EGO HUNTER

An Adventure for The Roleplaying Game of Transhuman Conspiracy and Horror
**Ego Hunter**

*Ego Hunter* is a convention scenario for *Eclipse Phase*. It is unique in that most (possibly all) of the player characters are forks of the same person who work together to track down their original (alpha) self. Intended as a one-shot, stand-alone adventure, it can easily be converted into a mission for an ongoing campaign.

**MISSION HOOK**

The scenario begins with several beta forks of the same person—Achjima Yai—all awakening in a body bank after being successfully sleeved into new morphs. Days ago, each of these forks was egocast away to conduct business and research in remote habitats. Upon egocasting back, their missions complete, these forks should have been collected by the Achjima from which they originated to be merged back into her ego. Instead, Achjima apparently left instructions and paid a small fortune (borrowed from a local criminal group) for these forks to be resleeved. A message left by Achjima tells the forks that something has happened to their alpha ego. They must put together the pieces of the puzzle and track their original self down.

**CHARACTER BACKGROUND**

It is expected that most players of this scenario will be playing a beta fork of Achjima. Forking is detailed on p. 273, *Eclipse Phase*. Beta forks are mind clones of the original person with some parts inhibited (skills) or deleted (memories). Though copies of the same person, each fork differs in small but distinct ways. The neural pruning used to create them varied slightly, as each fork was tailored for its specific task. This means that some forks might retain memories that others do not. It also means that small differences in personality or even skills might exist between forks.

Throughout this scenario, the designation (alpha) will be used to refer to the original Achjima from which these forks emerged. The character forks will be identified as (B1), (B2), (B3), and so on, as noted below. Other forks of Achjima will be noted in the text by the type of fork and a numerical designator (for example: B6, B7, and B8). Character sheets for each fork can be found in the portrait version of *Ego Hunter*, starting on p. 18.

Not all of the players need be a fork of Achjima. Several suggestions are provided for other characters to be included. Most of these are characters who egocast in with the forks from a remote location. Character information for Nkeka is provided (p. 28 of the portrait version). It is recommended that one of the Sample Characters from the core rulebook (p. 154–169, *EP*) be used for each of the other characters (Roque and Park); specific suggestions are provided and sheets included.
CHARACTER LIST
This list assumes a game of up to 8 players. The characters are listed in the order they should be assigned; if a game has only 5 players, for example, only use the first 5 characters listed:

1. **Achjima (B1):** This fork was sent to research various xenobotanical samples recovered from exoplanets accessed via Pandora gates in the possession of argonaut researchers.
2. **Achjima (B2):** This fork was sent to discreetly speak with an expert in uplift genetics regarding the effects of certain chemicals on smart monkey brains.
3. **Achjima (B3):** This fork was sent to investigate the recent activities and disappearance of a singularity seeker named Arman Usupov.
4. **Nkeka Adesoji:** Nkeka is an agent of Firewall who has infiltrated some singularity seeker circles.
5. **Achjima (B4):** This fork was sent to research the durability of various botanical and mycological strains on Mars.
6. **Roque Vera:** Roque is a collector and dealer of unusual things—usually illegal and sometimes dangerous. Recommended: Hypercorp Black Marketeer, Extropian Smuggler, Mercurial Scavenger
7. **Park Soon-Ok:** Soon-Ok is Achjima’s only local friend. She knows nothing of recent events. She simply received a message that Achjima was in trouble and to join her forks at the resleeving facility. Recommended: Criminal Hacker, Scum Enforcer, Anarchist Techie
8. **Achjima (B5):** This fork was sent to investigate and appraise a set of experimental cognitive enhancements being offered by a group of renegade genetecists in the Main Belt. (This is a red herring.)

If there are fewer than 8 players, the higher Achjima forks should be ignored (alternatively, the gamemaster can combine some of the forks together). Roque, Park, and Nkeka, if not used as player characters, should be run by the gamemaster as NPCs.

STARTING SETTING
This scenario takes place in the domed Martian settlement of Anyang, in the region known as Hellas Planitia. Originally founded as a terraforming outpost by Chinese settlers, Anyang is now an administrative center home to some 300,000. Many of these residents are hypercorp personnel, drawn to a cluster of research parks, mostly focused on genetics and biological sciences. Anyang is a focal point of culture and nightlife for the dozens of smaller outposts and settlements in the region.

Anyang is laid out much like a city on Earth would have been, except that it is covered by a large pressurized transparent dome that holds in a breathable atmosphere for transhuman biomorphs.

EGO HUNTER IN AN ONGOING CAMPAIGN
The easiest way to use this scenario as part of an ongoing team is to make the various forks of Achjima into NPCs, run by the gamemaster. In this case, the player characters would be taking on the role of Achjima’s allies. If the player characters are part of Firewall, they can take the role Nkeka occupies, replacing her as a group. If the characters are not Firewall, they can fill in Park’s position, with the assumption that one or more know Achjima from past dealings. If handling multiple Achjima fork NPCs at once is too much for the gamemaster, the scenario can be altered so that only one or two of the forks are resleeved while the rest are brought along as infomorphs.

One way to still have fun playing the various forks and mesh this mission in with an ongoing campaign is to wait for a time when some of the player characters are separated from the team for a short period. In this case, the players whose characters are away can take on the role of Achjima’s forks. This also works if you happen to have some guests over for a game session or two and you want to hand them characters to play.

PLOT SYNOPSIS
Achjima Yai is a singularity seeker. Fascinated with the TITANs and the possibility of bootstrapping her ego to transcendant levels of intelligence, she has made a career out of scavenging, studying, and trading TITAN relics and other curiosities from the Fall. Her activities have landed her in trouble several times, forcing her to move often and keep to the fringes in order to avoid too many questions from the authorities. Her illicit technological interests and need to keep her activities clandestine are expensive, however, and so Achjima has become indebted to a triad crime syndicate. In exchange for their assistance, she lends her scientific expertise to their projects and sometimes passes them items of interest.

In recent months, Achjima has been forced to relocate to Anyang in order to work off some of her debt to the triad, who have her assisting in their soul-trading and black market morph operations here. While here, she recently received a package, hand-delivered/smuggled by a sufi nomad, from another singularity seeker named Arman Usupov. The delivery consisted of a specimen container with an unusual biological sample and a short message from Arman, who simply said that he had “discovered it under interesting circumstances” and wanted her to help analyze it.
ROLEPLAYING ACHJIMA

It should be an intriguing challenge for the players to all roleplay the same character. Though we have provided some details on Achjima’s personality, the players will have a limited amount of information to work from and it is likely that each player will approach the character in their own individual manner. While the players should make an effort to all come across as the same person, don’t sweat it if it doesn’t come off perfectly. There are many reasons why the different forks of Achjima might manifest different aspects of the character’s personality. The neural pruning process is far from perfect, and each fork was pruned in separate ways that can lead to variation. On top of this, the longer the forks remain apart, the more they diverge from each other in experiences and personality and become distinct and separate individuals. This process of divergence is in fact a key element of the roleplaying this scenario encourages.

Achjima began investigating the biological material. During this testing, one of her smart monkey pet/assistants was accidentally exposed to spores from this sample. Achjima isolated the creature and placed it under study, where she noticed it was exhibiting some odd changes in behavior. After several days, the monkey died. Achjima autopsied the animal and detected several chemical changes to the monkey’s brain. Shortly thereafter, she observed a strange set of biological growths extending from its corpse. She strongly suspected the biological substance had been manipulating the smart monkey’s behavior in order to facilitate its own best chances for replication and survival.

Achjima decided to research this unusual sample more. To this end, she pruned several beta forks of herself and sent them off on research missions. Somewhat paranoid and precautious, she was careful to trim each fork’s memories so that it only knew the bare minimum it needed in order to pursue the investigation, in case they happened to fall into the wrong hands.

