Attack: Claw +1 melee (1d6+1)
Full Attack: 2 claws +1 melee (1d6+1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.





Special Qualities: Undead, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, immunities, steam engine
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 11
Feats: —
Environment: Any land and underground
Organization: Any
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 3–5 HD (Large), 6–23 HD (Huge), 24–47 HD (Gargantuan), 48–96 HD (Colossal)

SMOKING ZOMBIE

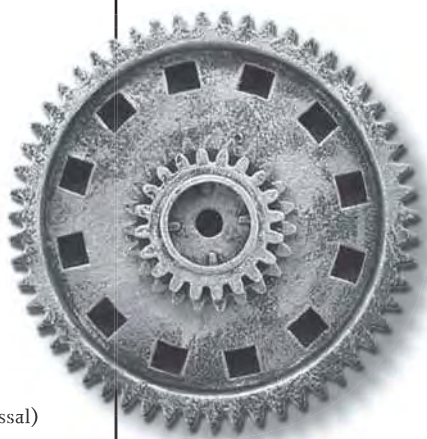
MEDIUM UNDEAD

Hit Dice: 3d12+3 (20 hp)
Initiative: –2
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 12 (–2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 12
BAB/Grapple: +1/+3
Attack: Slam +3 melee (1d8+2)
Full Attack: Slam +3 melee (1d8+2)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities: Undead, partial actions only, steam engine
Saves: Fort +1, Ref –2, Will +3
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1
Feats: Toughness
Environment: Any land and underground
Organization: Any
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 4–7 HD (Large), 8–23 HD (Huge), 24–47 HD (Gargantuan), 48–96 HD (Colossal)

MEAT RACK

LARGE UNDEAD

Hit Dice: 5d12 (33 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 17 (+1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16
BAB/Grapple: +2/+9



Attack: Claw +5 melee (1d8+3)
Full Attack: 2 claws +5 melee (1d8+3)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Qualities: Undead, steam engine
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +4
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 11
Feats: —
Environment: Any land or underground
Organization: Solitary or gang (2–5)
Challenge Rating: 3
Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 6–9 (Large), 10–20 (Huge)

The smoking dead are the natural outcome of steam engines in a world where necromancy exists. Smoking dead are corpses reanimated with the aid of steam-driven machinery. They are horrid creatures, even more repulsive than normal undead, for their reanimated bodies are often incomplete. Corrugated iron bars are welded onto the connecting sockets where forearms or thighs should be. Armored metal plates are bolted haphazardly onto femurs and sagging gray flesh. Somewhere in the chest cavity is a blackened, smoke-belching engine that sends the reanimated corpse shuddering forward at a lurching gait. Only by the aid of necromantic magic are the bodies able to remain in one piece and refuel their chest-engines when necessary.

Many kinds of smoking dead exist. Any corpse can be reanimated with the aid of the right spells and the proper engine. The two most common varieties are smoking skeletons and smoking zombies. Less common are the meat racks: man-made iron skeletons onto which reanimated muscles are welded.

Combat

The reinforced, ironclad bodies of smoking dead make them stronger and tougher than normal undead, but their reflexes are slower. As with all mindless undead, they attack until destroyed or commanded otherwise.

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poisons, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to nonlethal damage,





ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage. Smoking undead are subject to critical hits (see Steam Engine, below).

Immunities (Ex): Smoking skeletons have cold immunity. Because they lack flesh, they have damage reduction versus piercing and slashing weapons.

Partial Actions Only

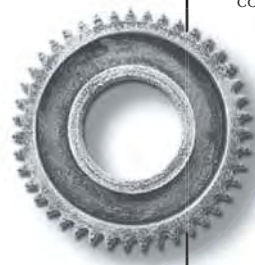
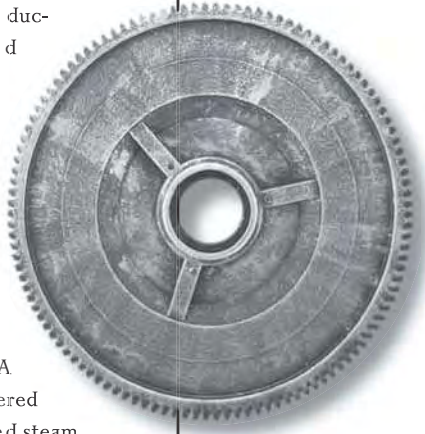
(Ex): Smoking zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only partial actions. Thus they can move or attack but can do both only if they charge (a partial charge).

Steam Engine (Ex): A smoking undead is powered by a charred, crud-encrusted steam engine. Necromantic energy holds together its bodies, but it cannot move without the steam engine. It is a critical piece of the construction. On any critical hit, the smoking undead must make a Fortitude save (DC equals damage caused by the critical hit *after* multipliers). If the save is passed, the engine is missed and the hit causes normal noncritical damage. If the save is failed, the smoking undead has suffered a hit to its steam engine. It suffers only normal noncritical damage but may no longer move or attack in any way. If the engine is repaired the creature will be restored to normal mobility.

The Meat Rack

The meat rack is a grisly attempt at recreating a living creature. It starts as an iron skeleton, roughly humanoid in shape. The ribcage holds a large steam engine with powerful gears and struts for moving the arms and legs. When the iron skeleton is completed, the creator attaches raw muscle from recently killed creatures. The creatures need not be similar in form, and the same meat rack may include muscle tissue from humans, animals, and even some monsters. The muscles are attached with welded bolts, stitched ligaments, and even glue.

Once the skeleton is muscled, it is covered in a layer of armored sheet metal,



which is left open at the vertebrae to allow the engine's smokestacks to protrude. Some meat racks are well armored; others display open patches of raw muscle with an iron skeleton visible beneath. If the creator wishes, he decorates the armor with spikes, spines, filigree, and motifs. Finally, the steam engine is activated, the flesh is animated, and the whole horrible monstrosity is ready to answer commands.

A meat rack attacks with sharpened iron claws, which are actually the tips of its skeleton protruding through its meaty fingers.

Creation

Smoking dead are created much as normal skeletons and zombies are. Because of the steam engine that governs its movement, animating one requires much less necromantic energy than with normal undead. Any corpse installed with a steam engine can be reanimated as a smoking dead zombie or skeleton using the *animate dead* spell. Smoking dead animated in this way count as half their normal HD for purposes of the spell's creation limits (though not its control limits). For example, a character with six caster levels could animate six normal Medium skeletons, or six smoking skeletons, provided the corpses were properly prepared with steam engines.

A steam engine strong enough to power a Medium smoking dead costs 100 gp. It must be created by an evil craftsman. The process of animating the smoking dead chars the engine with a sticky, black crust.

From then on, the engine is inherently evil and will corrupt any other machinery to which it is connected.

TORTOG

LARGE HUMANOID (TORTOG)

Hit Dice: 2d8+4 (13 hp)

Initiative: -2

Speed: 15 ft., burrow 10 ft.

AC: 22 (-2 Dex, -1 size, +15 natural),

touch 7, flat-footed 22

BAB/Grapple: +1/+9



Abilities: Str 11, Dex 12, Con 10,

Int 2, Wis 7, Cha 12

Skills: Move Silently +4

Environment: Any civilized

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral

Advancement: –

Trak traks are naturally occurring phenomena that Highpoint's traditional cosmology cannot explain. Named for the sound of its walk, a trak trak is a collection of gears, rods, engines, and junk parts, mostly iron and steel scrap, that becomes animated of its own accord.

No two trak traks look alike. They usually assume vaguely dwarven shapes — squat and bipedal — but not always; some are taller, some are thinner, and some are quadrupedal or even rolling balls.

Trak traks animate spontaneously with no apparent cause. They usually appear in the spare parts areas of mechs and the work spaces of gearwrights. The parts slide together, rise as a humanoid shape, then begin to wander. After a certain amount of time (which varies from hours to days, with no discernable pattern) the trak trak deanimates and the parts fall to the ground in a clattering heap.

Trak traks do nothing but wander. They will only attack defensively. If an attacker stops initiating attacks, the trak trak will likewise stop defending itself.

Though most people consider trak traks to be a supernatural creature of some kind, the followers of Dotrak see them as a sign of his influence. In fact, they are right. Trak traks are a consequence of Dotrak's incipient energies. He is not yet a deity, but his consciousness is forming, and in its infancy expresses itself in the form his followers can best understand: animated metal gears.

Combat

Trak traks lash at opponents with the jagged edges of their anatomy.

Empty Shell (Ex): Trak traks are magical conglomerations of spare parts with no visible connections between the parts. Because they lack internal organs, they have dam-



age reduction 5 against piercing weapons. Because the magical bonds between their parts are nonphysical, they have damage reduction 5 against slashing weapons. The best way to destroy one is literally to bash its component pieces into dust.

WORM, GIANT

GIANT WORM

HUGE MAGICAL BEAST

Hit Dice: 9d10+9 (58 hp)

Initiative: -1

Speed: 20 ft., burrow 30 ft.

AC: 19 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +12 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 19

BAB/Grapple: +9/+22

Attack: Bite +12 melee (1d6+5)

Full Attack: Bite +12 melee (1d6+5)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Qualities: Tremorsense

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 8, Cha 10

Skills: Listen +11

Environment: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary or herd (2-10)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Gems only

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 10-18 HD (Gargantuan)

DEEP DIVER

HUGE MAGICAL BEAST

Hit Dice: 9d10+18 (68 hp)

Initiative: -2

Speed: 20 ft., burrow 30 ft.

AC: 20 (-2 size, -2 Dex, +14 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 20

BAB/Grapple: +9/+22

Attack: Bite +13 melee (1d6+7)

Full Attack: Bite +13 melee (1d6+7)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Qualities: Tremorsense

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +2

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 6, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 8, Cha 10

Skills: Listen +11



Environment: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary or herd (2-10)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Gems only

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 8-14 HD (Gargantuan)

SHAKER

HUGE MAGICAL BEAST

Hit Dice: 6d10 (33 hp)

Initiative: -1

Speed: 20 ft., burrow 30 ft.

AC: 17 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +10 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 17

BAB/Grapple: +6/+17

Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d6+3) or sonic blast (2d6)

Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d6+3) or sonic blast (2d6)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Qualities: Tremorsense

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 8, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 8, Cha 10

Skills: Listen +8

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary or herd (2-10)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Gems only

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 7-12 HD (Gargantuan)

Giant worms, deep divers, and shakers are three breeds of the same species. In the wild they travel together in the same herds, with deep divers and shakers constituting about 10% of the overall giant worm population. The deep divers within these herds tend to spend half of their time with the herd and half their time on solitary "deep dives."

Since the advent of worm farmers, deep divers and shakers have been selectively bred because their traits are useful to the farmers. Deep divers are safer from attack by surface-dwellers such as lunar dragons, and shakers have powerful ranged attacks. Now it is possible to encounter entire herds of deep divers and shakers, though they are usually tended by worm farmers.

The typical giant worm is a long, thin annelid, 5 feet in diameter. Its body is one huge muscle, coiled in one band after another.

er. This affords it great strength and protection. The deep diver breed is even more thickly muscled, a natural adaptation that allows itself to dig through densely packed earth further from the surface. Shakers have the same length and girth as their cousins but are visibly less strong. They emit a constant subsonic hum, which shakes loose the earth around them. In times of duress they defend themselves with a sonic blast.

Combat

Giant worms travel mindlessly through the earth, ingesting the ground in front of them. They are not aggressive unless attacked. In fact, they're practically oblivious unless attacked; despite their tremorsense, they ignore nearby creatures until wounded.

Giant worms have a bite attack, but it is not very impressive. Their teeth are flat and designed for crushing mounds of stone and dirt. They aren't equipped for swallowing large solid objects like people.

Sonic Blast (Ex): Shakers can make a sonic blast attack. It is a cone 40 feet long; creatures caught within can make a DC 10 Reflex save to take half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based. The sonic blast is a reflexive response to pain, however, not a premeditated attack. If the shaker suffers damage, it has a 50% chance of using its sonic blast on the last creature to inflict damage on it. Otherwise, it bites. Only with a great deal of training can worm farmers teach shakers to use their sonic blast on command.

Tremorsense (Ex): Giant worms are nearly blind. They navigate by sensing vibrations in the ground around them. They can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground.

Training

Giant worms are routinely raised tame by the worm farmers. They do not lay eggs; instead, a pregnant worm gives birth to 3d6

live-born young. A worm that has survived its first three months is more valuable, since many die in infancy. The prices they can fetch are as follows:

	GIANT WORM	DEEP DIVER	SHAKER
Newborn	1,000 gp	1,200 gp	1,500 gp
Young	2,000 gp	2,400 gp	3,000 gp

An adult giant worm can be trained with a Handle Animal check at DC 24.

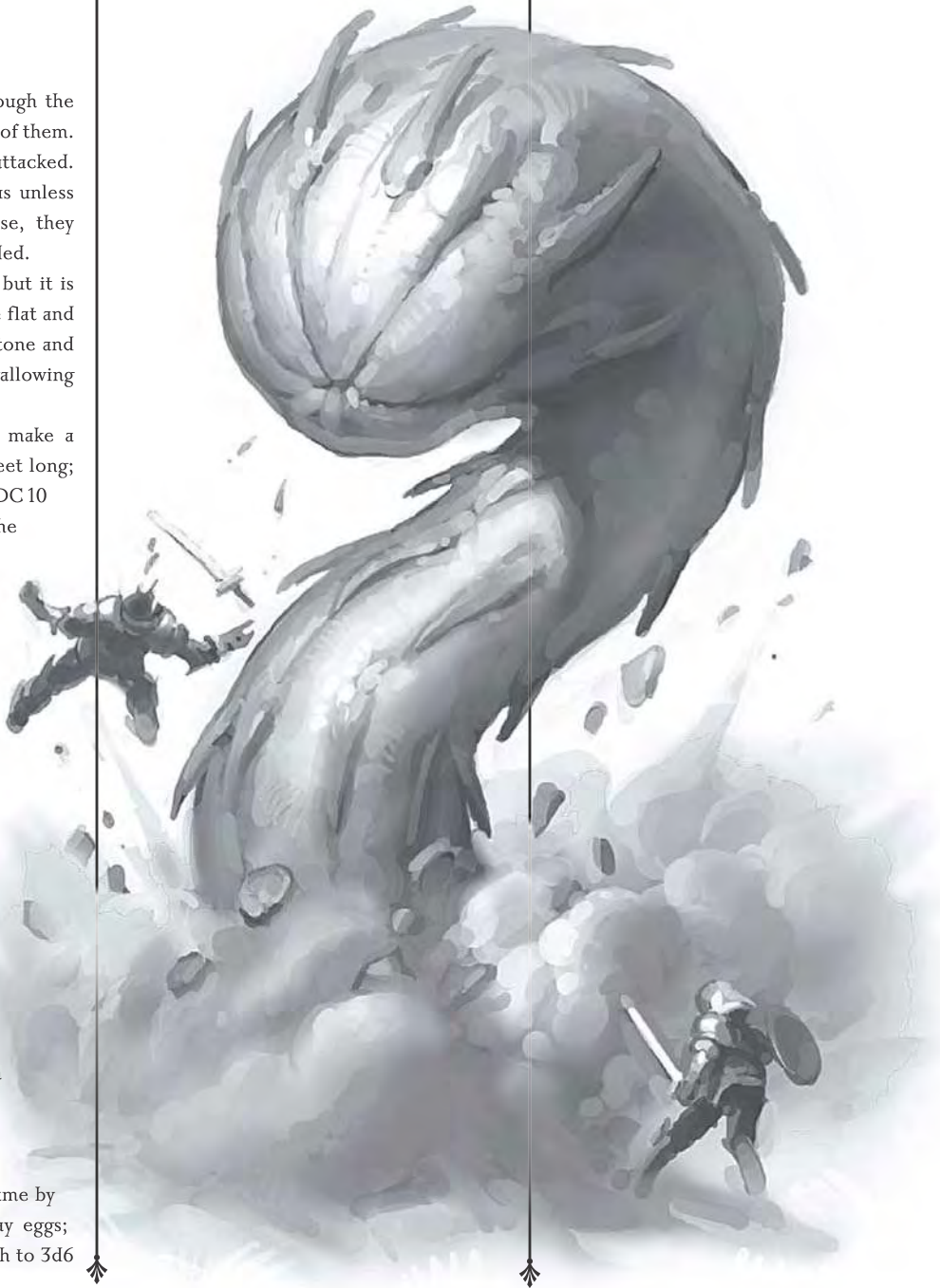




PLATE 7 Although mechs are the focal point of the DragonMech world, they need not be the center of a campaign.



