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## The Hive

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An Antlion Queen has made her nest in a previously abandoned spaceport North of the small mining town of Orrton. The Antlions are hunting the villagers for food and have killed anyone who enter the crater that the spaceport was built on. The Mayor of the town will pay handsomely the mercenaries who are able to stop the attacks and drive off the Antlion menace.

This is a dungeon suitable for about 5 players and a GM, with characters around level 5, give or take a couple levels. It should be playable in about 8 hours.

This dungeon is agnostic to the planet that it is on and the town that it is nearby. Feel free to pick it up and drop it wherever you need it to be in your setting.

### ===== Hooks =====

#### Bounty:

If the player characters check the bounty board, add this bounty to the list.

Search and Destroy: Antlions on Planet Kalimba  
Reward: \$80000 and the deed to a spaceport  
Contact: Mayor of Orrton

The Mayor of Orrton needs help dealing with recent attacks from local wildlife. It seems they may have a nest nearby and he's willing to give the place and a healthy reward to whomever can save his town.

#### Person from your past:

If the players have any friends or family who didn't join the military, maybe they moved to Orrton to find a better life on their own in the blossoming mining town? If so, they will likely reach out to their friend or family who takes care of this kind of thing. Consider having the Antlions have eaten someone with two degrees of separation.

You receive an urgent call from your sister. "Brother? Oh thank God I got you on holophone! Brad and I moved to Orrton on Planet Kalimba. He got a good job as a mining foreman and I - well, that doesn't matter now. We were so happy. But they ate him, brother! They came in the night and ate him on his way home from work! He's gone! And he's not the only one. Please come quickly!"

### ===== Prelude: The town of Orrton =====

If the players either fly in their ship or are flown by a transport to the spaceport in Kalimba, they are hailed by the temporary flight control tower and informed that the spaceport is inoperable. The control tower instructs them to either leave, land at a space port on a different continent (Kalimba's is Port Nguni, pronounced "Goonie") or in an emergency land at the temporary landing zone on the road to the quarry on the south side of town.

The Town of Orrton has several notable buildings in it, especially

- \* The Mayor's Office/Manor
- \* The spaceport, currently overrun
- \* The Inn "The Orchid Inn"
- \* The Bank "Orrton Fiduciary Bank"
- \* The Small hospital, "Orrton General Clinic"
- \* The General Store "Meeshnu's Mercantile"
- \* Selena's Armor Botique
- \* The Mining Compound
- \* The Foreman's Office
- \* The Refinery
- \* The Jeweler "Sparklies"
- \* The Temple ""
- \* The Bar "The Crab and Kraken"
- \* The Brothel "The Butterfly Tea House"
- \* The Police station

### ===== Common Descriptions =====

Some of the things your players will encounter throughout the dungeon are the same all over the dungeon. Where possible in the room descriptions below, such common items will be referenced here.

### == Antlion Construction ==

As the antlions continue to live in the spaceport, they improve their nest by constructing a sort of termite mound out of a mix of steel, plastic, debris

and their naturally occurring acid. It is hard as a rock when it dries and is capable of stopping bullets and small explosives like a grenade cold. It's rough and porous to the touch and is usually about half a meter thick with rounded almost bulbous corners.

If a character inspects a part of antlion construction, have them roll a PER check. Depending on what they roll, read the following to the players.

(less than 25) You see a brown mound about a meter tall and about half a meter wide. the texture is rough like sand paper.

(between 24 and 76) You see a sturdy brown mound that stands about a meter tall and has rounded edges that make it about a half-meter thick at its thinnest point. The texture is rough like sandpaper. The coloration of the mound has spots in it that are lighter and darker. It seems quite heavy and sturdy.

(above 75) You see a sturdy brown mound that stands about a meter tall with rounded edges. The mound is about a half meter thick at its thinnest points. It also has a sandpappy rough texture. Although mostly a dark brown, you notice that parts of it are lighter and even colored the same as the walls of the spaceport. close inspection shows bits of jagged metal and even rivets and screws that seem almost melted that are encrusted on surface of the mound.

