

9TH LEVEL



THE DM TOOL CHEST

# INTERGALACTIC WORMS

ATTACK OF THE MIND CRAWLERS PART II

FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE

A body snatching species bent on galactic domination is about to resurrect their queen.





## ADVENTURE PRIMER

**I**ntergalactic Worms is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for **three to six characters of 8th to 10th level** and is optimized for a party of **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 9**. Characters who complete this adventure will earn enough experience to reach one-third of the way to 10th level. A mysterious island has trapped our brave adventurers, and they are searching for a way to escape. They stumble across a secret gnome facility that mind-controlling aliens were attacking and have now tracked them to their ship. This adventure is set in the Broadsword Monthly Issue 15 Island setting but can be adapted to fit any campaign with a jungle island and a small island off the coast.

## BACKGROUND

A mysterious island is traveling between the planes of existence and collecting creatures and people who find themselves trapped and unable to escape. One such group of gnomes is called the G.H.A.R.M.A. Initiative — Gnomes for Home And Restoration of Magical Apparatus — has built multiple facilities around the northern part of the island to study its ability to phase between the planes in hopes of controlling it.

The Initiative recently determined that one of the small islands off the northern coast is not, in fact, an island at all — it's a derelict spacecraft that has been crashed there for decades. After bringing some samples back to their jungle facility for study, the gnomes made a shocking discovery; the ship belonged to a race of mind-controlling beings that burrow into their victim's minds and take control of their bodies — and they are still alive.

The mind crawlers have taken over the gnomes and stole their planar travel prototype — possibly the only way off the island. They have returned to their ship with plans to awaken their queen and the rest of their hibernating kin to continue their plans to dominate the planes of existence and wipe out all other species.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

This adventure assumes that the party has played the first part of this series - The Gnome Initiative: Attack of the Mind Crawlers Part I.

**Attack of the Mind Crawlers.** Continuing their travels while stuck on the mysterious island, the adventurers have determined the location of the mind crawler ship after mistakenly freeing them from the G.H.A.R.M.A. facility. They have followed the trail to a small island off the northern coast and are preparing to enter the giant ship in hopes of saving the mind-controlled gnomes and retrieving the stolen portal device.

## THE MIND CRAWLERS

A ship containing a Mind Crawler Queen and her entourage crashed on the island almost a century ago. The host bodies they inhabited were killed or too severely injured to leave their ship, forcing them to bide their time until a band of gnome engineers stumbled upon them. They've now taken over most of the Initiative members, worming into their brains and taking them over. They've escaped the gnome facility and stole their portal device in hopes of summoning a new host body for their Queen.





1

3

4

2

5

11A

14

12

13

6A

11

6

15

11B

8

6B

10

9

2A

7

16



1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



# THE MIND CRAWLER SHIP

Once a powerful living warship that sailed through the planes, the mind crawler ship is now a corpse after crashing into the water near the mysterious island over a century ago. Most of the mind crawler hosts inside the vessel were killed on impact, but a few tadpoles survived in stasis along with their queen. They waited for decades while the ship became overgrown to the point it resembled a small island off the coast.

Completely overgrown with vegetation, the ship resembles a small island just off the big island's coast, replete with a small copse of trees and other vegetation. It is now undergoing repairs in an attempt to revitalize it and raise it from the dead. The mind crawlers are currently using the stolen portal device to summon creatures from different planes, including a new host for their queen: a Rakshasa.

## GENERAL FEATURES

These general features are prominent throughout the ship unless otherwise noted in the area description:

**Ceilings, Floors, and Walls.** The ship's interior is made of a hard, chitin-like material, while the floors are metal tiles that seamlessly connect with the walls. The ceilings are 12 feet high throughout and have collapsed in some places with fallen rubble creating difficult terrain.

**Doors.** All of the ship's doors are made of slightly iridescent chitin with steel-like sinew hinges inserted into the doorways. They each have an AC 20, 20 hit points and are immune to poison and psychic damage.

**Lighting.** The ship is pitch black except where noted in the descriptions. The listed descriptions assume the adventurers have a source of light or assisted vision.

**Alien Ship.** The ship is part dead organic matter and part advanced machine — a horrifying blend of both. Thick cables that run across the floors and ceiling appear to pulse with life as the mind crawlers attempt to resuscitate their ship in the engine room. Skittering noises randomly come from the walls, and a thick, gurgling noise occasionally sweeps through the ship.