THE DRAGONMECH CAMPAIGN

THE **DRAGONMECH** SETTING IS PREDICATED ON ONE SIMPLE ASSUMPTION: MECHS CAN EXIST IN A FANTASY WORLD. IT IS NOT A SETTING WHERE YOU HAVE TO PLAY A MECH PILOT, NOR IS IT A SETTING WHERE MECHS ARE AUTOMATICALLY GOOD OR BAD. YOU CAN PLAY **DRAGONMECH** CAMPAIGNS MUCH AS TRADITIONAL FANTASY CAMPAIGNS, WHERE THE MECHS PROVIDE A NEW SOURCE OF CONFLICT, OR YOU CAN RUN THEM IN A STYLE WHERE ALL THE ACTION REVOLVES AROUND MAINTAINING A MECH.

This chapter looks at different ways to run a **DragonMech** campaign. It discusses options for starting new campaigns, as well as options for integrating mechs into an ongoing campaign.

ADVENTURE THEMES

The **DragonMech** world revolves around four main threads of adventure: mechs; the lunar rain, including the war between terrestrial and lunar gods; the destruction and reconstruction of the surface world; and the competition between magic and steam engines. You can build unique **DragonMech** adventures from any or all of these threads, adapting them as you wish based on how you want your campaign to go. This chapter discusses adventuring first by looking at the adventures that arise from these various plot threads, then by examining standard adventure motifs and how they can fit in.

ADVENTURES BASED ON MECHS

You can run an entire campaign without the characters ever setting foot on a

mech. You can also run an entire campaign where they never set foot off a mech. Mech can be central elements to adventure, simple modes of transportation, or mere background decoration. The following section discusses how to fit them into your campaign.

The mech has three roles on Highpoint. First, it's a protected home. City-mechs serve the same role that castles, keeps, and towns serve on traditional fantasy worlds. Smaller mechs are also domiciles, usually for itinerant mech tribes, traders, or adventurers. A mech in this role primarily provides protection. It opens adventure hooks because every home needs someone to defend it. Even a mech can be threatened, sometimes by magical creatures that it can't harm. Enemy mechs can be a threat, especially if they're bigger or more powerful. Sometimes the best option for taking out an enemy mech isn't actually to duke it out, but to hire adventures to break into it and kill the crew. Either way, as many adventuring opportunities are open for defending a mech as are for defending any castle or town.

Second, a mech provides transportation. It's a safe way to travel from one place to another. Mech is extremely difficult to destroy, and although they can be boarded, toppled, or captured, they're still a lot safer than horseback or in a wagon, especially

when the lunar rain is factored in. Characters with a mech can be hired to transport all sorts of goods, ranging from essential foodstuffs needed by a city-mech to contraband that somebody doesn't want the Stenian Confederacy to see. Transportation missions can have deadlines attached ("the city-mech will starve if they don't get this shipment by tomorrow") or emphasize stealth instead ("don't let the Stenians catch you with this!"). They can also have more mysterious implications: Instead of transporting goods, the characters might be hired to take an elf maiden to the ruins of Rook. She offers little explanation but pays up front in gold. Everyone knows that the elves are on a quest to recover their lost artifacts, so maybe this transportation mission has more to it than meets the eye

Third, and most important for adventuring, a mech is a military weapon. The destructive potential of a single human is magnified one hundredfold when that human enters a mech. A mech can be used to slay monsters, conquer kingdoms, rescue hostages, and ransack ruins. In this role, mech adventures are similar to some of the classic fantasy adventures. The characters could be hired to use their mech to slay a rampaging lunar dragon. The adventure could be made more dramatic by the dragon's intelligence: Too smart simply to let itself be slaughtered, it makes flying hit-and-run attacks and won't stay in flat terrain for a fair fight. Alternatively, the mech could be pitted against what seems like an easy target, a swarm of orc raiders operating out of a system of caves. The mech is too large to go into the caves, however, so the characters are forced either to widen the entrance or get out and fight on foot. And of course there's the classic mech-vs.-mech campaign. The characters may have to get rid of an Irontooth or rust rider mech that has been making trouble. In this situation they could try a direct confrontation, or, if they want to minimize damage to their mech, they could leave a skeleton crew to fire the weapons while the rest of the characters leave and try to force their way into the enemy mech to fight its crew.



Mech Warriors

Characters as mech warriors is seemingly the most natural style of play for **DragonMech**. (In fact, it's only one of many options, the rest of which we'll examine below.) As mech warriors, the characters should obviously have a mech. The party should consist primarily of mech jockeys and coglayers, with perhaps a steamborg, stalker, and spellcaster. Fighters are practically useless in this sort of campaign, though rangers who specialize in archery can be somewhat effective. Most combat will be ranged, generally against other mechs or large creatures. Battles against hordes of smaller creatures won't be common (most small creatures know enough to run away from an attacking mech), but enemies capable of toppling a mech are definitely a threat.

Running a mech warrior campaign requires you to answer two questions. First, how do the characters acquire their mech? Second, when do they acquire it? If you want to get things rolling fast, you can start them at 1st level with a mech. The explanation could be simple (such as they inherited it from family members) or could lead to further adventure hooks. Maybe they found it and refurbished it prior to beginning the game, in which case the previous owner is probably out there somewhere. Maybe they were mech traders in earlier times, in which case they may have old trading partners and rivals. Maybe they're part of the military, in which case they have to take orders from the Stenian Confederacy or Shar Thizdic. Or perhaps they've gone AWOL and stolen a military mech. That can make for a lot of interesting adventures.

If you want the game to progress a little more slowly, you can start them without their own mech. They could be ferried about by the military or a trader, or provided a mech by a patron. At the extreme, they may

simply be on foot. Their first mission could be to capture an enemy mech, and a series of adventures after that could send them after progressively better mechs until they have a nice set of wheels (er, legs). Infiltrating an enemy mech is an interesting mission because it involves investigation (finding the mech and pinpointing vulnerable times), stealth (approaching quietly), hand-to-hand combat (getting on board and killing the crew), mech combat (using the captured mech to take out other enemy mechs that might pursue), and possibly escape (out-running whoever gives chase). If the enemy mech is shoddy or poorly defended (think rust riders and mech tribes), it's within the realm of possibility for low-level characters to take it. The spells *jump* and *reduce person* are both useful for getting onto a mech or entering through a small porthole. Once characters have access to 2nd-level spells, they're able to take on better-defended mechs through a combination of *shatter*, *spider climb*, and *bull's strength*. This sort of campaign could see the characters start out in traditional classes and then multiclass into **DragonMech** classes once they have a mech.

Once you run a mech warrior campaign, you automatically leave the realm of the traditional d20 fantasy game. Not a lot of dungeons can be explored in a mech. Instead of resupplying at small towns and staying at inns, the characters stop off at city-mechs or neutral cities like Edge. Most adventures become "wilderness" scenarios

where battles are with large creatures or other mechs, often at long range, or else direct mech-to-mech duels. Irontooth pilots could duel simply as a matter of course, or a military post might produce constant encounters with smugglers, raiders, and invaders. At the other extreme, the characters could be raiders who prey on other mechs, and might even specialize in capturing "live" mechs to be resold or stripped of anything valuable.

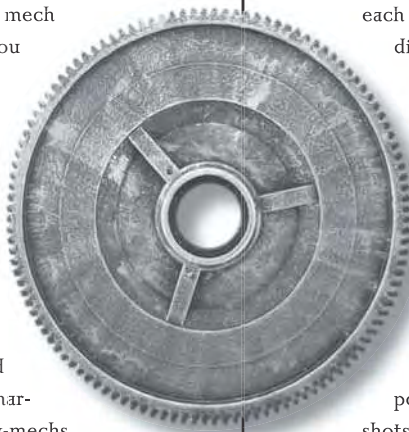
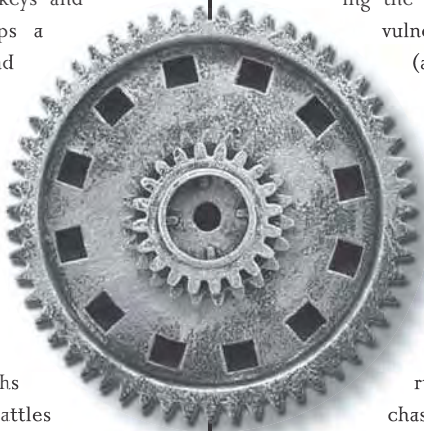
Character Involvement

A mech-based campaign has to give characters a way to stay involved. When the whole campaign comes down to the mech, everyone needs to roll the dice or take an action every now and then, or else they'll get bored. Try to arrange the characters' mech so it incorporates places for each character. One character should be the pilot. He'll make lots of checks with his Mech Pilot skill and generally be active in most situations. A second character can be the navigator. He can have a special observation post where he specializes in scanning the horizon and plotting courses. His best skill could be Spot, and his role in combat is to monitor the positions of enemies. After all, most physical stations on a mech have limited fields of view, and a character dedicated to telling the pilot which way to turn can be extremely useful when the pilot can't visually track an enemy who vanishes from his field of vision.

Gunners are obviously important, and they make for a fun role. At low levels, each mech weapon will need a different character to pilot it.

At higher levels characters can take the right feats to operate multiple weapons, but they might not, and gunner roles might still be important.

Portholes allow for another level of player interaction. Spellcasters can lob ranged spells from portholes (even making called shots with spells such as *hold person* aimed at enemy mech pilots), and archers can fire on enemy spellcasters,





ground troops, or boarders. Each porthole lets another character become involved.

Finally, you have the boarder. Every gaming group has one guy who loves to think of ways to break the rules, and in **DragonMech** he usually decides to find ways to break into an enemy mech. He'll think of things like casting *spider climb* on himself to climb up the side of an enemy mech so he can then cast *web* into the pilot's compartment, or using *gaseous form* to get into the mech and then use a host of *charm person* spells to take it over. Among nonspellcasters, rogues and fighters are both skilled at boarding actions, whether through use of *Escape Artist* to squeeze through open portholes or *Strength* checks and *potions of bull's strength* to simply bash them open. The anklebiter prestige class is designed for exactly this kind of player. Expect someone in the gaming group to want to play this role, and plan for it accordingly.

The Away Team

Once you have a mech-based campaign started, you have to decide how much adventuring will take place in the mech and how much will take place off of it. In its most limited role, a mech can be simple transportation. It can be nothing more than a glorified wagon that ferries the adventurers from one dungeon to another. In a more moderate role, it can be necessary for completing some adventures (such as battles against other mechs or extremely large creatures, delivery missions, or nighttime adventuring when the lunar rain is active) but remain parked on other adventures. In the most mech-heavy campaigns, the mech might be the central focus of almost all aspects of every adventure. Entire adventures could be conducted in the seat of a mech.

Most campaigns will fall in the middle somewhere, and characters in such campaigns will face an interesting dilemma. In order to succeed on missions in their mech, at least someone in the party (preferably more than one person) really needs to take some levels in the mech jockey class. However, that same character becomes almost useless on any other adventure. He has the

minimal combat abilities of a wizard but lacks the spells, and all of his special abilities are geared toward mechs.

We suggest three ways to deal with this. The first is to keep the mechs such an important part of the campaign that the mech jockey doesn't feel left out. The party's fighters are given a chance to shine on the dungeon crawls, while the party's mech jockey shines in the mech duels. As long as you keep the adventures balanced, all characters will be useful. In the same way that you create roles for characters on a mech as described above, you can do the same for roles in nonmech adventures. The fighter might just have to stick to archery from a porthole during mech combat, while the mech jockey is in charge of firing a steam gun from the rear during ground combat. Intermediate classes skilled in combat on both mechs and the ground — such as coglayers and steamborgs, as well as clerics and wizards — become most useful in this kind of campaign.

The second option is to use an "away team." The party can have one set of characters that specializes in mech combat and a second set that specializes in more traditional adventuring. Each player has two characters, but only one is played at a time. On board the mech, one character has a defined role (gunner, pilot, etc.), while the dungeoneering character simply rides as a passenger. When the mech arrives at its destination, the mech crew stays put and the dungeoneers disembark for the adventure. As long as you keep the adventure balanced between mech missions and nonmech missions, this style of campaign can also be very rewarding. This way players have characters who are good at dealing with almost any situation they encounter.

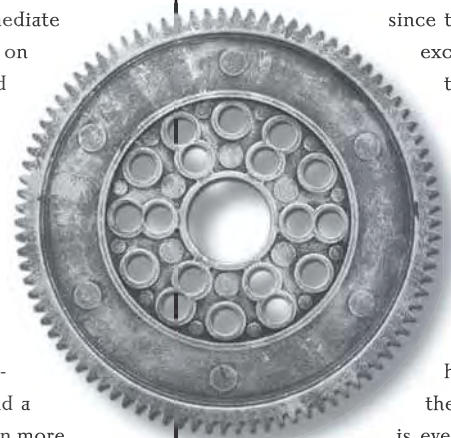
The final option is to allow mech piloting skill to be common knowledge. As an optional rule, declare that any character raised on a city-mech treats mech jockey as a favored class, in addition to the racial favored class.

