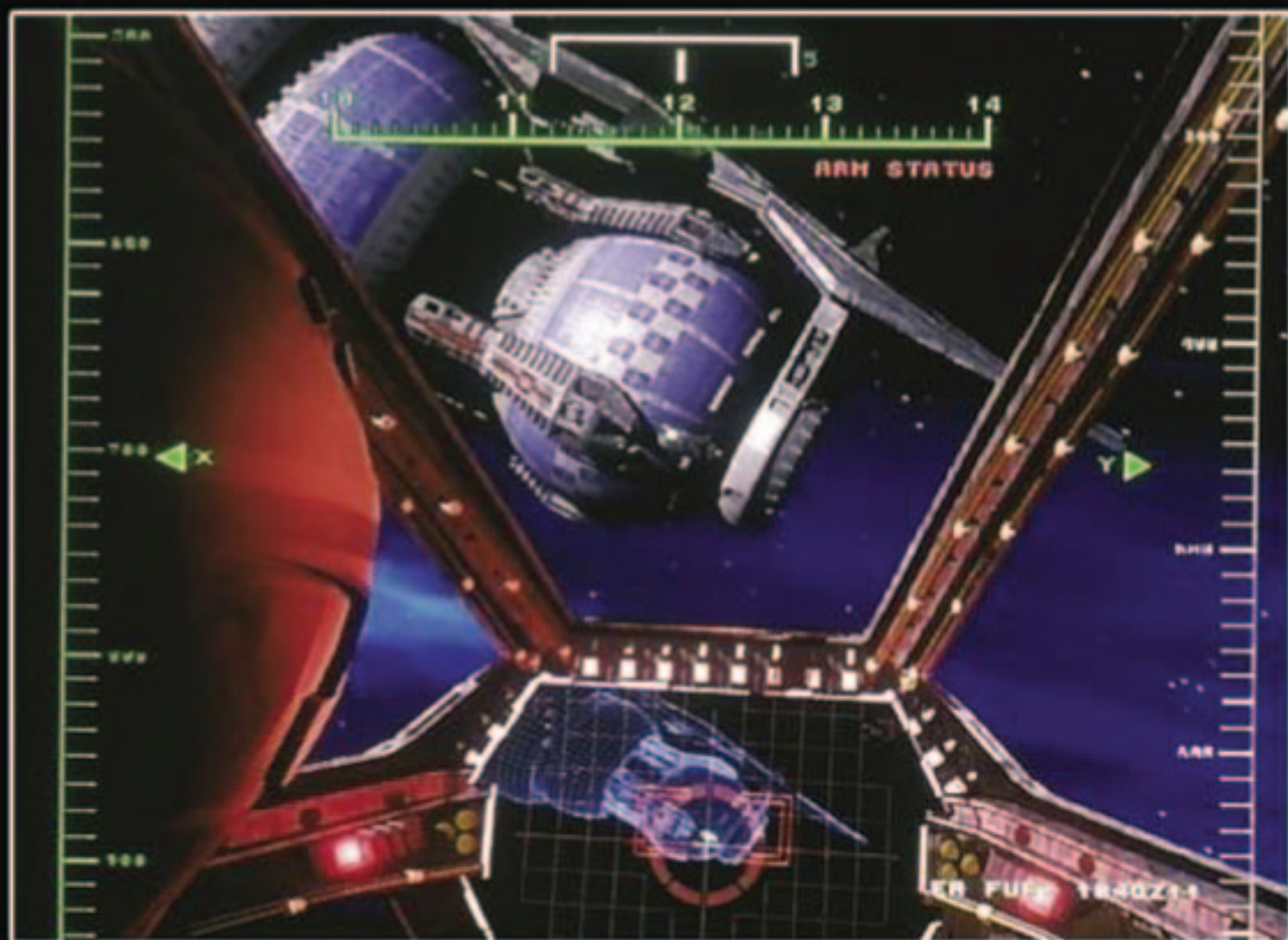


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The Fiery Trial



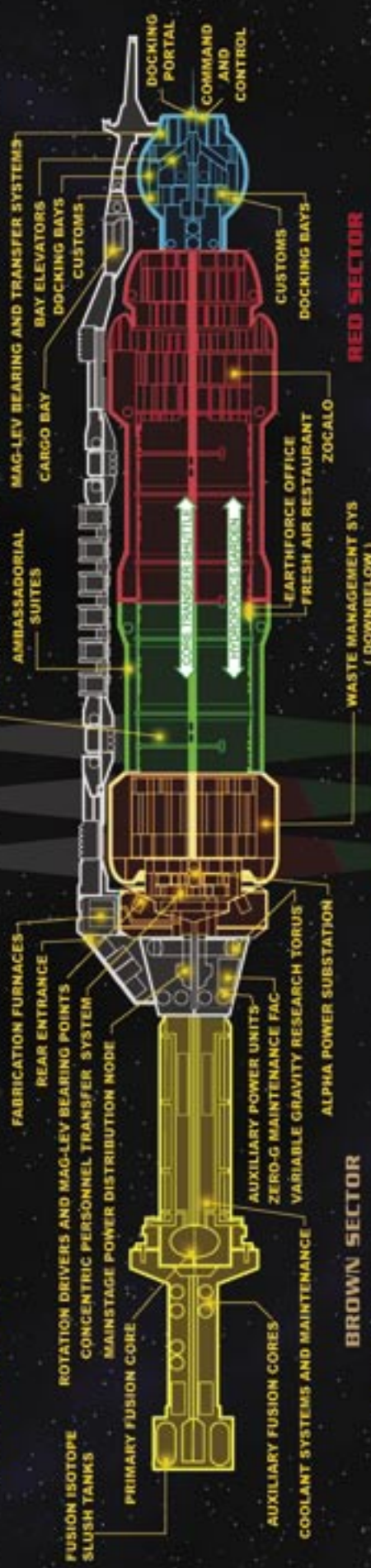
Babylon 5 Created by J. Michael Straczynski



GREY SECTOR



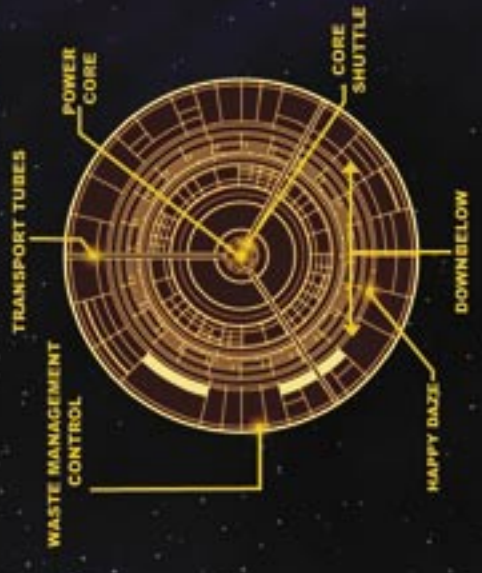
BLUE SECTOR



YELLOW SECTOR



BROWN SECTOR



GREEN SECTOR



RED SECTOR



Fiery Trial

By
Bruce Graw

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Introduction

Chrysalis, the final episode of the first season of Babylon 5, was a turning point for the series in many ways. What had essentially been, to that point, a space opera with loosely connected episodes now revealed itself to be much more—a single integrated story with a single plot, and that amazing, powerful tale was only just getting started.

This book is designed in much the same manner. Within these pages, you will find a single integrated story spread over the course of many different scenarios. As the players proceed through the individual modules, they will slowly become aware that they are actually part of something grander—a story arc that gradually leads up to something much larger than they had ever guessed. In the process, the characters will find themselves taking part in Babylon 5's history from behind the scenes. The choices they make will help determine the future of the galaxy as they know it.

Fiery Trial is more than just a few scenario modules thrown together. It is designed to act as the centrepiece of an epic campaign—an entire story arc the Games Master can use either on its own or alongside other arcs of his own creation. Between the various modules, months may pass before the players start the next scenario. In many cases, the players may not even be aware that any given module is part of the same series, until they discover a clue that ties things together. Frequently this revelation only occurs at the end of a module, providing an excellent cap to an evening's gaming. The payoff moment, as each player suddenly realises what they have been a part of, is one of the most rewarding facets of the Babylon 5 roleplaying game.

Preparation

To run this campaign, the Games Master must possess the main rulebook and *Core Rulebook*. A thorough knowledge of the events that occurred in the Babylon 5 show will also be quite helpful, although reminders will be placed throughout this text as necessary to link in with events on the show. Since the players will be operating 'behind the scenes' of the events depicted on television, this may not be as critical to them as it is to the Games Master.

Whenever a potential action the players might take will come into conflict with the main Babylon 5 story arc itself, a 'DANGER!' notice will be given to that effect, along with suggestions for how it might be avoided. Note that this will only be of concern if the Games Master is running a 'canon campaign' as defined in Chapter 9 of the main rulebook. In many cases, the players may not even be aware that they are affecting the core arc. The Games Master should take appropriate steps to ensure the integrity of Babylon 5's storyline is not disrupted in a canon campaign, though these

alterations may not necessarily be visible to the players. When applicable, suggestions will be given for potential solutions, although the Games Master should feel free to create his own as necessary. However, simply saying 'You can't do that because it didn't happen that way in the show!' is not a viable option. Often, the best solution is to avoid allowing the situation to occur in the first place, and the key to that is preparation.

Text that appears in a shaded box within the course of a module is intended for the players. You can read this material aloud, or paraphrase it as necessary. Sidebars contain privileged Games Master information, instructions, danger notices, alternative rules and optional encounters. Information on encounters is provided directly within the module text, although significant characters and more powerful enemies are described more fully in the Appendices.

Encounter Levels

This campaign is intended for a party of four to six first level characters. If fewer participate, the Games Master might wish to run an initial mini-scenario to provide them some additional experience. Some suggestions for starting activities are provided with the first module, *And So It Begins*.