Stop reading to the players.

== Antlion Eggs ==

If a character inspects the eggs, read the following.

Antlion Eggs are perfectly round, and have an iridescent green color. They are about a meter in diameter and are held in an encrusting of Antlion construction. Green gobules set into a base of the brown cement-like material that keeps them from rolling away. The gobules are about 0.8m in diameter and glow softly. If the room is quiet, periodically one could hear them shudder with a soft squeelching noise and a crustacean-like clicking.

Stop reading to the players.

== Ducts in the Ceiling ==

Do not read to the players!

The air duct network runs throughout the spaceport and is specifically designed to augment the tactical options of a clever assassin character. While any character can get into the vents from the climate control machine in the Power Room, any assassin character gets several key bonuses to moving through the duct system, as telegraphed in the power room description.

The first time a character in a duct makes a move on their turn (or every 15m out of combat) that character must make an Acrobatics(Dex) check to make sure that they maintain their balance and don't put too much of their weight on one spot; if they fail the Acrobatics check, they come falling through the duct at the spot where they failed, and that duct becomes unpassable. Each time they make an acrobatics check, they must also make a stealth check. If they pass the stealth check, nothing happens. If they fail the stealth check then the character makes loud, echoing banging noises as they move. If antlions are in the room below and they detect the banging noises, the antlions will shoot acid at the ducts. Antlion acid melts the ducts and make them unpassable. The DCs for characters of the Assassin class and others differ, since assassin training lends itself well to crawling through ducts, even if this particular assassin hadn't done it before. Furthermore, a character in a duct can break the fragile freon pipe that is in all of the ducts, which lets any assassin character slide through the ducts at 1.5 x speed (round up). However, this slippery freon makes moving through the ducts harder for non-assassin characters. The DCs are listed in the table below; DCs with an asterisk (\*) are for characters moving through freon-drenched pipes. Breaking a freon pipe coats the ducts for 15m. Breaking the pipe is a free action.

	Acro DC	Stealth DC	Acro DC*	Stealth DC*
Assassin	10	20	x	x
Non-Assassin	20	45	25	55

If a character in a duct shoots or uses an attack ability, they must make the Acrobatics and Stealth rolls as well; attacking through the ducts makes them impassable. A character in the duct can break through the duct and drop as a free action.

If a character outside of the ducts inspects the ducts, read the following.

You see a plain grey metal vent that winds its way around the ceiling. It

periodically has air vents spaced along it. You don't hear anything moving in it right now. The metal seems fairly thin, you're not sure if it would hold any weight.

Stop reading to the players.

If a character inside the ducts inspects the ducts, read the following.

It's hard to see through the dark of the duct, periodic vents allow some dim light from the room outside to peek through. The metal of the duct is cold to the touch, and you can feel a cold, fragile pipe running along the inside of the vent with you.

Stop reading to the players.

===== Rooms =====

== Security Checkpoint ==

The entrance to the spaceport from the south side (The side closest to the town) is a Security checkpoint with powerless metal detectors. Trash cans and metal benches offer scattered cover. A counter with a computer on it is on one side of the room. A small metal door on one side leads to the Power Room. A large open hallway to the North West leads to the terminal, while a large metal door behind the counter to the North East leads to the luggage sorting room. An easily-broken glass window due North overlooks the courtyard.

When the players enter the room, read to them the following description. If the players somehow reached the Power Room before coming here and turned the lights on, change the details of the dark room to have the lights on and the metal detectors working.

The room before you is dimly lit by a dusty window to the north and a sky light. The room is split in half by a wire fence that runs into an open air office which is in turn separated from the waiting area by a 1m wide counter which wraps a U-shape around it. On the counter, clearly visible is an average-looking computer monitor. The wire fence has several arches with red lights at the top of them. Each archway also has a computer monitor facing the back of the room beside them, behind the wire fence. The red lights on each arch are off, as are the overhead lights. In addition to the deactivated lights, the ceiling also has a small network of gray ducts that snake around it, and every once in a while end in a vent. The room feels a little cold, but not uncomfortably so.