Just a few hours after these forks were egocast away, Achjima made a horrible discovery. She herself had been exposed to the spores just as the smart monkey had. Though her initial tests on herself had shown she was unaffected, she was now detecting signs of the material in her system—a substance she fears was created by the TITANs.

In fact, the biological sample is an alien life form most similar to the terrestrial Cordyceps fungus. Cordyceps is a parasitic fungus that (usually) preys on insects and sometimes has the ability to affect the host’s behavior by directly infiltrating its brain and neurological system. Recreated and modified by exsurgents during the Fall, the xenofungus in Achjima’s possession has been specially tailored to affect transhumans; the spores of this parasitic xenofungus can infect biomorphs. When a victim breathes in the spores, they attach to the inside of the throat, lungs, and sinus cavities and germinate. From there, they grow thin tendrils into the victim’s body. Once these tendrils penetrate into the brain, they begin releasing mind-altering chemicals that affect the victim’s perceptions and behaviors. The infected become slightly dazed, highly-sensitive to odors, and concerned primarily with finding the ideal location from which the fungus can spread its spores. The ideal location is one that is warm, moist, and subject to strong winds. Once the parasite kills the victim, it replaces its host’s tissue, sprouts from the body, and fruits into maturity. The entire process takes just under a week. Even though the victim is doomed to die, the xenofungal infection prevents them from contemplating suicide or pursuing similarly self-destructive measures.

Unfortunately for Achjima, she discovered her infection too late. The xenofungus was already manipulating her behavior more than she realized. Unable to kill or restrain herself, the best she could do was to arrange for the forks to be resleeved when she returned (a large expense that required a temporary loan from her triad connections) and hope they would put together the information they needed to track her down and deal with the problem. She also created three new beta forks (B6, B7, and B8) and sleeved each, but due to the xenofungus’s influences, she was incapable of creating either until their new sleeves had been similarly infected. Though neither

What matters is that the players make an effort to portray roughly the same character. One way for them to do this is to play off of each other’s presentations and mimic each other. If one player starts off with a specific speech pattern, the others should emulate it. If another player coins a specific amusing catch-phrase that Achjima uses, the others should adopt it. If a player invents a specific memory from Achjima’s past while narrating a tale, the others should feel free to expand on that story. In a sense, Achjima is a group identity, fleshed out by the cooperative manner in which the players bring her to life.

If for some reason one of the players fails to stick to the character, as portrayed by the others, there are in-game ways of explaining this. As noted under Neural Pruning (p. 274, EP), precise manipulation of the ego is still an art form and subject to errors. It is quite possible that one of the forks in question has been significantly altered by the pruning process, to the point of having a mental disorder (p. 150, EP) or simply some distinct mannerisms that make them stand out.
has reached the stage of infection that Achjima (alpha) has, all three are effectively under the parasite’s control. As Achjima (alpha) succumbed to the infection, these forks carried through a plan to infiltrate the habitat’s air plant. This scheme involved abducting an air plant engineer (Scott Wai) and hiring a hacker (known as T-Faktor) to oversee the infiltration and hide their tracks, so that they could place the sprouting Achjima in the best possible position to spread spores.

Meanwhile, the activity of one of Achjima’s forks has drawn the attention of Firewall. Achjima’s past activities reserved her a spot on Firewall’s watch list some time ago, as did the interests of Arman Usupov. When Arman began poking around in the TITAN Quarantine Zone, Firewall started paying closer attention. His recent disappearance, and the sudden arrival and interest of Achjima (B3) in the matter, prompted a proxy to dispatch three sentinels to investigate what was going on. One is doing what they can to find Arman. Another, Nkeka Adesoji, made contact with Achjima (B3), pretending to be another singularity seeker. After doing what she could to help research Arman’s disappearance, Nkeka has egocast with the beta fork to Anyang.

The third sentinel, named Kjell Hoff, took a more direct approach to researching Achjima. Unfortunately, he drew the attention of the paranoid singularity seeker and was murdered by Achjima B6. This killing was very public, and Achjima is now wanted for questioning for aggravated violence and property destruction.

At the time the scenario begins, Achjima (alpha) has fully succumbed to the alien fungus. Her infected corpse lies hidden within the habitat’s primary air recycling and circulation plant. Large fungal growths already sprout from her body, growing larger by the hour. In approximately twelve hours, the xenofungus will spore. The characters have until then to track the body down and contain the infection.

**MAJOR NPCs**

Here is a quick summary for the gamemaster of the NPCs that play a role in this scenario:

- **Dolma Gope** (p. 11): A genehacker who runs a black clinic linked to the triad. Achjima sometimes works at this clinic. Dolma helped Achjima (alpha) acquire three morphs just recently (for B6, B7, and B8).
- **Kjell Hoff** (p. 9): A Firewall agent sent to investigate Achjima ahead of Nkeka’s arrival. Achjima (alpha) was alerted to his snooping and so Achjima (B6) murdered him.
- **Scott Wai** (p. 11): A technician who maintains Anyang’s air plants. Achjima (alpha) had him kidnapped to gain entrance to one of the plants.
- **T-Faktor** (p. 11): A mercenary hacker, perhaps the best in Anyang. Achjima (alpha) hired him to help gain access to one of the air plants.
- **Yao Xie** (p. 12): The local triad boss to whom Achjima is indebted. He is aware that Achjima is in trouble and want to know the details. He also possesses Achjima’s backup.

**FORKING LEGALITY**

Forking is a tricky matter when it comes to legal interpretations. Given the patchwork nature of transhumanity’s holdings, legal views of forking vary almost as much as social attitudes. Even within the Planetary Consortium, individual habitats may have nuanced approaches to the legal standings of forks.

The habitat of Anyang, in which this scenario takes place, approaches forking legality in a manner similar to most Consortium settlements. Specifically, alpha forking is illegal, beta forking is legal for up to 4 hours (not counting remote transmission lag time), and delta forks are legal for unlimited periods. The time limit on beta forks is rarely enforced, however, unless it is abused. Forks are considered the legal property of the originating alpha. The alpha is responsible for any laws the forks break and is legally accountable in other matters as well. Forks are, however, prohibited from signing legal contracts or otherwise entering the alpha into any binding legal agreements without the alpha’s express permission (and secure digital confirmation). Forks are not considered to have personal or civil rights of their own. Alpha forks, betas that exceed their time limits, and other divergent forks are considered legal non-entities.

It is customary for forks to be given limited credit from the alpha’s accounts. The alpha’s rep scores apply equally to their active forks.

In the context of this scenario, Achjima’s forks are already breaking the law by existing longer than 4 hours. Should they run afoul of the law, they have no rights to speak of—and in fact no right to exist any further. Without the approval of Achjima (alpha), they also have no authority to legally access Achjima’s credit accounts or other private affairs, nor can they speak on behalf of Achjima in any legal sense.

If the gamemaster wants to explore forking legalities, they may desire to change Anyang’s laws. Enforcement of forking limits may be more strict, for example, which could spark an investigation into Achjima’s recent activities by the local militia. Or forking may be more permissible and legally supported, perhaps creating the opportunity for Achjima’s forks to achieve their own legal independence and existence.
STAGE 1: MEET YOURSELF

Each of the player characters awakes in a body bank resleeving facility. Roughly an hour passes as various medical scans and tests are run to ensure that that the resleeving went smoothly. The various forks of Achjima are likely to be confused, as they expected to be merged with Achjima (alpha) when they returned. Instead, the med-techs tell them that Achjima arranged otherwise and that a message is waiting for them.