In general, the completion of a module will result in the acquisition of at most one level for each character. This in and of itself will not prepare them for the next module in the series. A suggested level will be provided for each module, and if the group has not yet achieved that much experience, the Games Master should strongly consider running a side scenario or two first. Some suggestions for these alternatives will be provided as sidebars or, in some cases, several extra pages of text. If the *Fiery Trial* is being run alongside other story arcs with their own modules, however, this is unlikely to prove a problem.

Running the Campaign

This campaign may be viewed as a series of modules laid end to end, but it is much more than that. The events that happen in one module directly affect what happens in the next, and certain events may happen between scenarios differently depending on how, or if, the previous module was completed successfully. While every effort has been taken to provide options that cover such situations, it is impossible to predict the actions of every group of players, so sometimes the Games Master may need to make alterations to the events set forth in the text. Above all, be flexible. Changes can be made, but be aware of their effect on the overall arc. When the time comes to proceed to the final module, you do not want to find yourself unable to determine a logical manner to get the players to the right

place at the right time. Your players are going to know if your conclusion is too contrived, and that will spoil the grand finale.

The campaign is made up of several modules that together make up an entire story arc. The modules should be run in the order shown, and in each module new things are learned that build toward the story's ultimate conclusion. Be careful not to reveal more information than a given module specifies, or the discoveries that await the players in the next game will be spoiled. Players like to talk and guess and speculate amongst themselves, and listening to these comments and questions is part of the fun of being a Games Master. Just remember, confirm or deny nothing. Simply smile and nod and look mysterious. Pretend to be a Vorlon if you want to really enjoy yourself—answer questions in terse, obtuse, short sentences that mean nothing to anyone until after the fact.

In this product, modules are presented as chapters. In between each one, you will find suggestions for events and activities that can occupy the players before the next part of the story arc unfolds. The Games Master can use these as desired, in whole or in part, or substitute activities of his own. A skilled Games Master might also be running an entirely separate story arc or two alongside *Fiery Trial*, as defined in Chapter Nine of the main rulebook. Since the characters will likely need to achieve another level of experience between modules, a secondary arc provides a perfect opportunity to do this.

Some Games Masters might wish to incorporate elements of a secondary or tertiary arc directly into the events of *Fiery Trial*. For example, a group that finds itself operating as mercenaries or pirates might involve some or all of its members in side quests during trips to the various alien worlds explored herein. *Fiery Trial*'s ending scenario (which takes place in Quadrant 37, within disputed territory between the Narn and Centauri) will then take on an even greater significance if the players have allied themselves with one side or the other. While no rules can be written specifically addressing such situations, we have attempted to provide hints and suggestions for additional scenario options whenever possible. Some of these will suggest additional story arcs in and of themselves.

Module Handouts

At the end of this book, you will find a variety of handouts provided for use by the Games Master during the course of the campaign. These include 'Universe Today' news clippings that will let the players know what is going on in the Babylon 5 diplomatic station, as well as 'Want Ads' that provide potential sources of income.

The Want Ads section should be given to players at the start of the story arc. Enough adverts are provided to give just about any potential character some opportunity to

find work. (If one of your players is so exotic or strange that nothing fits, feel free to post additional adverts as necessary.) Not all the jobs listed are vital or necessary, but provide a way to get your players established on the station so they can form a base of operations. Each advert includes a basic description, along with any additional details for the Games Master and how it might affect the story arc. Some jobs might lead to side scenarios, while others will simply provide a limited source of income, or possibly contacts for future intrigue.

The Universe Today pages are designed for use at the start of the modules. Present these to your players at the start of any session where a module is scheduled to begin. Within the text of each module, suggestions are given for side scenarios that support the stories mentioned in the articles. The Games Master should feel free to modify these as needed, or add his own. Not everything in the newspaper will result in a scenario, of course, and some scenarios (and much of the main story arc itself) will not be referenced in the Universe Today at all. The Games Master can also create additional Universe Today pages as needed to cover any side scenarios of his own creation, or download more from the Mongoose Publishing web site.

Non-Player Characters and Alien Lifeforms

Generally, there are two types of enemies the players will encounter during play: non-player characters and hostile alien creatures. On Babylon 5 and in other civilised areas, virtually every encounter will be with a non-player character of some sort—including intelligent people who also happen to be aliens. Those modules set on other planets could feature any number of bizarre monstrosities intent on killing and eating the players, and some of these will have even more fiendish ideas in mind.

Non-player character descriptions include the skills and abilities that are relevant to the encounter in question. For non-player characters who appear only in a single encounter, no further details will be required. The Games Master may, however, occasionally need to give a non-player character a more active role, depending on player actions. For example, a duty officer with whom the party must interact may be intended to appear only as a source of information, but if the players convinced him somehow to join their group for a time, further information might be needed. In these cases, the Games Master should extrapolate likely skills and abilities for the non-player character based on his or her profession and experience, or use the sample characters in Chapter 6 of the main rulebook. Suggestions and hints on how to play such characters will also be provided as necessary.

Virtually every alien creature encountered by the players in this campaign will be of a type never before seen, the complete description of which will appear as a Xenobiology

File sidebar. Individual statistics for the encounter itself will be placed within the encounter description.

Experience Points and Mini-Scenarios

At the end of each module, a suggested amount of experience points (XP) is provided. This is by no means a hard-and-fast, precise amount that must be given, and the completion of certain tasks, rescuing of victims, discovery of hidden clues, or other actions may also provide a party with bonus XP, as noted within the text. The Games Master can also provide other bonuses at his discretion, or reduce the amount if not all goals of the module were met. If the module is completely botched, few if any points should be awarded, and an additional side scenario may need to be run to make up the difference to prepare the players for the next module.

In certain instances, side plots are provided as for specific individuals who match certain racial or social connection criteria. In these cases, XP awards apply only to that player. The Games Master should, however, ensure that each participant in the campaign undertakes approximately the same number of such modules if they wish. This avoids the appearance of favouritism, which can ruin the game for the disgruntled player. Suggestions for a few side modules are found throughout this book.

The Story Arc

This campaign is designed to finish as a bridge between season one and season two of the television series, and indeed, the first module takes place immediately after *Midnight on the Firing Line*, as detailed in Chapter Eight of the main rulebook. By the end of the final module, which takes place in concert with *Chrysalis*, the campaign will get the characters started on the path to involvement directly in the coming conflict...for good or ill. This is a monumental undertaking that cannot happen all at once so, as might be expected, things begin slowly.

Module One: And So It Begins

After a few brief, minor events on Babylon 5, a man named Roland Anderson approaches the players. He is looking to hire a few specialists to assist him in locating what happened to a survey mission near the Rim, and each potential party member has a skill he needs. What he doesn't tell the group is that the scientists are now the prisoners of a group of Llort (a League race whose people do not understand the concepts of 'ownership' or 'possessions'). The group must deal with these difficult aliens, and fight off the local fauna, in order to discover what happened to the missing scientists.

In this introductory module, the players (whose characters likely come from highly disparate backgrounds) must learn to work together for the first time. Some will have their own agendas, but in the end, Roland Anderson will deem

them a worthy team. He will make note of their names, and promise to remember them if he needs any other missions completed in the future. He will not, however, let them in on the fact that he represents Earth's IPX Corporation or that they are now, unofficially, a group of clandestine operatives who will be called on to undertake duties IPX doesn't want to dirty its hands with.

Module Two: Raid on Ranasha

After a few side scenarios, Anderson visits the group again. He has a new task for them—breaking a friend out of prison on a Drazi colony. According to him, his associate Matthew Hendrix was surveying what he thought was a newly discovered world, only to be attacked and arrested by a Drazi patrol. Attempts to get him released through official channels have all failed. As an added hook, any players who have EarthForce connections will actually be assigned to undertake this mission, so long as they get a chance to interrogate Hendrix before he is returned to Anderson's care.

The party is then called upon to sneak into the Drazi prison complex, rescue Hendrix, and sneak him out again safely. This is not something that can be performed as a direct assault—they must use stealth and guile. Space combat will be a part of this module, as a Drazi patrol will be dispatched to chase down the ship that delivers the players to their destination. Any characters with fighter piloting skills will likely get a chance to put them to use!

At the end of this module, Hendrix will be interrogated, but the players won't be able to see the proceedings. Whatever secrets the man held will remain secret—for now.

Module Three: To Kill a Thief

More side scenarios ensue, including one involving a major non-player character and her relationship to Roland Anderson. After a time, he returns again to call the party together. He admits now that he has a client who is undertaking a great deal of scientific research on the Rim and elsewhere. A team of scientists recently discovered an alien artefact of huge importance, but the ship carrying it back to Earth never made it home. A mission has already been dispatched, but he happened to be in the area of Babylon 5, and the party could get there much faster if they departed at once.

Upon arrival at the ship's last reported location, they find it a derelict, with most of the crew dead. A few clues remain, however, along with an alien creature brought aboard during the scientist team's recent surveys. It has since grown, however, and will be quite a thorn in the players' sides as they try to figure out what happened to the original crew. The creature carried off and hid the bodies in a concealed corner of the ship, staying alive by eating them slowly - and using the decaying flesh to feed its young.

The alien item was actually a weapon designed to interface with its owner at the cellular level. The ship's captain, too curious for his own good, put it on and fell under its influence. (This is similar to what happened in 'Infection,' an event that produced its own side scenario, so the players may incorrectly believe this is related.) The weapon now controls its owner, using him as a killing machine. Worse, he has now set himself up as a god on a low-tech world, forcing the party to deal with a horde of fanatical Bronze Age worshippers.

This module is in many ways the turning point for the group. Roland Anderson now trusts the players implicitly, enough to use them during the most important mission of all.

Module Four: Spy in Our Midst

Finally, Anderson's careful training of the players bears fruit. Anderson believes the aliens IPX has been investigating are responsible for the destruction of the Narn base in Quadrant 37, an event that has just now occurred. These beings are much more powerful than anyone ever believed, and IPX wants to know as much as they can so they can duplicate the technology. Their agents have recently learned that the Shadows, as they have been called, had another reason to destroy the Narn outpost in Quadrant 37—it was the cover for a huge archaeological dig over a ruined city. The party is to be sent in to recover a secret cache of data in a hidden underground complex, right in the middle of Narn territory!