Stop reading to the players.

The small metal door leading to the Power Room is locked. It can be picked with a Slight of Hand (Dex) DC of 44 or it can be bashed open with tools like the battering ram with a Athletics (STR) DC of 90.

The computer on the counter is connected to a credit account with \$2000 credits in it. It won't work unless power has been restored to the spaceport. Once the power is back on, passing a hacking (INT) check of DC 45 will retrieve the money.

Enemies:

\* 6 Antlion soldiers

== Power Room ==

Behind a locked door is the power room. The room is unlit as the Power Converter has been damaged by the infestation. Describe the room thus to the players.

The dark and dusty room beyond the door has a desk with a cheap articulating lamp positioned over it to one side, a large machine with a lightning bolt warning sticker on it that reads "Warning: High voltage Power Converter" toward the back, and a damaged and deactivated robot is slumped in the corner. A large metal box with air ducts running from it into the ceiling sits silently on the opposite side of the room from the desk. The room is quiet as the grave and smells of dust and antlion acid. Next to the door are a couple of locked lockers.

Things in the room.

- \* Desk
- \* Damaged Robot
- \* Power Converter
- \* Metal box with air ducts

Stop reading to the players.

Power Converter:

If a character inspects the power converter, read the following paragraph to

them. Consider only telling the player of the character who inspected it.

A closer inspection of the large machine in the corner that is sparking shows that it's an industrial-grade power converter that takes the often inconsistent power current from the village power plant and converts it into a current usable by the automatic doors and conveyor belts of the space port. It looks like something acidic has burned through the a few of the capacitors and resistors. They'll have to be replaced, but once that's done you should be able to route power to the whole station if need be. There's also a large switch in the "on" position and a fuse that would pop if way too much energy was pushed into the converter. Luckily though, the fuse seems to be in good condition.

Stop reading to the players.

If a character attempts to repair the Power Converter, ask them what their repair skill is. If their repair skill is higher than 15, tell them that they would know to turn off the power converter before messing with it. If their skill is lower, just say "ok, well you get to add that to your repair roll."

Have them roll a repair check. If the switch is still in the "on" position, and they roll to fix it and roll below 100, they get shocked. Have the shocked character roll a shock check of DC 90. They take 50 electrical damage and if they failed the shock check, the AC power paralyzes them and continues to shock them for 20 damage each turn until another character can disconnect them. Either by shooting the power converter and destroying it, or by tackling them out of the way. The character being shocked can't speak, but can only yell in pain while they are being shocked. When a character tackles another out of the way, the tackling character must also make a shock check of DC 40, or they also get shocked, but only take 10 damage per turn. If the character that tried to do the repairs has their health hit 0 or lower, they fall down and have a heart attack, which means they enter bleed out mode. Everyone connected to them being shocked are freed from their being shocked.

If a character doesn't shock themselves, and rolls lower than 95 on their repair roll, tell the player "You are unable to bypass the burned out Power Converter Capacitors without popping the fuse. You think if you found some Capacitors, you might have better luck." Stop reading to the players. If the player rolls a 96 or higher, tell them "You are able to scavenge some of the components of the fuse to work as a boilerplate capacitor. It won't work for more than a week, but it should get you through the mission." Stop reading to the players. If the character has the capacitors when they go to fix the power converter, and the switch is off and they roll above a 15, read "You successfully install the capacitors. Would you like to turn the switch back on?" Stop reading to the players. If and when they hit the switch, power is restored to the station. There are notes throughout the dungeon script on where power is beneficial for the players.

Robot in the corner:

If a character inspects the robot in the corner, read the following to them. Consider only telling the player that inspected it. See "Wallie The Wounded Maintenance Bot" in the Characters section below.

It looks like the robot was damaged by the same acid that hit the power converter. It should still function though, if you can get it out of its power save hibernation mode.

Stop reading to the players.

Air Conditioning System:

If a character inspects the metal box in the corner with air ducts coming out of it, read this to the players. Consider telling only the character that inspected it.