The beta forks are clothed (given the outfits the last owners of their morphs were wearing) and each herded into a waiting room together, along with Nkeka (who accompanied Achjima B3) back to Anyang. The forks are introduced very matter-of-factly by a bored med-tech, who then transmits an encrypted private message to each of them, to be viewed in their entoptic displays. The message is the same for each, and may be shared with others if they like. They are also informed that two others (Roque and Park, the other player characters) are waiting to meet with them in the reception area.

THE MESSAGE

When the forks access the message, they view an avatar of Achjima (alpha) as they last remember themselves: an attractive ruster morph with typical Eurasian looks. Though computer-generated, the avatar’s programming captures the emotional state of the user. In this case, Achjima (alpha) comes across as unfocused and dozy, perhaps drugged. The icon gazes off into the distance for several long, uncomfortable moments, then turns to address the viewer directly with a glassy expression. With apparent difficulty, she stutters out a short string of letters and digits: “SC-D378.” She swallows uncomfortably, and then follows this up with a simple “Find it.” After another long, blank stare, she croaks out “St— … st— … stop me.” After that the message ends.

PRIVATE MESSAGES

In addition to the one message which all of the forks receive, each fork receives a private message from Achjima. Each of these messages is different. These messages are noted on the character sheet for each fork.

INTRODUCTIONS

The assembled forks should have a few minutes to “get to know each other”—or at least to compare notes and share information. Though Nkeka is present, it is entirely up to the forks whether or not to share the message with her.

After a short period, the med-tech will return and usher the characters out to meet their visitors: Roque and Park. Roque only recently arrived, having egocasted into the same facility just ahead of the forks. Roque was invited here as a potential buyer of the xenofungal sample several days ago. Achjima

UPPING THE ANTE

There are several ways gamemasters can make this scenario more challenging:

- Rather than having each of the forks start in a new morph, they may simply return to find Achjima missing, no clues as to what happened. Beginning as bodiless infomorphs, the forks will need to work with their allies either entirely via the mesh or else acquire morphs on their own.
- Firewall may have had an opportunity to intercept one of Achjima’s forks and, thanks to some skilled hacking, replacing it with an imposter ego of their own. In this case, replace one of the forks with a secret Firewall agent. This character will have to be careful to masquerade as Achjima, despite having none of her memories. It also creates the opportunity for more division in the group, as one of the Achjimas is not what she seems.
- Achjima may have a singularity seeker rival. Unknown to Achjima, this rival has thoroughly hacked and infiltrated Achjima’s mesh systems so as to monitor her work and steal her secrets. This rival has watched the situation unfold and is fully aware of what is taking place. Seeing an opportunity to set back the competition, the rival begins actively sabotaging the forks’ plans while seeking out a sample of the fungus for their own research.
- The gamemaster can advance the timetable on Achjima (alpha)’s infection, so that by the time the player characters arrive at the air plant, the spores are already spreading throughout the habitat. The scenario then turns into a containment and/or survival mission—can the forks survive without becoming infected? Can they somehow alert the authorities or act independently to keep the infection from spreading outside of Anyang?
- Firewall may not have been the only one alerted to Achjima’s affairs—Project Ozma may also be on the trail. In this case, Ozma is operating a step removed from the player characters. They will be watching remotely, using spy drones and precision mesh intrusions to monitor the situation as it unfolds. If the characters are lucky, they may become aware of being watched—a fact likely to fuel their paranoia. Once the end game begins, Ozma will step in with the full weight of its secret authority. The air plant will be cordoned off and everyone involved will be rounded up and interrogated. Escaping with memories intact will be a challenge.
(alpha) simply left a message for him stating that he should wait at the facility and conduct business with his forks. The forks themselves know nothing about him, and it is up to Roque to decide how much he wishes to share with them.

Park is someone the forks will all recognize, though they are unlikely to have many memories relating to Park and Achjima’s past. They will remember that Park is one of Achjima’s only local friends. Though not a singularity seeker, Park is a technophile and interested in techno-curiosties. Park knows very little of Achjima’s recent activities; she often buries herself in research or work for days or weeks at a time and doesn’t talk much of her work for the triads.

**BREAKING NEWS**

At some point during this meeting, one of the player characters should become aware of a recent news item (most likely Roque or Park, having been alerted by their muse, if Nkeka hasn’t told them already). According to the reports, just hours ago Achjima (alpha, presumably) was implicated in the public murder of someone named Kjell Hoff. Nkeka is already aware of this information, having been alerted by Firewall just after her resleeve.

The murder itself was captured by various sensors and is available for download. In the footage, Kjell is seen emerging from a local pub called Bar D’Ville and heading down the street. Achjima is seen emerging from the shadows between buildings, coming up on Kjell from behind, and planting a bullet in the back of his head. The murder occurs on a semi-busy street, in front of a dozen onlookers. Achjima is then seen running off. Sensors continue to track her for several blocks, before she disappears into an area with little sensor/spine coverage.

While the killer looks like Achjima (alpha), in reality it was B6. Any character who investigates in detail may make an Interfacing Test to enhance and sharpen the footage. If successful, one thing becomes immediately apparent: Achjima has a blank expression throughout the incident, just like the avatar did, and immediately after the killing she even pauses for a second over the body, as if in confusion over what to do next. Any of the forks may make a Perception Test to notice that certain small features of this morph do not quite match up to the morph they last knew Achjima (alpha) to be in. It seems possible to them that this is a separate morph, biosculpted to look like the old. A further Investigation Test by any character will uncover the fact that this morph has unusual orange patterns showing in its eyes and even subdermally on its face.

The news indicates that the local Anyang People’s Militia are seeking Achjima for questioning. Though they do not seem to be aware of the forks yet, it is only a matter of time before their mesh spiders turn up data on their return and seek to track them down.

**WHAT THE FORKS KNOW**

Since the forks are in pursuit of another version of themselves, exactly what they know about Achjima (alpha) and her life is likely to come up often and play an important role in this investigation. The simple answer is: not much. Most of the banal memories of Achjima’s regular and recent affairs were excised via neural pruning, as unnecessary to their respective missions. This sort of memory alteration is not an exact science, however, and so it is entirely likely that some useful info remains. To complicate matters, each fork was pruned separately and so is likely to have different memory fragments.

What this means is that the gamemaster has fine control over what the forks know. If the gamemaster finds a particular bit of info useful to the scenario, he can let the forks remember it. If the characters are grabbing at straws, pursuing red herrings, or bogging down the scenario with too many questions, “you don’t remember” will work just fine.

This said, there is some info that each of the forks is likely to recall. They will know where Achjima lives, but they won’t recall the security codes. They will know she works for the triads and who her main contact there is (Yao Xie), but they won’t recall exactly what it is she does or any details on the triad’s operations.

It is likely the forks at some point will attempt to second-guess Achjima (alpha) by asking what she would do in a certain situation. In this case, the gamemaster should answer as truthfully as possible, keeping in mind the limits of what the forks know and the fact that Achjima (alpha) and her three infected forks are under the parasite’s influence.

**GEARING UP**

The forks are unequipped and one of the first things they are likely to do is seek to remedy that situation. Achjima (alpha) left an account with 500 credits which they each have access too. Any attempt to access Achjima’s other accounts is futile; they have been drained (though they may provide certain leads; see Credit History, p. 10).

Achjima (alpha) did leave Achjima (B1) a private message, hinting that a cache of gear was left for the forks at The Bar D’Ville (p. 10). If the forks talk to a bartender there, they will be handed a sealed bag with a medium pistol firearm, 100 rounds of ammo, a microwave agonizer, a utilitool, and a gardener nanoswarm capsule. Achjima (B1) is, of course, under no obligation to share this stash with her cohorts.

