

# THE TWILIGHT JUNGLE:

THE WORLD OF THE  
SESHEYANS

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**FROM** the stone age to the space age, they are savage hunters from a night-bound world, enslaved by a powerful stellar nation and thrust into the light of the 26th century. Fighting to sustain an ancient culture amid the scientific wonders of galactic civilization, the sesheyans are held by many as an example of humans' unfair treatment of alien species.

Primitive aboriginals living on the largest moon of Gamma Leonis III, sesheyans were discovered by VoidCorp explorers. The corporation took advantage of the sesheyans' primitive nature and arranged a contract placing them in the service of VoidCorp in perpetuity. In effect, a stellar nation turned an entire alien race into its slaves. The sesheyans have learned a great deal about the galaxy since signing that fateful compact more than two hundred years ago, and many have begun to work in secret to free their people.

## PIGGIN SESHEYAN

As a general rule, singular sesheyan words ending in "-a" or "-ai" are made plural by changing the ending to "-ei," such as "aikai" to "aikei" or "jaeja" to "jaejei." Most sesheyan words involving advanced technology are loan-words learned from VoidCorp. For example, the sesheyan word for "drivespace" is "dryspas," the same word pronounced with a strong sesheyan accent.

aikaloska?	"Does the ghost grasp you?" or roughly, "Do you get it?" or "Do you understand?"
aikai	"ghost," a figure from sesheyan fable
aikaya	"ghost walkers," the dead, and sesheyans in the employ of VoidCorp
aikeita	The Day of Ghosts (July 13, 2274)
apassa	armor
dryspas	drivespace
enoshai	"twilight dream," sesheyan history and myth
enoshaikai	"ghosts of the twilight dream," stars, and moons (as seen from Sheya)
esosha	"free heart," native sesheyan
huraikai	"Wind Spirits," sesheyans who have escaped VoidCorp
hureja	"wind claw," a native sesheyan weapon
ieshean	food
jaeja	dagger
keita	day (one revolution of Sheya)
laesa	laser (also aikenoja, "ghost light spear" to primitive sesheyans)
losaika	"keeper of ghosts," shaman
oja	spear
sesha	hunter
sesheyan	"hunters of the land," the sesheyan race
sheya	"hunting land," the sesheyan homeworld
unja	wing
wonto	"tokens of trade," money

## PHYSIOLOGY

Sesheyans are perhaps the most "alien" species encountered thus far by humans. They average 1.7 meters tall with sleek, whipcord muscles. The sesheyan skeleton is composed of light, strong cartilage, so sesheyans weigh only an average of 40 kilograms and have extraordinarily flexible joints and posture, allowing them to crouch and bend for extended periods of time without discomfort.

Sesheyans are hexipedal, having six limbs. The upper arms end in four fingers (including an opposable thumb), and the lower legs end in three splayed toes. Both of these sets of limbs have short claws, allowing sesheyans to climb trees and perch on branches in their native jungle. The two middle limbs are slim and end in six long, slender "fingers" with flaps of leathery skin stretched between them, forming a pair of wings with a span of six meters. The wings allow sesheyans to fly on their homeworld and other worlds with Earth-normal or lighter gravity and sufficient atmospheric pressure.

The sesheyan head is wide and round, with four small eyes on each side and topped with a pair of elongated ears. Their eyes are highly sensitive to light, having adapted to the twilight environment of the jungles of Sheya. The blunt snout covers a wide mouth filled with sharp, bony ridges rather than teeth. Sesheyans have a voice box capable of producing a wide range of sounds, and they have no trouble learning and speaking human or other alien languages.

Sesheyans have long, finned tails used for balance and flight control. The tail ends in a series of spines connected by leathery skin. The spines can flex to widen or narrow the "fan" at the end of the tail, providing steering while in flight. Sesheyans also open or close their tail fans to display emotions: those in an excited mood open their tail fans, while those in a quiet, contemplative mood close their tail fans.

## FROM THE STONE AGE TO THE GRAVITY AGE

According to sesheyan fable, their race originated in what is known as enoshai, or the "Twilight Dream," a timeless state of being connected with the vastness of space and the night sky. The first

sesheyans were created by Vec't'lr, the Brood Mother, whom the sesheyans associate with the second-largest moon of Gamma Leonis III. Her twin sons are Tal, the Hunter, and Neshii'en, the Trickster, associated with the gas giant's two smaller moons, which chase each other endlessly across the sky.

Sesheyans were created to be the greatest hunters of Sheya, "the hunting land." (The name sesheyan means "hunters of the land.") In the days of the Twilight Dream, great heroes like Tal and Neshii'en lived among the sesheyans, teaching them. Over time, they became a part of the history and culture of the sesheyans, their names invoked by hunters and shamans.

For millennia, life on Sheya was largely the same. The tribes hunted (and warred occasionally), shamans kept the wisdom of the past, families mated and grew, and the cycle of life went on. The sesheyans existed in the timeless realm of the Twilight Dream—until the arrival of VoidCorp.