## THE SHIP ENTRANCE

After following the directions laid out by Tristina (or her journal), the adventures travel through the jungle to the island's northern coast. A small chunk of land sits just a few hundred feet off the coast, covered in the same lush vegetation as the main island. They quickly find the scattered remains of the G.H.A.R.M.A. excavation camp on the isle along with the gaping hole in the ground that leads down into the mind crawler ship. Fresh tracks and new rope ladders hint that the mind-controlled gnomes from the facility have arrived here first.

## KEYED LOCATIONS

The following descriptions correspond to the provided map:

### 1 - ENTRY POINT

The excavation hole leads down into a partially collapsed, pitch-black corridor. There are a few digging tools propped against the walls, evidence of the original G.H.A.R.M.A. excavation. The smooth yet rippling material of the walls

shimmer slightly and thick, cord-like tendrils snake across the ceiling and floor. A quiet hissing sound comes from the darkness ahead, and somewhere in the distance, screaming echoes faintly down the hall.

### 2 - OUTER CORRIDOR

The central corridor circles the entirety of the ship, linking to every room and passage. Parts of the ceiling have collapsed in many places, making the entirety of the route difficult terrain. Complete cave-ins block off parts of the corridor, and scattered throughout are pools of acid that will cause 14 (4d6) acid damage to anyone who steps or falls into them.

### 2A - BRIDGE ENTRANCE

A thick barrier of crackling lightning-like energy fills the entire hallway leading to the entrances to area 16. Anyone entering the same space as the energy must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw and take 21 (6d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one, and be knocked back 5 feet. The doorways to areas 7, 9, and 16 are completely blocked. This barrier can be removed by shutting down the security panel in area 12.

### 3 - STORAGE ROOM

Rusted metal crates and cracked containers lay pushed against the walls of this room. Tools of all sorts sit in open wooden boxes that are falling apart.

**Trap: Collapsing Ceiling.** The ceiling in the center room is on the verge of collapse, and an adventurer notices the bulge waiting to drop with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Anyone stepping below will cause enough vibrations for the roof to collapse. They must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw and take 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

**Treasure: Platinum Bars.** There is a metal container holding a strangely carved platinum rod worth 500gp.

### 4 - LIVING QUARTERS

Large iron shelves jut from the walls as if they were bone poking through flesh with newer blankets and a stuffed pillow sitting on top of them as if just placed there. A small door opens to a tiny lavatory.

**Salwin Piffideron.** A mind crawler-controlled gnome named Salwin Piffideron (CN, male gnome **veteran** - use the **mind crawler template** - see Appendix) is hiding in the lavatory. He will use his mind-reading abilities to befriend the party and convince them that the mind crawler left him for some reason. He knows that some hosts can reject the parasites, and he will take the party to area 13 to prove it. He begs them to let him escape safely, but he will run to the nearest group (area 5 or 14) to warn them of the party's presence, joining them in an attack.

### 5 - BRIG

Short stone benches line the walls, and rusted manacles dangle from hooks in the ceiling. Spatters of fresh blood decorate the walls, dripping down to reconnect with the battered bodies of the corpses lining the outside edges of the room. Grunts and exclamations of pain mixed with hoarse laughter echo out down the corridor.



**Encounter: Fresh Fighters.** Two Dragonborn **gladiators** (use the **mind crawler template** - See Appendix) are here fighting for fun after killing off a couple of unviable hosts. They're reveling in their new hosts' power and bloodlust.

## 6 - STARBOARD HALL

Deep, intricate gold-filled engravings cover this hallway's walls into a small room to the east. An onyx statue of a hooded figure sits in a niche, clawed hands folded as if in prayer.

**Treasure: Gold Inlay & Statue.** Someone can spend 1 hour prying the 10 pounds of gold worth 500gp from the engravings in the walls. The onyx statue weighs 200 lbs and is worth 1,000gp to a collector.

### 6A - DISPOSAL CHAMBER

This room's southern wall is partially collapsed, and the rubble spills into a sunken tub in the center of the floor. A door in the northwest corner opens into a small room filled with broken pottery and rusted iron ceremonial implements.

A slightly coagulated dark goo fills the tub with bits of bone, flesh, and fur suspended in it while a gnome prods at a corpse, pushing it in.