If the forks wish to acquire gear, they have several options. First, they can use the limited credit they jointly share. Second, they can pull in favors using their rep scores to borrow gear or get it cheap. Third they can rely on Nkeka and/or Roque. Fourth they can track down other allies, such as Dolma. The forks may be hoping to pick up gear from Achjima’s home, but they will find this more complicated than expected (see Achjima’s Lab, p. 8). Trying to use their triad connections is also unlikely to go well, considering the debt Achjima (alpha) has accrued (see The Triad Comes Calling, p. 12).
Nkeka is also not very well equipped, though she at least has credit to acquire what she needs. Firewall has also provided her with the location and access codes to Kjell Hoff’s hotel room, where some gear awaits her. It may be difficult, however, for her to slip away with raising suspicion—especially if the forks connect Nkeka to Kjell. In the hotel room Nkeka will find a heavy pistol firearm, 100 rounds of ammo, a utilitool, an armor vest, specs, a specimen container, a guardian nanoswarm, and a speck robot.

STAGE 2: FIND YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR
From this point, the player characters have multiple avenues of research to choose from. This part of the scenario is free-form, depending on the players’ whims and how the gamemaster guides them. Ultimately the information gained should lead to a confrontation with Achjima (B6), as noted in Stage 3.

THE SERIAL NUMBER
A successful Research Test with a MoS of 10+ will uncover the fact that the serial number matches the range of numbers used by a personal locker storage rental facility in this habitat. A successful hacking intrusion into the storage company’s rental records will indicate that locker D378 was indeed rented by Achjima just a couple of days ago.

The locker itself is easy to find. It is, however, locked with an e-lock with hooded keypad access. This lock can be circumvented with a covert ops tool, network hacking, or hardware hacking as noted on p. 291, EP. The storage facility, however, is monitored by a security AI (p. 332, EP) with a guardian angel (p. 346, EP) bot on call.

Inside the locker is the corpse of the smart monkey that was first to be infected by the xenofungus. Though contained in a sealed plastic bag, this bag is rigged to tear open when the locker is opened. The body, still recognizable as a monkey, is heavily covered in strange fungal growths that protrude from its head, chest, and other parts of its body. These growths are spore-laden, so when the bag rips open and the body is disturbed, a thick cloud of powdery spores will gush out of the bag, enveloping anyone within 3 meters of the locker door. Characters who have stated they were ready to dive out of the facility, however, is monitored by a security AI (p. 332, EP). The body, still recognizable as a monkey, is heavily covered in strange fungal growths that protrude from its head, chest, and other parts of its body. These growths are spore-laden, so when the bag rips open and the body is disturbed, a thick cloud of powdery spores will gush out of the bag, enveloping anyone within 3 meters of the locker door. Characters who have stated they were ready to dive out of the facility, however, is monitored by a security AI (p. 332, EP). The body, still recognizable as a monkey, is heavily covered in strange fungal growths that protrude from its head, chest, and other parts of its body. These growths are spore-laden, so when the bag rips open and the body is disturbed, a thick cloud of powdery spores will gush out of the bag, enveloping anyone within 3 meters of the locker door. Characters who have stated they were ready to dive out of the facility, however, is monitored by a security AI (p. 332, EP). The body, still recognizable as a monkey, is heavily covered in strange fungal growths that protrude from its head, chest, and other parts of its body. These growths are spore-laden, so when the bag rips open and the body is disturbed, a thick cloud of powdery spores will gush out of the bag, enveloping anyone within 3 meters of the locker door. Characters who have stated they were ready to dive out of the facility, however, is monitored by a security AI (p. 332, EP).

If the characters do not somehow contain or mitigate the spore threat, it is possible that others may become infected.

The Achjima forks will all recognize the smart monkey as one of their pets (“Stella”). A successful use of Medicine to examine the corpse will reveal that it likely died about two days ago when the strange biological growth penetrated its brain.

THE FUNGUS
A thorough examination of the biological growth will require proper scientific equipment and several hours of research and testing. What the characters can determine, given this short amount of time and some successful Knowledge skill rolls, is that the substance most closely resembles a fungus, it is alive, and it is unlike any sort of fungus known to transhumanity. Certain markers in its makeup strongly imply that it is alien in origin; notably the fact that its genetics are remarkably non-terrestrial. Furthermore, the xenofungus is asexual and seems likely to thrive in damp, warm environments. It probably feeds off host bodies or decomposing matter (in this case, living bodies or corpses). It can survive in extreme cold conditions, such as the surface of Mars or deep space, but it goes dormant in these conditions.

A thorough examination of the smart monkey corpse will indicate that the monkey was probably only recently infected (within the past 2 weeks), but the exact rate of fungal growth is hard to pin down. The fungus most likely took root in its head and/or chest, and seems to have spread throughout the body, transforming tissue into fungal growth. The monkey’s entire brain, lungs, and a significant portion of its digestive and nervous systems have been eaten away and replaced.

ACHJIMA’S LAB
Achjima’s residence, a medium-sized converted garage in a light industrial district, is difficult to access. The local Militia currently has the place restricted while a forensics team investigates. The initial police response, coming to detain Achjima after the murder, entered and found some illegal technologies and other dubious items. They are currently looking through her possessions and lab materials, trying to decide if anything warrants calling in a quarantine squad.

If the players wish to access this residence, they need to somehow draw off or distract the pair of investigators and forensic and sentry bots or wait them out (they will take at least 2 hours). Alternatively, they can try to pass themselves off as investigators. If they manage to get inside, a successful Investigation Test (timeframe: 30 minutes) will turn up one clue: the original specimen container lies in the small, sealed clean room that is part of Achjima’s lab. Inside is a xenofungal specimen, still sporing. Note that the police will find and confiscate this before they leave (giving Firewall another loose end to track down). The container itself contains records that it once belonged to Arman Usupov and was transported from his residence in Noctis about 3 weeks ago.

Achjima’s forks will know that Achjima had three smart monkey helpers. None of these are present.
XENOFUNGAL INFECTION

Luckily, xenofungal infection is not that difficult to fight off—assuming you have medichines or know you have been infected. Characters with medichines are automatically immune to the fungus—the nanobots quickly find and eliminate the infection.

In most cases, cursory medical screening will not detect an infection in its early stages. Only advanced medical testing (including the likes of deep tissue scans, nanoswarm diagnosing, respiratory tract tissue samples, etc.) and a successful Medicine Test at -30 will detect an infection within the first day. Once the fungus begins to grow into the victim’s body (2-3 days), however, it is easier to detect (no modifier). After that point (4+ days), the infection reaches the brain and the victim falls under the xenofungus’s mental control. An infected person at this stage can be diagnosed without advanced scans, as the fungal infection becomes visible in their throat and under the skin. Around 5 or 6 days after infection, the victim will die. The fungus will begin sprouting from within the body at this point (through orifices and also piercing through the skin) and will spore a day or two later.

Infected people can be treated. A few hours in a healing vat (2 hours per day of infection) will remove the infection.

Once the infection has reached the brain, a character can no longer be played as a player character. The chemicals released from the fungus prevent them from committing suicide or otherwise acting against the infection and will in fact become extremely protective of themselves and the fungus. The victim will suffer -5 COG and WIL modifiers and will seem dazed and distant to others, but will gain a +20 bonus on olfactory-based Perception Tests. The victim’s primary imperative will be finding a place to die that will maximize spore dispersal.

ACHJIMA’S HOME NETWORK

If the player characters access or hack into Achjima’s home network (the forks all have access), they will find several potential clues with appropriate Research Tests:

- An encrypted file (password unknown to the forks) contains all of Achjima (alpha)’s own research regarding the xenofungus. While breaking the encryption would likely take too long for relevance in this scenario, each fork may make an educated guess at the password with a COG Test. If successful, they pick the password they suspect Achjima (alpha) would have chosen.