## AIKEITA: THE DAY OF GHOSTS

On July 13, 2274, a VoidCorp exploratory vessel landed on the largest moon of Gamma Leonis III. There, project leader JT795 42IWQ (Erim Ollander) made contact with the sesheyans. To the primitive sesheyans, the arrival of the explorer ship was nothing less than the appearance of ghosts from the night sky, as in their ancient fables. The visitors displayed magical powers: Their weapons spat fire, blinding light spilled from their instruments, and their bodies were tall and strange. Sesheyan shamans called the arrival of these strangers aikeita, "the Day of Ghosts."

The VoidCorp crew had little difficulty making peaceful contact with the sesheyans, who considered them visitors from the Twilight Realm. Understanding the value of their discovery, JT795 42IWQ decided to remain on Sheya and conceal her discovery, even to the point of not sending transmissions to VoidCorp management, lest they be overheard by agents of another stellar nation.

Immediately after translating their language enough to converse with the sesheyans, JT795 42IWQ negotiated the



Sesheyan Compact with the leaders of the most powerful tribes. The Compact granted the sesheyans right of passage off their homeworld and access to advanced technology. In exchange, the sesheyans agreed to serve VoidCorp in perpetuity. In essence, every sesheyan became a VoidCorp employee, subject to VoidCorp rules and authority. VoidCorp now owned the sesheyan race.

At first, the sesheyans were delighted by the Compact, since it seemed to them a religious experience of unprecedented proportions—a chance to share in the power and wisdom of the ghosts and to serve them faithfully. As time passed, the sesheyans began to discover that their visitors were not all they appeared to be.

When news of the Sesheyan Compact arrived, VoidCorp management was supremely pleased. They immediately ordered the exploitation of this valuable new resource. VoidCorp ships arrived on Sheya and established bases to handle administration of the population for the maximum utility of the company. Sesheyans were displaced from their long-held territories without consideration. The company assumed supreme authority on Sheya, and any disagreements on the part of the sesheyans were handled swiftly and forcefully.

Thousands of stone-age sesheyans were thrust into training programs designed to test their capabilities and make them useful employees. VoidCorp discovered that the sesheyans were remarkably intelligent and adaptable. They were able, even eager, to learn new languages and technologies, which the sesheyans considered magical. VoidCorp decided that the sesheyans would serve the company in several ways, especially in handling menial or difficult tasks. In a matter of years, sesheyans were being shipped off their homeworld by the thousands to serve their new employer.

To those who remained on Sheya, the sesheyans taken by VoidCorp became aikaya, "Ghost Walkers." From their point of view, Ghost Walkers left the living world behind and entered the Twilight Realm. For all intents and purposes, they had died and moved on to a new life elsewhere. Sesheyans held funeral rites for family-members chosen to leave Sheya and travel with the ghosts; their lives as hunters of the land were over.



*A sesheyan losaika meets a VoidCorp human resources director.*

#### THE TWILIGHT REALM

When other Stellar Nations discovered the Sesheyan Compact, there was an outcry against VoidCorp. Many denounced VoidCorp's exploitation of the species. For their part, VoidCorp officials pointed at the primitive conditions on Sheya and all the humanitarian aid, education, and technology that VoidCorp devoted to assisting the sesheyans in becoming galactic citizens. They also pointed out that the sesheyans were considered full VoidCorp employees, with the same rights and responsibilities as employees of any species. VoidCorp defended their actions and ignored protests from other Stellar Nations who called for them to renegotiate or suspend the Compact.

As the years passed, sesheyans in the employ of VoidCorp learned to function in a technological society. Their children were born as employees of VoidCorp, often away from Sheya itself. Sesheyan breeding was originally limited by the delicate balance of their ecosystem and the relatively harsh living conditions on Sheya. Now, the sesheyans were limited only by the requirements of VoidCorp corporate breeding programs, which encouraged employees to produce even

more employees. The sesheyan population exploded across numerous VoidCorp worlds as the sesheyan lifespan was greatly extended through modern medical technology.

Billions of sesheyans have grown up never having touched the soil of their homeworld, hearing only legends of the hunting land where their people originated. Some of the new generations of sesheyans threw themselves into the corporate culture, serving to the best of their ability and seeking advancement where they could find it. Others, educated and raised by VoidCorp, began to see flaws in the Sesheyan Compact.

#### THE GALACTIC CONCORD

In the more than two hundred years since the signing of the Sesheyan Compact, some sesheyans have turned against VoidCorp. The chaos of the first and second Galactic Wars allowed a few million sesheyans to escape from VoidCorp space to other stellar nations or unknown frontiers like the Verge. VoidCorp maintains that all sesheyans remain their employees, and it works to hunt down any "absentees" (as they are

## SHEYAN FAUNA

The jungles of Sheya are filled with a wide variety of animal and plant life. Two of the better-known Sheyan predators are described here.

### ISSHA

Issha are tree-dwelling reptiles similar to Terran snakes. An issa has a blunt, triangular head with three eyes along each side and deep pits behind the eyes which serve as scent organs. The body is up to 4 meters long and muscular, covered with fine scales and patterned to match the jungle foliage. The issa has a hinged jaw, allowing it to swallow its prey whole. The jaw is equipped with fangs that inject a deadly venom. Issha coil around tree limbs where they wait to drop on unsuspecting prey. The sesheyans use issa hide to make fine, soft leather.