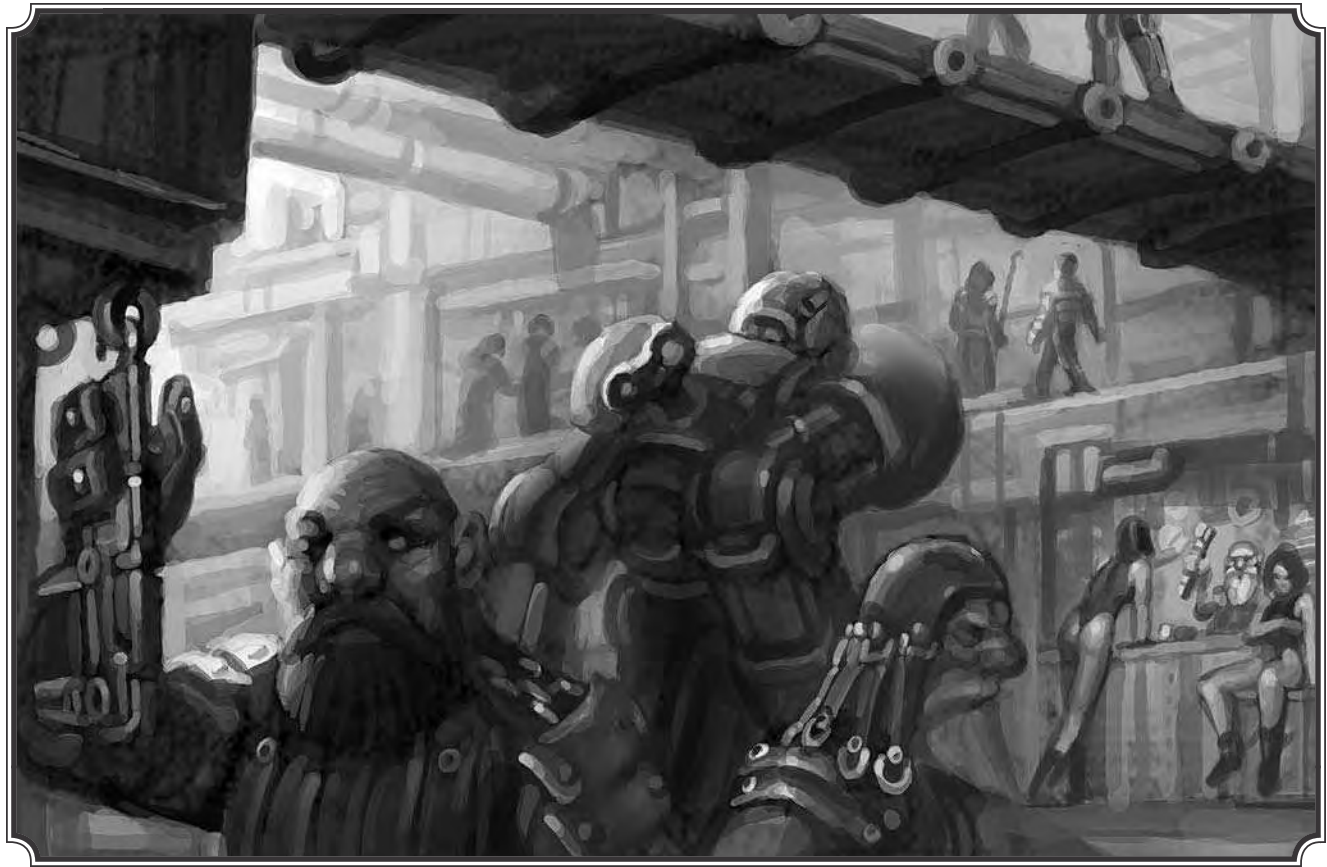
In other words, he can multiclass as a mech jockey at no penalty. This allows every character to take a few levels of mech jockey — enough to fill their roles on the mech — and also take classes that are useful on the ground. The explanation for such a campaign ability is simple: Just as anyone raised in a fishing village has a basic knowledge of how to fish regardless of his profession, anyone raised on a city-mech picks up on the basics of how to pilot a mech.

You can take this one step further by incorporating campaign feats. Start every character with two free feats: Mech Weapon Proficiency and Mechanized Combat Practice, geared to whatever mech they obtain first. This practically eliminates the need

for mech jockeys at low levels, since the fighter's BAB exceeds or matches the mech jockey's with new characters. The characters may still have to take levels in the mech jockey class as they reach higher levels, but the playing field is evened early on for them to participate in both mech and nonmech missions.

One last thing to remember is that characters need be only as tough as their opponents. If you routinely send the characters into combat against mech jockeys equal to the characters' levels, then they'll be outclassed unless they also have a mech jockey pilot. If, on the other hand, the pilots of enemy mechs tend to be multiclassed mech jockeys (such as bandits who also need levels in rogue, or military men who also need levels in fighter or warrior), the characters aren't at as much of a disadvantage. If the enemy mechs aren't piloted by mech jockeys at all, but instead by coglayers (who often pilot the mechs they build) or NPC experts with Mech Pilot as a skill (think self-taught rust riders who learn to pilot the mechs they





steal or rebuild), then the PCs simply need a reasonable number of ranks in Mech Pilot skill to match them, rather than entire class levels as mech jockeys.

Other Ways to Incorporate Mechs

So far we've assumed that you want mechs to play a fairly prominent role in the campaign, and the characters pilot the mechs. That doesn't have to be the case. **DragonMech** is designed so you can also run mech-heavy campaigns without the characters actually piloting them.

One way to do this is to situate the campaign on a city-mech. City-mechs are enormous. They offer as many ways to adventure as any large city in a normal fantasy setting, ranging from political intrigue to defending against raiders to exploring the sewers and ruins (in this case, the gear forests, as described below). Characters based on a city-mech have constant exposure to the

world of the mech and can partake in mech-based adventures by deploying from the mechs docked on the city-mech's ankles. Chapter 7 offers a detailed description of city-mech Nedderpik and some ideas for adventures that could happen there.

Another way is to make the characters mech hunters. For whatever reason, they journey on foot and specialize in destroying mechs. A party of spellcasters has the perfect motivation for this, since steam power has eclipsed the role magic once had. Other characters could be saboteurs hired by rival factions to take out enemy mechs, such as Stenians eliminating Legion mechs, or vice versa. They could be raiders and pirates who capture the mechs then drive them somewhere where they can be sold to rust riders or the Irontooth Clans. They might have a personal grudge against a major mech faction for having taken territory they once occupied, and the entire campaign could be centered around revenge against the mechs

of that faction.

In this sort of campaign, the characters have no mech jockeys among their ranks. Traditional character classes all work very well, and a large part of the combat strategy revolves around planning ways to infiltrate or destroy mechs. The rules for tripping, toppling, and boarding mechs will be used a lot, as will those for trampling. Faced with massive machines far more powerful than themselves, characters will be forced to come up with creative ways to defeat these enemies.

The same players who love planning boarding actions will love the challenge of a mech hunter campaign. Rogues, fighters, and wizards all have skill bases suited for infiltrating enemy mechs, each in their own way. The anklebiter prestige class comes in very useful in this style of campaign, as does the riftwalker. Steamborgs who emphasize Strength can make good boarders, as can coglayers who build the right steam devices.

Mech hunter campaigns generally start



with straightforward mech-hunting expeditions. As the campaigns progress, they incorporate transportation missions (moving the captured mech to the place where it will be sold) and can eventually branch out into a wide range of other kinds of adventures. If the characters are hunting Stenian mechs, it just may happen that on the dead bodies of a mech crew they find medallions that give them a free pass onto Nedderpik (see page 224). The campaign could then take a twist onto the city-mech as the characters search for ways to ambush it, or watch its deployments as a way of finding out the best times to ambush enemy mechs.

If the theme of a mech-hunter campaign incorporates any Robin Hood aspects, the characters might split their time performing good deeds for those who can't afford to live on a mech. They might be agents of surface towns upset by the martial law inflicted by the Stenian Confederacy. When not hunting Stenian mechs, they defend the town against lunar creatures and explore ruins that might have equipment the town could use.

ADVENTURES BASED ON THE LUNAR RAIN

The lunar rain provides an ever-present threat with a deadline. It can be used as a hook that forces characters into fast-moving transportation or rescue adventures. For example, a caravan of traders might be traveling by day, planning to sleep in a well known underground caravanserai for the evening. When they arrive, however, the place has been ransacked by orcs or has collapsed due to tectonic activity. The characters happen upon the traders right as the sun is setting. Far on the horizon, they can already see the telltale streaks of a bad lunar rain. Will they help the caravan find safety? If so, how?

Alternatively, the lunar rain can bring adventure directly to the characters. Remember that the lunar rain is fundamentally the disintegration of the planet's moon, and that moon is inhabited. Although most meteorites are sheared smooth by the

atmosphere long before they impact with the ground, a few survive intact. Sometimes this is through pure luck, but other times it could be through lunar magic — a wall of force is perfectly capable of surviving atmospheric friction. While the characters are waiting through the night for the lunar rain to abate, they could witness the earthfall of a huge meteorite that still has on it the intact remains of a lunar temple. Perhaps a lunar dragon's cave falls to earth, complete with eggs still residing in a nursing chamber. The characters go to explore the huge rock, finding all sorts of exotic treasures and interesting wonders, only to find upon their exit that the lunar dragon has swooped down from the moon in search of its missing lair.

Any time you need a spontaneous encounter with a lunar creature, the lunar rain provides an easy way to introduce it.

The lunar rain is also fodder for terrestrial adventure. Most creatures retreat indoors or underground when the moon rises. Smugglers, pirates, and others who have reasons to hide take advantage of this by traveling only during the lunar rain. This can be extremely dangerous, and likewise extremely painful. During the worst storms, where veritable boulders are falling from the sky, no one emerges. But in lighter rains, when the meteor storms are nothing more than an abrasive haze, creatures will wrap themselves in thick layers of hide, leather, and blanket and then venture forth hoping to remain unnoticed. They may have to add extra layers

throughout the night as the ones they're wearing are burned off, but even so, their nighttime journeying reduces the chances they'll be seen. Some creatures with a natural immunity to the rains, such as the tortogs, have taken advantage of the opportunities to smuggle during the lunar rain and are known far and wide as "moonlight movers." The Stenian Confed-

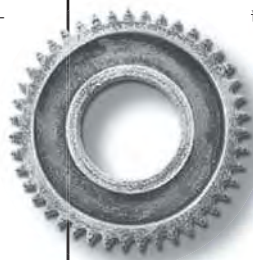
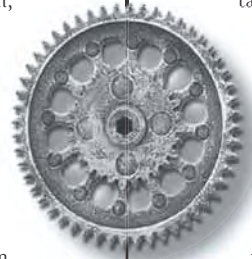
eracy is aware of this aspect of the lunar rain and sometimes sends reduced patrols out during the night, specifically hoping to find those who do not want to be found.

Divine Wars

One of the most important but least understood implications of the lunar rain is the invasion of the lunar gods. The conflict between the terrestrial and lunar gods takes place on the outer planes, far beyond the comprehension of mortals. It is felt on Highpoint only through unsettling visions, disturbing interruptions in divine spellcasting, and the often-dismissed proselytizing of those who follow the lunar gods. Yet these vague hints are enough to unsettle even the most devout cleric, especially when his attempts to resurrect a pious ally fail.

This conflict makes for a great overarching theme for your campaign. Dreams and mysterious visions can guide characters on their missions. Their gods need every foot soldier they can get, preferably pursuing missions directly opposing the lunar gods, and this makes for an easy way to steer adventures.

Imagine a host of lunar skinstealers that has infiltrated a city-mech undetected. They make their way to the engine rooms, where they take over unsuspecting engineers. They then use these engineers to bring them into proximity to soldiers, then aristocrats, and finally the senior mech staff, until eventually they are in charge of the city-mech. They use this position of influence very subtly, making no sudden moves or drastic decisions. Instead, they slowly make it more difficult for traditional religions to operate in the city-mech, whether through taxes or tariffs or regulations, or by commandeering the temple space in the name of greater needs. All the while, their cultist allies begin speaking in the markets of Seroficitacit's will, converting followers one by one. This insidious plot could be taking place so slowly that the characters don't connect the dots between the various instances — until one of their gods plants a dream that tells the character





to go to the mech's cockpit. The character has no idea why, but upon arriving his clerical ability to detect lunar creatures kicks in, and he knows something is up.

Other plots could be far more overt. A lunar dragon who worships Andakakiligitat might go on a rampage to destroy followers of the terrestrial gods. He might declare a holy war, or strike seemingly random targets that eventually coalesce into a clear pattern.

The divine conflicts can also provide a cover for other activities. More than one Stenian military commander has accused Shar Thizdic of being in league with the lunar creatures. This is not the case (at least not as far as anyone knows), but scapegoating him in that way helps motivate the Stenian civilians to oppose him. At the same time, Shar himself claims that the misguided priorities of the Stenian Confederacy are part of the reason the lunar problem persists. If they were to focus more on directly attacking the lunar creatures (as the Legion does, Shar claims) instead of simply securing land and resources, the problem might be solved. On top of all that, more than one claim has said that a failed *resurrection* wasn't due to the intervention of the terrestrial gods, but in fact to the cleric's base unwillingness to revive a political rival

Scourge of the Dragons

The lunar dragons are worthy of a campaign by themselves. Pound for pound, they are far more powerful than any terrestrial dragons. They literally fall from the sky into an unsuspecting region, then pick the area clean in their unrelenting hunger. They lead armies of other lunar creatures and also recruit terrestrial raiders and criminals to fight with them. Because much of the surface world's infrastructure has been destroyed, many places have no armies left to fight off the dragons. An area that seemed safe can suddenly become a nightmarish terrain of spontaneous raids and endless danger when

a lunar dragon swoops out of the moonlit sky, dropped unceremoniously from its home planet.

Fighting against the lunar dragons makes for both one-shot adventures and long-term campaigns. A mech is capable of facing (and sometimes beating) a lunar dragon, and characters in mech-based campaigns should be sent into conflict with at least one such enemy. If the background of any of the party's characters includes

interactions with the lunar dragons, they may have a particular vendetta. A character whose family was wiped out by a dragon, or whose homestead mech was crippled by one, might make a point of seeking them out for destruction in his adult

years. Stories of a resident dragon generally reach far and wide, so it's easy enough for characters to locate their hunting grounds through rumor alone. It's unlikely a dragon would be dumb enough to pit itself in a combat it couldn't win — especially against a walking tin-can that doesn't taste good — but with patience and good sense the characters should be able to find its lair or at least sight it on its next raid.

Solving the Lunar Rain

Solving the problem of the lunar rain can provide a long-term goal for any campaign. The lunar rain causes immense hardship for many people, and making this clear to the players can help make it real for them. Meteors have literally smashed untold people, houses, and livestock. Traveling through a region struck by severe meteor storms the night before is like walking across a moonscape: Huge craters lie everywhere, rocks the size of boulders still steam from the impact of their collision, and every so often a collapsed cave or underground shelter is

filled with the crushed remains of those who futilely sought protection there.

How could characters possibly solve this problem? No easy solution exists. A short-term answer is to find housing and shelter for those in need. Presenting the characters with a family which had half its numbers killed during the previous night's meteor storm can tug on their hearts and make them wonder how they can help. Many times, the only thing they can do is dig a shelter or perhaps pull some strings to get the family on board a city-mech. But an adventure hook might lie waiting in the fact that the family has a shelter, a family stronghold, or an invitation to stay with distant kin, but it lies many hundreds of miles away, and they can't reach it without some sort of mobile cover such as the mech piloted by the characters.

Some righteous crusaders have attempted to take the battle to the moon, hoping that direct confrontation will somehow solve the problem. Although it is unlikely that a lunar trip will make any change to the lunar rain, such trips can oppose the lunar creatures on their own turf and provide direct attacks on the lunar gods. After all, the lunar gods' intrusion onto the earth has strengthened them here, so shouldn't a counterassault help the terrestrial gods?

ADVENTURES BASED ON SURFACE WORLD REBIRTH

The lunar rain effectively destroyed civilization as Highpoint knew it. Most major social institutions were destroyed. Cities were demolished, churches lost power, and kingdoms were reduced to ruins. From this chaos emerged new institutions. Initially the institutions were simple and small: single mechs that gave power to their owners, or the scattered tribes whose control of formerly irrelevant caves catapulted them into positions of importance. As time went by, the institutions evolved, organized, and firmed up their grasps. The mechs formed alliances and eventually became mechdoms, mobile kingdoms built around fleets of city-mechs. The Gearwrights Guild, formerly a



professional organization, built and controlled city-mechs that eventually made it effectively the governing political force in the Stenian Confederacy. Balances of power shifted, and clever opportunists (such as Shar Thizdic) took advantage of this to benefit themselves.