- Another part of the network holds Achjima (alpha)’s deactivated muse, Nonny. Achjima deactivated her muse shortly after becoming aware of her infection; under the parasite’s influence, she feared the muse might interfere with her plans. The muse can provide background on Achjima receiving the package, sending out forks, becoming infected, and her research into the xenofungus (it knows the password for the research archive). It also knows that Achjima (alpha) contacted Roque as a potential buyer. Finally, the muse is aware of Achjima’s work at Dolma Gope’s black resleeving clinic, and will suggest that as a likely place for Achjima (alpha) to pursue resleeving.

- Achjima (B7) was careful to wipe the residence of old sensor footage that might show the infections, what happened to Achjima (alpha), and the three recently spawned forks.

THE MURDER

Kjell Hoff, the first Firewall agent on the scene, had been working his way around Anyang, poking his head into Achjima’s affairs, particularly her research and triad connections. Achjima got wind of his snooping, and not knowing who he was, simply decided to kill him to buy some time.

THE MURDERED

Kjell’s cortical stack is recoverable, though his body is currently in militia custody, pending the backup insurance claim processing. If the players somehow manage to retrieve it, they can run Kjell as an infomorph and question him. Though he will tell what he knows to Nkeka, he will refuse to cooperate with anyone else not in Firewall.

Kjell had discovered two useful items in his legwork: first, that part of Achjima’s work for the triad involved a black resleeving clinic operated by Dolma Gope. Kjell was on his way to this clinic when Achjima took him out. Second, Kjell had learned of Achjima’s interest in and potential hiring of local hacker T-Faktor.

If the player characters look into Kjell’s background, there is very little they will find initially. Successful Research Tests or use of rep will ascertain that he recently egocast here from Progress Station, where he had been working as a freelance security consultant for various hypercorp concerns. He seems to have been involved in one or two sketchy security incidents in the past, but there is nothing connecting him to Achjima, the triads, or the xenofungus. There seems to be no discernible reason for why he was in Anyang asking about Achjima or why Achjima murdered him.
Scott Wai hasn't been seen in over a day. Some acquaintances also in triad employ. The proper deployment of g-rep and/or drink buying in this bar might reveal the information that Kjell learned here regarding Achjima’s black clinic work, its location, and Achjima’s interest in T-Faktor. This is also a likely spot for the triad to get wind of the player characters and come looking for them.

Putting the Research Puzzle Together

If the different forks of Achjima share notes on their respective missions, some additional information might come to light.

The xenobotanical samples that Achjima (B1) was sent to research were similar in some ways to the xenofungal samples the player characters will find in the locker or Achjima lab. Specifically, the fork was investigating various specimens with mycological (similar to fungi) and/or parasitic properties. Though the argonauts were not in possession of anything with an exact match to the Achjima’s xenofungus, there are some correlations to be drawn.

The chemical effects that Achjima (B2) was looking into are of course those caused by the xenofungus. The fork will have learned that these chemicals are likely to increase olfactory sensitivity but would also inhibit certain brain functions and impulses. Though the exact mechanisms and effect of the chemicals would take weeks of study to deduce, there is no question that they are in fact mind-altering and mind-controlling chemicals. And, yes, these chemicals are likely to have the exact same effect on transhuman brains.

While looking into Arman Usupov’s disappearance, Achjima (B3) made the acquaintance of Nkeka and discovered that Arman had last been seen at his Noctis residence approximately 3 weeks ago. He was last known to have left Noctis by rocket buggy, heading west (the direction of the TITAN Quarantine Zone). Arman’s singularity seeker and underworld contacts know that Arman had been spending a lot of time sniffing around the TQZ in recent months, hoping to find TITAN artifacts. Aside from mentioning a settlement known as Kartika to a few contacts, there are no other leads. Kartika was within the TQZ and was destroyed during the Fall.

Achjima (B4)’s research into mycological success in the Martian environment will have determined a few things. First, wind is an important thing for dispersing spores. Second, the ability to survive in the Martian environment is highly dependent on the strain in question. The cold and lack of moisture are inhibitive to many known fungi. Luckily for the player characters, this particular xenofungal strain goes dormant on the Martian surface.

Kartika

If the player characters engage in some successful Research Tests regarding this long-lost settlement, they can dig up the fact that the settlement was believed to have been overcome by a TITAN-created biological warfare attack. A successful use of i-rep, c-rep, or another Research Test at –30 can uncover some long-range sensor scans taken of the settlement before military forces carpet-bombed it. These photos show large, strange, biological growths growing from what appear to be corpses on rooftop—or in some cases dangling from the spars of the overhead dome and radio towers. These growths look similar to the xenofungus sprouting from the smart monkey or found in the specimen container.

Looking for Achjima

The usual methods of online research and social networks can be used to track down information on Achjima’s whereabouts, as noted below. Similarly, the forks each have limited access to Achjima (alpha)’s credit, which includes the ability to track her spending (and that of the other forks).

g-rep (Moderate): Find the name of Achjima’s triad connection (Yao Zie).
g-rep (Moderate): Find out what Achjima did for the triad’s (worked at Dolma Gope’s black clinic).
g-rep (Moderate): Find out where Dolma Gope’s black clinic is.
g-rep (Moderate): Find out that Achjima had been looking to hire a hacker named T-Faktor.
@-rep or g-rep (Low): Contact T-Faktor.
@-rep or g-rep (Moderate): Find out background info on T-Faktor.
c-rep (Moderate): Find out what the People’s Militia knows (gamemaster call).
c-rep or r-rep (Low): Find out that Achjima was inquiring about air plant engineer Scott Wai.
c-rep or r-rep (Trivial): Scott Wai hasn’t been seen in over a day. Some friends and co-workers are growing concerned.

Credit History

Achjima’s credit has been reduced to next to nothing, due to the cost of multiple resleevings. In fact, Achjima (alpha) had to pull in some new favors from her triad bosses to cover the costs. Though she promised to pay soon, she had no intention to follow through.

Two days ago, Achjima (B6) rented a flying car. This was used to transport the smart monkey’s body to the locker and then later to transport Achjima (alpha) to the air plant, among other activities. A successful Research Test at –30 with a 1 hour timeframe will draw up some of the locations the vehicle was used, most of which do not seem important. The air plant location will likely be one of many that do not seem immediately relevant, unless a character aware of the xenofungus’s properties makes a successful Investigation Test. The car is currently in the possession of Achjima (B7), parked near the center of the habitat. It is but a matter of time before the militia and/or triads also track it down.

There are several other large withdrawals from Achjima’s credit that are more mysterious. These have been successfully laundered through triad credit.
Achjima (alpha) and (B6) have been disabled, however.

Though Achjima (alpha) is already dead and fruiting, forks B6, B7, and B8 are still active. Since murdering Kjell, B6 has been laying low in the air plant, keeping an eye on Achjima (alpha)’s corpse and the kidnapped engineer, Scott Wai. B6 plans to die and spore in this plant as well and is simply holding down the fort until that time.

Achjima B7 and B8 are both slowing down as the xenofungal infection consumes more of their mental capacities. Their priorities right now are finding their own places to die and spore. Achjima (B7) plans to die and spore in the flying car and has pre-programmed the car’s AI to rise to a certain altitude in a few days time and open all of the doors and windows, to maximize the spores’ range of dispersion.

Achjima (B8) has secured a place on a high rooftop where she expects to die and spore undisturbed, but the recent arrival of the player characters has triggered her defensiveness, already enhanced by the xenofungal parasite. She will be monitoring the player character’s progress, and if it seems they might become a threat to her or the other infected Achjimas, she will take action.

Though both Achjima (B7) and (B8) operate in privacy mode, they may be tracked online by capable characters who know about them, using the rules for Scanning, Tracking, and Monitoring, p. 251, EP. The mesh inserts of Achjima (alpha) and (B6) have been disabled, however.