STR 11 (d4+8)      INT 1 (Animal 4 or d4+2)  
DEX 11 (d4+8)      WIL 7 (d6+3)  
CON 7 (d4+4)      PER 2 (Animal 6 or d4+4)  
Durability 7/7/4/4      Action Check; 17+/16/8/4  
Move: run 24, walk 6      #Actions: 1  
Reaction Score: Good/1

#### Attacks

Bite	12/6/3	1w/d4w/d4+2w	LI/O
Crush	10/5/2	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/O

On a successful bite attack where at least 1 wound penetrates the victim's armor, the issa injects its venom. The onset time is d4+1 rounds. At the end of this time, the victim must make a Constitution feat check to resist the toxin.

Result	Damage
Critical Failure	Death
Marginal	1d6m
Ordinary	2d6w
Good	d6w
Amazing	d4w

#### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Armor: d4+2 (LI), none (HI), none (En)

#### Skills

Unarmed [11]—*brawl* [12]; Stealth [11]—*hide* [15], *sneak* [15]; Awareness [7]—*intuition* [9], *perception* [13]



### SKA

Ska are large jungle carnivores similar to great cats. They are hexipedal, having six legs. The rear two pair of legs are adapted for running and climbing, while the front pair are for climbing and fighting, allowing the ska to rear up on its back four legs and slash with its front claws. If it manages to strike with its foreclaws, the ska can also rake with its middle claws. It also has a jaw full of sharp, bony ridges capable of inflicting a terrible bite.

The ska's hide is stripped or dappled, providing camouflage in the jungle. It has poor vision, but its senses of hearing and smell are incredibly sharp, allowing it to stalk prey in near-total darkness using scent and vibration alone. Ska tend to be solitary hunters, occasionally appearing in mated pairs. They rest atop tree branches, sleeping during the daytime and hunting at night.

Sesheyans consider the ska the fiercest and most dangerous prey in their native jungles. Sesheyen hunters often make use of ska hide, teeth, and claws as decorations, and weapons carved from ska bone are considered the most potent.

STR 13 (2d4+8)      INT 3 (Animal 10 or d6+7)  
DEX 11 (2d4+6)      WIL 11 (d6+8)  
CON 11 (2d4+6)      PER 3 (Animal 11 or d8+7)  
Durability 11/11/6/6      Action Check; 15+/14/7/3  
Move run 50, walk 10      #Actions: 3  
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2

#### Attacks

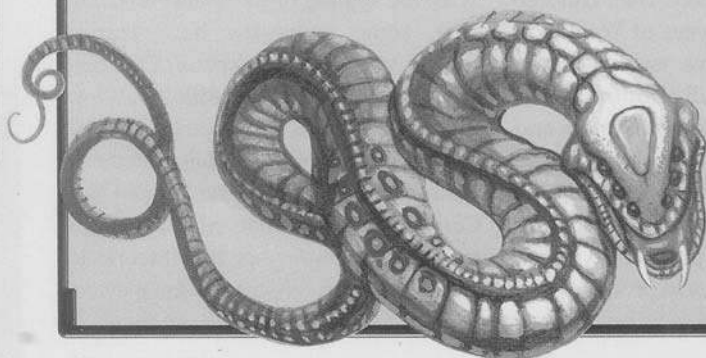
Bite	14/7/3	d6+1w/d8+1w/d4m	LI/O
Foreclaws (x2)	16/8/4	d4+1w/d6+1w/d6+2w	LI/O
Middle claws (x2)	16/8/4	d4w/d6w/d6+1w	LI/O

#### Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Armor: d4-1 (LI), d4-2 (HI), d4-3 (En)

#### Skills

Athletics [13]—*climb* [15]; Stealth [11]—*hide* [12], *shadow* [16], *sneak* [14]; Stamina [11]—*endurance* [15]; Awareness [11]—*intuition* [14], *perception* [12]; Investigate [8]—*track* [13]; Resolve [11]





known). The discovery of the sesheyan colony on Grith in the Corrivale system of the Verge has led VoidCorp to lay a claim on the colonists before the Galactic Concord. The Grith colonists maintain they have been on Grith since long before the Sesheyan Compact, transported there by a precursor race that once inhabited the planet. Thus far, the Concord has upheld the sesheyan claim.

There have been occasional uprisings and rebellions of sesheyan employees on VoidCorp worlds. Rogue sesheyans who attempt to return to their homeworld are detained by VoidCorp authorities. Even if they manage to slip unnoticed into the sesheyan population, their former friends and families consider them dead or—if born off-world—complete non-entities. The majority of native sesheyans refuse to have any dealings with these Ghost Walkers and do not listen to what they have to say. Still, there is some discontent on Sheya about the Compact, and some native sesheyans have realized that VoidCorp does not have their best interests at heart.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity for the sesheyans since the Day of Ghosts came when VoidCorp agreed to recruit half a billion sesheyan employees to join the Galactic Concord. Although they remain employees, these sesheyans have greater opportunities for interaction with people from other Stellar Nations and societies. Many sesheyans hope to plead their case to the Concord and gain assistance in overturning the Compact, but the Concord is far too new and still testing its authority in civilized space. It will be some time before the Concord can challenge VoidCorp's claim.