Political Adventures

The rebirth of the surface world is a situation ripe for political adventure. On the most basic level, many areas still have no effective leadership. Clever adventurers can use these places to carve out their own fiefdoms. The bands of scavengers that inhabit the ruins of surface cities aren't held together by hereditary or traditional bonds; they're nothing more than random survivors who have bonded together for safety. The same is true of the rust riders and most mech tribes. Small pockets of cave dwellers still cower when they see a lunar dragon fly overhead. Characters who position themselves as protectors — or dictators — could rule these lands. They could also be placed in the position of freeing them from oppressive rule. A powerful orc warlord, or a human tribesman of great personal power, could easily take control of an isolated band of survivors. Imagine a 10th-level fighter who comes across a band of commoners still living in the caves near the ruins of their village. Whereas in

the past the laws of the land (and defenders of those laws) would prevent this fighter from simply taking over, now he has no such constraints. He could rule with an iron fist, threatening the villagers with death at his hands if they don't serve him. The characters could come across this situation and be faced with the chance to free the enslaved villagers. But the twist could be that the powerful

fighter might be the only person protecting the villagers from raids by lunar dragons or other scavengers. If the characters kill him and then move on, the village will surely be destroyed by the next unscrupulous band to wander through. How can they free the villagers while still keeping them safe?

A second level of adventure is based on the political intrigue that follows from areas of weak leadership. In many regions, multiple factions still compete for the hearts and souls of the people. The characters can become involved in these struggles. They could arrive on a city-mech only to be faced with two offers of alliance: one from the traditional church, which still commands the worship of a small but devoted core, and the other from the Gearwrights Guild, which effectively controls the mech's operations but has little loyalty from the people. Though violence between the groups is not likely, room for diplomatic sabotage abounds. The characters may be asked to spy on the rival faction, or travel off-mech to seek new allies; they may be offered bribes to switch sides, or threatened with exile if they don't; they may be set up or blackmailed if they refuse to play the game. If the situation is one from which they cannot exit (perhaps their own mech is badly damaged and they have no means to escape), they may be forced to navigate a volatile situation. Peaceful characters may seek a common ground; more violent characters may decide to take over.

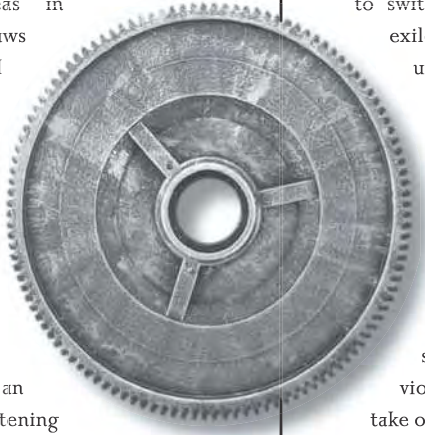
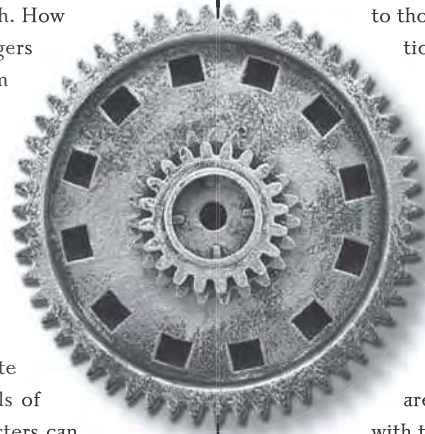
Within the existing world structure, several points of developing political strife already exist. Shar Thizdic is the most obvious example. The human tribes of the endless plains were never organized before the

lunar rain. He took the opportunity provided by this disaster to unite them. He effectively manipulated a potent threat to fill a political vacuum — and in doing so has created a political structure that runs counter

to thousands of years of tradition. Some factions within the human tribes resent his leadership and long for a return to the old ways, just as others welcome the re-institution of control after so many years of chaos.

Elsewhere on the endless plains, the orcs are becoming intrigued with the power of mechs. The scattered orc tribes have never had any particular fondness for weapons of war beyond brute strength, but the impressive abilities of a mech are hard to ignore — and even harder to conquer. After a few too many defeats, the orcs began looking for ways to bring mechs under their control. This has caused political tension on a number of levels. The traditional source of orc power — raw physical strength — has been usurped by orc engineers who can build mechs that are unstoppable by foot soldiers. More than one orc warlord has resented his less-important position as intelligent orcs build mechs. The orcs are still a diffuse, disorganized bunch of tribes, but like the humans who were once in that position, they are a powder keg waiting to explode. With the right leader, they could become a potent political force; with the wrong leader, they could self-destruct into petty bickering.

Back on the highlands, the most important political struggle is being fought in the dwarven halls. The traditional dwarven clan structure has been forced to yield to the Gearwrights Guild, which made the city-mechs possible. The clans grant power based on wisdom, seniority, and battle prowess, but the Guild grants power based on building ability and technical insight. Some elder dwarves among the clans simply cannot understand why a younger dwarf would





be placed in charge of a mech — but to the Guild, it seems obvious that those with technical skills should be deployed where they can be most useful. On the city-mechs, these differences of opinion create grave danger. Clan leaders sometimes give orders that contradict those of the Guild; dwarven pilots, gunners, engineers, and warriors sometimes have two sets of directions to follow. Organization hierarchies can be clear on paper but difficult to enforce in practice; combat efficiency is eroded when turf wars and infighting prevent rapid decision-making. These problems are not easily solved. Many dwarves are old enough to remember the days before the lunar rain, and they tend to follow the old rules; but younger dwarves, or those who have trained for decades with the Guild, can't agree to a return to the ancient traditions. Given the stubbornness for which dwarves are famed, these divisions won't simply go away, and many a dwarf with wounded pride has challenged another to a warrior's duel. The mech jockeys dismiss these duels with laughter, claiming they'd rather fight with a mech than an axe any day, but more than one has been forced to defend himself against a sudden attack by an enraged rival.

Dungeon Crawl Adventures

The world is now covered in ruins. Cities were laid to waste by the lunar rain. Underground regions saw wave after wave of refugees, and countless wars. Ancient citadels immune to ground assault for generations were opened up by the meteors, then scoured by the dragons. Impenetrable citadels were flattened; powerful cities were humbled.

In short, it's an adventurer's dream. Relics and ruins cover the surface, waiting to be claimed by those brave enough to find them. Tortogs and other scavengers already make a good living specializing in this trade, and the friction between the elves and those who have raided their ruins for relics is a well known phenomenon.

Room exists for characters on both sides of the equation, either as grave-robbers in search of undiscovered treasures, or in the service of those who wish to recover lost

treasures. As grave robbers they could simply wander from ruined city to ruined city, looting what's left of once-great societies. In a mech they'll be well protected on the journey, but once they arrive they'll have to disembark. This is where you can run some good old-fashioned dungeon crawls. Maybe a scavenger band has recently shown up in Edge with bags of gold coins, far more than rubbish such as they should possess, and the gold coins are imprinted with the royal seal of a nearby ruined city. Word leaks that they've found the dead king's vault, which was exposed to the surface

by a recent meteor

strike. The characters

join

the race to

secure the

vault first.

Perhaps

they succeed — or

perhaps

they fail only

to discover an

even more promising

lead in the city's

ruined sewers, which saw

extensive occupation in the early days of the

lunar rain

On the flip side, the characters may be in search of lost family heirlooms, whether their own or their employer's. Elf characters feel this particularly strongly, as their historical artifacts were robbed from their ruined tree villages. An everyday merchant might want to locate an heirloom in the house he fled 100 years ago, or a grandson might seek to recover his noble grandfather's legendary magical sword, rumored lost when the meteors destroyed his keep. Countless ruins beckon to be searched for something that has been lost, and all of them provide characters with a reason to go on a dungeon crawl.

Another kind of adventure presents itself when these ruined areas are rebuilt. Since the surface world is becoming more habitable, some brave souls are actually trying to rebuild it. They may want to build where a ruined city once stood in its prime. This

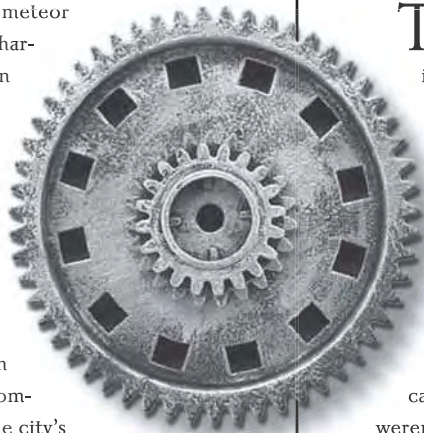
requires clearing the area of monsters, of course, and then the task of protecting it from raiders once it's established. Even the city-mechs face this problem, as their mechs try to grow their safe zones steadily. Making a zone safe means entering the ruins and flushing out whatever is there — surely a task for heroes if ever one existed.

ADVENTURES BASED ON COMPETITION BETWEEN MAGIC AND STEAM

The rising power of steam technology is a major theme in **DragonMech**. The dwarves claim that once an Age of Walkers existed when steam power dominated the land. The elves dispute this claim, finding no reference to it in their own legendary texts, which document the predominance of magic throughout all of recorded history. Until P arilus came to Duerok, even the dwarves weren't inclined to place much stock in the Age of Walkers, but now it seems undeniable, especially when backed by the proclamations of the Gearwrights Guild.

This dispute is more than academic. Steam power threatens the predominance of magic in the world. The social status of mages is being eroded by gearwrights and coglayers who can accomplish equally amazing tasks with completely mechanical means. Coupled with the diminished position of divine spellcasters (who sometimes go days without hearing from their gods), this makes steam power a savior to the people, and a threat to those who once provided protection.

Adventures built around this thread can use the characters' allegiances for or against them. Characters who use magic may find themselves ostracized on city-mechs. The reverse situation can be far worse: Characters who try to build mechs or other steam-powered creations may be the victims of sabotage by jealous wizards.





Some wizards have taken this rivalry to the level of a holy war. This is especially true among the elder elves. During the worst of the lunar rains, their forest villages were reduced to rubble. Many valuable magic items were then stolen by raiders, looters, and scavengers. Mechs in particular played a large role in this, because the mech-equipped raiders could enter the elven ruins before most of the elves could. Now that the elves have devised their own mechs (powered by magic, of course), they seek to recover their stolen relics. To them, the steam-versus-magic conflict is not academic; it's the direct reason their historical records are being disputed and their magical properties have been stolen.

Adventurers of elven origin may feel the need to recover magical artifacts. Recovering the relic that once protected their home village might be an ongoing quest, taken up whenever time or circumstances provide a new opportunity. Likewise, they may try to even the score a bit by disabling or damaging steam-powered objects whenever possible. Members of the anklebiter prestige class are often embittered elves.

ADVENTURES ON CITY-MECHS

City-mechs are like massive walking cities with built-in dungeons. They provide a mix of urban and dungeon adventures, with access to mech- and wilderness-based adventures only a few hundred meters apart. They make a great base from which to launch a **DragonMech** campaign, particularly because they can introduce a character to the world of mechs without requiring him to actually pilot a mech. This section discusses some options for adventuring on city-mechs.

One thing to remember about a city-mech is that it is constantly in motion. Characters on board feel a slight swaying motion as it strides across the landscape. The higher

up they are, the less noticeable this is; in the highest levels, they might not even feel it unless they are near a window to see the horizon line moving. On the lowest levels, though, it is painfully obvious, particularly to those with a vulnerability to motion sickness. Living on the legs of a city-mech is like riding a never-ending roller coaster.

GEAR FORESTS

The so-called "gear forests" are the engine rooms of mechs and other complex mechanical devices. They are man-made spaces filled with spinning, whirling, pumping arrays of engine apparatus that are dizzying in their complexity. They are, in essence, engines so large that humans can walk within their empty spaces. But doing so is quite dangerous, to say the least. Gears, cogs, levers, pistons, and other engine components fly about, each doing its own job to keep the engine functioning. Combined, these can make hundreds or thousands of moving parts, each of them potentially deadly, all of them utterly heedless to the lives of passersby. Organic intrusions are distractions at best, malfunctions at worst.

Look under the hood of your car and imagine the engine on a human scale. That's a gear forest. It could be described to players like this:

You enter a cavernous area filled with moving gears. It's almost like you're standing inside of an engine so large you have room to walk within it. Gigantic pistons, the height of the ceiling, pump up and down in the distance. Beside them, dozens of huge round gears turn in place. The visible upper halves rise as high as the ceiling. Some turn laboriously while others spin at breakneck speeds, their toothed edges like menacing buzzsaws. Between the large pistons and gears is a dense underbrush of smaller engines, including cogs, gears, levers, pistons, belts, fans, pipes, arms, pumps, and rotors. Pendulums swing from above you as hidden shafts occasionally slam upward from the floor.

You can see no clear path through the engine underbrush, though if you're careful you might pick your way through safely. The ground and most surfaces are covered with oily residues, ranging in depth from a slick layer to puddles of sludge. The air is oppressively hot and tastes metallic. You can see the reason why: Gouts of flame belch forth periodically from some parts of the room, while other areas let off steady supplies of white-hot steam. Everything is in motion, in all directions and at all speeds. The effect is dizzying.

City-mechs are large enough that they have several levels devoted to engine spaces. Once set in motion, these gear forests can take on lives of their own. As long as the engine runs smoothly, the city-mech's coglayers have no need to visit, so the gear forests become home to creatures looking to stay out of sight. Some are thieves, criminals, monstrous humanoids, and other rejects from the mainstream of city-mech society, but others are strange creatures specially evolved for life in a gear forest. In some cases they initiate a bizarre symbiotic relationship whereby they keep the engines clean and functional precisely so the mech crew will have no reason to visit and accidentally discover their presence. This is a common practice among stowaway coglings. They sometimes battle with other intelligent residents of the gear forests who may damage the apparatus. These include scavengers illicitly collecting engine sludge to be resold as second-rate motor oil, to rust riders. Some thieves have even been known to siphon fresh oil straight from the pipes. But the coglings always react quickly to these incursions, since any reason for the authorities

to visit the engine room only increases the likelihood they'll be found and evicted.

Hazards of the Gear Forest

A gear forest can cover multiple levels on a large mech. It is considered forest terrain for movement purposes (half speed except on trails). The forest alternates between huge parts that are easily avoided





and thickets of tiny, whirring gears that move at dangerously high speeds. “Trails” exist — paths built by coglayers to reach certain sections of the engine for maintenance reasons — but they are few and far between, rarely leading where the characters want to go.

Moving through a gear forest is dangerous. Everything moves, the ground is slippery, and a tiny misstep can mean being smashed by a piston or sliced by a spinning gear. Passersby must step very carefully, and even then they may be caught by surprise. On top of that, the air is oppressively hot.

The table below describes potential hazards. No matter how careful they are, characters walking through a gear forest have a 25% chance per round of encountering a hazard. Running or fighting within a gear forest doubles the chance. Determine the hazard by rolling 1d8.

ROLL (1d6)	DAWGER	REFLEX SAVE	DC	DAMAGE
1	Geyser of hot steam	8		1d2
2	Idle gear suddenly starts spinning	10		1d3
3	Unseen piston shoots up from the floor	16		1d4
4	Two heavy metal blocks on either side of the character swing shut, closing a valve	8		1d6
5	Slippery oil slick	14		Fall prone
6	Pendulum swings down from above	12		1d6
7	Gout of fire	10		1d6 + fire
8	Slack belt at floor level starts spinning	12		1d2 + fall prone

Creatures smaller than Medium size are more easily able to duck and dart between the engine's crevices. They receive a +2 bonus to their Reflex saves. Creatures with 5 or more ranks in the Tumble skill receive a +1 bonus to their Reflex saves.