ACHJIMA’S LOOKS
Gamemasters should note that only Achjima (B6) looks like (alpha). Achjima (B7) is sleeved in a splicer sculpted to look like a famous XP icon—there are probably dozens of other splicers in this same habitat with exactly the same face. Achjima (B8) is sleeved in a male flat.

Despite looking different, a character familiar with Achjima (alpha)—such as the forks or Park—may be able to recognize one of the other beta forks with a successful Kinesics Test. If the character is not actively looking for such clues, the gamemaster should roll in secret, applying a –30 modifier. If any of the characters interact with an infected Achjima directly in person, they will receive a +10 modifier to notice, given the somewhat distracted pose and glassy look they have.

SCOTT WAI
Scott Wai is an engineer at the Anyang air plant. Until recently he had never met Achjima, until B6 tracked him down—and kidnapped him. Using his credentials and the assistance of T-Faktor, the Achjima forks accessed the plant and found a place to hide Achjima (alpha) until she can spore.

Scott has been missing for over a day, but his disappearance is only now being noticed. Some questions have been posted by friends on social networks, but so far no one has declared him officially missing. Tracking of his mesh ID will pinpoint his last known location at just outside his house. A careful examination of some spimes in the area with an appropriate Research Test (1 hour) will find footage of Scott being shocked into unconsciousness and dragged into Achjima’s rented flying car.

Scott is currently unconscious and bound, next to Achjima (alpha)’s decaying corpse.

T-FAKTOR
T-Faktor is the handle of one of Anyang’s most accomplished hackers. As the characters may discover, Achjima (B6) recently sought out his services. Tracking T-Faktor down requires a proper allocation of rep (and perhaps bribes). The only way provided to contact him will be online—T-Faktor will refuse to meet in person.

If the hacker is approached with a large enough bribe, he may be willing to spill the details. In fact, since Achjima originally promised payment for additional work that never materialized, T-Faktor is a bit inclined to sell her out, so the player characters may be able to convince him in other ways.

If persuaded, T-Faktor will tell the player characters that Achjima hired him to facilitate a break-in of one of Anyang’s major air recycling and circulation plants. These facilities are typically heavily secured to deter bio-terror attacks, but they are also very automated. T-Faktor happens to have had personal experience with this plant before. He helped deactivate certain security elements, though he is aware that Achjima used a coerced engineer to bypass some of the other safeguards. He doesn’t know what Achjima wants with the facility—and doesn’t want to know.

It is possible for the player characters to hire T-Faktor to break them into the facility as well. If they reveal that Achjima is planning to infect the habitat with alien spores, he may even be persuaded to do it for free—he has a small bit of conscience remaining—but he will haggle for payment if he can.

THE BLACK CLINIC
The black clinic run by genehacker Dolma Gope offers a range of illegal or gray market services. Like Achjima, Dolma is partly indebted to the triads, and so the clinic is used for some of their resleeving, psychosurgery, bio-mod, and darknet needs. This is where Achjima usually performs services on the triad’s behalf.

The mesh inserts of the characters interact with an infected Achjima directly in person, they...
NKEKA’S OPTIONS
Given Nkeka’s secret status as a Firewall operative, she may pursue her own investigations on the side.

RESEARCHING ROQUE
From Firewall’s perspective, Roque’s presence in this affair is a wild card. While Nkeka can research Roque’s background through standard channels, she is unlikely to find much she doesn’t already know, and Firewall will be of no extra help here. What is clear, however, is that Achjima (alpha) likely brought Roque in to purchase something dangerous and nasty—something Firewall will probably not be interested in anyone walking off with.

CALLING ON FIREWALL
Firewall’s resources are stretched thin and her backup (Kjell) has already been murdered, so Nkeka is largely on her own in this affair. She can use her i-rep to swing favors in the usual manner, should she need help acquiring information or gear, but there are no other Firewall agents in the vicinity or willing to egocast in to help without more incentive. Should her cover be blown, Firewall will send in two agents to extract her if necessary (use the Scum Enforcer sample character); these sentinels will do what they can to eradicate all traces of Firewall involvement and pull out.

Should Nkeka be able to provide evidence that the habitat faces an immediate large-scale threat, she will have more luck. Firewall will take a more pro-active stance, scrambling sentinels and proxies to contain the situation, provide damage control, and backup Nkeka as necessary, per the gamemaster’s discretion (this is after all, Firewall’s mandate). Physical backup will take time, but in a pinch Firewall can egocast some sentinels in to sleeve in synthmorphs or hire some local mercenaries. Should the habitat face widespread infection, an erasure squad will be activated.

Dolma is sleeved in a fierce-looking exalt morph with customized biosculpting. She stands a good seven-feet tall, with enlarged eyes and orange skin with shifting red and gold nanotats. A pattern of slowly-wiggling, reddish, tendril-like frills circles her head like a sea anemone crown.

Dolma would normally be reluctant to part with information on Achjima’s activities; however, given that it is a fork of Achjima that is asking, she will tell what she knows. Achjima stopped showing up for a triad project she was working on at the clinic about two weeks ago—apparently she was too engrossed in personal research. Then a few days ago, she contacted Dolma and asked her to resleeve a trio of beta forks on the side, without the triad knowing—and at a discount. Dolma reluctantly agreed and hasn’t heard from Achjima since. She can, however, provide detailed information on the morphs she provided to the beta forks, including their looks, biometrics, brain scans, and mesh IDs. This data can be further used to identify or track these variant forks down (see Scanning, Tracking, and Monitoring, p. 251, EP).

STAGE 3: COMPLICATIONS
As the characters assemble clues and track down Achjima (alpha), they are likely to cross paths with three potential opponents. The gamemaster is encouraged to space these encounters out, to keep the action coming between periods of investigation.

ACHJIMA COMES CALLING
As noted above, if the player characters come close to tracking down one of the other Achjimas, (B8) will take action. The xenofungal infection prevents (B8) from acting in too rash or suicidal of a manner, so her actions will seek to either distract the player characters and send them running in the wrong direction or to strike at them from positions of surprise and/or strength. Possible distractions might be to sick the militia on the player character forks or to pose as someone else who has information the characters want in order to send them on a complete goose chase. If Achjima (B8) decides to attack the characters, she will probably attempt to strike at individuals while they are alone and isolated, and even then she will likely shoot them from behind, attempt to run them down in a car, or hire a group of thugs to attack in her stead.

If captured, there is little the characters can do make Achjima (B8) talk. In fact, if she lacks other options, she will willingly kill herself, hoping that her corpse will soon fruit, spore, and infect the others. If at all possible, she will try to kill herself in a location that will be positive for spore dispersal, such as somewhere high and windy.

THE TRIAD COMES CALLING
Achjima (alpha) had to borrow quite a bit of money from the triad in order to fund the forks’ sleeves; she paid little attention to the consequences that would result when she did not pay it back within 48 hours, as promised. Suspecting that something might be afoot, and already disgruntled at Achjima’s poor attendance to her triad duties over the past two weeks, triad lieutenant Yao Xie was about to go looking for Achjima when news of the murder of Kjell hit the streets. Now Yao Xie knows that something is going on and he wants to find Achjima before the cops do.
At some point the triad will get wind that several forks of Achjima were resleeved or will find out that someone is asking around about Achjima's triad involvement. The player characters may even approach the triad themselves asking questions. A group of 4 armed triad soldiers will approach the characters and tell them that Mr. Xie is expecting them. If the player characters decline, the soldiers will attack the characters and attempt to disable them, then bring them to Xie for a talk.

Yao is very pissed and very much wants to know what the hell is going on. He wants his money back from Achjima. If the characters refuse to talk, they will be beaten. If they still refuse, they will be tortured. If he fails to get satisfactory answers, he will have the characters uploaded and sent to a professional triad interrogator. Their egos will be tortured via psychosurgery in simulspace and then sold on the black market.