#### CULTURE & SOCIETY

Before VoidCorp's arrival, sesheyans maintained a simple, tribal culture based around the extended family unit. Even two hundred years after the Sesheyan Compact and their introduction into galactic civilization, some sesheyans maintain their old customs.

#### FAMILIES & TRIBES

Sesheyan families tend to be quite large, mainly due to the sesheyan definition of "family." They do not limit family ties to biological connections; sesheyan families include extended clans with many

#### WHAT THE SESHEYANS THINK

Since their first fateful encounter with humans, sesheyans have been exposed to many different races. Although individual views vary, here is what the two main sesheyan factions generally think of the other major races of the STAR\*DRIVE® setting:

**Fraal:** "The fraal understand the value of technology. They assisted humans in reaching the stars much in the same way humans later assisted us."—*Ghost Walker*

"There is a quiet wisdom to these people, much like the most enlightened of us. Although they are not hunters or warriors, they have a great inner strength."—*Wind Spirit*

**Humans:** "Humans were our patrons and guides to the stars. They are a clever and inventive people. We still have much to learn from them."—*Ghost Walker*

"Humans are as changeable as the wind, and as dangerous as ska. They have equally great capacities for kindness and cruelty."—*Wind Spirit*

**Mechalus:** "A capable and industrious race, with an understanding of technology that makes them valuable business partners."—*Ghost Walker*

"The Mechalus are fine examples of a race that has put aside their need for violence, but they have merged too much with their machines and lost the fire of their spirit."—*Wind Spirit*

**T'sa:** "The t'sa foolishly reject all outsiders. If their inventive and industrious nature could only be harnessed, they could become truly productive members of galactic society."—*Ghost Walker*

"The t'sa saw the dangers in accepting human aid and kept their independence. The question is, are they willing to aid others in regaining what they have?"—*Wind Spirit*

**Weren:** "Brutal fighters, useful as mercenaries, but they refuse to learn the lessons offered by superior cultures."—*Ghost Walker*

"They have no idea how fortunate they are to have the Orlamu rather than VoidCorp as patrons. May their blood philosophy help them walk the dangerous path between independence and slavery."—*Wind Spirit*

relationships. Sesheyans do not mate for life but instead have many mates and many children over a lifetime. A group of sesheyans involved in mating—along with their children, close friends, and other relations—make up the whole of a family. The sesheyan language includes many terms for relations that do not translate into human languages.

A tribe is composed of a group of families. The structure of the sesheyan tribe is fluid, shifting according to the needs of its members. Tribes split when they've grown large enough, breaking into two or more tribes that go their separate ways. Likewise, sesheyan tribes encountering each other might exchange families as a sign of friendship, strengthening the ties between them before moving on. In this way, stories and history are spread among widely dispersed tribes. This practice also serves to maintain a healthy gene pool.

Tribal and family loyalties are suppressed by VoidCorp, which emphasizes loyalty to the company above all

else. Some tribes on Sheya are allowed to maintain their traditional structure, but they can be broken up by VoidCorp officials at any time to serve the company's needs. Ghost Walker sesheyans do not maintain tribal ties.

#### AIKAI

Sesheyans have as broad a range of emotions and expression as humans, if not more, but they do not change moods as quickly or as arbitrarily as humans do.

To the sesheyans, every state of being is embodied in a mythic archetype from their fables, known as an *aikai*, meaning ghost or spirit. When a sesheyan needs or wants to experience a particular state of being, he or she calls up the appropriate *aikai*. A sesheyan on the hunt calls upon the ghost of the Hunter and, for him, nothing other than the pursuit and capture of the prey is important. On other occasions, a sesheyan might call upon the ghost of the Dreamer, the Dancer, the Traveler, or the Maker. Each basic archetype also has dozens, if not

## USING AIKEI

The best means of simulating the sesheyan use of aikei is through the Faith perk (*Player's Handbook*, page 104). The perk allows a sesheyan hero a greater chance of success when invoking the appropriate ghost in a situation. Not all sesheyans have this perk, only those with considerable faith and skill with the old ways (particularly shamans). The use of the perk is limited to actions suitable to primitive sesheyans, not for actions involving modern technology or ideas. A sesheyan might use aikei to improve a use of Melee Weapons—*blade*, but not Melee Weapons—*powered* or Computer Science.

**Example:** *Edolan, a sesheyan hunter, is trying to sneak past a Hatire guard on Grith. She calls upon the ghost of the Silent Stalker, focusing entirely on making her movements as quiet as a jungle stalker. Edolan has the Faith perk and rolls a Good success on her perk check. This gives her an improvement of two degrees of success on her sneak check result.*

hundreds, of variations associated with particular situations. So there is a Patient Hunter, a Feral Hunter, a Hunter Who Speaks With Spirits, and so forth.

