

# The Artificer's Litter

Orbiting a dwarf planet on the edge of Partisan territory are the remains of a massive megastructure. It looks like the head of a yinrih, wrought in colossal proportions. It was clearly meant to be part of an even larger mechanism, and has been left unfinished rather than having been completed and then dismantled or broken later. Strictly speaking, nobody knows why its there. No records can be found relating to the terraforming or colonization of this particular dwarf planet, but there are records of the planet's existence before the head appeared, so it had to be built by a group of yinrih colonists at some point.

The structure is simply called "the head" by local yinrih, but after First Contact it acquires the human sobriquet of "Yinrihcron".

The lack of records is fertile ground for legends to spring up surrounding the giant mechanical head and its creators. These putative creators are known collectively as The Artificer's Litter, as many of the legends have the colonists lead by a charismatic leader to whom is given the title of Artificer. One such tale serves as a cautionary parable.

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It came to pass in the time of the decadence of the hearthkeepers that there was a group of colonists who sought a suitable habitation free from the onerous tithes levied by the clergy. They settled a tiny world far from Yih (These were still the days when the clergy had their seat of power on the Homeworld.) Once the people had established themselves in their new home, their leader said to them

"The hearthkeepers say that the Creator dwells outside of time and watches from afar. Why does it stand aloof, speaking only in riddles and visions to corrupt clerics? They tell us to do this and to do that, saying the fate of our immortal souls hangs upon our obedience. Perhaps the Light's Truth is being bent by those crooked hearthkeepers. Come, brethren, now that we are free of those witches and their priestcraft, Let us build a suitable vessel for The Light, that it may vouchsafe to dwell within its creation as one of us, speaking plainly and not hiding its meaning in obscure metaphors."

So they set to work building a great machine, wrought of steel and plastic and silicon, in the likeness of a yinrih. It was said to inspire fear and awe in all who looked up on it, even as it lay unfinished.

The Light saw what they set themselves to do, and said "My little ones, why do ye this? Would ye have me as your slave master? For that is what I would be to you were I to reveal myself as I am. I would say 'do this' or 'go there' and ye would obey in servile fear. I desire not fearful slaves but willing collaborators. I stand apart not out of cold indifference but so that ye might seek me willingly. Know that all that I do is for your benefit, though it may not seem so there within.

“There are yet many righteous clerics who chant the liturgies I have prescribed at the hours I have appointed, neither adding nor omitting a single syllable. They give warmth and light generously to those under their care, Indeed, they glorify me all the more by their quiet labor among this wicked generation. But those bent clerics, that den of usurers, will be laid low at a time I deem fit. As for you, little ones, I will scatter you among the other peoples of Focus, leaving no trace of your habitation. This idol ye have made shall remain as a warning to those who would stand atop your paw prints.”

And so it was as though the colonists never settled there, with only their unfinished machine standing watch over the empty world.

This is only one version of the story among many. Another popular telling gives the head the same purpose of acting as a material vessel for the Uncreated Light, but rather than being built as a mechanical messiah, the builders are Misotheist Atavists who seek to trap the Light in a physical form so it can be killed.

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