Characters who pause in a safe area to study the path ahead of them receive a bonus to their Reflex saves. After observing the engine's rhythm for a full five minutes, they have watched long enough to see the pattern and know when to anticipate most hazards — although plenty of irregular occurrences still happen, and their own reflexes decide the final outcome. Studying the path ahead grants a bonus to Reflex saves of +2 to +4, depending on the complexity of the area and how much a character can grasp. This bonus applies only while concentrating on movement. If the characters are distracted (such as by combat), the bonus ceases.

Living within a gear forest for an extended period of time can make a character familiar enough with the area that he is no longer in danger. Just as a ranger can learn his forest so intimately that he knows the location of every predator, a cogling or clockwork ranger can learn the gear forest so well that he is



aware of every moving part. For every month of occupancy within a gear forest, subtract 1 from the DC of any danger encountered, to a minimum DC of 1. Even then, however, the character may still be delayed by the need to time his travel to avoid moving parts. If his movement exceeds walking speed, he suffers a 12% chance of encountering a hazard.

General Traits

A gear forest is illuminated by the glow of hot furnaces and gouts of flame. It is considered a low-light area. Without additional lighting, visibility is limited to 15 feet, or 30 feet for characters with low-light vision.

Gear forests are extremely noisy. Buzzing, clanging, and banging are all around. All Listen checks suffer a -2 penalty in a gear forest.

Gear forests are filled with places to hide. Unless specifically noted on the map, assume a creature can find shadows or an obstruction to hide behind in any area of a gear forest. This cover usually involves moving parts, however (even though they may not be moving when the character first ducks down). The character is still exposed to the danger of hazards while hiding. In the same manner, it's almost always possible to find cover of one-quarter or one-half, but the cover might start moving unexpectedly.

Some areas of the gear forest are virtually impassible on foot. The ground is so thickly covered with moving parts, red-hot steel, or pools of steaming liquid that climbing or jumping may be necessary. Depending on the obstruction being cleared, the penalty for failure can be loss of hit points. You should indicate these obstructed areas on your map.

Other areas may be extremely active. So many moving parts might exist that it's just downright impossible to get a sense of what's going on. In these areas, hazards may be encountered much more frequently. Coglings and other natives of the gear forests (who know it so well that they are immune to its dangers) direct combatants into these areas, hoping they'll be killed by the environment.

The ever-present piles of sludge in which the machinery sits can be fire hazards. Designate any particularly deep sludge puddles on your map. Any fire attack aimed at the pud-

dle or a creature in the puddle will instantly ignite it. The fire spreads outward to the rest of the puddle on the next round. It will last until it has burned itself out, which typically takes 1d3 rounds. Creatures caught in the fire take 1d6 damage and may catch on fire (Reflex save (DC 14) to avoid).

Summary of gear forest traits:

- 25% chance of hazard per round while walking; 50% while running or fighting
- Creatures smaller than Medium size receive +2 bonus to Reflex saves against hazards
- 5 or more ranks in Tumble skill grants +1 bonus to Reflex saves
- Studying the path ahead gives bonus to Reflex saves of +2 to +4
- Visibility of 15 feet (30 feet with low-light vision)
- All those within suffer a -2 penalty to Listen checks
- Hiding places and cover readily available
- Some areas impassable; other areas very active
- Flammable sludge piles

Ecology

Strange as it may seem, gear forests are home to a wide variety of life. The building blocks are vermin and small animals, especially insectoids and reptiles. Cold-blooded creatures are attracted to the warmth of engine rooms. One reptile, the grease lizard, has established itself as the dominant animal among the gear forest's natural denizens. Of course, there are always monsters, beasts, and aberrations that can best a grease lizard. They are somewhat less common in gear forests than in normal dungeons, but they are still present.

Intelligent denizens are another matter entirely. The heat and noise make the usual underdeep races uncomfortable in gear forests. Coglings are the most common intelligent race found in gear forests. Even if coglings are present, human clockwork rang-

er may be there as well. Relations between these two parties vary from firm alliances to tolerance, but are almost never hostile. The only other humanoids encountered with any regularity are troglodytes and kobolds.

Ferrovores, the most hated creatures on any mech, are rare in gear forests. This includes rust monsters. They are hunted and killed by coglings, who don't want to give the mech crew reason to come make repairs.

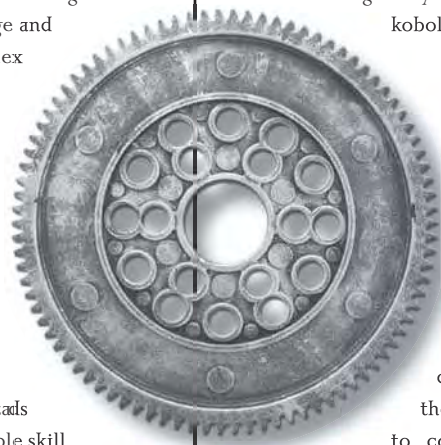
Characters will only encounter ferrovores if they have just recently invaded the mech.

Constructs are the final category of life in a gear forest. When first built, gear forests invariably include a small army of cogulus, clockwork puppets, and other special-purpose automatons. Most are programmed for specific maintenance purposes, with a few there for defense. Over time, they can be corrupted. In older engine rooms, they may be hostile, insane, or co-opted by coglings. Other constructs are introduced by various squatters or arrive of their own volition (as clockwork horrors are known to do).

URBAN AREAS

The settled levels of city-mechs vary greatly in design, size, and construction, but they have some things in common. A central marketplace level can always be found; engineering hurdles concerning delivery of water always exist; more room is always needed to grow all the food required; and the city-mech is always in need of raw materials. These and other needs routinely create conflict and the potential for adventure. Here are some ideas.

Water: Water is the most precious commodity for any steam-powered mech,





for it keeps the engines running. Water is delivered to the city-mech by way of huge reservoirs on its shoulders. Rainfall accumulates in the reservoirs, with an additional water pumped up from the city-mech's feet whenever it walks through a river or lake. In areas with little rainfall, the city-mech must routinely visit nearby lakes, which often creates conflicts with the fishermen and hunters whose territories are disturbed by the thousand-foot-tall creature sucking up their water supply.

The water is fed to the mech from the reservoir through a series of gravity-powered vertical pipes. At least one pipe goes through each level. On the poorer (lower) levels, this pipe empties into a communal bath in the center of the level, which is shared by all. On the richer (upper) levels, the city-mech has primitive plumbing built in; secondary pipes distribute the water to several smaller basins throughout the level, each of which is shared by two or more families.

Water distribution is a constant source of strife. Because a handful of vertical pipes channel the reservoir to the entire mech, upper levels can blackmail lower levels by cutting off their water supply. In fact, this is one of the state-sanctioned crimes of the thieves' guild, which often charges "water rents" to the poor lower levels. But the poor can retaliate by punching holes in the pipes that lead up from the grates in the feet, then siphoning off water whenever the mech walks through a river. Patrolling and preventing this sort of a problem are constant necessities.

Food: No city-mech produces all the food it needs. Food and metal are their two greatest imports. But city-mechs do devote substantial resources to feeding

themselves. Many of the wealthier families have small fungus farms. Entire levels are devoted to raising livestock; during the day, the walls of these levels slide aside to provide sunlight, with barred pens keeping the animals from falling out. Other levels use the same method to

grow crops, especially grains; city-mechs have never had much luck with fruits or vegetables.

Despite these efforts, city-mechs invariably require far more food than they produce. Mech fleets are encouraged to hunt when they can and bring home anything edible from their kills. Other than that, the shortfall is supplied by taxation of the surface-dwellers whom the city-mech protects.

Class Differences: Severe class stratification exists on most city-mechs, especially now that the military threat is subsiding in favor of civilian populations. The poor have cramped quarters on the lower levels, while the rich have spacious areas up high. The poor do the work that keeps the city-mech running — shoveling coal, repairing engines, fabricating parts, tending livestock — while the rich do ... nothing. On some city-mechs, the poor literally built the mech (as was the case with Nerdrik, whose citizens were

all builders), and now nonbuilder aristocrats are buying their way on board.

In no case has this reached the point of violence, but resentment is building. The idealism of the "city-mech pioneers" fades as they watch the fruits of their hard work be once more transformed into a feudalistic system.

Getting Around: Each floor has at least three staircases leading to lower levels, plus whatever passages have been built inside of private houses. Some of the lesser-used areas have only portholes and rope ladders; other

important levels have grand staircases and official entryways.

Steam-powered elevators of sorts exist; these loud, grinding rooms frighten the daylight out of almost everyone who has used one. You walk into a small windowless steel box, the door shuts, a racket louder than anything you've ever heard occurs, you feel like you're moving, then the door opens to a different room — it's an experience that seems magical to the typical medieval peasant. Usually one steam-powered elevator is in the center of the mech and several more are around the edges, all connected to the vital areas. Visiting traders use the elevators routinely to bypass the gear forests on their way to the market (freight elevators specifically for this purpose even exist), but locals almost never use them. All elevators are locked, and only the military and mech officials have keys.

Districts: As with any city, a city-mech has different districts. Some levels are devoted to housing, others to work. Generally each group of three to five floors is one "neighborhood," with the neighborhoods divided by nonhousing levels. Common districts include these:

- **Housing:** At least half of the mech's area is devoted to housing. The upper levels are spacious and well appointed, while the lower levels are cramped. Every housing level has a few main roads or alleys connecting the staircases. Very little of the floor space is public. The public corridors are lined with endless doors, some of which lead to individual dwellings while others enter "lobbies" connecting several dwellings. Every door has a lock, only a few windows exist, and at least a quarter of all dwellings are not directly connected to a public space — meaning it is quite easy to do secretive things and be noticed only by your immediate neighbors, if at all.
- **Market:** Usually one large market is in the city-mech's torso. This area occupies a full level, sometimes two, and is the official trading area for the mech. All state-sanctioned sales take place here, including transactions for imported metal and food. (The storage of the food and metal may



TABLE 6-1: UNUSUAL FEATURES ON A CITY-MECH

ROLL (D20)	FEATURE
1	Very low ceilings (such as a level designed for halflings or gnomes).
2	High ceilings (the trader level, designed for visiting humans or elves).
3	A staircase sealed off with very old bricks and mortar.
4	An area conspicuously walled off.
5	A previously undiscovered hull breach.
6	A gang of ruffians, protected by the thieves' guild, is extorting tolls from anyone who wants to travel up the most convenient staircase.
7	All residents of this level seem to be involved in some sort of cult.
8	A nasty slum, worse than any other level on the city-mech.
9	Part of the floor has been collapsed to make room for taller residents below.
10	A monster has breached the hull and settled on the level, using <i>charm person</i> or other similar abilities to ensure that no one complains about its presence.
11	The level has a radically different culture than the one above/below it.
12	A dividing wall separates the level into two sides, each with its own identity and culture. The wall extends several levels deep, creating two "towns" that are rivals (or even enemies) and never meet.
13	Rotting infrastructure: weak walls and leaky plumbing. A child fell through the floor last month, but "they won't come fix it."
14	Rubbish heaps on the floor.
15	The rubbish comes from open portals in the ceiling, which lead to the wealthier upper levels, whose residents simply dump their garbage on those below.
16	All stairways leading to lower levels have been sealed, and the residents claim it's always been that way — but evidence suggests otherwise.
17	The door to one particular dwelling simply can't be located, no matter how you navigate the winding passages.
18	Strange noises come from that (or another) dwelling at night.
19	The staircases to one level seem particularly long. Upon investigation, it seems that they were carefully walled off to bypass one level.
	The mysterious "forgotten level" hasn't been accessed for years.
20	Stowaways are protected by a sympathetic mage (via illusion spells and the like).

take place on other levels, but the official buildings and records are here.) The usual assortment of merchants and craftsmen peddle their wares from rows of stalls. In most cases these are rented, not owned; rental fees go to the city-mech's coffers. Unusual goods available for sale in a city-mech include an impressive array of steam-powered gear (such as steam guns, flame nozzles, steambreathers, and so on), smithed goods of the highest quality (including plenty of masterwork items, since the best blacksmiths invariably are accepted to live on a city-mech), and the most exotic spices, fabrics, and household goods from anywhere within 1,000 miles of the city-mech (since they are the center of wide-ranging, highly mobile networks of mech traders).

At least one fifth of the market is dedicated to rotating stalls, where visiting mech traders can display their wares. These stalls have new sets of goods almost every week, which are always a focus of attention since they are invariably exotic

or highly valuable. Of course, most of the mech traders bring loads which they would prefer to sell in bulk, but they are happy to display small samples of the latest drow spidersilk or elven darkwood, since the delighted responses of everyday folks show the bulk buyers how popular the items will be.

- **Livestock:** As described above.
- **Military:** Many areas are under military control. Any area with a weapon is locked and often has a military guard. The hands and feet are almost always 100% military, though the arms and legs have plenty of civilians, especially close to the torso.
- **Control Room:** Several levels of military facilities exist, at the head of which is the control room. This is the nerve center of the entire mech, and it is off-limits to almost everyone.



- **Foundries:** Quite a few levels are devoted to blacksmithing, metal refining, parts fabrication, and new mech construction. The foundries are always close to the gear forests. This puts the repairs area right next to the location where repairs are most needed, and also reduces the distance imported metal must be hauled. One section of the foundries is a construction zone where the floors have been removed for several levels. This space has a ceiling clearance of nearly 50 feet and is used for assembling parts of new mechs. A massive freight elevator carries the parts down to the hangar, where they are assembled.

- **Hangars:** The hangars are the mech's feet and shins. Huge vaulted spaces hold smaller mechs snugly in space as the city-mech walks. These hangars are secure, locked, and well guarded. They usually hold only military mechs.

- **Docking bays:** Around each ankle of the mech is a wide, flat platform, like a plate or saucer built around the leg. This plat-



form is divided into trapezoidal sections so it can be folded onto the leg when necessary. Most of the time, however, it is open, where it plays host to visiting mechs. They are mostly traders or military mechs from other city-mechs.

As the city-mech strides along, the platform rocks and rolls like the deck of a sailing ship. Most of the mech is fairly stable when in motion, but not the feet! This takes some getting used to. Mechs are heavy enough to remain in place despite the rocking, but they are still chained in place as a precaution; if the city-mech enters combat, the sudden motion can send things toppling.

The process of boarding a city-mech can be harrowing. Every mech, whether docked in the hangars or the docking bays, must time its steps to the motion of the city-mech. The lowest edge of the docking bay dips to within ten feet of the ground (bumping into it on uneven terrain). The boarding mech must run alongside, end up in just the right spot, and step onto the trailing section of the docking bay for the ten seconds it is reachable. The boarding mech then rises with the docking bay on the city-mech's next step. A wrong step in boarding can mean being kicked aside, knocked over, or even crushed by the city-mech. It's rare, but it does happen. (See page 88 for detailed boarding rules.)

In times of danger, the docking bay is a vulnerable place. It's wide open and easy to board. In such times the owners of all visiting mechs are required to man their mechs as they rest on the docking bay, using their weapons to defend the city-mech

- **Gear Forests:** And last are the gear forests, as described above.