If the characters are caught with no hope of rescue and seem unlikely to talk—or simply don’t know enough yet—then the gamemaster can choose this time for the militia to catch up with the player characters. Though the local militia and triad have a certain understanding, the militia is not above impeding his business affairs and would reflect poorly on his performance the next time his triad masters take him under review. If convinced of this situation would also impede his business affairs and would reflect poorly on his performance the next time his triad masters take him under review. If convinced of this situation—particularly if shown evidence—Yao Xie will release the characters on three conditions. One, they must report all new developments to him immediately—particularly if shown evidence—Yao Xie will release the characters on three conditions. One, they must report all new developments to him immediately. Second, they must keep the affair private, out of the militia’s and public’s eyes. Third, the forks of Achjima must accept responsibility for Achjima’s debt should Achjima (alpha) be unable to pay. Xie will provide a pair of triad soldiers to accompany the characters and assist their efforts—as well as keep an eye on them.

Unknown to the player characters, Yao Xie actually has Achjima (alpha)’s backup in his possession—this is how the triad keeps their hold on the singularity seeker. Should Achjima (alpha) die, it will be Yao Xie’s choice whether to resleeve her or sell her ego on the black market.
Armor: 11/12 Armor Clothing with Armor Vest and Light Helmet

**Militia Trooper**

**Skills:**

**Rep:** e-rep 15

**Implants:** Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack

**Gear:** Cuffband, Prisoner Mask, Specs, Tactical Network Software, X-Ray Emitter

**Exalt**

**Morph:**

**Skills:**

**Rep:** e-rep 15

**Implants:** Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack

**Gear:** Cuffband, Prisoner Mask, Specs, Tactical Network Software, X-Ray Emitter

**STAGE 4: AT WAR WITH MYSELF**

Ultimately the various clues should lead the player characters to the air plant where Achjima (alpha) is sequestered and soon to spore. The player characters will need some way to bypass the plant’s security measures—a task that T-Faktor and possibly the triad can help with, should the player characters have their support.

**AIR PLANT LAYOUT**

The air plant is located to one side of the habitat, right up against the dome. Inside the dome, massive intake vents suck in air that is filtered. Similar vents suck in Martian atmosphere from the outside, filter it, and combine it with hydrogen in a catalytic converter to produce methane gas and water. The methane is vented back into the Martian atmosphere (it helps with terraforming) while the water is broken down into hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen is fed back into the converter while the oxygen is added to the recycled air from inside the habitat. This air is then pushed by large fans through a vent system where it is released throughout the habitat.

The interior of the plant consists of a massive catalytic converter, water and hydrogen tanks, large fans, huge vents and ductwork, a control center, and various work/monitoring stations. The plant runs itself, with robotic drones handling standard maintenance duties. Transhuman engineers stop in periodically to keep an eye on operations and are on call in case of a breakdown.

Achjima (alpha) and Scott Wai have been sequestered in an air-flow pipe, right before one of the fans that pushes air out to various vents throughout the habitat. Their location is hidden from sensors and the standard paths of the maintenance drones. To find them, the player characters will need to physically search the plant, requiring a Perception or Scrounging Test with a timeframe of 1 hour (3 hours if they are actively hiding from maintenance bots and sensors). A character who makes an Investigation or appropriate Engineering (or other Knowledge skill) Test to locate the most likely hiding spots can shorten that timeframe to 10 minutes (30 minutes).

It is very difficult to hear near the hiding spot, given the large fans nearby. Apply a –30 modifier to hearing-based Perception Tests. The enhanced olfactory capabilities of those affected by the xenofungus work well here, however—it is likely that they will smell anyone approaching.

**AIR PLANT SECURITY MEASURES**

The air plant is secured by e-locks that require both biometrics and a physical token (B6 had both via Scott Wai). The player characters will have to hack the locks to get in (p. 291, *EP*). The plant’s walls inhibit wireless signals, and the e-locks are hardwired to the internal system. (T-Faktor has remote access because he hacked a rooftop panel’s e-lock and hooked it up to a radio receiver, but he won’t tell the player characters that.) A standard security AI watches over the network. Two security bots also guard the facility. Both the AI and the bots have been hacked to ignore Achjima (B6) and the smart monkeys (T-Faktor can do the same for the player characters).

**ACHJIMA (B6), THE SMART MONKEYS, & BOTS**

Achjima (B6) is not the only opposition the player characters will face. Her other two smart monkeys, also now affected, will join in the fray. These monkeys will keep to the catwalks and ductwork high above, looking for an opportunity to drop on the player characters from high above. They are armed with vibroblades.

Achjima also has brought along several bots, with instructions to attack any intruders. Two of these are creepsies (p. 346, *EP*)—small pet-like assistants bots. Achjima’s creepsies happen to look like plush millipedes with an extra set of arms for manipulating items and tools. With their chameleon skin, they can meld into the background, lying in ambush for unwary player characters. Both have been equipped with hypodermic needles and two doses of twitch (p. 324, *EP*). A third bot, a guardian angel, has been equipped with a heavy pistol.

Achjima (B6), armed with her pistol and a stun baton, is also tied into the air plant’s interior sensor system. She will use this to track the player characters and ambush them. She will deploy the bots and smart monkeys first, hoping to draw the player characters away from Achjima (alpha)’s resting place. As a final resort, she will engage the player characters herself, also attempting to do the same.
ACHJIMA (ALPHA) AND SCOTT WAI
Achjima (B6) has left one final trap for anyone who finds these two. The floor and walls around them have been coated with slip (p. 323, *EP*), a frictionless substance. Anyone who runs towards these two, especially in a combat situation, is likely to hit the slip and slide right past them—and directly into the huge ventilating fan. Anyone who does this must succeed in a REF Test to grab onto one of the bodies or somehow stop themselves. The fan inflicts $3d10 + 20$ DV (AP –5).

Achjima (alpha) is dead and poses no threat to the player characters. Scott Wai is unconscious, but is easily revived.

Note that if the player characters have not been to the black clinic and are not aware that Achjima (B6) is a fork and not Achjima (alpha), they may not realize after defeating (B6) that (alpha)’s body is hidden elsewhere in the facility.

STAGE 5: AFTERMATH
Depending on the character’s actions, they may resolve the situation discreetly or end up with an entire habitat in ruins.

INFECTED CHARACTERS
Xenofungal infection is not that difficult to treat, assuming the character is aware they are infected (see *Xenofungal Infection*, p. 9). If an infected character does not seek treatment, however, they may put the entire habitat at risk.

GOING TO THE AUTHORITIES
Rather than pursuing the infected Achjima(s) at the air plant on their own, the characters may decide to simply go the militia (or some other authority) with what they know. Nkeka, belonging to Firewall, should argue against this. Firewall much prefers to handle these situation quietly; bringing them into the public eye exposes others to danger. If necessary, Nkeka may even reveal her Firewall affiliation to the others if she feels it would convince them to stay quiet.

AIR PLANT AI

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ROBOTS

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<tr>
<td>Smart Monkey</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Blades 20, Climbing 50, Fray 30, Freerunning 30, Infiltration 30, Perception 30, Scrounging 30, Unarmed Combat 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roque should also be opposed to such a plan. Roque is, of course, hoping to walk away from this scenario with a sample of the xenofungus to sell on the black market. It is possible that after the threat has been contained, Roque may even turn on the others.

The forks of Achjima would also be wise to think this through. If the authorities catch an infected Achjima (alpha), they have little hope of merging back with her. Since the triad holds Achjima’s backup, their only hope is to catch Achjima (alpha) and cure her (since they do not, of course, realize she is already dead). Failing this, they need to strike a deal with the triad to have Achjima’s backup resleeved and themselves merged with it.