In addition to the players, Anderson and several non-player characters will be provided to ensure success, including some the players have worked with before in previous modules. One of these is an enemy agent who will ambush and kill Anderson once the team reaches the planet. The players must then figure out who the spy is and take him out, defeat the Narn defenders, steal the data, and escape safely before a Narn relief force can arrive.

At the conclusion, an Earth Alliance Hyperion heavy cruiser arrives and orders the Narn ships to stand down—only to be destroyed when an alien vessel phases in and dices it into fragments. The players flee and return to Babylon 5, but their stolen data disappears, stolen by person or persons unknown, leaving only greater mysteries for potential future scenarios. Eventually, the characters return to their lives, having been part of something that could change the galaxy. But did they do the right thing?

Bringing the Characters Together

Within the synopsis above, it is assumed that the various party members all have some good reason to work together. However, the Babylon 5 roleplaying game provides for a

wide variety of character types, personas, motivations, and goals. The Games Master may well find it challenging to form these disparate classes into a functional, cohesive party. Below are some suggestions for integrating such individuals into a team, and how they might be motivated to agree to Mr. Anderson's requests.

Agent

Members of the agent class often possess the exact breadth of skills that Anderson is looking for, but this comes at a worrisome price. An agent - even one currently operating on a freelance basis - represents a significant security risk for IPX. After all, any secrets the agent learns could easily become commodities for sale to the highest bidder. It is for this reason that Anderson performs thorough background checks on everyone he considers for employment. Should he choose to take the risk and hire an agent, he will do so only if he is confident he knows their true loyalties and motivations. Of course, there is still the chance that a deep cover agent might remain undiscovered by him, adding an element of intrigue to the campaign, but even if he does discover the truth, that does not disqualify the player from employment. Anderson might attempt to turn them as a double agent later on, for example, or control the information that individual learns - perhaps even feeding false data back to their true employer. The flow of information goes both ways, as well - he could very easily use such a person as a way to extract secrets without the player even being aware of what is going on.

A freelance agent, with no government or high-paying employer hovering over their heads, is someone Anderson will need to keep a close eye on. The agent might require additional payments to keep them in line, and the information they know to themselves. Should the player prove to be loose-lipped despite any such motivation (or threats), Anderson will not hesitate to kill them if necessary. Such an event could become a significant turning point in the campaign! Such are the risks inherent in this very dangerous game.

Diplomat

Not all diplomats will be part of the ambassadorial staff and many ambassadors have only one or two people working directly for them. They do, however, employ a network of couriers and other operatives. A player who operates in such a position is an ideal target for Anderson, as he is looking for means whereby he can establish connections directly to a specific ambassador. This will allow him to both gather and send information through the player at some point in the future.

As for the player, he may or may not choose to make his association with Anderson known to the ambassador (or whomever his own contact may be). If he does, the player will be allowed to participate in the events, primarily for the purpose of learning what they can - more information

on this is given in Module One. If he does not, their side activities will be discovered eventually. This could lead to a troublesome showdown with the ambassador, or possibly nothing more than a simple acknowledgement of what is going on.

A freelance diplomat player, of course, has no patron to worry about pleasing. Anderson will still seek them for their skills, and taking trips with him would be just another job.

Lurker

These might well be the easiest people to convince. Lurkers look out for Number One, and when they're offered not only cash but a chance to get off the station, they should jump at the opportunity. Roland Anderson will be looking for streetwise, stealthy, and easily controllable individuals who will not be missed if they disappear. Not too many, though, or the others will not be able to keep them in line. (Note that a fence will be highly useful later on, as he can source certain items that make the scenarios easier, and will also gather a few henchmen to provide additional firepower in the tougher modules.)

Officer

The method used to motivate members of the officer class depends greatly on the player's background. Retired officers of a major military (such as EarthForce) would be desired for their leadership skills, and could be easily convinced to join the team out of some patriotic beliefs Anderson or his agents foster in the player. Mercenaries not associated with any government will be easier to convince, as they will go where the money is.

Anderson will certainly not want any members of active duty military forces along on his missions—if he knows of *their true nature*. Therein lies perhaps the best method of inserting an active officer into the team—as a deep cover agent. This works best for Earth Alliance officers, but could serve well for members of any race.

To pull this off, the player should be pulled aside (in an early scenario or as part of the character design process) and given a special undercover assignment aboard Babylon 5. He is to disguise himself as a member of some other profession, and report back anything unusual. When Anderson contacts him, he will be given authorisation to proceed on any mission the mysterious man might offer. Further information on this process will be provided in Module One.

This presents a somewhat significant problem in that the player will be obligated to prevent any atrocities or criminal activities, or at least report them back to his superiors once he returns to the base. Still, as part of the ongoing investigation, some of these might be let slide. After all, arresting a character for an action only the party knew

about will reveal that one of their number is an agent or spy. Sometimes a few minor crimes must be let go for the good of the overall mission. This allows the Games Master to place some real moral dilemmas in front of the players, and encourages strong roleplaying. Is letting a criminal get away scot-free justified in the face of the overall goal? Where does the player draw the line?

This can have huge implications later in the campaign if the player is forced to reveal his true allegiance before the final module. In fact, if Anderson ever discovers it, the player will most likely be the target of an assassination attempt, and certainly he will not be invited on any further missions. The Games Master must be sure to reinforce the idea in the player's mind that he must remain incognito at all times, or else the player might well write himself out of the final scenarios!

Scientist

Anderson is actively looking for people with intelligence to join his team, for obvious reasons. Recruiting a curious individual should be no trouble at all. The promise of meeting new alien life forms, exploring distant planets, or studying strange ruins or artefacts should be more than enough to convince a true scientist to come along for the ride. Anderson and his agents will simply appeal to the player's vocation (geology, xenobiology, chemistry, or whatever is appropriate). After all, his people will have had plenty of opportunity to perform a full background check on each potential 'applicant,' so he will know exactly what interests the player has.

Soldier

Soldiers are important to Anderson's plans, as they will be the ones who fend off any danger that face the rest of his team. He wants at least one, preferably two or three, fighting types in his group, particularly those of races with greater physical strength and stamina than humans. A player who meets Anderson's criteria (a decent selection of combat skills and the willingness to employ them) will be perfect for his needs, especially if they have no existing connections or affiliations. Remember, not all members of the soldier class need be part of a military organisation. Anderson will aggressively pursue mercenary types who can be easily bought, as well as former military troops with good combat skills. For players who are still active duty, see the suggestions for the officer class on a potential method to deal with them.

Telepath

This may well be the most difficult class to involve in Anderson's plan. He will not want to risk having a mind reader around, for fear that they will pick up the wrong surface thoughts at the wrong time. In addition, it will be difficult to convince Psi Corps that one of their members should go on these questionable missions. However, the

player could certainly masquerade as another class or Anderson may be granted his own Psi Corps bodyguard.

Of course, if the player is a Psi Corps member in secret, perhaps as a plant, all of this changes. The Corps will want to know more about the mysterious Mr. Anderson, and will be more than happy to authorise participation in his missions. Any information the player learns should, naturally, be reported to the Corps. This could lead to several side scenarios.

Another option is even more insidious. The Psi Corps are well aware of IPX's continual quest to investigate and utilise the mysterious alien technology, and some of their higher-placed individuals will be well aware of Roland Anderson's true nature. A player telepath could quite easily be given a secret assignment to join one of Anderson's teams and report everything back to the Corps. But what if the person giving out this assignment has ulterior motives of his own? Perhaps he secretly wants the alien technology for his own purposes, and is planning to use his secret influence on Anderson's team to manipulate them like puppets on a string. Alternately, this could simply be a case of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing within the corridors of EarthForce and the Psi Corps. The Games Master should feel free to take the 'wheels within wheels' conspiracy as deep as he wishes.

Worker

The lowly labourer or white collar office staff may seem useless on the surface, but Roland Anderson knows they could easily form the background of any team. Workers are used to long stretches of backbreaking or mind-stretching labour, and some missions might well focus on such things. Also, many people who take on a trade can be motivated simply by giving them something useful to do, so long as they are kept interested. Anderson's missions could become another form of work - or they might be seen as much-needed vacations from the dull monotony of life aboard Babylon 5. Some individuals might be willing to do anything just to get off the station for a while!

Other Races

Virtually any race will be sought by Anderson for their various talents and skills. After all, the team he intends to form will very likely be sent into foreign territory, so any members of the race in question will be quite helpful. Narns, for example, will be sought for their fighting skills and reputation as warriors. He should have little trouble finding a good way to motivate the typical Narn into becoming part of his little group.

Centauri should also be easy to convince. If the character is a loyal citizen of the Republic, Anderson need only focus on showing how his research will aid in the fight against the Narns. A simple scenario might help cement this relationship. If the Centauri player has rejected his heritage, or shows anti-government tendencies, Anderson

will instead point out that he may know things that could help him later on, once a strong working relationship has been set up.

Minbari are troublesome, because Anderson's people suspect the Federation is actively working on their own, competing efforts in the quest for alien technology (a false belief, but one they are paranoid of). Therefore, he will go out of his way to ensure no Minbari learns of IPX's attempts to advance their own cause. Instead, he will concentrate on assuring the player that he only wants to help his colleagues and, later on, learn ways to defeat and destroy these mysterious aliens. The player may need a side scenario or two to prove this is the case.

Drazi are also highly sought after for their fighting abilities. Unlike many people, Anderson is not subject to the false assumption that Drazi are inherently stupid. He knows they are as smart as humans, just not as pragmatic. Additionally, because the Drazi are the largest of the League races, any of their kind who join Anderson's team can potentially open up doors into Drazi space later on. Convincing a Drazi to join the team could be as simple as dangling some money in front of his face, or suggesting that he might learn information beneficial to his people. Again, use the player's background to set up the particulars.