The metal box seems to be some sort of air heating/cooling system, with dials and knobs for setting air temperature, humidity and fan speed. At the moment the old and cracked screen is blank and unlit. On one side, there's an almost person-sized hatch labeled "Maintenance Hatch." It's not locked, but it's a tight squeeze. Poking the ducts makes a sort of "gonggggg" noise, and you think that if you had some skill in stealth and acrobatics, you could probably move through the maintenance ducts easily and undetected, perhaps even easier if you were some sort of spy from the movies who did that sort of thing before. But if you didn't have such skills that you would likely bang around in there clumsily drawing attention to yourself and maybe even break the thin ducts and fall out of them at an inopportune moment.

Stop reading to the players.

The Air ducts allow a tactical advantage to stealth characters. They connect together in every room that mentions them.

The Desk with the lamp:

Have any character interested in the desk with the lamp roll an Investigate(PER) check to see what they find in the desk. Read one of the following paragraphs to them depending on their roll.

< 21: You see some drawers and some papers with scribbles on them, as well as a pencil. You're pretty sure this desk would be uncomfortable to sit at for long periods of time.

20 < roll < 61: You check the drawers and leaf through the work orders on the desk. In one of the drawers you find a couple of power converter capacitors, which are orange cylindrical electrical components about half the size of one's fist. They aren't worth much, but might be helpful fixing something. You also find a pencil.

60 < roll < 100: You find a couple of power converter capacitors in one of the drawers in the desk, as well as a note from a "Mr. Wilson" telling "Wallie" that he did a good job cleaning up the grease fire spill and that the station would fall apart without him.

#### == Luggage Sorting Room ==

The luggage sorting room is dominated by a network of interlocking conveyor belts which are each about 2m wide and run the length of the room, criss-crossing each other in a couple of layers. There are panels by each of the conveyors with off and on switches, but all of them start with the switch in the "On" position. A couple of carts with crates on them offer cover around the room, as does some brown bulletproof antlion construction. The ceiling is about 10m up and has industrial lights hanging from the bare metal prefab superstructure there. Also hanging from the roof is a cross-hatch of air ducts with maintenance ducts which run back to the security checkpoint and above the door on the other end of the room to the queen's lair.

#### Things in the room

- \* conveyor belts
- \* conveyor belt control panels
- \* 6 Antlion workers
- \* 3 Antlion Soldiers
- \* Grub nest with grubs
- \* carts with crates
- \* Antlion egg clusters
- \* 3 abandoned luggage loot piles
- \* several antlion construction cover-pillars

If the power converter has been fixed, the room is well-lit and the conveyors are turned on and moving at a speed of 4m/turn. If the power is off, the room is barely lit from some slit windows by the roof.

There are 6 antlion workers and 3 antlion soldiers in the luggage sorting room. The workers are dragging debris around to melt into the brown cement-like construction, or dragging the dead to feed the grubs. A small collection of 5 grubs sit in a bowl-like nest made of the brown construction material. See the Enemies section below for stats on the antlion soldiers, workers and grubs.

Read to the players.

Scattered elsewhere through the room are clusters of 6 to 10 of Antlion Eggs.

Stop reading to the Players.

If the Soldiers in the Luggage sorting room hear a confrontation either in the Queen's Lair or the Courtyard, they move quickly to respond. They will not however pursue enemies beyond those areas and instead will retreat to guard the eggs.

#### == Telemetry Antenna Array ==

If the players view the array from a distance, or if they see the array on a map and ask about it, feel free to read to them this description.

About a 150m from the main spaceport across the red dried mud of the plateau sits a small cluster of hills. Situated on these hills is an array of antennae and a couple of large satellite dishes. The equipment has all been painted the same matte gray, though the paint has some scratches and scuffs of various sizes in a few different directions that show some rust and metal underneath the paint. A few cables run from array to the roof of the spaceport, and they should be strong enough that one could zipline from the maintenance platform on the antenna to the spaceport proper.