**Encounter: Disposal Ooze.** When a host dies, the mind crawlers bring the body to the **black ooze** here that dissolves it for them. The mind crawlers eventually dilute the ooze down and use it, in turn, to feed their tadpoles, completing the cycle. A G.H.A.R.M.A. gnome named Satina Toggletrick (LN, female gnome **veteran** - uses the **mind crawler template** - See Appendix) is here providing a fresh human corpse to the ooze.

**Treasure: Unlucky stone.** Searching the corpse uncovers a *Stone of Good Luck (Luckstone)* in a pouch on its belt.

### 6B - EXTRACTION ROOM

A small stone table sits in the center of the room with surgical instruments covered in fresh blood. A bucket filled with bloody rags sits on the floor next to a pile of discarded clothing.

## 7 - MEETING ROOM

Collapsed walls cover the large stone table in the room's center with rubble and debris, and crumbling bookshelves sit askew from the rocks and dirt that have fallen inward. A few books and papers lay scattered across the room.

**Ancient Tomes.** Most of the papers and books in this room are destroyed beyond repair, but someone spending an hour and succeeding a DC 18 Intelligence check will determine the following pieces of information:

- The Mind Crawlers call themselves "Dhamhier."
- The ship can skim through planar rifts.
- This ship held royalty of some sort.
- Certain species' blood can cause a host to reject a Mind Crawler tadpole.

## 8 - ENGINE ROOM

The cables from the rest of the ship converge into thicker lines that end in the hardened, dried husk that was once the ship's brain. The vessel has been dead for decades, but the Mind Crawlers are attempting to resurrect it.

**Encounter: Boatswain.** A **half-red dragon veteran** and a human **knight** (both with the **mind crawler template** - see Appendix) are here setting up equipment to be used in attempting to resurrect the ship.

**Security Gem.** A triangular orange gemstone is in a pouch at the waist of the veteran. This gem is the control key to the security panel in area 12.

## 9 - MEETING ROOM

This room is a tangle of wires, chunks of metal, and collapsed rubble that has fallen through the ceiling. Anyone climbing through the room must succeed a DC 18 Dexterity check or take 10 (3d6) piercing damage from the sharp metal in the rubble. Small-sized adventurers have advantage, and Tiny-sized succeeds this check automatically.

## 10 - LAVATORY

The stench of excrement fills this chamber. Open-air toilets line the walls, and fresh refuse fills the containers beneath them.

## 11 - PORT HALL

Deep gouges mar intricate engravings that cover the walls of this hallway. A few flecks of gold that once filled them sparkle when light hits them. The remains of an onyx statue sit crumbled in a niche in the cracked wall.