Because the Brakiri are known to be traders and merchants, they could be quite helpful in Anderson's employ. Not only could they help make purchases in markets not open to humans, they would be likely to have connections that could help locate missing or rare items. Convincing a Brakiri to join the team will probably involve the suggestion of new items to sell or buy, if the player is true to the 'typical' Brakiri mindset.

Other races may also be played, but have little bearing on Anderson's decision to hire them. In his mind, the more varied his team members, the better off he will be, and the less likely their capture will lead back to him or his corporation.

In the Beginning

With this in mind, the Games Master now has all the information needed to jump right into the story arc presented hereafter. If you wish, you can begin play by simply having the players describe their characters and then jump right into the initial meeting with Roland Anderson. In this case, you can use the race pointers mentioned previously to give Anderson and his agents a simple reason to recruit the players to his employ. If you prefer, however, you can sit back and let the players explore the station, work out various mini-scenarios, and come together for the initial briefing when the time is right. Either way, proceed onward to Module One.

In the immortal words of Ambassador Kosh: *And so it begins...*

Module One: And So It Begins

They come from all over known space. Diplomats, wanderers, rogues, dilettantes, scavengers—virtually anyone might end up Babylon 5. Many, perhaps the vast majority, are worthless beings taking up space and wasting resources. Some are strong, dedicated individuals with their own goals and loyalties—all well and good for them, but useless to me. A few, however, are skilled but directionless, lacking only a purpose in life to set them apart from the rest. Those are the ones I seek. The ones I can fashion into useful tools.

Who am I? You can call me Roland Anderson. That may or may not be my real name—you'll probably never know. All you have to be concerned with for now is who I represent. I work for the IPX Corporation, one of Earth's largest technological research groups. You may have heard of us before. If there's a planet out there being surveyed, an ancient relic undergoing study, or a new life form being categorized, we're probably involved somewhere along the line. We have well over a million employees throughout known space, although the exact number is probably something no one knows for sure.

So why am I talking to you? Well, I'm getting to that. You see, IPX needs more than just scientists, researchers, field operatives, and managers to get our job done. We also have the occasional requirement for—well, let us just say, people who know how to work comfortably in the background. I understand you might know some people who fit the bill right here on Babylon 5. You do, don't you? I'll bet you know a lot of them, too. Well, I'm looking for a few who have certain skills and talents that might be of use to me. Not right away, though. Not at first. No, I'm in no hurry. We have some time to select the right candidates and train them before we proceed with the greater plan.

With me so far? Good, good. Now, here's how we go about picking these few grains of wheat from all that chaff...

Background for the Games Master

Give the players Handout One, plus the Want Ads.

Module Summary

- 3 Roland Anderson's agents recruit the players.
- 3 Anderson sends the players on their first mission to locate missing scientists.
- 3 A Drazi Sunhawk challenges the players at a transfer point.
- 3 The players explore the desert planet where the scientists disappeared.
- 3 Llort pirates try to capture one or two players or their ship.
- 3 The players rescue the scientists from the Llort vessel.

Names and Places of Importance

- 3 Roland Anderson: IPX operative looking to form a covert team.
- 3 Ivan Torkovski: Possible friend of a player.
- 3 Dave McCullough: One of Anderson's agents (muscle).
- 3 Alison Fernandez: Another of Anderson's agents (diplomat).
- 3 Rasheed Isanda: Another of Anderson's agents (pilot).
- 3 Dr. Evan Thompson: Lead scientist of the missing team.
- 3 Torashkavall: Llort captain who captured and imprisoned the scientists.
- 3 Levana IV Beta: Planet where the missing research team was located.
- 3 Llort: Alien race in whose territory Levana IV Beta is located.
- 3 Descari: Race whose territory the players must pass through.
- 3 *Liberty's Fortune*: The civilian pinnacle used by the players in this module.
- 3 T'lad'tha: System where the players make a jump transfer (at a Drazi outpost).
- 3 *Drek Tral Mazka*: Drazi ship that will stop and search the players' vessel.
- 3 Desert Worm: Poisonous creature native to Levana IV Beta.
- 3 AntLion: Pit-digging insect life form on Levana IV Beta.

Roland Anderson, a clandestine recruiter for the IPX Corporation, has come to Babylon 5 to locate and recruit one or more teams for use in tracking down and locating alien technology. His company has authorised him to operate independently, using his own private account to pay for any expenses as necessary. To maintain complete anonymity, he is using a pseudonym ('Roland Anderson' does not appear on company books in any way) and carries nothing that can connect him with IPX. Anderson will not identify himself as working for that company until later in the story (if at all), if and when he feels he has achieved the proper level of trust with the characters. He has even been trained to hide his true allegiance from telepaths.

IPX has learned, over the course of the past several years, that a powerful and ancient race exists somewhere in the Galaxy. These aliens have not been seen for hundreds of years but now, for whatever reason, they are stirring again. Their goals and purpose remain a mystery, but IPX believes their return could lead to nothing but trouble. On the other hand, IPX also knows the race possesses highly advanced technology that could be put to good use within EarthForce. To this end, IPX recruiters are active throughout known space, hoping to produce teams who can find out more about this threat without revealing who is really involved in the search. The more eyes and ears IPX has out there, the better.

The Shadows

The mysterious, ancient aliens mentioned here and elsewhere in this story arc are the Shadows, a race almost as old as the cosmos itself. Every thousand years or so, they resurface and stir up trouble wherever they can, for reasons known only to themselves and their equally ancient enemies, the Vorlons. Eventually, the return of the Shadows will lead to a full-fledged conflict that scours known space but for now, they are quietly gathering their power. Those who know of them at this early stage are few and far between.

As the arc of Babylon 5 progresses, the Shadow threat will loom ever larger on the horizon. For now, the players should not hear the name 'Shadow' or realise that any of IPX's missions involve this mysterious race. Even if the players have seen the television show and know what is to come, do not confirm or deny anything regarding the Shadows. After all, their characters should not possess this knowledge, so there is no way they should have any idea what is really going on. Within the text of this book (with the sole exception of this sidebar), the Shadows are never referred to as such, only as the 'mysterious aliens' whose existence so intrigues IPX.

Further information on the coming Shadow War will be released in future publications.

The existence of this race is top secret within the upper echelons of EarthGov, and their operatives act to suppress information regarding the mysterious beings at all times. IPX uses its reputation as an exploratory and survey corporation to cover their true nature—the acquisition of technology for EA military research. Naturally, they are more than a little interested in an ancient, powerful race and whatever artefacts it may have left lying around the Galaxy! After all, the technology employed by these unknown aliens is so advanced that their own investigations have revealed

only the slightest, barest tip of the iceberg—an iceberg that will, if all goes well, be extremely lucrative indeed!

However, because EarthGov does not want the existence of the aliens to become common knowledge, IPX operatives must pursue their research in total secrecy. The discovery of an alien ship on Mars led to a nearly complete disaster but during that ill-fated incident the scientists involved gathered more data in a few weeks than they had in the previous two decades. Sadly, much of that information is now fragmented, some taken away by EarthGov's operatives, and others within the heads of scientists now in hiding. IPX has recovered what they can but lack the understanding to put any of it to use.

This is where Babylon 5 comes in. Since it first went on line, the station has gradually formed into a hub of activity. People from all over the galaxy come to share ideas, trade rumours, and offer their services. Better yet, Babylon 5 is centrally positioned in neutral territory, affording easy access to virtually every corner of known space. What better place to set up a clandestine operation?

Of course, Roland Anderson cannot simply show up and announce that he needs to form a secret team to hunt down alien artefacts. Even if he dared be that open about his goals, he would attract too much attention from other groups. Instead, he plans to take the guise of an honest businessman looking for help he cannot get elsewhere. If his new acquaintances perform well, he will begin the process of moulding them into a cohesive team that can be of better use to IPX later on.

Now, he has a chance to put his first group to the test, thanks to an incident that occurred recently in League space. A small team of scientists (employed by IPX but not aware of that fact) was investigating a set of mysterious ruins on a world not normally open to exploration by humans. The planet is called Levana, and it is found in a system along the Llort-Descari border, approximately eight days' travel from Babylon 5. Levana is technically a Descari system, although it offers almost nothing of any use except a few frosty rocks for mining. There is one habitable moon orbiting an otherwise uninteresting gas giant, and that is where the ruins are located.

While the system is claimed by the Descari, their neighbours the Llort do not recognise the concept of 'ownership.' To them, possession exists only from moment to moment. If they see something they want, they simply take it. Amazingly, their people rarely fight each other, because if someone else desires the item, it is usually freely given. This alien mindset is difficult for outsiders to grasp, and because of it, most other races see the Llort as thieves, or at worst, dangerous lunatics to be avoided.

The Descari, naturally, have taken steps to defend their mining operations from these ‘natural pirates.’ Llort attacks are infrequent now, but their ships still meander around the system occasionally, looking for anything they might want to take. When they witnessed an EA survey vessel landing on Levana IV Beta, they followed in secret and set up their own camp nearby, hoping the scientists would discover something of interest. They got bored, however, and attacked the team, taking them prisoner and forcing them to reveal what they discovered. All they had was scattered information, but the Llort believe there is more to be found, so they are still present. The scientists are now trapped on the Llort ship, being gradually starved while the Llort try to figure out the truth.

When the team failed to check in, IPX sent word to Anderson that there might be trouble. He has been on Babylon 5 for a week now, looking for potential candidates, and now the time has come at last to act...

Additional Module Information

This module can, like most of those in this book, be played as a standalone scenario. However, it is best used as part of the ongoing story arc that unfolds throughout these pages. The module is an introductory one, with a variety of options that can carry the tale in many directions over several weeks of game time. While many of the remaining modules that comprise *Fiery Trial* have carefully scripted timelines, that is not the case here. Indeed, the Games Master can choose to bring in Anderson at virtually any time, either immediately (if he wants to get right down to business) or after a few short scenarios intended to introduce players to the game. Some suggestions for possibilities are provided in the opening pages of this module.