OPPOSED INTERESTS
Roque and Nkeka both have opposed secret ambitions in this scenario. At some point, these agendas are likely to come out—with the Achjimas caught in the crossfire. If Nkeka gets her way, the xenofungus will be utterly destroyed. If Roque succeeds, the xenofungus will go for auction on the black market.

FAILURE
If the characters fail to find and deal with Achjima (alpha)’s body within 12 hours, it will begin sporing. The air plant ventilation system will carry these spores throughout the habitat, where hundreds of biomorphs will become infected. Within a week, these biomorphs will also begin sporing, and within short order the entire habitat will be doomed. The authorities will likely be aware of the problem by this point, the settlement will be placed under quarantine, and the entire situation brought to the attention of senior officials within the Planetary Consortium. If Firewall has not already moved to eradicate the threat, it is quite likely that the the Consortium—perhaps even Project Ozma—will.

CALLING IN A FIREWALL ERASURE SQUAD
If things start looking bad—very bad—Nkeka has the option of calling in a Firewall erasure squad. She is likely only going to do this if the group seems unlikely to prevent the xenofungal spores from being released into the habitat. In this case, a heavily-armed Firewall team will descend on the city and pick up where the player characters left off (possibly an option for working this scenario into a longer campaign). If the spores are already released into the habitat, Firewall will seek some way to have the habitat quarantined and evacuated, with all residents going through careful scanning to ensure they are not infected. After this, or barring any other options, they will find some way to destroy the habitat, even if it means killing thousands inside, if that’s the only way they have to keep the infection from spreading. The methods used might include a nuclear detonation, orbital bombardment (perhaps a misdirected iceteroid used in the terraforming process), or infusing the habitat’s atmosphere with extra oxygen and setting it aflame.

ARMAN AND OTHER LOOSE ENDS
Even if the player characters succeed, this scenario can continue on. No one knows where the original xenofungal sample originated from, for example, and Arman Usupov is still missing. Firewall is likely to track down these loose ends, sending agents to hunt Arman down, and sending a team into the TQZ to investigate the ruins of Kartika and eradicate any xenofungus remaining here.

It is also possible that the player characters might not track down Achjima (B7). This could lead to a separate xenofungus outbreak, as described under Failure. Alternately, the militia may track down (B7) before this happens, bringing the xenofungus to their attention. This could lead to a future Firewall mission, as sentinels are sent to make sure the militia-confiscated samples do not end up in the wrong hands.

FUTURE OF THE FORKS
Presumably the forks hope to merge back together with each other and Achjima (alpha). With (alpha) dead, this is no longer an option unless they manage to convince the triad to merge them with Achjima’s backup. Legally, this puts the forks in a bad position. Without an alpha fork, and having extended their legal duration as forks, they are considered non-entities with no legal standing. Their only option, should they wish to continue living, is to adopt a fake identity or find a darknet egocaster (such as Dolma) and transmit themselves to a jurisdiction that is more forgiving of forks.

Another option to consider is that the beta forks could always merge with each other. The option is entirely up to them.

REZ AND REP AWARDS
Characters may be awarded reputation awards, and those who survive may earn some rez points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>AWARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character participated in mission</td>
<td>1 RP, (+2 i-rep for Nkeka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anyang saved from mass xenofungal infection</td>
<td>2 RP, +2 g-rep, (+5 i-rep for Nkeka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anyang not saved from mass xenofungal infection</td>
<td>1 RP, –2 g-rep, (–5 i-rep for Nkeka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achjima’s triad debt repaid</td>
<td>+1 g-rep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenofungal samples all destroyed</td>
<td>1 RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roque (or others) acquire xenofungal samples</td>
<td>(~2 i-rep for Nkeka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character contributed to achieving success in a significant way</td>
<td>1 RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The character achieved a motivational goal (p. 121, EP)</td>
<td>1 RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The player engaged in good roleplaying</td>
<td>1 RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The player significantly contributed to the session’s drama, humor, or fun with roleplaying</td>
<td>1 RP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following handouts should be given to the player characters when they interact with each noted NPC. Each handout represents the results of a quick mesh search on the subject. There are individual PDF files for each NPC in the Ego Hunter package, if you want to give your players digital copies instead of printouts!

**Subject: Dolma Gope**
- Rep: c-rep 45, g-rep 30, r-rep 40
- Gender Identity: Female
- Last Known Morph: Modified Female Exalt
- Occupation: Genetecist
- Notes: Dolma runs a black clinic.

**Subject: Yao Xie**
- Rep: g-rep 55
- Gender Identity: Male
- Last Known Morph: Male Exalt
- Occupation: Self-employed
- Notes: Yao Xie is the leader of Anyang’s local triad.

**Subject: Arman Usupov**
- Rep: g-rep 25
- Gender Identity: Male
- Last Known Morph: Modified Male Ruster
- Occupation: Self-employed
- Notes: A singularity seeker, Arman was last seen at his Noctis residence approximately 3 weeks ago. He was last known to have left Noctis by rocket buggy, heading west (the direction of the TITAN Quarantine Zone). Arman’s singularity seeker and underworld contacts know that Arman had been spending a lot of time sniffing around the TQZ in recent months, hoping to find TITAN artifacts. Aside from mentioning a settlement known as Kartika to a few contacts, there are no other leads. Kartika was within the TQZ and was destroyed during the Fall.

**Subject: Scott Wai**
- Rep: c-rep 45
- Gender Identity: Male
- Last Known Morph: Male Splicer
- Occupation: Air Plant Technician
- Notes: According to some social network posts, Scott Wai has been out of communication for over a day.

**Subject: T-Faktor**
- Rep: g-rep 65
- Gender Identity: Unknown
- Last Known Morph: Unknown
- Occupation: Freelance Hacker
- Notes: T-Faktor never meets in person. By all accounts he is the best hacker in Anyang.

**Subject: Kjell Hoff**
- Rep: c-rep 55, f-rep 20, g-rep 10
- Gender Identity: Male
- Last Known Morph: Male Exalt
- Occupation: Security Contractor
- Notes: Kjell arrived in Anyang just a day ago, egocasting in from Progress Station. He was allegedly murdered by Achjima just a few hours ago while leaving a place called Bar D’ville.

**Subject: Yao Xie**
- Rep: g-rep 55
- Gender Identity: Male
- Last Known Morph: Male Exalt
- Occupation: Self-employed
- Notes: Yao Xie is the leader of Anyang’s local triad.
The following hyperlinked flowchart helps guide the GM through the timeline.

**START**
Forks Sleeved; Receive Message from Achjima

**Stage 1**

**Stage 4**
Investigate Air Plant

RESEARCH SERIAL NUMBER
- The Serial Number

INVESTIGATE ACHJIMA WITH ONLINE RESEARCH/REP USE.
- Looking for Achjima

INVESTIGATE ACHJIMA’S HOME
- Achjima’s Lab

INVESTIGATE ACHJIMA’S MESH
- Find Nonny
- Achjima’s Home Network

INVESTIGATE DOLMA GOPE’S CLINIC
- The Black Clinic

VISIT STORAGE UNIT
- Find Smart Monkey Corpse
- The Serial Number

FIND CAR AND B7
- Achjima on the Move

ENDGAME
Investigate Air Plant
- Stage 4

INVESTIGATE KJELL HOFF’S MURDER
- The Murder

VISIT BAR D’VILLE
- The Bar D’ Ville

RESEARCH SCOTT WAI
- Scott Wai

Contact T-Faktor
- T-Faktor

EGO HUNTER GMs FLOWCHART
This map is not intended to be exhaustive. The exact layout of the factory is less important than creating several tense chase or discovery situations!

Unless the characters are able to prepare extremely well, they will encounter sentry bots, Achjima’s “creepies”—and the plant’s AI!

The catwalks offer line-of-sight except when obscured by the catalytic converter or the hanging vents.