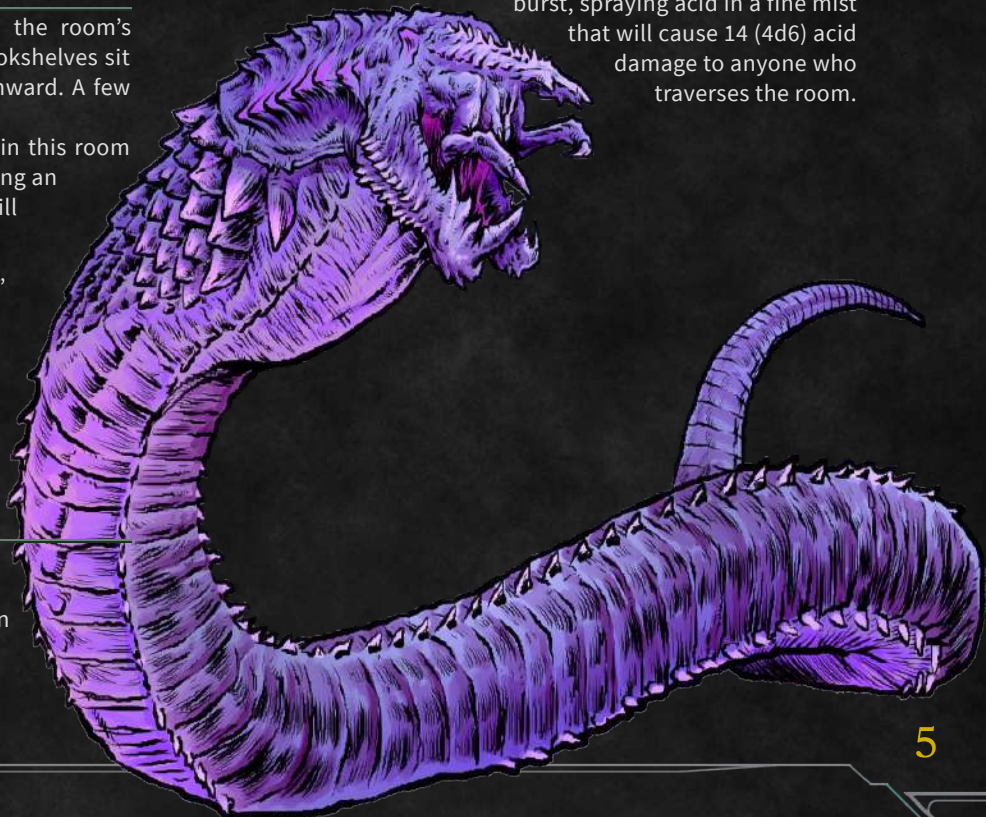
### 11A - CHAPEL

Metal benches jut from this room's walls, lining the exterior and facing a small pit in the center. Nothing but spiderwebs and dust fill the closet in the northwest corner.

**Encounter: Knights of the Pit.** There is an elven **knight** and a half-orc **gladiator** (both with the **mind crawler template** - see Appendix) meditating together on the benches here. The knight is wearing a suit of *demon armor*.

### 11B - CLEANSING ROOM

Cables and piping on the ceiling of this room creak and groan under the stress of pressure. Rusted sections of the pipes have burst, spraying acid in a fine mist that will cause 14 (4d6) acid damage to anyone who traverses the room.





## 12 - SECURITY ROOM

Thick orange crystalline sap has hardened on the walls of this room and gathers into an overflowing pedestal. The gelatinous mass is almost wholly solidified and smells of rotten and decayed meat. The pedestal has a large, empty triangular slot set in the front lip.

**Security Matrix.** Anyone touching the orange goo in the pedestal without first setting the security gem found in area 8 into the slot must make a DC 18 Intelligence check and take 21 (6d6) psychic damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a successful save. If the gem is placed before touching the goo, a character can telepathically interact with the security matrix. They can shut down the psychic barrier in area 2a and unlock the doors to area 16. The character also learns that the ship was once a living creature and is essentially tapping into its nervous system.

## 13 - HOST TRANSFER ROOM

Stacks of bodies of a cat-like humanoid species are shoved into the corners of the room. Each of them has a particular injury — their throats are slit, and they've been drained of blood. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (perception) check will reveal the entire room is devoid of a single drop of blood, despite the number of corpses here.

**Mind Crawler Cure.** The blood of this species is poison to mind crawlers. A vial of this blood will heal the imbiber for 14 (4d4+4) hit points, and if infected with a mind crawler, it will become poisoned and quickly die, causing intense pain to the host and freeing it from the mind crawler's control. Once cured, the host will be unconscious for 24 hours while their mind heals, and the blood breaks down the mind crawlers form to eventually be vomited up as black and green goo from the host upon awakening.

**Treasure: Healing Blood.** One of the bodies was not fully drained and is noticed with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. There is enough blood left to make ten vials of the mind crawler cure.

## 14 - BIRTHING CHAMBER

Rows of upright rusted canisters sit in rows lining the walls of this chamber. Two of the six canisters hold a manacled figure trapped inside — both of them screaming in agony as a mind crawler takes over their minds.

**Encounter: Nurse Knights.** There are four human **knights** (with the **mind crawler template** - see Appendix) tending to the canisters. The two figures in the canisters are a human **veteran** and an elven **knight**, both without weapons or armor and cannot escape the canisters without help.

## 15 - SLEEPING QUARTERS

Rows of rusted metal bunkbeds march up and down the sides of this elongated chamber. Metal wardrobes lean against the walls, and deteriorated footlockers hide under each bed. Moldy blankets and pillows are strewn about the room, still lying where they landed when the ship crashed over a century ago.

**Personal Effects.** Tucked into the footlockers and wardrobes are small personal trinkets of the ship's former crew members. There are lockets filled with small paintings of loved ones, letters sent between lovers, journals, and other items that show a different side to the mind crawlers — they are more than just mindless parasites.