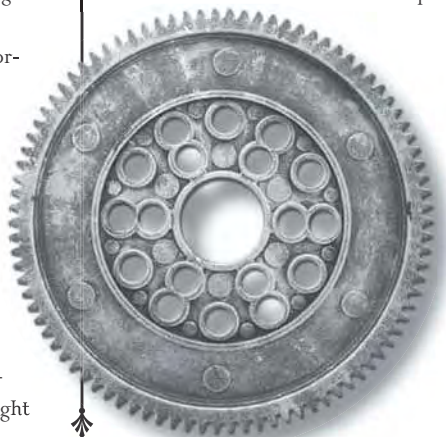
Blocked Areas: It's easy to block off part of a city-mech. On the residential levels, walling off a single hallway can seal in dozens of homes. Protracted disputes have resulted in just such things occurring. One level on Nedderpik had the misfortune of coincidentally housing both sides of a generations-old family feud. One side built a wall right

down the middle of the level, with no access to the opposite area, then literally hacked a hole in the floor and ceiling to give access to the adjacent levels. It has been that way ever since. Walled-off areas are few and far between, but they present opportunities for adventure. In the hot, desolate foundries right above the gear forests could be a wall that has been there as long as anyone can remember. Why? What's behind it? Within the gear forests themselves, areas could be walled off by stowaways. Maybe a stall in the market always seems closed

Hull Breaches: Hull breaches are generally repaired as quickly as possible. No one gains from having a hole in the side of the mech; it makes everyone vulnerable.

That said, breaches can't always be fixed promptly. On a city-mech with 3,500 people, the authorities might have something better to attend to. By the time they get around to the breach, it has been forgotten or taken care of by the locals. One level on Durganlok has been breached for decades, but since the locals bricked off the immediate area, no one has ever bothered to fix it properly. In effect, a cave is now on the side of the city-mech: The original hole in the side (caused by several faulty iron panels, which just fell off) and the roughly sixty square feet of space behind it have no access to the rest of the level. If a flying or climbing creature could reach the breach, could it now be living in the *de facto* cave? No one knows

Unusual Features: Table 6-1 presents a number of unusual features that can be used to personalize a city-mech level. You can roll 1d20 or pick.



INTEGRATING MECHS INTO EXISTING CAMPAIGNS

Fantasy mechs can be integrated into any campaign setting. You don't need to run your game in Highpoint to use them. Explaining their appearance within an existing setting may be a bit tricky, but it's no trickier than explaining the appearance of the tarrasque; after all, these are *fantasy* games, and it's perfectly permissible to allow for the sudden appearance of heretofore untold marvels

For the sake of internal consistency, however, you should introduce mechs in a planned way. They are so powerful that they can swing balances of power wildly and quickly. Just as the horse was the most powerful armored assault vehicle for thousands of years of human history (and, in many fantasy campaigns, still is), mechs can assume the same mantle: an unstoppable military machine. If one kingdom deploys mechs in a war of conquest, its neighbors had better get their own mechs fast.

The most entertaining way to bring mechs into an existing campaign is to treat them as lost artifacts of a bygone age. Imagine: Thousands of years ago, mechs existed. Their use dwindled for a variety of reasons: wars with magical outsiders; replacement by easier-to-maintain golems and magical constructs; a shift in magical energies or interests that reduced the number of magic users available to maintain them. Over time, the empty mechs rusted into aged hulks, bipedal testaments to a lost era. Most eventually collapsed. But three survived. One was sealed, repainted, and installed as a monumental statue in the capital city. Now no one remembers that its interior contains an engine. A second was stored below the sea in an underground air pocket, where it has been kept dry and clean by a monk order called the Brotherhood of Gears. They await their avatar to bring the mech to life. The



final mech was buried in a titanic battle with earth elementals. That strange humanoid-shaped mountain in the distance is actually a buried mech, ready to come to life if it can be entered and cleared of the monsters that now occupy it.

Alternatively, mechs may have existed all along as part of the world's mythology — and now the characters discover they're real. Or perhaps the mechs are still active but few in number.

They wander the world and periodically come into contact with known civilizations. What if the mechs were primordial creations, constructed thousands of years ago, that have been built upon since? They may have massive unexplored dungeons in their lower levels; the areas where people once lived are now derelict and occupied by monsters.

Once mechs do make an appearance, the world will change. First, the powers that be will seek to control this new marvel. Kings will fear the mech's ability to destroy their armies. They will try to steal it, control it, or copy it as fast as possible. Second, threats to civilized society will be reduced by an order of magnitude. Rampaging dragons? No big deal; bring in the mechs. Dwarven mechs in particular will have the greatest repercussions, because they can be built with no magical requirements; any king with deep pockets, intelligent sages, and a few hired dwarves or gnomes can construct one. Third, the changed nature of warfare may encourage changes in daily life. Traditionally, peasants congregate around castles because they provide safety. Now they may con-

gregate around mechs ... but because mechs are huge, and they can move, some peasants may live on the mechs, growing crops in terraces carved out of its hull.

If these changes are too much for you, introduce mechs more sparingly. Incorporate natural limitations on their role in the world. For example, constructing a mech requires an enormous amount of metal.

Even if an ancient mech is discovered and restarted, neighboring kings may be unable to build their own for lack of sufficient metal deposits. Of course, they could still build some of the old-fashioned stone mechs, but those aren't quite as powerful. Alternatively, a powerful religious order could decry the mechs as an affront to the gods. "Who are we," they say, "to build metal mockeries of the gods?" Suddenly the entire mech movement is squashed at its beginnings.

Introducing mechs into your world can constitute an enormous story arc covering many, many adventures. Characters at low levels may hear rumors or legends concerning the ancient walking mechanical men. At the middle levels they could discover evidence of such constructions, via ancient tomes or miniature working models. At the

higher levels they could learn that such things really did exist, then embark on a great quest to find one of the three remaining mechs.

An alternative to introducing the "mechs

of the ancients" is to let mechs evolve naturally. That's the approach we've taken with Highpoint. A series of events defined circumstances favorable to mechs. Instead of lunar rain and massive dragons, your world could include another series of events. Invaders are a good prescription for the protection afforded by mechs. The mechs may even have existed for hundreds of years as expensive curiosities; only now are the prototypes altered for practical use. The invaders must be something out of the ordinary, however; orc hordes aren't enough to send society into mechs (unless they're truly orc hordes like

nothing the world has ever seen before). Outsiders from another plane, demons or devils, dragons, even a plague that has sent the giants into a frenzied, rabid state of mind — the enemies should be insurmountable without the aid of mechs.

Once mechs are in your world, give them time to settle. It might take many years of game time for stories of the mechs to be accepted as real in all parts of the world. In areas under mech control, people associated with mechs will have instant social status. First-level mech jockeys may be afforded more prestige than 10th-level fighters. The displacement of cavalry and traditional modes of warfare will undoubtedly cause rivalries and resentment, as will any changes forced upon commoners. Peasants who go from tilling their fields to shoveling coal into a mech's furnace might not be too happy!

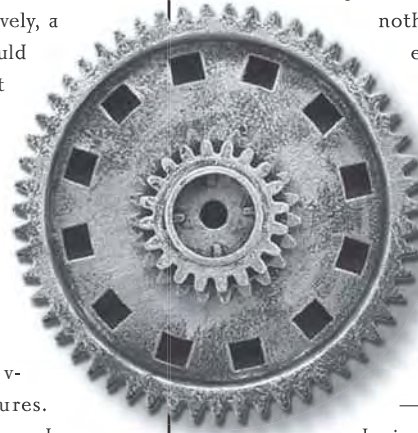
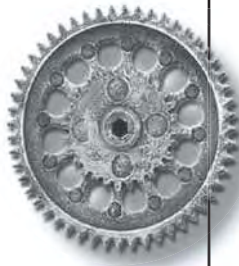




PLATE 8 *The city-mech serves as an excellent starting point for any DragonMech campaign.*



CITY-MECH NEDDERPIK

NEDDERPIK IS A LARGE CITY-MECH UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE GEARWRIGHTS GUILD. IT WAS THE SECOND CITY-MECH EVER BUILT. EVEN THOUGH MECH TECHNOLOGY WAS NEW TO THE DWARVES WHEN NEDDERPIK WAS CONSTRUCTED, THE MECH WAS DESIGNED USING THE SAME PRINCIPLES PARILUS APPLIED TO DURGAN-LOK, AND THE CONSTRUCTION WAS SUPERVISED BY THE THREE JUNIOR GEARWRIGHTS HE LEFT BEHIND. THIS WAS THE ONLY CITY-MECH WHOSE CONSTRUCTION THEY SUPERVISED. AS A RESULT, NEDDERPIK IS ACTUALLY FAR MORE ADVANCED THAN MANY OTHER CITY-MECHS BUILT AT LATER DATES, WHICH WERE LED BY THE COGLAYER APPRENTICES OF THE GEARWRIGHTS WHO BUILT NEDDERPIK.

In the early days the Guild maintained a crisis-situation mentality where only essential personnel were allowed on board Nedderpik. Now that the Stenian Confederacy has largely secured its territory, Nedderpik is far more open to traders, refugees, and wanderers — making it a perfect starting or stopping point for adventurers.

STATS

NEDDERPIK
Size: City-mech E
Power Source: Steam
Payload Units: 8,224
Height: 1,200 ft.
Space/Reach: 600 ft. by 600 ft./600 ft.
Crew: 2,056
Firing Ports: 987
Hit Dice: 718
Hit Points: 3,949
Critical Thresholds: Green; Yellow 1,975; Orange 987; Red 395
Base Initiative: -5
Speed: 180 ft.
Maneuverability: Clumsy
AC: 2

Hardness: 28 (Iron, City-mech E)
Base melee attack: +20
Base ranged attack: -5
Unarmed Damage: 11d6 +28
Trample: Largest City-mech B; safe Colossal V; damage 13d6
Saves: Fort -2, Ref -8, Will -
Abilities: Str 66, Dex 0, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —
Mechcraft DC: 80
Base Planning Time: 160 days
Base Cost: 1,424,589 gp
Total Cost: 1,497,818 gp (does not include weapons)
Labor Requirements: 1,966,080 man-hours
Construction Time: 125 days (1,970 avg. laborers plus 197 overseers)

COMBAT TACTICS

Nedderpik is extraordinarily difficult to attack. It has an arsenal of weaponry, a powerful fleet of smaller defense mechs, and the benefit of sheer size. Given the rarity of direct assaults on city-mechs to begin with, most of its defenses are aimed at ground raiders, boarding actions, and hit-and-run

assaults, rather than head-to-head combats with mechs of equal size.

Nedderpik's mech fleet emphasizes relatively small mechs — most of the force is size Gargantuan. These are constantly patrolling the ground near the city-mech's feet. They are small enough to detect and pursue humanoids, whether singly or in small raiding parties.

The city-mech's legs are heavily defended against ground raiders. Each leg has a total of 10 cupola-mounted steamguns only a few dozen feet off the ground. These are always manned. With their overlapping fields of fire, the mech can hit any individual target long before it manages to sneak up on the mech.

If the steamguns fail, or if the mech is overwhelmed by a large force, each leg has a steambreather as back-up. With their cone-shaped area effect and 360-degree track mounting, the steambreathers can engage huge crowds of humanoid targets with a single shot. The left arm wields a Gargantuan flame nozzle that can also be used against ground raiders. As a last resort, the mech can bring its 987 firing ports to bear, although most of these are on the torso and are too far from the ground to be effective against land forces.

Against enemy mechs or large targets (such as giants or dragons), the city-mech has an impressive array of steam cannons. A total of six are mounted near ground level on the legs. Nine more are mounted on the torso and head. An array of javelin racks is mounted in the torso to deal with flying attackers.

Nedderpik has only a few defenses against attacks from large mechs. The first is its mech fleet. The second is the enormous steam cannon mounted in its head. This has a limited fire arc but is utterly devastating against anything foolish enough to enter its range. Finally, there are the arms. Each one has a bore puncher, and the right arm also has a lobsterclaw. If attacked by another large mech, Nedderpik uses its bore punchers to install assault squads that attempt to fight their way to the other mech's control room and kill its pilots. Once they're installed, it attacks with the lobsterclaw.

The main weakness of Nedderpik — and most other city-mechs — is its ponderous movement and lack of maneuverability. It is



TABLE 7-1: NEDDERPIK PAYLOAD USAGE

PU	Use
6,936 W	Workspace, living quarters, and common spaces for 3,468 Medium-size civilians and crew
736	Luxurious living quarters for 210 aristocrats, Gearwrights Guild officials, and senior military personnel
64 F	Foundry for building mechs of Colossal II size or smaller
160	Hangar space for mech fleet
328	On-board weaponry
8,224	(Total)

PLUS 160 MORE PU OF OPEN-AIR MECH STORAGE ON EACH LEG'S DOCKING STATION.

vulnerable to attacks from the rear, especially fleet-footed mechs that can move behind it and launch bore punchers or other raiding apparatus. Nedderpik addresses this with a combination of a rear-mounted chain tentacle and a buzzsaw. Rear attackers are speared and drawn into the buzzsaw, where they are shredded. If that doesn't work, the city-mech also has two steam cannons, just in case.

In fact, given this impressive array of weaponry, the mech's main worry isn't outright attack. It's stalkers and other infiltrators, who gain access legitimately through disguise or subterfuge, or use hiding techniques or magic to get on board. To this end, the Gearwrights Guild maintains strong ties with a sophisticated thieves' guild that is firmly entrenched in Nedderpik's politics. Under the table, the thieves' guild acts as an unofficial arm of the Gearwrights. In exchange for the authorities looking the other way on a number of minor extortion rackets, the guild patrols the mech's lower areas, with a special focus on detecting those who can get past the mech's conventional defenses. It's all under the table, of course, and the Gearwrights Guild would prefer more honorable methods ... but these days, you do what you gotta do.

APPEARANCE

Outside: Nedderpik is as tall as a 120-story building. It has a bulky humanoid shape with dwarven proportions — very wide and very stocky. It is covered with chimneys and smokestacks, which alternately release scalding hot steam from the steam engines and

choking black smoke from the coal fires that keep the engines running. The hull is armored in thick plates of cast iron, reinforced with limited quantities of mithral at entry points and critical areas such as the control room.

Nedderpik's feet and shins are mech hangars. Its knees and lower thighs are the gear forest that runs most of its functions. Human habitation begins above the thighs. Transportation between the torso and mech hangars occurs via steam-powered cargo elevators. Each leg has four such elevators. They aren't used that often, however. Except when stopped at a settlement, the only people making the trip up or down are military personnel.

The hangars are augmented by open-air docking stations around the mech's feet. These wide, flat platforms look like saucers from a distance. Stenian mechs are anchored to the docking stations when they aren't on patrol. Each platform is independently hinged and can be raised or lowered as the need arises.

Interior: Nedderpik was built by dwarves for dwarves. The ceilings are five feet tall, though some areas have been retrofitted to make foreign visitors more comfortable.

Dwarves have darkvision, so the Guild never thought to install lighting within the mech. In many places it is utterly dark. The influx of gnome laborers, as well as human and elven traders, necessitated some sort

of lighting. The restricted military levels are still completely dark, but other areas now have limited lighting. Businesses usually put torches of some sort in front of their storefronts. Public areas are lit by gas "streetlights" or torch sconces. Individuals without darkvision carry torches or lanterns on them, just in case, as many parts of the mech are still dark.

Air is recycled via gigantic metal fans that run constantly around the mech's exterior. Their rhythmic droning provides a never-ending backdrop to the roar of the engine rooms. Despite the builders' attempts to maintain good air circulation, the air is always muggy and hot. The center areas — where most people live — have virtually no circulation. Coupled with the fact that the engines generate a lot of heat, and a lot of warm bodies are living in close proximity, the whole affair can become pretty uncomfortable. Of course, dwarves are used to such conditions from life in their underdeep strongholds, but other races aren't.

Mannerisms: Tight quarters and a military regime combine to make Nedderpik a haven for lawful characters. Nations display a striking tendency toward order. They form lines naturally and wait patiently. Market crowds unconsciously form lanes, moving along in an orderly fashion. Badges of rank, authority, or merit are proudly displayed and willfully acknowledged.