Stop reading to the players

The antenna gives a good overwatch of that side of the spaceport. As such, a traveling xenoentomologist is hiding out with his sketch pad and binoculars

studying the antlions. He is fairly well camouflaged, and the player characters cannot notice him unless they visit the array. (xenoentomology is the study of alien insects.) See "What Dr. Ettles Knows" below in the Characters section.

#### == The Terminal ==

The terminal has a number of small shops, departure time signs, antlion construction pillars and benches for cover. The long thin rectangular room has a sidewalk-conveyor belt (sometimes called a "people-mover") that runs down the length of it. The hope is to offer a variety of ranges to fight in, and to reward the players for solving the power puzzle by having the people mover offer a tactical advantage.

Things in the room

- \* Benches
- \* Antlion construction cover
- \* Newsstand counter
- \* Fast food counter
- \* 5 abandoned luggage loot piles (on benches?)
- \* 5 Antlion soldiers
- \* 3 Antlion Workers

When the players enter the room, read them the following paragraph.

You see a long room with floor-to-ceiling windows to the west that run the length of the room. The eastern wall is lined with alcoves topped with colorful awnings advertising magazines, overpriced water bottles, and fast food. Benches dot the room along with large black deactivated signs. The ceiling has an array of vents and ducts, as well as large hanging industrial lights. Some of those brown concrete-like pillars are also scattered around. The place smells musty and feels a little cool. Through the darkness, you can hear soft scuttling and clicking noises.

Stop reading to the players.

The people movers take their "turn" at the end of each round and move any character on them 4m in the direction that they are running. If they don't have power, they just act like regular floor. Each is remotely hack-able. To do so, a character must succeed on a DC 55 Hacking(INT) check. The hacker that has owned a people-mover can change its direction, shut it off, or turn it back on. A people-mover without power cannot be hacked.

#### == The Courtyard ==

The wide open courtyard has stone paths through what used to be a pretty garden and outdoor shopping area. Now it's the main farming ground for the lichens and fungi that the antlions are cultivating for their food. Since the antlions moved in recently, the small half-caves of brown cement-like antlion construction are only partially built and work well as cover for antlion and interloper alike. There are also a number of signs for gift shops and fast food restaurants long abandoned and dirty for cover as well.

The Courtyard has a small reserve force of four antlion Soldiers that are resting up from a recent hunting excursion and snacking on lichens and scuffling with each other. There are also about 6 antlion Workers either adding to the farming domes or tending to the lichens. In the case where the player characters attack either the Luggage Sorting Room or the Terminal loudly, the reaction force will respond to either of those two areas. Conversely, if the PCs attack the courtyard, then each of the soldiers from those two locales converge on the Courtyard.

#### == The Queen's Lair ==

To any player that can see it, read the following.

The largest landing/launch bay has been infested as an Antlion nest. In the back corner, the queen herself rests in a tube of antlion construction. Her head and pincers stick out of the front and occasionally pick at the pile of corpses and lichen that has been stacked up by the workers that attend her. The workers also transit the small path between the blast-proof concrete of the bay and the backside of the tunnel where the queen lays an egg approximately every hour. (Read the description of Antlion Eggs in the common description area if need be).

Pools of iridescent green acid dot the nest and make the air above it shimmer slightly. The smell is acrid and foul. The temperature is significantly higher in the room, but only so much as to be irritatingly uncomfortable, not dangerously so.

Stop reading to the players.

#### Enemies:

The room has the following Antlions in it.

- \* 1 Antlion Queen

- \* 6 Antlion workers
- \* 5 Antlion Soldiers
- \* 6 Antlion grubs

The Antlion Queen sits in her tunnel/throne in the corner, attended from the front by one worker who is bringing her a tuft of lichen and another who is removing the acid-soaked bones of her last meal to a refuse pile in the corner. A third worker is behind the tunnel, hidden from view of the doors, and is gingerly carrying a fresh egg. This egg-carrying worker will take the new egg to a small clutch of eggs by the door to the Luggage Sorting Room and secure it in place there unless it is disturbed.