Before the Module

As mentioned in the Introduction, the first challenge for the Games Master will be getting the players together into a cohesive group. They are likely to come from different backgrounds and have widely varying careers, however. If that is indeed the case, you may need to run a few short introductory scenarios to bring them together. These are not solo events—allow the rest of the players to observe the interaction between characters and non-player characters, even if their own characters are not present at the time. This will help the players learn about each other and provide a better introduction than simply going around the table describing themselves.

Note that the players do not actually need to jump right into Module One on the very first night of the campaign. The most effective means of getting a game rolling might well be to simply sit back and let the players explore Babylon 5, using the information provided in Chapter Six of the main rulebook. When the time is right, you can bring them

into contact with the others (and Roland Anderson) for the initial briefing.

While the players are getting jobs, meandering about, and exploring the station, Roland Anderson has his agents scouring Babylon 5 looking for people with specific skills to join his team—skills exactly like those displayed by the player during the performance of their job. For example, a dockworker might possess a gift for innovation with otherwise useless equipment, or a waiter might have a knack for persuasion. This could call for a roleplaying situation, or simply assume that the player demonstrates such as skill (after all, player characters are supposed to be exceptional) on a regular basis.

Some of Anderson’s agents, and potentially mean Anderson himself brings them into contact with the players, are listed hereafter. The Games Master can also come up with other scenarios as needed, or simply repeat one or more of these plots with slight variations.

Established Babylon 5 Residents

Someone new has been hanging around the player’s usual quarters or hangouts, asking questions about anyone who might serve well as a bodyguard or whatever else that character is well suited for. Ivan Torkovski (see p125), a friend of the player’s, brings this to his attention. Together, the two track down this mysterious individual, but are ambushed by two thugs – use the sample characters found in Chapter Six of the main rulebook. A brawl ensues, with fists only. If the player wins, the thugs flee; if the player loses, their prey helps him to his feet and congratulate him on ‘being a pretty good fighter, but not up to taking on a real brawler yet.’

In either case, the man they were tracking steps out of the shadows and introduces himself as Paul Ramirez, an employee of Roland Anderson. He is quietly seeking someone with the player’s skills and talents to accompany him on a mission elsewhere in known space. As a reward, he offers a ticket back to Earth for one passenger. At this, Torkovski enthusiastically agrees to go. If the player is reluctant, his friend will work very hard to convince him to agree. The offer stands only if both men go together to the Nova Nine in order to meet with Mr Anderson.

Torkovski can be used for this module only, as additional firepower for the group, or if you wish, he can stay as a permanent ally of the player. However, once he receives his ticket back home, the player will have to come up with an awfully convincing reason to get him to stick around!

Worker

During the description of a day in the life of the player’s chosen career, a dark-skinned, loudmouth lout named Dave McCullough (see p125) will attempt to ruin their day. Exactly what Dave does will depend on the player’s career

path—for a dockworker, he might try to pick a fight; for a waitress, he might make a pass at her. He might pretend to be drunk, or simply be rude and obnoxious. For more technical jobs, he might break something, or insult the player's ability to do the work he's been hired to do.

Regardless, in the end Dave will back down and retreat, but then meet up with the player later on and inform them that he was just making a final test, which they passed. He'll then 'butter up' the player by lauding the skills he's seen demonstrated during the time he observed them over the preceding week, and he's impressed. He has an offer for them, if they'd like to hear it, one that might get them out of their dead-end or troublesome job. Then he ushers them off to meet Mr. Anderson at the Nova Nine.

Diplomatic Assistant/Attache

While Roland Anderson (see p126) is on the lookout for such individuals, one potential problem lies in getting the player properly motivated to meet with the man and accept his task. A simple solution is to let the player be disillusioned with his job and quit the position in order to experience more out of life, but this will sever ties with the employer (not necessarily one of the ambassadors or their staff) and make reconciliation difficult. Another alternative for alien characters is to have the employer direct the player to learn more about humans by whatever means they see fit. This would be particularly appropriate for a Minbari (even one very low in the hierarchy), since Ambassador Delenn knows humans are an important part of what is to come, and wishes to know what she can about them and how they think.

Among the men on Roland Anderson's staff is Alison Fernandez (see p127), who is something of a 'Jill of all trades.' She is a former EarthForce officer who has also been a member of EarthGov's diplomatic staff. Now she works for IPX under the guise of an independent consultant. She has been on the station for two years, performing odd jobs for the Council and acting as a go-between for the various ambassadors. She draws a small stipend from the Council for organising meetings and running errands, but her real purpose is to pass information back to IPX and to keep an eye out for potential operatives. If one of the players is of an alien race, Alison will have her eyes on them.

To get things started, the player is called into a meeting with their employer. Alison is present and introduces herself (see sidebar). She explains that she needs an individual from the player's race for a special mission, and the employer has agreed to assign the player to this duty. This may be to increase the player's understanding of humans and their ways as described above, or for other reasons. For example, if the player has been idle, bored, or dissatisfied with their posting, this could be looked on as a vacation!

Regardless of the player's race, Alison's true goal is to bring at least one alien into Anderson's service. She will say literally anything to convince the player to join the group, emphasising the need for 'further understanding between our people' as necessary. Much depends on the player's motivations as defined during character creation, but feel free to let Alison go as far as she needs to go to ensure the player joins the team. She can be quite persuasive.

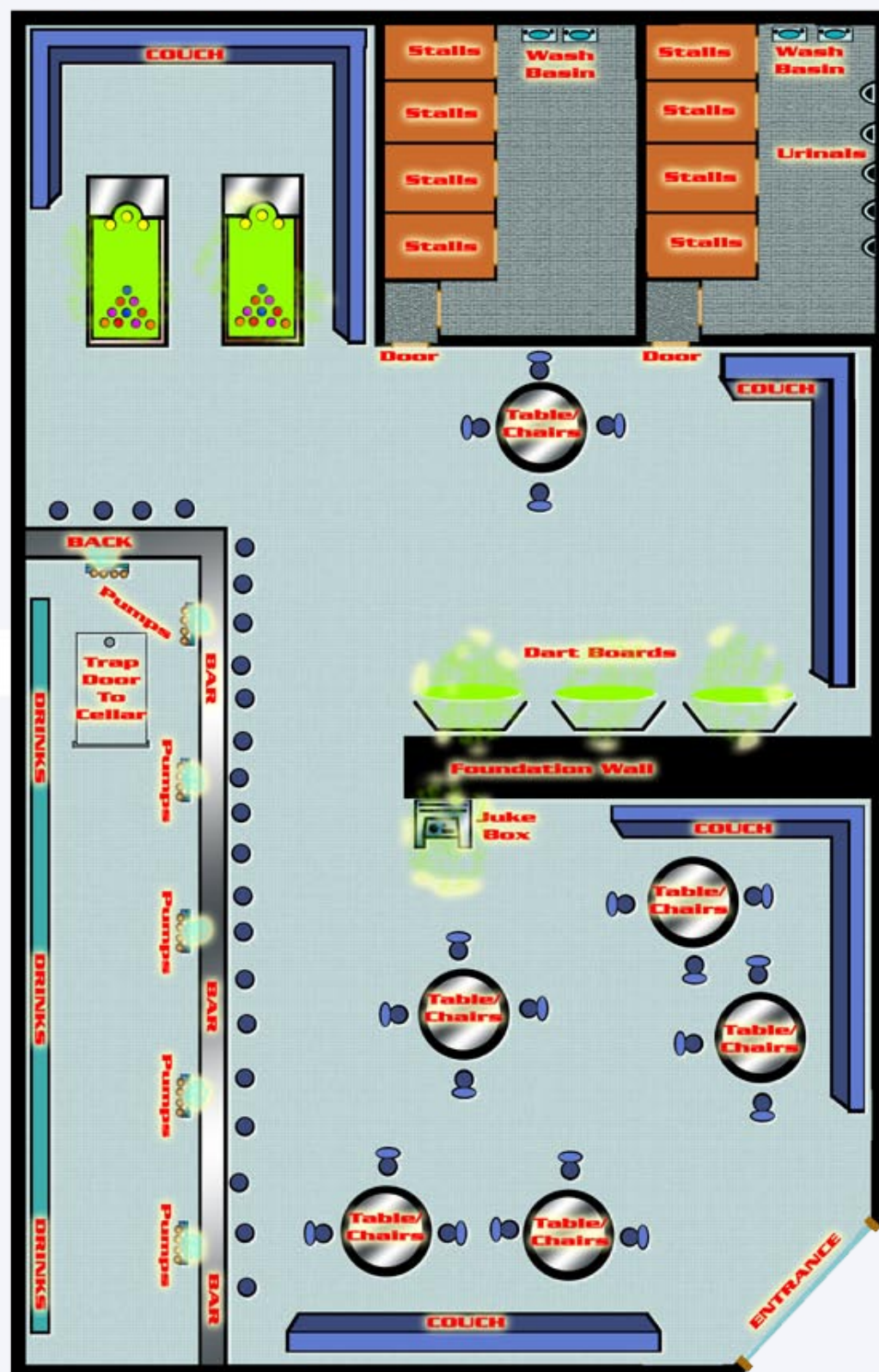
In the event the player's background simply does not lend itself easily to the above scenarios, here are some other possibilities Alison might try:

Minbari: Alison approaches the player quietly and suggests she might know some information that would be helpful to their caste. She will turn over this data if the player will aid in a simple mission first. If the player presses her for more, she will claim she does not actually have the data herself, but will deliver it in the form of a data crystal. At the end of the mission, she actually does deliver it to the player but to Ambassador Delenn, who watches it in private, without any further word. This could be used as a lead-in for a side scenario later on, however.