GETTING ON BOARD

Essential Personnel: Getting on board a mech isn't as hard as it used to be, but it's still not easy. Longtime mech residents have metal medallions stamped with their names. This is a legal record of their

TABLE 7-2: MECH FLEET

MECH MODEL	SIZE	PU	QUANTITY	TOTAL PU
Scorpion	Colossal II	64	1	64
Lancer	Gargantuan	16	2	32
Juggernaut	Gargantuan	16	4	64
Total				160



residence on the mech. The names on the medallions are matched against a master list maintained by the mech's administrators, so someone who has his medallion stolen can get a new one — but the thief still might be able to use a stolen medallion to get on board an otherwise secure mech before the theft is detected. To that end, mech residents protect their medallions carefully. While on board the mech they keep them safely secured, and they guard them religiously while offboard.

Convincing the mech administration to let a nonresident on board is not easy. Nedderpik divides petitioners for space into two categories: essential and nonessential. Essential applicants have skills that are useful to the mech. After passing a brief interview (and the discreet casting of *detect evil*), they're admitted on the spot. Essential skills vary depending on the mech's current population, but usually include coglayers and mech jockeys, fighter types who are willing to serve at least part-time in the mech's military (including fighters, warriors, rangers, paladins, and barbarians), clerics and adepts who will provide medical care, and experts with skill in blacksmithing and engineering. Wizards and sorcerers are occasionally needed, but they're not in as high demand as the other classes.

Nonessential personnel includes everyone else. Those who petition for permanent residence are treated differently from those who petition for temporary admittance. The permanent residents are evaluated based on how much they'll contribute to the mech versus how much they'll take from it. Having any sort of skill or craft goes a long way to recommending someone. Unskilled labor is a dime a dozen and rarely makes it on board.

Temporary admittance is generally granted to traders, especially those with legitimate business, political, or religious concerns, provided the mech administrators don't consider them stowaway risks. Most adventurers can board a mech temporarily on grounds of trade or hands-for-hire, provided they're not muddy and bloody when they try to get on board. Temporary admittance is for periods ranging from one day (for local traders) to up to six months (for paying passengers traveling safely on the mech). Extensions are avail-

TABLE 7-3: ON-BOARD WEAPONS

LOCATION	ARC OF FIRE W	WEAPONRY	PU
Head	45° forward	Colossal III steam cannon	64
		2x Gargantuan steam cannons	16
Left arm	180° forward	Gargantuan bore puncher	8
		Gargantuan flame nozzle	8
Right arm	180° forward	Gargantuan bore puncher	8
		Colossal lobsterclaw	16
Torso	45° forward	4x Huge javelin racks	16
		4x Huge steam cannons	16
	45° backward	Gargantuan chain tentacle	8
		2x Gargantuan steam cannons	16
Left leg	180/360°*	Colossal buzzsaw	16
		Colossal steambreather	16
		2x Colossal steam cannons	32
Right leg	180/360°*	10x cupola-mounted personal steamguns	20
		Colossal steambreather	16
		4x Gargantuan steam cannons	32
		10x cupola-mounted personal steamguns	20

*SINGLE WEAPONS HAVE A 180-DEGREE ARC OF FIRE FACING ONE DIRECTION. THEY ARE ARRANGED SUCH THAT EVERY ARC OF FIRE IS COVERED, HOWEVER. UNLESS ATTACKERS ARE COMING FROM EVERY DIRECTION AND IT REALLY MATTERS WHAT SHOOT AT WHAT, ASSUME AT LEAST HALF OF THE LEG-MOUNTED WEAPONS CAN HIT ANY GIVEN TARGET. THE STEAMBREATHERS ARE AN EXCEPTION; THEY ARE MOUNTED ON A MOVEABLE TRACK NEAR GROUND LEVEL SO THAT THEY CAN REPEL BOARDERS FROM ANY DIRECTION. THE STEAMBREATHER HAS A 180-DEGREE ARC OF FIRE IN WHATEVER DIRECTION IT FACES. IT CAN SHIFT FACING BY UP TO 45 DEGREES PER ROUND.

able, though it's a bureaucratic process.

As one might surmise, immigration administration is a big aspect of managing the mech. Housing on a mech is at a high premium, and at every stop, Nedderpik is besieged by peasants looking for safety. Of course, despite the well defined application process, mistakes and loopholes occur. A fat purse filled with gold will get anyone on board, though the price has been rising — it takes 5,000 gp to get a medallion these days, and that's just on the lower levels. Aristocrats have been known to pay ten times that much for higher-level housing. Nepotism and connections to the Guild also help certain applicants. More than one idle malingerer has gotten a room on the mech because his uncle is a prominent Gearwright.

Housing: Housing on a mech is in short supply. Families of four live in 10x10 rooms. Individuals rarely have more than half that amount of space.

The very upper and very lower levels of Nedderpik are considered Guild property.

Residents on the upper levels pay rent to the Guild; they do not own their living quarters. The lower level slums don't pay any sort of rent, but their space is completely unofficial (in other words, space is allocated by the laws of the jungle) and subject to reclamation by the Guild if it needs to expand the engine rooms.

In the rest of the mech, individuals can own "land" just as modern condominium residents own space in a larger building. Space is bought, sold, traded, and leased for a variety of purposes. The mech's strict immigration policies enforce an indirect version of rent control, in that the demand for property never exceeds the supply by a great margin. Even so, vacant properties are still snapped up quickly, and you can be assured of selling for more than you bought.

The Guild is well aware of the danger of large property owners buying blocks of space and controlling who lives on the mech. The Guild has a number of policies in place to prevent this, including limitations on how



much space an individual can own. The Guild also has right of first refusal to purchase any available space on the mech. It has been known to intervene and purchase high-demand properties for below-market prices to make sure they are available to newly settling essential personnel. In the cases of highly essential residents, the Guild buys space then provides it free of charge, giving the occupants a one-year period before they have to either buy it, start paying rent, or move out. The Guild also maintains blocks of property that it gives free to certain essential professionals (such as coglayers).

Characters are unlikely to own “land” unless they or a relative is essential personnel. As a rule of thumb, it’s a good idea to declare that the characters live in property owned and provided by the Guild. A character whose parents were engineers, or who has several ranks in Profession (engineer), may live in a Guild-owned apartment.

Sea Legs: A mech is constantly in motion. Someone standing on one of Nedderpik’s hundred-plus levels will feel the floor rising and falling in a never-ending rhythm as the mech walks across the landscape. When the mech speeds up, the sensation becomes stronger; when it stops, the rhythm does, too.

Longtime residents don’t even notice this anymore, but newcomers to a city-mech have to get their “sea legs” before they can move comfortably. They are constantly thrown off-balance by the mech’s rhythmic rocking. Characters who haven’t been on a city-mech before must spend their first month on board with a –1 penalty to Dexterity. If they attempt to move faster than a walk, they must make a Reflex save (DC 14) each time or fall over. After a month, they get their sea legs and can move normally on the mech. Note that this is different than the usual “mechsickness” experienced when boarding a smaller mech; it is more of an annoyance than a source of nausea.

Finding Home: One of the interesting aspects of life aboard a mech is that your home moves about. Leave for a quick dungeon crawl and your city’s gone when you come back!

As with all Stenian city-mechs, Nedderpik patrols a fixed territory. It generally follows the same loop month after month, so it will eventually pass close to any place it has been before. Most of the time, it moves at a leisurely pace, stopping several times a day to let on visitors. This lets fast-moving mechs catch up with it, or, at the very least, cut a straight line across its circular path and meet it at the next pass. Of course, it helps that Nedderpik is the size of a skyscraper: In level terrain (or from the top of any tree-sized mech) you can see where it is at a pretty great distance.

Even though you know the mech’s coming back, you still might have to wait a while. It can take a good month for Nedderpik to make the rounds, so to speak. A crisis situation may require it to stay in one place for a while, necessitating waiting, waiting, and more waiting. Adventurers should always be prepared to spend a while on the surface, or split their time between Nedderpik and a more predictable home (such as Edge or another city). Alternatively, they could just have fast transportation capable of catching up with their home.



GOVERNMENT AND MAJOR FACTIONS

Nedderpik is ruled by a complicated system that has yet to find a balance. Three factions exist: the mech commander, known as the Admiral Navigator; a three-man (er, dwarf) council called the Council of Navigators; and the Gearwrights Guild. The Council of Navigators is responsible for general mech policy and law, and for determining the mech’s course. The mech commander is responsible for day-to-day execution and for all aspects of mech piloting. The Gearwrights Guild has little involvement in government other than through maintaining the mech and constantly upgrading its systems, but it officially owns the mech and often interferes in all manner of affairs.

The three factions are in a constant state of flux. Although politics never get nasty, they do become confusing and bureaucratic, and important decisions are delayed or diluted for political reasons. Because the mech was built outside the traditional dwarven clan structure, it has embarked into uncharted political territory and no firm sense of authority has been established by any faction. So far no single strong leader who can unite the disparate forces has emerged, though many crew members hope one shall someday arise.

The current Admiral Navigator is “Steel” Dworgen (dwarf male Mcj 17), better known as “The Steel Admiral,” a nickname he picked up in the mech fleets for his steadfast piloting. A veritable legion of subordinate mech jockeys reports to him, each controlling one minor aspect of the mech’s piloting. In extreme cases, “Steel” takes the controls himself, but usually another dwarf does the piloting.

The current Council of Navigators consists of one elder clansman, one senior gearwright, and one high-ranking military general. Currently the three officials are Lord Thulin (dwarf male Ftr 6/Ari 8), Gearwright Trigus (dwarf male Cog 9/Grt 9), and General Gunnar (dwarf male Ftr 19). Each is appointed to an indefinite term by his respective faction.



SOCIETY

The vertical nature of a city-mech imbues it with a strict hierarchy, whether the designers intended it or not. The most prominent citizens live on the upper levels, with prominence declining as the levels do. The hierarchy on Nedderpik is as follows. The upper reaches are at the head; the lower levels are at the thighs or lower. This does not include the hangars in the shins, which are a special case; most troops assigned there have permanent quarters with other military personnel.

- Council of Navigators, Admiral Navigator, and Gearwrights Guild
- Mech jockeys and clan aristocrats
- Engineers, technicians, coglayers; mech crew; clergy
- General military personnel, including most fighter types
- Wizards and most merchants
- Craftsmen
- Farmers
- Laborers

ECONOMY

As far as interaction with surrounding areas goes, Nedderpik has an unusual economy. It is essentially a huge military base supported by the land around it. As such, its main imports are raw metal, foodstuffs, wood, and coal. Its main exports are services: military protection and shelter, though it also produces a large number of finished metal goods.

The domestic economy is more traditional. Laborers refine metal, grow food, shovel coal and wood, and keep the engines running. Craftsmen fabricate parts, maintain the mech, design and build new mechs and other constructs, and keep weapons production up. The military crews the mech and its fleet, protecting nearby areas in the process. Finally, the secondary labor pool tends to the needs of the mech crew itself, including tailors, carpenters, and other craftsmen.

The mech is a huge population base, and a thriving trade exists between its residents and traders who visit for short periods. But docking a mech on Nedderpik's docking bays isn't free. The price depends on the mech's size:

SIZE D	DAILY DOCKING FEE
Huge	10 gp
Gargantuan	20 gp
Colossal	35 gp
Colossal II	50 gp

Nedderpik has three main markets at varying levels, and the goods are pricier and rarer as you advance higher. Numerous local "mini markets" where basic foodstuffs and supplies are sold are also placed every two or three levels. Otherwise, the mech's layout is typical for a city-mech, as described on page 218.

MILITARY

The highest military rank on Nedderpik is the Admiral Navigator, who is always drawn from the military's mech jockeys. He technically outranks the generals, though he always defers to them in matters of strategy, just as they defer to him in matters of mech commanding.

Nedderpik's military mirrors the three divisions of the Stenian Confederacy, which are the Footman Guard (ground troops), Mechanized Assault (the mech fleets), and Mechanized Defense (the city-mechs, especially their weapons use).

The Footman Guard maintains order on the mech, acting as police with a separate judges division. No civilian police or judges exist. They also handle ground warfare as needed, as well as repelling boarders. They are in charge of handing out citizenship medallions and managing immigration issues.

Mechanized Assault patrols the areas around the mech, attacks relevant threats, escorts cargo vessels, and transports footmen as needed.

Mechanized Defense controls the mech's guns and subpiloting according to the Admi-

ral Navigator's commands. It controls the hangar bays and the open-air docking stations, and determines which mechs can dock and for how long.

ORGANIZATIONS

The Gearwrights Guild has a very strong presence on Nedderpik, as does the College of Constructors, which maintains a construct lab there. Usually two or three DragonMech pilots are on board, though they tend to come and go. The thieves' guild is unusually powerful, due to its under-the-table arrangement with the Gearwrights Guild for maintaining order in the mech's lower levels.

In addition to these, a number of organizations on board are unique to Nedderpik:

Ball & Bolt: This military club is devoted to combat with ranged weapons, especially from moving mechs. Members are hard-core military officers, mostly mech jockeys and fighters with mech weapon proficiencies, who practice whenever they can. If a mech patrol has a spare gunner seat, you can be sure that someone from Ball & Bolt has talked his way onto it.

Jousting Crows: An informal mech jockey association. Primarily a social club; no actual jousting takes place. They're named after the Jousting Crow tavern, a pub on Nedderpik's upper levels. All mech jockeys are free to join, regardless of military affiliation or citizenship.

Cannoneers: A group of mathematically inclined artillery crew (mostly mech jockeys and fighters with siege weapon proficiencies) who train incessantly with their steam cannons. Devoted to both physical training and the mathematics of artillery fire, the group has uncovered several hitherto unknown rules of geometry and is on the way to developing what we know as modern trigonometry. Initially regarded as esoteric and useless, the association is rapidly gaining respect among the gearwrights, who are starting to see practical applications for their discoveries. Anyone can join, but members with Int lower than 17 will have a hard time following the conversation.



DESIGNER'S NOTES

DragonMech was born on a sunny summer day in Atlanta, Georgia. I was reading a gaming magazine and happened upon an ad for a sci-fi mech game. I started thinking about how mechs don't really fit into a sword-and-sorcery setting... then wondered if there was a way to make them fit. Over the next year and a half, this thought developed into **DragonMech**.

The first playtest was in January 2003. The adventuring party consisted of standard fantasy characters (the new classes weren't fully developed yet), and the setting was a city-mech. Like all great first-level adventures, this one started with, "There's a problem, and you'll be paid well to fix it." The problem was a clogged water pipe somewhere deep in the city-mech, but it wasn't the city-mech government that was hiring the characters. Instead, it was the thieves' guild, which had a good protection racket going by siphoning water off the city-mech's pipes and selling it to those who should be getting it for free. The guild needed the problem fixed before it brought public attention to their scheme.

The descent into the gear forest introduced the players to coglings (which in this adventure were ferocious natives bent on defending their turf), grease lizards, and the myriad hazards of endless engine rooms. The opening encounter had a hidden cogling with a crossbow, who managed to drop the gnome wizard less than 5 minutes into the game. The gnome got toted around in a sack for a while until the characters found a cleric to cure him. As soon as they got back into the gear forest, the other gnome (a bard) got dropped. The remaining players were eager to get going at this point, so the bard's unconscious body spent several hours of game time stuffed in a sack. Conveniently, the next session saw the introduction of a new player who had been talked into playing a cleric. "Garrick

the cleric" immediately healed the bard and the group was back in business.

The gear forest had a "sludge river" that formed from pools of grease, oil, and mechanical byproducts. A massive grease lizard ruled the river. As I recall, the players were about to use a typical scorched-earth policy to literally ignite the sludge river, hoping to toast the grease lizard that was lurking within, when they suddenly remembered that hours of exploring the gear forest had left them coated in flammable grease! Self-immolation was avoided, and they fought the grease lizard the old-fashioned way.