Each of the hundreds of aikei is strongly rooted in sesheyan myth. Some are spirits or animal totems, while others are based on great heroes from legend. Instead of saying, "I am sad," a sesheyan says, "the ghost of sadness is upon me" to express sorrow. The elaborate rituals and myths associated with various aikei makes it seem—from the human point of view—as if a sesheyan has many different personalities. A sesheyan embodying the Brood Mother can be tender and nurturing. The same sesheyan can then call up the Feral Hunter and kill prey with savage abandon.

VoidCorp officially bans the practice of aikei, but it is so strongly rooted in the sesheyan psyche that it is nearly impossible to eradicate. Modern sesheyans continue to use aikei to express themselves, but the mythic elements have faded almost completely.

## CLOTHING & DECORATION

Sheya is a temperate world with little climatic variation. Sesheyans have little use for clothing, often wearing only simple loincloths. Belts and harnesses allow them to carry things. Even in galactic society, Sesheyans wear little, unless environmental conditions dictate otherwise.

Sesheyans like to decorate themselves and often wear different kinds of jewelry. Native sesheyans tend to wear jewelry made from natural materials, particularly carved animal bones and teeth, as well as carved and stained wood. Since the arrival of VoidCorp,

sesheyans also wear metallic jewelry, including rings in their ears and pierced through the skin of their wings or tails.

Sesheyans also use paints to decorate their bodies. Particular patterns of decoration are often associated with particular aikei, so sesheyans wanting to invoke the ghost of the Hunter paint their bodies accordingly. Sesheyans use tattooing to decorate themselves in a more permanent fashion, usually something related to a great accomplishment or a patron spirit. Sesheyan shamans are often tattooed in this manner. Patterns tattooed on the skin of their wings are the most common.

Sesheyans living in galactic society tend to eschew many of the personal decorations worn on Sheya. This is mostly out of deference to VoidCorp policy, which prefers employees maintain an appropriately "businesslike" appearance. Sesheyans employed by VoidCorp as scouts and spies are given greater leeway and often wear more decorations.

## OUTSIDE INFLUENCES

Sesheyan culture has been irrevocably changed by contact with galactic civilization. Although the old ways are still practiced by tribes on Sheya, sesheyans living away from their homeworld must adopt human mannerisms and abandon or hide their traditional customs and rituals to fit in. Many sesheyans fear that continual suppression of their culture by VoidCorp will cause them to lose their unique cultural identity entirely.

Since the Compact, sesheyan society has split into three fairly distinct segments: the *esosha* (Free Hearts), the *aikaya* (Ghost Walkers), and the *hurakai* (Wind Spirits). Free Hearts are those sesheyans

still living on Sheya. The Ghost Walkers are sesheyans in the employ of VoidCorp. Sesheyans who escape from VoidCorp become Wind Spirits. Wind Spirits are considered outlaws throughout the galactic arm, and even other stellar nations cannot always shelter a Wind Spirit from the vengeance of VoidCorp.

The split between these three factions of sesheyan culture is even deeper than most people realize. After two hundred years as galactic citizens, the sesheyans cannot return home. The differences between the Free Hearts and the others of their race are substantial. Free Hearts cling to the ancient culture and traditions of Sheya, permitted to do so by VoidCorp. They have little comprehension of the vastness of galactic space or the true nature of VoidCorp. Many Free Hearts remain as primitive as their precompact ancestors. To sesheyans born away from their home world, Free Heart life seems either idyllic or hopelessly primitive. Having learned so much, the galactic sesheyans cannot return to a blissful state of ignorance.

Despite the claims of the Wind Spirits, many Ghost Walkers are content with their lot as employees of VoidCorp. Raised since birth to honor and appreciate the company, these sesheyans are completely loyal to VoidCorp. They look with pity on the primitive Free Hearts, who are unaware of the wonders of life among the stars, and with disgust on the Wind Spirits, who betrayed their benefactors. A few Ghost Walkers harbor misgivings about VoidCorp and the Compact, but most are as loyal as VoidCorp's human employees.

The Wind Spirits have benefited from modern education and technology. They claim to understand the nature of interstellar politics in a way their ancestors could not have imagined when they agreed to the Sesheyan Compact. Wind Spirits range from pirates and renegades to political activists who claim VoidCorp illegally and immorally enslaved their race. Either way, VoidCorp considers them criminals to be hunted down.

## GOVERNMENT

Before the arrival of VoidCorp, sesheyan tribes were governed by a council of the eldest members, usually including their greatest hunters and the tribe's shaman.



Matters were decided by simple vote, usually involving various rituals to call upon helpful ghosts and a divination by the shaman to read any omens.

The Sesheyan Compact officially dissolved all political and social organizations on Sheya and replaced them with VoidCorp institutions. Teaching and practicing sesheyan traditions is banned by VoidCorp, except in certain areas of Sheya where company scientists study the sesheyans' native culture.