Narn: Alison tells the player that a human research expedition in League space discovered something mysterious, but then reported sighting a Centauri ship shortly before they went off-line. A mission is being put together to visit the site and will be departing very soon. If the Narn can spare an 'expert' to assist in the mission, she agrees to turn over anything they learn to Ambassador G'Kar. There will be nothing of interest to the Narns, but she will provide a complete after-action report at the conclusion of the scenario.

Centauri: While it would be easy to say IPX suspects Centauri involvement with the mysterious aliens they are investigating, that is not the case at this early stage. Instead, Alison will appeal to Centauri greed and egotism, pure and simple. In addition to offering money, she will also suggest that the team needs a skilled leader, and only one of the noble Centauri people will suffice. Of course, a shrewd player will know there must be more, so if pressed, she will admit there is some potential that the Narn might be involved. How, she will not say, because she has nothing more specific.

NOVA 9 PUB



Encounter One: The Meeting

You enter the Nova Nine Pub without incident. Since it is only mid-afternoon, the place is not particularly crowded. A pair of men are playing darts along the back wall, and several of the tables are occupied with couples having drinks or enjoying an appetiser. In the back corner, where you were told to meet, a snappily dressed man beckons to you. A man in black and a woman in a long dress accompany him. As you approach, the well-dressed one stands and extends a hand. 'I am Roland Anderson,' he says by way of introduction. 'These are my associates, Mr McCullough and Miss Fernandez. You may or may not know these others, so I will let them introduce themselves to you now...'

As with many campaign introductions, time should be taken first to let the players describe themselves to the others. Some may know each other already. For example, a security guard may have encountered a lurker in the past, perhaps during illicit activities. Allow these to roleplay out for as long as the players wish. Anderson will watch and evaluate, while Fernandez makes eyes at any handsome male characters in the group. McCullough will stand with arms folded, ready to intervene if any fights break out.

Eventually, a waitress will approach and take orders at the table. The Nova Nine serves what you might expect to see in a British pub, with the obligatory page full of spoo entries...be sure to try the spoo, spoo, sausage, and spoo. At this point, Anderson begins the meeting.

Roland Anderson rises again and smiles at all of you. 'Now that you're all familiar with each other,' he says with a smile, 'let me explain why I've called you here. I've been trying to find some people who might help me, and official channels just aren't working. Several weeks ago, a research team on the planet Levana IV Beta broadcast a very brief emergency message and then went off the air. All attempts to contact them since then have failed. We need someone to go find out what happened to them, and fast. I'm willing to pay you all 500 credits each, plus passage to Levana and reasonable daily expenses, if you'll help me out.'

At this point, the players will probably have a few questions. Some of Anderson's potential responses:

'Why us and not someone more official?' 'Good question, and I'll be brutally honest with you—the Levana system is technically off limits to human explorers. It's located in between Llort space and a Drazi outpost, and

if you know anything about those two races, you already know why we try to stay away. EarthForce won't risk an incident with either race by sending a team in, and I'm not stupid enough to ask them and get myself in trouble.'

'What were they doing on Levana?' 'I'm a middleman of sorts—I help other people find what they're looking for, you see. I helped these scientists discover some ruins they sought, in exchange for some money now and the rest when they completed their explorations. Plus a complete disclosure of what they found, naturally. Sadly, I can't collect if they don't come back.'

'How are we supposed to get there?' 'I have a long-range scout craft available for my personal use. I won't be going with you, of course, as I have other duties here but my associates will accompany you, as well as my pilot. The journey should take about three days and will traverse safe jump routes, so you need not fear for your safety. After the conclusion of your mission, be it successful or not, you will be returned here.'

'These people must be doing something important for you to risk all your money and resources like this. What are they looking for?' 'Well, we're not really sure, actually. They just gave me a description of what sort of ruins they were after. I found the information for them, and arranged for their transport to Levana. They were alien ruins, but I don't know what race. Personally, I think those guys are crazy to think they'll find anything useful in a system so close to Llort space, but they're the ones with the money.'

'Can we hear their distress message?' 'Sure, I'll have that available for you during your flight.' (Basically, it's nothing more than a lot of hissing and static with a broken voice gasping 'Help!' This is followed by the barely audible word 'Attack' just before the signal is cut off.)

'If I don't go, what happens?' 'Nothing, except that you miss out on this opportunity. I have other candidates I'll ask next. I was hoping for all of you, though. You're the first team.' (If anyone plays hardball, he's willing to negotiate on the price. However, a deal must be struck during this meeting. If the players walk away, he'll find someone else.)

'What do you mean by 'reasonable' expenses?' 'Well, basically food, shelter, and a few simple supplies. There are plenty of rations on the ship, and the staterooms are quite comfortable. If you use up any personal supplies in the course of your trip, I will replace them but no more than, say, 100 credits in value.' (Games Master judgment applies here. Basically, he will cover anything the players use up during their mission, and could even be persuaded to repair or replace something fairly expensive, so long as it really was used to further the mission. If they lose or

damage anything illegal or rare, they will be out of luck. Also, the amount he is willing to bend on this is entirely dependent upon mission success. If he is happy with player performance, he will be more likely to help them out.)

‘When do we start?’ ‘Immediately. We are ready to depart now, pending the appropriate clearances. I understand you may need to collect some personal goods, or make arrangements to leave for about a week. Shall we say eighteen hundred hours?’ (That is less than three hours away. He will allow more time, but prefers to leave that very evening if possible.)

Anderson will be vague and mysterious with any other questions the players may ask. He refuses to admit to knowing anything more about what the scientists were actually looking for. As far as he knows, he says, they are just researchers, although if pressed he’ll admit they seemed rather excited by this opportunity.

After this briefing, any food the players ordered arrives, and the remainder of the meeting is taken up with idle chit-chat and small talk. Dave will begin the process of buddying up to any tough-guy character, while Alison might make eyes at one (or more) handsome men in the group. At the end of the meal, Anderson picks up the tab in full, even leaving a generous tip (25%). Any player may inspect it, but if they wish to do so surreptitiously, make a Spot check (DC 12). If this fails, Anderson will frown and narrow his eyes, and then give a knowing smile and look away.

Anderson and his associates walk with you to the door. To those of you who agreed to come along, he says, ‘Thank you for accepting my offer. Please meet me in the hangar at Bay Nineteen, and don’t be late. As you know, we must schedule our departure carefully, and the sooner we leave the better. Our friends on Levana might be in danger even as we speak. I’ll see you at the dock.’

If any of the players have decided not to come, he adds, ‘For those of you who declined, the offer still stands. I’m going to find a replacement for you now but if you change your mind, you’re still my first choice. Farewell.’

After this, the players have a period of time to prepare or do whatever they feel is necessary before departure. Some may need to report to a patron or diplomat, while others might wish to pass word to whatever organisation they belong to. Others will take the opportunity to purchase supplies, while some might attempt to learn more information on their new employers. Searches for data will reveal the following:

Roland Anderson: Station records show he is an independent sales consultant on Babylon 5 for business

purposes. He has been here for fifteen days. Inquiries in the criminal sector will show no one knows a thing about him. A background check, if the players have access to this data or succeed in hacking it with a Computer Use check (DC 25), will show he is a sole proprietor with a successful consulting business formed over three years ago. He has no criminal activities on file and pays his taxes on time—in other words, he’s squeaky clean.

Dave McCullough: Station records reveal he has been on the station for two months, with four incidents on file for brawling and two for public drunkenness (one resulted in a night in lockdown). His name is known in Downbelow, but only as a troublemaker with no affiliations. Background records show he spent two months in prison on Mars for almost killing a man in a bar brawl, but Dave will angrily deny this if it is ever brought up publicly.

Alison Fernandez: According to station records, she has been on the station for two years, operating as a diplomatic consultant. (If asked about this, she will shrug and reply that she is open to offers from anyone, be they members of a diplomatic staff or not. Besides, she says, it’ll be nice to get off the station for a bit.) Players who have access to one or more diplomatic contacts will be able to inquire further, and will learn she is a frequent sight at council meetings and running errands for ambassadors. Everyone seems to like her, too. She has no connections whatsoever with criminal elements, although they might have heard her name. A background check reveals that she worked for Ambassador Sullivan during the post-Minbari War discussions, then disappeared from the public eye until reappearing on Babylon 5 two years before. Her records do not mention the bribery scandal (she was exonerated and the incident stricken from her record, but that did not save her career).

Encounter Two: Boarded at the Border

You arrive at Bay Nineteen on schedule, and find Mr Anderson waiting for you in front of the pinnacle Liberty’s Fortune, flanked by Miss Fernandez and Mr McCullough. Anderson gives them a few final instructions quietly and then wishes you luck, waving goodbye from the rear of the boarding platform. Mr McCullough urges you all to board and as soon as you do, he seals up the doors and suggests you be seated. The vessel lifts off within moments, and in just a few minutes, you clear the docking port and sail into the bright yellow shimmer of the jump gate.

Departure from Babylon 5 is handled without incident. The players have one final opportunity to ask questions of Anderson if they wish (pause while reading the box text so they have a chance to do so). They can also look over the vessel more carefully if they wish. Those with experience in starship designs or civilian space flight will recognise the class on an easy Knowledge (spacecraft) or Technical (space travel) check (DC 10).

Civilian Pinnacle

These small vessels are relatively common and inexpensive, but are rarely seen in the hands of individuals due to licensing and registration restrictions. Instead, they are operated by corporations, privately funded research groups, and the like. A pinnacle can support up to 9 individuals, although only one pilot is actually needed. They are not armed and cannot open their own jump points, so they are limited exclusively to established travel routes. In a pinch, they can move double their cargo capacity, if all passenger space is eliminated, although this is inefficient considering their relatively slow speed.

Huge Spacecraft; hp 45; DV 9 (-2 size, +1 agility); DR 6; Spd 20; Acc 1; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +1; Stealth 13; SQ Atmospheric Capable; Cargo 3,000 lb.; 1 Pilot, 8 Passengers; Cost 7,500,000 cr.