===== Characters =====

== What Dr. Ettles Knows ==

If approached in a friendly way, the xenoentomologist politely, cheerfully, but a tad shyly introduces himself as Dr. Skrum Ettles. He speaks quickly, with an overexcited whisper at all times and has a bit of an inconsistent stutter whenever talking about himself or if talking about something scary, such as talking to women about anything other than classwork or insects. He is also quite unnerved by the idea of going near the antlions, and will not approach them unless someone has persuaded him with a skill check of DC 140.

If asked about the Antlions, Dr. Ettles explains that he's seen three kinds. He calls them Larvae, Workers and Soldiers. The Larvae are small and their carapaces haven't fully developed yet, but he's seen them voraciously devour dead people and animals that the workers have dragged to them. He says their bites can still crunch bones. The worker antlions have fully developed legs, and while they tend to work slowly and steadily moving food, debris and young around the compound, they have been known to suddenly speed up and either run or jump when they sense danger. They've been using the green acid that is secreted from their mouths to melt the alloys of the spaceport together to re-shape it so that it's more to their liking. They seem to work well together and coordinate, but while they have some physical gestures, I don't see a sonic or pheromone way of them to communicate like most other insects... The antlion Soldiers are bigger, their exoskeletons are tougher and they spit acid. He also says that he expects that there is likely an antlion Queen somewhere in the spaceport, but he hasn't seen it.

If Dr. Ettles hears that the characters are intending to wipe out the antlions, he asks if the players intend to kill them all or just drive them out?

If the player characters respond that they intend to kill them all, Dr. Ettles informs them that if a single egg or the Queen is left, the antlions will just come back.

If the player characters ask about driving them off, the good Dr. explains that either killing the Queen or destroying all of the eggs will drive the antlions off.

If the characters are very nice to Dr. Ettles, the GM may ask them to roll a straight Charisma roll. If they succeed on a DC of 60, Dr. Ettles takes a liking to them and tells them that when fighting the antlions, to aim for the joints in their exoskeletons; most Anthropods have slightly weaker armor there. This gives the players a permanent feat called "The Exterminator" which gives them a -1 To Miss with weapons in the R1 range bracket when fighting antlions and an increased crit range when hitting antlions.

== Wallie the wounded maintenance bot ==

Wallie is a consumer-grade Maintenance bot who has been working on the spaceport since the settlement was built. Wallie has a robotically fantastic memory, and is good at solving the kind of puzzles that arise in the day-to-day maintenance of such a facility, but is mostly innocent and kind of dumb. He is overjoyed by solving problems and/or pleasing the staff at the spaceport (most of whom are dead) or "customers" which is the category that almost any other living thing falls into.

Antlions attacked and damaged Wallie before he locked himself in his office, The Power Room. Wallie was critically injured and went into a backup/hibernation mode to save his personality and memories in the desperate hope that someone would repair him before his OS battery died and he was gone forever. Before he can talk or interact with either the players or antlions, he must be repaired.

If the players mention Mr Wilson to Wallie, Wallie immediately trusts them.

If asked about what happened, the character asking must succeed on a DC 35 Persuade(Charisma) check. If they fail, Wallie just says "I don't want to talk about that. I don't like it. I don't want to talk about that with you now." If the Character succeeds then read the following to the players.

Wallie's shoulders slump and he looks at the ground. "The bad customers came. I - " Wallie cuts off for a second, clearly upset. "I tried to tell them to stop! I tried to tell them that they were making things unpleasant for the other customers! They were hurting the other customers! They were eating my happy customers like happy customers sometimes eat the foods! ... But the bad customers wouldn't listen to me. " At this point, Wallie is shaking. His feet begin to mechanically shift, pointing in different directions as if he's about to bolt and run, but with nowhere to go, they just keep picking a new direction. His arms pull up against his chest and his hands curl into fists and his posture curls just a little bit while he's standing. "But the bad customers wouldn't listen. They spat green mess at me and all over the floor. I left the mess and ran in here. But they followed me, they damaged me! They broke the Power Converter too. I couldn't fix myself, so I went into power save mode so that my memories wouldn't corrupt if I ran out of power." Following this, Wallie grows quiet.

===== Enemies =====

All enemies are in the bestiary.