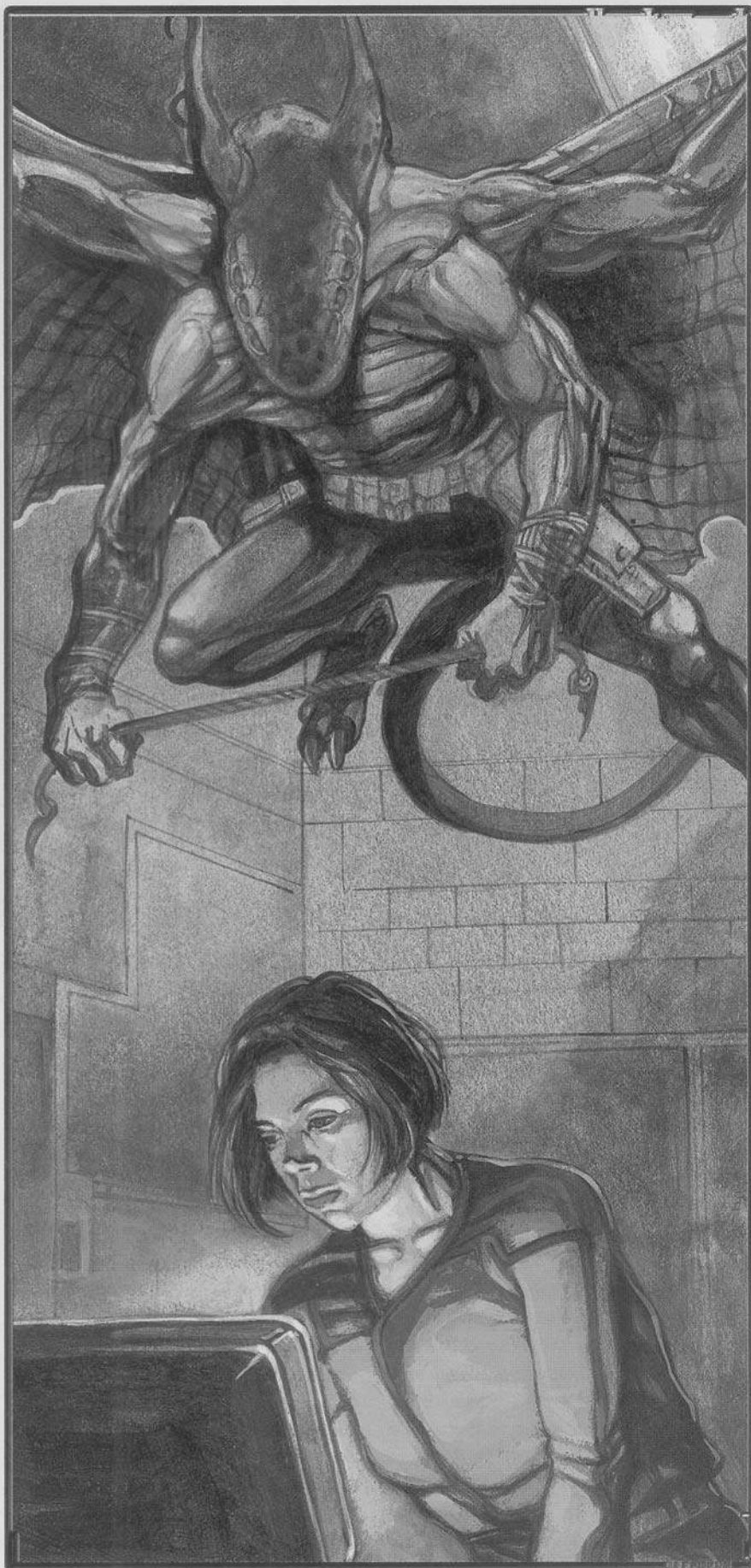
Since the Compact, all sesheyans are considered citizens (employees) of VoidCorp from the moment of birth, just like all other sentients in VoidCorp space. The sesheyans are governed by the same set of rules and regulations as any other VoidCorp employee. They are assigned Employee Identification Numbers at birth and may apply for positions with VoidCorp. VoidCorp holds the dozen or so sesheyan Vice Presidents in the company as examples of what the sesheyans can achieve, as well as showing their equal treatment.

In practice, it is often difficult for sesheyans to advance within VoidCorp. Some sesheyans manage to overcome the limitations of their culture and background to rise in the ranks, but they do so at the cost of their cultural heritage and traditions.

#### RELIGION

Religion and ritual have been central to sesheyan life throughout their history, but they are vanishing due to the influence of VoidCorp. The tribes on Sheya still follow the old ways and keep their traditions alive, mostly as a "living laboratory" for VoidCorp scientists to study. Elsewhere in VoidCorp space, however, the practice of any religion is banned. Possession of religious icons or artifacts is subject to heavy fines and other penalties. Still, the practice of sesheyan religion continues in secret among some, particularly the Wind Spirits.

Sesheyan religion is based around stories told by their shamans. The fables revolve around important figures from myth and history, and they provide the framework for the many different ghosts the sesheyans believe in. The practice of fable animism involves telling the various stories at the correct times, often in conjunction with certain rituals to honor



*Natural hunters, sesheyans make the deadliest VoidCorp assassins.*

## NEW CAREERS

### VOIDCORP ASSASSIN

One of the many areas in which VoidCorp employs sesheyans is in a contemporary model of their role as hunters. Skilled and patient hunters able to fly silently and stalk prey in the dead of night, sesheyans make superlative assassins. Once given an assignment, the archtypical sesheyan assassin never gives up until either successful or dead. The activities of such assassins outside of VoidCorp space has not helped to endear the sesheyans to other stellar nations, which suits VoidCorp (and many sesheyans) just fine.