The pinnacle, *Liberty's Fortune*, enters the jump gate and sets off through hyperspace towards Levana. Dave McCullough and Alison Fernandez accompany the group, mostly to evaluate their performance, although Dave is also there to ensure they do not try to hijack the ship or do anything else to violate Anderson's trust.

The journey takes a total of eight days, although after the first, they arrive at the transfer point at a Drazzi outpost near the T'lad'tha system. During the intervening time, the players can engage in roleplaying aboard ship, or simply fast-forward to this encounter. Some helpful information is provided here, although of course it is not possible to anticipate every possible activity.

Exploring the Ship

The *Liberty's Fortune* is atmospheric-capable and built to land on any planet with a standard atmosphere. Its interior consists of a bridge with two seats, ten private staterooms (with their own washrooms), a galley, a small cargo hold, two airlocks, and a storage facility for repair equipment and the like. The ship does not have artificial gravity, so zero-G conditions apply at all times. The players must wear magnetic-soled shoes and strap themselves into their seats, and characters with long hair should tie it down or put on appropriate headgear. Staterooms have holos built in for

entertainment, and the mostly empty cargo bay has padded walls for exercise purposes.

The ship's storage compartment includes enough food and water for 240 individual meals (enough to last a team of 8 people 30 full days). This should be plenty for the round trip, even if they players need to supply a few survivors on the way back. In addition to food stores, the ship also carries the following items that could be of use: 2 concussion grenades, 3 knives, 4 W&G Model 10 PPGs (with 12 extra power caps), 1 smoke bomb, 1 throat mike communicator per person, 4 first aid kits, 6 flashlights, 200 feet of rope, 1 electronic toolkit, 1 mechanical toolkit, and 1 engineering toolkit. These are Roland Anderson's property but the players can use them as they wish during the module, and are not required to replace anything they use up (power packs, first aid kits, etc.). If anyone tries to surreptitiously keep any of these items upon their return to Babylon 5, Anderson will not mind, so long as they were successful in the mission.

Interacting with the Non-Player Characters

Dave McCullough loves to play cards, and has a couple of decks designed for use in zero gravity (they carry a static charge and stick to a special plate on a table in the galley). He can also demonstrate zero-G fighting techniques to anyone who is interested. Alison enjoys telling stories about diplomatic events aboard the station, and while she was not present at the time, she can relate the entire tale of Ambassador Kosh's poisoning of 2257. She will also continue to pursue a romance with a player if she can. If two or more players are interested in her, so much the better, and she will play them off against each other with the skill of a true diplomat. Rasheed Isanda (see p127), the ship's pilot, will keep to himself, performing routine maintenance when he's not on the bridge or in his quarters.

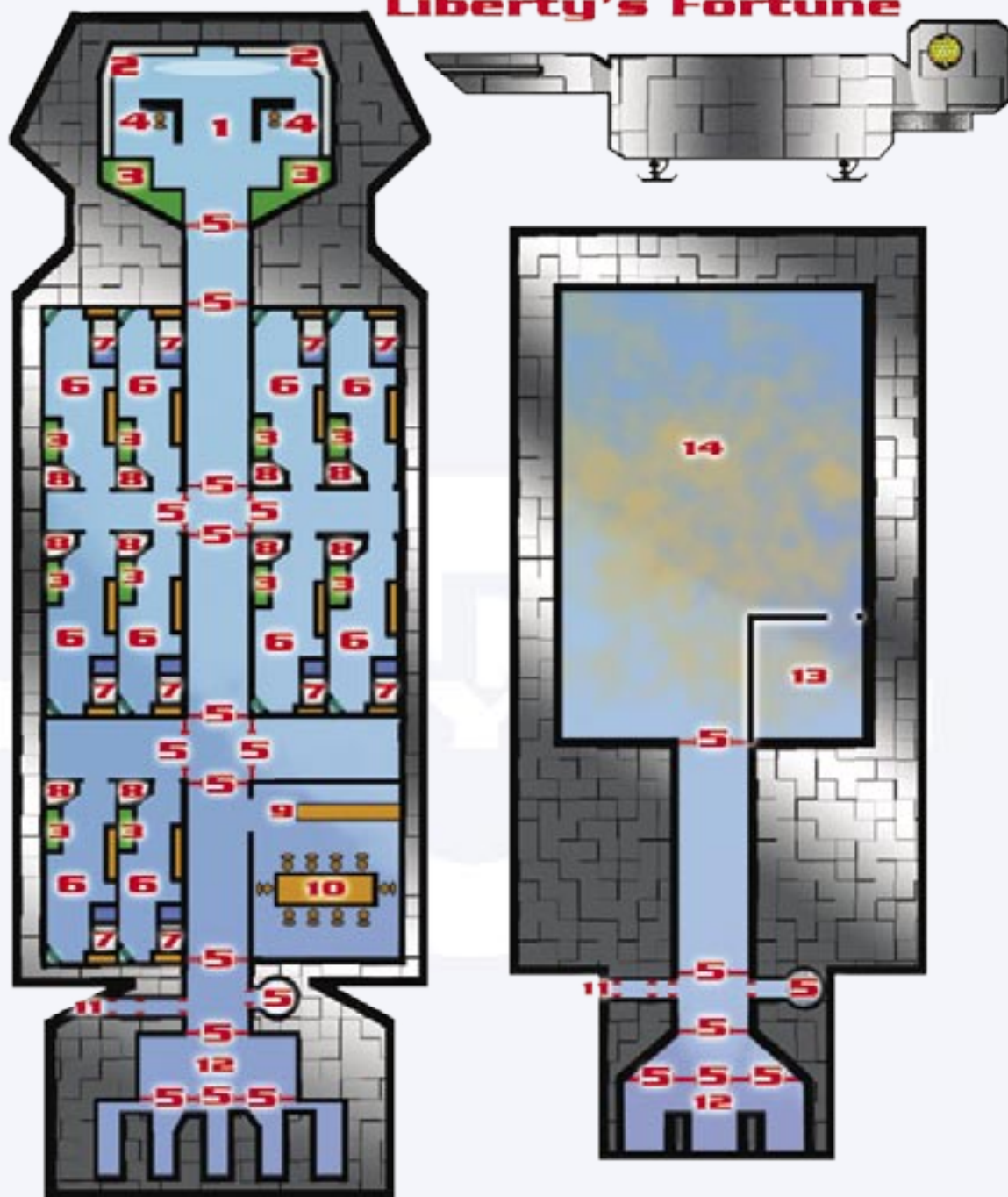
Finding Out More

The ship's computers include a small amount of additional information that could be of use on this mission. Anyone inquiring can discover further information about the Levana system, the Llort, or the Drazzi presence here. The system database also includes plenty of other data—basically anything that is common knowledge as listed in the main rulebook—but little else of any interest.

Drazzi in T'lad'tha

T'lad'tha is technically a Descari system. The Descari are a somewhat xenophobic race who try to keep to themselves as much as possible, so players might find it odd that a Drazzi outpost is located in their territory. Actually, the Drazzi have recently leased mining rights for one of the outer planets, and in the interest of fostering better travel through the region, have opened up the jump gate to all traffic. The only thing they insist upon is the right to spot-check any

Liberty's Fortune



- 1) Bridge
- 2) Consoles
- 3) Storage Locker
- 4) Pilot/ Co-pilot Seat
- 5) Access Hatch
- 6) State Room
- 7) Sleeping Pallet

- 8) Washroom/ Shower
- 9) Galley
- 10) Table
- 11) Airlock
- 12) Engineering
- 13) Storage Bay
- 14) Cargo Hold

ship passing through the area, in an effort to control access to League space by raiders.

In truth, the Drazzi mining operation is actually just a cover for a secret monitoring station used to keep a watchful eye on nearby League races, such as the Brakiri, Vree, and particularly the troublesome Llort. The presence of Babylon 5 close by allows the Drazzi to feed information they learn to their people quickly and unobtrusively. In addition, it allows the occasional Drazzi warship to be seen in the region without arousing too many suspicious questions. The players will meet one of these ships later in the module. The Drazzi Warbird that appeared in the Deathwalker episode was also in the area because of the T'lad'tha outpost.

Near the end of the first day of flight, *Liberty's Fortune* emerges from a jump gate into Descari space, where the pilot broadcasts his identity and destination to the Drazzi transit control station. Three other vessels are parked near the spherical outpost. A player with any basic knowledge of spacecraft designs will recognise one as a Drazzi Hawk class (see p97 of the main rulebook) though he cannot identify the subtype, while the other two are unknown. Rasheed will claim they are Descari patrol ships. Within moments, the Hawk hull approaches and orders *Liberty's Fortune* to stand by to be boarded.

At this point the players will discover that Alison Fernandez is actually in command of the mission, not Dave McCullough. She immediately takes control of the situation and moves to the copilot's seat. Any other players who wish to observe can watch from the doorway behind her, where the view out the forward port is unobstructed.

The approaching Drazzi ship looks like a sleek bird of prey as it passes over the top of the Liberty's Fortune. You catch a glimpse of two huge cannons at the end of each wing before it disappears from view. A few moments later you hear scraping sounds and feel the ship lurch as the vessel attaches to the port airlock. You can hear Alison complaining, 'We're on a scientific mission here! Why are you delaying us like this?' However, whatever response she receives is audible only to her through her headset.

After a moment she stands up and turns to you. 'Everyone, move back to the galley. These guys don't take no for an answer, and I sure hope none of you have any contraband. The Drazzi hate raiders, and they're real sticklers for smuggling in their territory. Just don't resist, whatever you do. The Drazzi can be quick to anger, and are real tenacious fighters.'

As the scraping sounds continue outside, Alison ushers you all back to the galley and insists that you strap in. She seems highly nervous and agitated. As she departs, you realise Dave isn't with you, and in fact, you don't recall seeing him since the Drazzi ship challenged you.