**Hellin Tumblebum.** A gnome named Hellin Tumblebum (NG, female gnome **veteran** - use the **mind crawler template** - see Appendix) is hiding in a wardrobe. She will use her mind-reading abilities to befriend the party and convince them that the mind crawler didn't take her for some reason. She knows that some hosts can reject the parasites, and she promises to take the party to show them and prove it, but leads them into an ambush in areas 8 or 14, joining them in an attack on the party.





## 16 - THE BRIDGE

The doors to this area will only open via the security control matrix in area 12. Wall-mounted crystalline globes brightly light this room with \*continual flames\* spells cast on them. Once the party reaches this room, read the following aloud:

A swirling portal opens into an endless black void filled with points of light and shifting colors. The faint screaming as if from a thousand souls in agony emanates from deep within it.

Before the portal on a throne made from the skulls of a hundred different species is a tall, pale-skinned being with elongated appendages. Devoid of hair and sexless in features, the being is dressed in flowing silvery robes and holds itself in a regal manner as it peers over its abnormally long, steepled fingers.

Its voice slips into your minds with the ease of a sword entering a sheath, its cold anger washing over you like a bucket of ice:

“Why are you here? Why do you hunt my children? I can hear their screams still; their blood still stains your hands. Why do you seek this genocide of my people?”

**Encounter: Mind Crawler Queen.** The Mind Crawler Queen is named Lihlos. They have taken over the body of a **rakshasa** (with **mind crawler template** - see Appendix) that the — now broken beyond repair — gnomish portal device summoned, and are using its *disguise self*, *minor illusion*, and *major illusion* spells to create the illusion of their appearance, the throne, and the void to intimidate the party. The Queen is immune to the mind crawler cure found in area 13.

### QUEEN TACTICS

While they have a disdain for the adventurers, they recognize that survival is more important than winning a battle at the moment. They will attempt to convince the party to leave in peace using their *suggestion* spell and using the argument that their species has a right to live just like any others — even though they believe this to be false. They will use their *charm person* and *dominate person* spells if they see the argument is not going their way. While they will defend themselves, they focus on survival and attempt to escape with *invisibility* if they lose the upper hand.

**Treasure: Past Life.** The Rakshasa has a satchel containing documents about its life in a city called Haven located in a nation called the Freelands and a small metal cube that is an *instant fortress* whose command word is “Bigglesworth.” It was living as a wealthy merchant with ties to a cabal of necromancers called the Brotherhood of the Black Skull. The documents also give access to a bank account worth 4,000gp.

## AFTERMATH

If the adventurers manage to defeat the Mind Crawler Queen, they will have killed off the last known remnants of an entire species — albeit one that was bent on intergalactic domination and extermination of all other species. Unfortunately, the gnome portal device was destroyed from overuse by the mind crawlers and is no longer operable. It can be discerned that it could not be used to leave the island anyway because it only opened portals that pulled creatures through it.

If the adventurers managed to use the cure on the infected (see Mind Crawler Cure in area 13), once they awaken: The G.H.A.R.M.A. gnomes will lead the party back to their jungle facility to meet with their head engineer (if she is still alive from Part 1 of the series) All other cured victims will awaken confused, upset, and wholly unnerved at the situation they find themselves in. They immediately run into the jungle to escape.

If the adventurers fail to defeat the Queen or her children, the Mind Crawlers eventually successfully resurrect their ship. Its planar skimming ability allows it to escape the island and the reign of terror of the once-forgotten Mind Crawlers begins anew across the galaxies. They reap through planets and leave trillions of dead in their wake as they exterminate species after species.

## CREDITS

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## APPENDIX

**Mind Crawler Template.** Mind crawlers use the stat block of their host with the following changes:

- Type becomes "Aberrant."
- Ability Score Changes: Int +2, Wis +1
- Gains resistance to psychic damage.
- Gains darkvision 60 ft.
- Knows Primordial and gains telepathy 30 ft.
- Gains immunity to the charmed condition
- Gains the following traits:
  - **Ambusher.** The Mind Crawler has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.
  - **Surprise Attack.** If the Mind Crawler surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) damage from the attack.
- Learns the following ability:
  - **Read Thoughts.** The Mind Crawler magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 60 ft. of it. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 ft. of wood or dirt, 2 ft. of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, the Mind Crawler can continue reading its thoughts, as long as the Mind Crawler's concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, the Mind Crawler has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.