**Signature Equipment:** laser rifle, CF softsuit

**Free Agent Core Skills** (25 points): Ranged Weapons, Mod-rifle, Security—security devices, Stealth—hide

**In the Verge:** VoidCorp assassins go wherever they are ordered by the company. VoidCorp's strong interest in many systems of the Verge (particularly Corrivale) is enough to warrant the attention of a trained assassin when a precise strike is needed.

### SESHEYAN SHAMAN

Sesheyan shamans are the spiritual leaders of their people, keepers of sacred lore and history. While most shamans do not leave Sheya, some have found their way to the stars as employees of VoidCorp, especially shamans who possess skills useful to the company, or those potential rebels VoidCorp prefers to have off Sheya. Sesheyans continue to pass on the traditions and teachings of shamanism, even though such things are banned by VoidCorp.

**Signature Equipment:** dagger, bone necklace, fetishes, and sacred items

**Diplomat Core Skills** (20 points): Knowledge—first aid 2; Deception—bluff; Entertainment; Leadership—inspire

**Mindwalker Core Skills** (25 points): ESP—precognition; Knowledge—first aid; Entertainment; Telepathy; Leadership—inspire

**In the Verge:** Sesheyan shamans can often be found in the jungles of Grith, helping guide the tribes while working to maintain the traditions and rituals of their people.

*backed out of the room, his folded wings concealing the information chips taken from the Manager's safe. The manager's anger was great when she discovered what Neshii'en had done, but the Trickster had already vanished like a shadow among the trees."*

— from "The Tale of Neshii'en and the Foolish Manager,"  
a modern sesheyan fable

### SHAMANISM

The central figure in sesheyan religion is the shaman, known as the *losaika*, or "keeper of ghosts." VoidCorp xenologists have noted remarkable similarities between sesheyan shamanism and that practiced by primitive human cultures. In essence, a shaman is "called" to the profession by a sign from the spirits, often an omen or an illness in which the shaman has visions. Many neophyte shamans spend lengthy periods alone in the jungle seeking such visions.

The student is apprenticed to an experienced shaman, who teaches the various stories, legends, and rituals the new shaman needs to know. The process takes several standard years, at which time the new shaman is presented to the tribe in a special ritual.

Sesheyan shamans have considerable authority in their tribes, since they are believed to be in closest contact with the ghosts and their wisdom. Scientists have discovered that some sesheyan shamans possess psionic abilities, which they often use to aid their rituals and perform their duties. They speculate that the emergence of psionic abilities, especially telepathy and clairsentience, may induce the "visions" required to become a shaman. These abilities most likely account for sesheyan tales of the fantastic powers of their shamans. Psionically-gifted sesheyans are high on VoidCorp's recruitment list.

— from "The Tale of Neshii'en the Trickster and the Great Ska Mother,"  
a traditional sesheyan fable

*"Neshii'en found himself in great trouble when the Manager returned to her office unexpectedly. Thinking quickly, Neshii'en wrapped a cord from his pouch around his neck, folded his wings, and bowed his head, his eyes cast down as the Manager entered. Neshii'en called for the ghost of the Humble Servant to be upon him as the Manager asked him what he was doing in her office.*

*"A thousand pardons, SZ472 556XX," he said. 'I come on an errand for Vice-President KG228 712ZA. He requests an immediate update on the status of...your project.' The Manager regarded Neshii'en for a long moment, but she saw nothing but the Humble Servant, eager to do his employer's bidding. She told Neshii'en to return to Vice-President KG228 712ZA and tell him an update would be immediately forthcoming. Dipping his head in obedience, Neshii'en*

the ghosts of the tale, particularly reenactments of legendary events and rituals intended to maintain things like the movement of the celestial bodies and the continued prosperity of the hunt.

*"And so Neshii'en found himself trapped in the heart of the Ska Mother's lair when she returned. Thinking quickly, Neshii'en covered himself with the scent of the cubs, knowing the Ska Mother's sight was weak. He rolled on the ground and imitated the mewling noises of the other cubs as the great Ska Mother came closer. She nuzzled the cubs with her head, and Neshii'en lay still, calling on the ghost of the Great Ska to be with him, making him like a ska cub. The Ska Mother did not notice him among her children and so dropped the prey she captured for them and lay down to sleep. While the Ska Mother slept, Neshii'en spirited away one of the cubs to become his friend and companion. He named the cub Nura the Brave, and she became Neshii'en's good friend."*

## WEAPONS & TECHNOLOGY

Before the arrival of VoidCorp, sesheyan technology was limited to bone knives and simple snares woven from jungle vines. The sesheyans had not even discovered the use of fire, due to the damp conditions in the jungles and their efficient night-vision which precluded the need for artificial lighting. All advanced technology on Sheya is