The heroes finally found the source of the problem on the next level of the gear forest, which was flooded (with water, that is). It turned out the city-mech's intake valves had sucked up a small locathah tribe when the city-mech waded through a surface lake not long ago. The locathah chieftain blasted a hole in the water pipe to escape, and now the tribe was living in a flooded gear forest while trying to figure where the hell they'd ended up. The final battle was against a locathah cleric with a *wand of water control* who used it to submerge the entire room, including the PCs. As the DM, I enforced a no-communication-between-players rule during that battle (submerged PCs couldn't speak, of course, so neither should the players), and I reminded the players each turn of how many rounds were left until their characters drowned. This battle was great – there was no light source, so half the PCs were blinded, and not a one of them had expected to be swimming in a city-mech, so they were all unprepared. After many tense moments, they finally grappled the cleric, wasted his summoned octopuses, and killed him before anyone drowned.

From there, the campaign progressed into the ruins of the flatlands, where the PCs had to find a cleric who had vanished on a mission to convert hard-drinking miners. The mine was of course built around several

huge moon-meteors rich in ore. One meteor contained a temple of Seroficitacit. Several lunar skinstealers had survived the drop to earth, unbeknownst to the miners who accidentally opened a shaft into the temple. The adventure plot was multi-tiered: lunar skinstealers were possessing people and trying to take over the mining camp, while the foreman was concealing the fact that he was skimming profits off the top. This created two entirely separate sets of suspicions, intrigue, and danger. I expected this adventure to last two sessions but it took more than six sessions as the PCs slowly unraveled the complicated situation (getting arrested during the process) and finally found the cleric's body. It was in this adventure that the lunar skinstealers earned the nickname that stuck with them for the rest of the campaign: "moon carpets."

The PCs soon had a mech of their own, and the next stage of the campaign was a cross-country trek to the city of Edge. The former owner of their mech had bequeathed them a strange crystal artifact, and hinted at a mysterious prophecy before he died. The rest of the prophecy could be learned from his sister in Edge – but all the PCs had to work with was a first name. The journey to Edge sent them into several mech battles, where we first started to really test the mech-to-mech combat rules. It was from these and subsequent mech combats that I settled on the mech rules, always with the helpful (and never-ending) input of the group.

My concept for the mechs of **DragonMech** is not the nimble, fleet-footed mechs of anime fame, or the solid, powerful walkers that most people associate with the term "mech." The **DragonMech** mechs are instead more like clumsy giants stomping awkwardly across the landscape. They're powered by steam engines but remain balanced only by the grace of God. A core concept of the game is that these mechs are



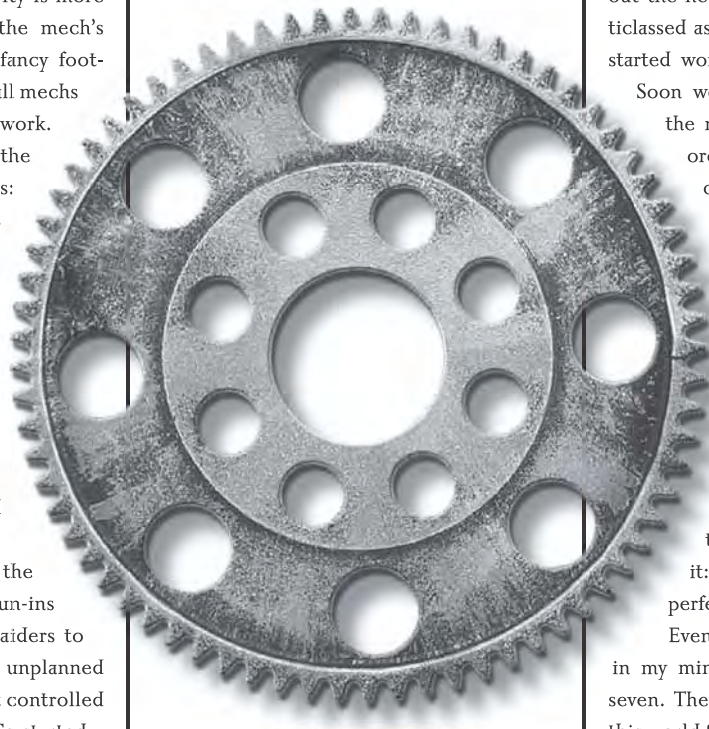
really massive bruisers with terrible coordination. They triumph through brute strength and sheer mass above all else. Think Andre the Giant, not Bruce Lee – except, of course, for the Irontooth Clans, who provide a bit of mystical martial arts balance.

This “clumsy giant” concept is the reason the calculation for a mech’s trample attack doesn’t include their Strength modifier. It’s assumed they’re bumbling about stomping infantry through sheer luck, rather than aiming carefully-delivered blows to squash specific targets. The same goes for the mech AC calculation, which foregoes Dex modifiers (unlike any other AC calculation in the game). Mech Dexterity is more about hand-eye coordination (the mech’s hand to the driver’s eye) than fancy footwork. It’s assumed outright that all mechs have mediocre (or worse) footwork. This, in turn, plays into one of the central tenets of fighting mechs: they should be easy to hit. It’s like shooting at a walking castle, after all; how can you miss? Thus, AC’s should be low, which is ensured by reflecting material armor bonuses in hardness rather than AC. Removing Dex penalties from the AC calculation balances out removing the bonus that would come from material armor.

Back to the campaign. Once the players reached Edge, they had run-ins of all kinds, ranging from orc raiders to drow schemes to a completely unplanned confrontation with the guild that controlled passage up the cliffside. Two PCs started a fight with a staircase toll-keeper who tried to charge Garrick the cleric extra. Because Garrick the cleric was 6’6” tall, the toll-keeper said he’d cause excessive wear-and-tear on the stairs. The extra charge was a whopping 1 copper piece, but the principle was enough to fight over. The belligerent PCs were promptly jumped by a band of half-orc porters. Even though the party included a tough dwarven fighter known only as “The Gong,” they had to retreat. It seemed like a minor incident until they tried to leave Edge.

They were remembered by the toll-keepers! From then on, they were charged 10 times the standard rate in stair tolls.

For most of the campaign, the players had been trying to devise ways to break open enemy mechs without actually fighting them. A favorite tactic was use of *spider climb* to get onto enemy mechs followed by bombs dropped through portholes. There was also some experimentation with called shots, including Sarin the half-elf rogue who once rolled a natural 20 for his longbow to nail a mech pilot through a tiny porthole from more than 500 feet away. At various times



two of the players took over the DM helm, and both introduced great new ideas along the way. These included the basic concepts for the riftwalker PrC (which grew out of an ancient order of monks that slipped to “the other side” to escape the lunar rain) and a slew of new mech ideas, including flying dragon-shaped necro-mechs, “the Hog” (a six-legged transport mech shaped like, well, a hog), and one-man mechs used in infantry combat. We also encountered all sorts of little rules modifications, not all of which

were significant enough to make it into this book. For example, if you want to buy a trained guard dog and turn it into robo-dog, it takes a DC 20 Knowledge (steam engines) check plus 25 gp in materials.

Somewhere along the way I finished the first draft of the **DragonMech** manuscript. I had 6 copies printed, one for each player and one for me. There were no pictures, of course, since this was a raw MS Word document bound by a local printer. This playtest book had a plain white cover, and the group began calling it “the white album.” The white album became the foundation for new PC directions as the players started trying out the new classes. Ulrie (the wizard) multiclassed as a coglayer, and Drem (the bard) started working toward the riftwalker PrC.

Soon we started a new campaign using the new classes: a multi-classed half-orc steamborg/barbarian, a half-elf coglayer (who traveled around in a walking, flying bathtub built from his steam powers), a female human mech jockey, a dwarven cleric of Dotrak (the player really wanted this so I bent my own rules to allow it... don’t try this at home, kids), and a gnome wizard played by the same guy who played the gnome bard, who was again trying to get to the riftwalker PrC. (As he put it: “I like running away. This class is perfect for me!”)

Even though **DragonMech** was born in my mind, it was raised by a family of seven. The five players who have gamed in this world for a year and a half are who really brought it to life. Mike, Alan, Garrick, and both Stephens – you raised **DragonMech** from a baby to what you’ve just finished reading. Guys – thanks! I couldn’t have done it without y’all. The seventh parent is my wife April, who put up with all those weekends and late nights of writing. Thanks, April. There’s a reason this book is dedicated to you. Now that this is over, the jadays can begin again!

Joseph Goodman
March 2004

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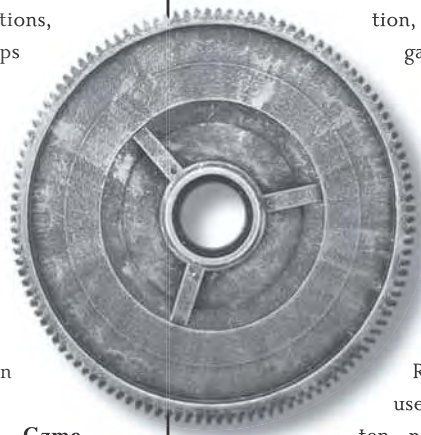
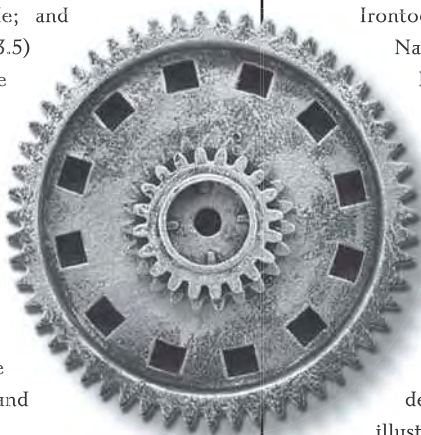
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TOTAL		WOUNDS/CURRENT HP		NONLETHAL DAMAGE		DAMAGE REDUCTION		HIT DIE TYPE		SPELL RESISTANCE		SPEED		
HP POINTS														
CR & CLASS		= 10 +		+++										
TOTAL		ARMOR BONUS	SHIELD BONUS	DEX MODIFIER	SIZE MODIFIER	NATURAL ARMOR	MISC MODIFIER	TOUCH AC	FLAT-FOOTED AC	MISS CHANCE	ARCANE SPELL FAILURE	ARCANE CHECK PENAL		
APPLE MODIFIER		INITIATIVE MODIFIER			SKILLS									
TOTAL					MAX RANKS /									
BASE BONUS			MECH ATTACK BONUS			CROSS-CLASS		SKILL NAME		KEY ABILITY	SKILL MODIFIER	ABILITY MODIFIER	RANKS	MISC MODIFI

ABILITY NAME	ABILITY SCORE	ABILITY MODIFIER	TEMPORARY SCORE	TEMPORARY MODIFIER
STR STRENGTH				
DEX DEXTERITY				
CON CONSTITUTION				
INT INTELLIGENCE				
WIS WISDOM				
CHA CHARISMA				

SAVING THROWS	TOTAL	BASE SAVE	ABILITY MODIFIER	MAGIC MODIFIER	MISC. MODIFIER	TEMP. MODIFIER	CONDITIONAL MODIFIERS
FORTITUDE (CONSTITUTION)	<input type="text"/> = <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/>						
REFLEX (DEXTERITY)	<input type="text"/> = <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/>						
WILL (WISDOM)	<input type="text"/> = <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/>						

	TOTAL		BASE ATTACK BONUS	STR MODIFIER	SIZE MODIFIER	MISC. MODIFIER	TEMPORARY MODIFIER
MELEE ATTACK BONUS		=			+	+	
RANGED ATTACK BONUS		=			+	+	
	TOTAL		BASE ATTACK BONUS	DEX MODIFIER	SIZE MODIFIER	MISC. MODIFIER	

Weapon			Total Attack Bonus	Damage	Critical
Range	Weight	Type	Size	Special Properties	

Weapon			Total Attack Bonus		Damage	Critical
Range	Weight	Type	Size	Special Properties		

Weapon			Total Attack Bonus		Damage	Critical
Range	Weight	Type	Size	Special Properties		

ARMOR/PROTECTIVE ITEM		TYPE		ARMOR BONUS	MAX DEX BONUS
CHECK PENALTY	SPELL FAILURE	SPEED	WEIGHT	SPECIAL PROPERTIES	

SHIELD/PROTECTIVE ITEM	ARMOR BONUS	WEIGHT	CHECK PENALTY	SPELL FAILURE
SPECIAL PROPERTIES				

AMMUNITION

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	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>
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CROSS-CLASS	SKILLS					MAX RANKS		/
	SKILL NAME	KEY ABILITY	SKILL MODIFIER	ABILITY MODIFIER	RANKS	MISC MODIFI		
<input type="checkbox"/>	APPRAISE ■	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	BALANCE ■	DEX*	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	BLUFF ■	CHA	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	CLIMB ■	STR*	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	CONCENTRATION ■	CON	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	CRAFT (_____)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	CRAFT (MECHCRAFT)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	CRAFT (BLACKSMITHING)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	DECIPHER SCRIPT	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	DIPLOMACY ■	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	DISABLE DEVICE	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	DISGUISE ■	CHA	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	ESCAPE ARTIST ■	DEX*	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	FORGERY ■	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	GATHER INFORMATION ■	CHA	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	HANDLE ANIMAL	CHA	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	HEAL ■	WIS	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	HIDE ■	DEX*	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	INTIMIDATE ■	CHA	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	JUMP ■	STR*	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (ARCHITECTURE & ENGINEERING)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (GEOGRAPHY)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (HISTORY)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (MECHS)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (NATURE)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (NOBILITY & ROYALTY)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (THE PLANES)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (RELIGION)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (STEAM ENGINES)	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	LISTEN ■	WIS	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	MECH PILOT	DEX	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	MOVE SILENTLY ■	DEX*	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	OPEN LOCK	DEX	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	PERFORM (_____)	CHA	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	(_____)	CHA	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	PROFESSION (_____)	WIS	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	PROFESSION (ENGINEER)	WIS	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	RIDE ■	DEX	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEARCH ■	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	SENSE MOTIVE ■	WIS	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	SLEIGHT OF HAND	DEX	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	SPELLCRAFT	INT	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	SPOT ■	WIS	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	SURVIVAL ■	WIS	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	SWIM ■	STR*	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	TUMBLE	DEX*	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	USE MAGIC DEVICE	CHA	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>	USE ROPE ■	DEX	_____	= _____	+ _____	+ _____		

Skills marked with ■ can be used normally even if the character has zero (0) skill ranks. Skills marked with ☒ are cross-class skills. *Armor check penalty, if any, applies.

SPECIAL ABILITIES/FEATS

STEAM POWERS

Page 10

LANGUAGES

Initial languages = Common + racial languages + Int bonus
Each additional language (Speak Language) = 1 skill point

SPELLS	
0:	
1ST:	
2ND:	
3RD:	
4TH:	
5TH:	
6TH:	
7TH:	
8TH:	
9TH:	

SPELL
SAVE DC

11

--	--

7

7

1

11

--	--

7

--	--

--	--

SPELLS PER DAY

10

--	--

--	--

7

--	--

--	--

7

--	--

--	--

--	--

BONUS SPELLS

0

11

11

11

11

11

11

11

11

11

0 _____ 1ST _____ 2ND _____
3RD _____ 4TH _____ 5TH _____
6TH _____ 7TH _____ 8TH _____
9TH _____

--	--

[illegible]

MONEY

CP —

SP —

GP —

PP —