## SESHEYAN WEAPONS

Weapon	Skill	Acc.	Md	Range	Type	Damage (O/G/A)	Actions	Hide	Cost
Bone Dagger	Melee— <i>blade</i>	0	F	Personal	LI/O	d4s/d4w/d4+1w	4	+3	10
Metal Dagger	Melee— <i>blade</i>	0	F	Personal	LI/O	d4w/d4+1w/d4+2w	4	+3	20
Spear	Melee— <i>blade</i>	0	F	Personal	LI/O	d4w/d4+2w/d4m	3	—	15
Blowgun	Ranged— <i>blowgun</i>	0	F	per STR	LI/O	1s/d4s/d4w, plus poison	1	+1	10
Dart	Athletics— <i>throw</i>	0	F	per STR	LI/O	d4s/d4w/d4+1w, plus poison	2	+4	5
Wind Claw	Athletics— <i>throw</i>	0	F	per STR	LI/O	d4w/d4+2w/d4m	4	+2	15
Bola	Athletics— <i>throw</i>	0	F	per STR	LI/O	1s/d4s/d4+1s, plus entangle*	1	+3	20

Special Effect—Entangle: The weapon entraps the target, restricting movement. Each level of success applies a +1 modifier to the target's actions, so an Amazing success imposes a +3 penalty. Bolas affect only actions involving use of the entangled limb(s). Getting out of the entanglement requires a Strength or Dexterity feat (including the entanglement penalty).

imported by VoidCorp to supply their own operations and is kept strictly under control, out of the hands of any possible sesheyan rebels. Sesheyan employees of VoidCorp have access to all of the company's advanced technology, the same as any other employee.

The pre-existing sesheyan technology is still effective. Many people who have scoffed at the image of sesheyans wielding bone knives and simple spears have discovered just how effective, to their own regret.

## WEAPONS

The standard sesheyan tool and weapon is the *jaeja* (dagger). Sesheyan daggers are typically carved out of bone and curved, with a point and a single cutting edge, about 20–30 cm in length. Some sesheyans also make use of straight, double-edged daggers chipped out of stone. Since the arrival of VoidCorp, nearly every sesheyan hunter carries a metal dagger on a leather belt around the waist.

The short spear is another common sesheyan weapon. Originally tipped with bone or stone, modern spearheads are made of metal. Sesheyan hunters can hurl spears with deadly accuracy from the air, and spears are a preferred weapon for occasions when tribes go to war with each other. While hunting, sesheyans also use various types of darts, made of wood or bone. Small darts are fired from a blowgun made of hollowed out wood, while heavier darts are thrown.

A native sesheyan weapon is the *hureja*, or wind claw, a melee/throwing weapon that consists of a short wooden shaft ending in two blades of bone

## SHEYA

Primary	Gamma Leonis III
Planetary Class	Class 1
Gravity	G1 (0.84g)
Radiation	R1 (9 rem/yr)
Atmosphere	A2 (N, O, CO <sub>2</sub> )
Pressure	P3 (1.12)
Heat	H2 (22° C)
Orbital Distance	10.2 AU
Diameter	5,840 km
Year (Earth days)	6,716 days
Day (hours)	22.4 hours
Axial Tilt	8°
Density	1.07
Satellites	None

(metal for modern versions) that curve in opposite directions. The wind claw is grasped and wielded from the middle of the shaft. It can be thrown a considerable distance by a skilled hunter.

Sesheyan hunters also use a weapon similar to an Earth bola: three or four round stones tied together by tough cords. The bola can be thrown a considerable distance by a capable hunter and can entangle the limbs or wings of small prey animals.

In addition to their various native weapons, sesheyans have proven adept with modern 26th-century weapons. Their sharp eyesight makes them capable marksmen, once they become accustomed to the feel of a modern gun. An airborne sesheyan with a laser pistol is a formidable opponent.

Sesheyans normally wear little or no armor, since it tends to interfere with their wings and weighs them down. They can wear light, modern body armor specially tailored to accommo-

date their body structure and wings, however. This armor is generally limited to softsuits and similar light, flexible materials. Cerametal armor and bodytanks modified to fit sesheyans are extremely rare, and sesheyans don't generally like wearing them. A deflection harness is perhaps the ultimate armor for a sesheyan: light, unencumbering, and capable of being built into a pair of bracelets, a belt, or an amulet.

## THE SESHEYAN HOMEWORLD

Sheya is the fourth and largest moon of the gas giant Gamma Leonis III. Although it orbits more than ten times the distance from its star than Earth orbits its sun, GLIII puts out considerable heat, warming the surface of Sheya and making it quite habitable.

The moon is cut with a network of deep valleys. While the higher altitudes are cold and arid, the valleys are warm and lush. Native plant-life grows riotously throughout the lowlands, forming a heavy jungle canopy that soaks up the heat and limited light that falls on the surface of Sheya, cloaking the ground below in perpetual twilight. Sheya's ecosystem is filled with various lifeforms, of which the sesheyans are the top of the food chain. Sesheyan hunters stalk wild game in the jungles, from snakelike reptiles to large, sleek jungle predators and game animals.



Steve Kenson is the author of the *Avengers: Masters of Evil* adventure for the *MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game*. He is a lifelong fan of science fiction and a new fan of the *STAR\*DRIVE* campaign setting.