Actually, this encounter is entirely innocent. The Drazzi are simply conducting an orderly search because the *Liberty's Fortune* is heading to Levana, an uncommon destination. Raiders have been somewhat prevalent lately, so they aren't taking any chances. A boarding party of five armoured Drazzi, wearing helmets and combat harnesses, will enter the ship and conduct a cursory search of the cargo bay, galley, storage areas, and staterooms. If any player brought any liquor aboard of any kind, this will be seized, as will any obvious forms of contraband. A fine of 100 credits will be levied for each violation, which Alison will pay but dock from the player's fees at the end of the mission.

The Drazzi speak only in their own language while on board. The captain does manage to spit out a few words of English if anyone attempts to protest the seizure of contraband items. 'Bad,' he growls, holding up the goods. 'I take. You break law. You pay, then you go.' If a player continues to protest, they will simply be ignored. The Drazzi will initiate no violence, although if anyone starts anything, they'll be happy to finish it.

Drazzi Boarding Party (5)

1st Level Drazzi Soldier; hp 10; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; DV 11; +3 melee, +2 ranged; SQ DR 1; Fort +3, Ref +1, Wis -1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8
Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Climb +3, Concentration +2, Intimidate +3, Jump +3, Listen +0, Spot +0; Skill Focus (intimidate), Weapon Focus (shock stick)
Standard Equipment: Padded armour (DR 2), PPG rifle, shock stick

These Drazzi are trained for combat but prefer not to fight unless attacked, primarily to avoid creating some sort of diplomatic incident so close to Babylon 5. When it comes to military duties, they are all business. They will not initiate violence even if threatened, but if someone attacks them, they fight with grim intensity.

After the soldiers depart, the Drazzi ship undocks and returns to its post near the station. The players are then made to wait for clearance. During the delay, the Drazzi ship enters the jump gate and departs. Rasheed thinks it is a Sunhawk, the most common ship of that type, but cannot be certain. Regardless, most Hawk hulls are warships, and this one is far from Drazzi territory. If asked, he will speculate that the ship is probably just here to make sure nothing happens to the outpost, but why it left so suddenly, he has no idea. If the players suggest it, Alison will query the base, and will be informed that the Sunhawk, named *Drek Tral Mazka* (*Tracker in the Stars*), is in pursuit of an unknown pirate vessel that attacked a Drazzi trader. The base will then explain that the Sunhawk searched the *Liberty's Fortune*



just to be certain they were not the pirates in question. No further information about this can be gained.

If anyone asks Dave where he was during the boarding, he'll shrug and say he was in his quarters, ensuring they didn't damage any of his personal property. He won't say anything more on the subject.

After about ten minutes, *Liberty* will receive clearance to depart, and the players can press on towards their destination, unaware that the Drazhi ship is also on its way to Levana. Because the Sunhawk's speed is so high, it will be in the system and hidden well before the players arrive.

Encounter Three: The Camp

Seven days later, the *Liberty's Fortune* pops out of the jump gate in the Levana system. Rasheed quickly scans for any other ships, but detects nothing.

The jump gate is high above Levana V, an immense gas giant larger than Jupiter. There are several moons visible,

including one very large, rocky one almost directly ahead. Alison explains that the jump gate orbits that moon, which houses a small Descari mining outpost. Although no ships are visible, she explains that there are surface guns trained on the *Liberty* right now, in case the ship turns out to be a pirate or Llort looking for plunder. Without any further delay, Rasheed turns the ship and sets course for Levana IV.

This flight takes about an hour, which the players should use to prepare for landing. Levana IV Beta has a breathable atmosphere, but it is thin and the gravity is light. Players will be required to use oxygen masks to avoid oxygen deprivation. Alison will demonstrate their use to anyone who has not been trained on this equipment.

When the *Liberty* reaches its destination, Rasheed brings it in for a gentle landing close to the scientists' camp. There is no sign of the survey vessel they brought along, and no signals of any kind from the base. He suspects it is deserted but takes no chances, landing opposite a small ridge and out of view of anyone in the camp. The landing occurs without a hitch, Alison and Dave pass out oxygen masks, and then the group sets off without any further delay.

Levana IV Beta is a rocky world with a rough desert surface. A few scrubby bushes and thorny plants dot the area, but nothing that provides any significant cover. The scientists' camp is about a mile away, over a high, windswept ridge. The distant sun is a bluish orb on the horizon, casting an odd glow over everything. The temperature is about ten degrees centigrade, cool but not terribly uncomfortable. Alison and Dave pull on heavy jackets as you get going, hiking upwards towards a visible pass between two high hills.

As you walk, you note that the desert around you does indeed harbour its own ecosystem. Several hard-shelled insects scatter out of your path as you move, and here and there you can see mounds built by some kind of unknown creature. A scaly, tailless lizard-like creature watches you from a nearby rock and then darts away as you approach. Nothing flies through the thin air, however, and the landscape is silent, without even a gust of wind to disturb the peace.

The hike to the camp is uneventful, unless one of the players wishes to investigate the flora or fauna more closely. The beetles are hard-shelled and very slow-moving, so they are easy to capture. The mounds contain tiny ant-like creatures that retreat into their underground tunnels if threatened. Capturing one of the lizards will be more difficult but a determined player may try. There is nothing remarkable about any of these life forms, however.

When the players top the rise, read the following:

Below, a rocky valley spreads out before you. In the distance, along the edge of a cluster of boulders, stands the ruins of some kind of structure. The camp, perhaps a hundred meters away, consists of seven prefab tents clustered around a portable dome. To the left, part of the terrain appears to have been scoured away, as if by a tremendous blast of wind. Nothing moves in the valley as far as you can see.

The scoured area was where the scientists' shuttle was located before the Llort stole it and flew it back to their space. At present, the Llort ship is parked elsewhere on the planet, staying hidden from the Drazi Sunhawk they spotted making a patrol pass earlier. Until the Drazi ship departs, they will not risk taking off. This gives the players a window of opportunity to rescue the scientists and get away.

The camp itself is nothing spectacular. There are seven sealed tents, and these prefabricated, triangular dwellings normally come with their own air and power supply, as well as heating for the planet's frosty nights. However, these items have been stripped away, leaving the tents open to

the air. In addition, each has been ransacked, with clothing and the like pulled out and scattered around, but there is no evidence of a struggle anywhere (i.e., no blood or bodies). Very little of value will be found, although some items remain as mentioned in the descriptions below.

Tent #1: This is the tent formerly occupied by Dr. Evan Thompson, the lead scientist. In addition to the usual supplies, and clothing, the players will discover a journal. This details the exploration of the nearby ruins, noting that they were produced by an alien race heretofore unknown. No information is given about the scientists' true employer, because Evan took great pains not to leave any such evidence lying around. Instead, he concentrated strictly on scientific observations. While most of these just talk about exploring dusty corridors and finding broken, rusted equipment, one entry in particular at the end reads as follows:

(Six days ago) Today we finally broke through the collapsed wall and found a huge metal door. It doesn't appear locked, but hundreds of years in this environment have frozen it shut completely. Ivan and Robert are busy cutting through it now.

(Four hours later) Success! We cut through, and found a most amazing thing. Beyond lay a huge cavern, covered over with a domed metal ceiling. We realised in an instant that the flat area of desert just south of the boulders actually covers this roof, as if blown and collected there over the ages. It also only took a few minutes to realise that this was no natural cavern. Was something hidden here, that these people wished to conceal? Or did they discover something and build this dome to cover it during the excavation?

Tent #2: Nothing unusual here, although the occupant was obviously female from the clothing in the storage locker. There is a pot of cold coffee on the desk, suggesting that whatever happened here, the scientists did not get a chance to shut everything down.

Tent #3: This tent has two air mattresses pushed together, suggesting the occupants were a couple. There are enough clothes and supplies for two people, as well. A careful search (against DC 29) will locate a W&G Model 10 PPG in the bottom of one of the lockers, but the power cap is very low, affording no more than four shots before the weapon is out of juice.

Tent #4: Whoever occupied this tent was also interested in the planet's fauna. Several jars and other containers hold dead specimens of insects, reptiles, and similar creatures. Any player who looks at these closely will recognise them as local life forms, although two will be of types not yet seen. One is an eight-legged insect that resembles a branch from one of the scrubby plants that dot the landscape, while another is a snakelike, segmented, hairy worm that looks like a centipede without any legs. A journal and sketchbook on the desk describes each of these creatures in detail, also mentioning (if anyone reads it closely) that the worm secretes an unusual poison. Here is the exact text:

The desert worm seems to add segments to its body as it grows. I have found hatchlings with only a single body joint, as well as a huge specimen almost two meters long with several dozen sections. The worms attract the reptiles with a kind of scent exuded from the hairs along their bodies, but when the lizard takes it in its mouth, the hairs deliver a muscle-relaxing poison. The worm then consumes the reptile at its leisure. The poison will affect humans, so the worms should not be handled or numbness and loss of muscle control will result. Whether the desert worm will attempt to consume a human is unknown, but Dr. Thompson is taking no chances. He's ordered us to avoid contact with the creatures, and keep our tents sealed at all times. Since I don't know if there is any size limit to these things, I figure that's a pretty good policy.

The worms will not survive long in captivity but the players might get the idea to capture a few and extract some of this poison for later use. This could, in fact, come in quite handy against the Llort later on. To do this, the players must first locate a sufficient quantity of worms (about 20 average-sized ones per dose) and then coax them into releasing enough toxin to be useful. If the players work together, scouring the area for enough worms will take about two hours and a group assisted Knowledge (alien life) check (DC 20). Collecting the poison takes another hour, along with a successful Medical check (DC 15). Repeated tries are allowed in all cases. However, no matter how hard the players search, they won't find enough worms to make more than six doses because there just aren't that many worms in the valley, and outside it they are much less common.

Levana Worm Poison

Type: Injury DC 11

Initial Damage: 1d2 Dex

Secondary Damage: 1d3 Dex

Cost: 85 cr.

Back on Babylon 5, a chemist or medically skilled player might attempt to identify this useful poison for later synthesis. Unfortunately, the chemical formula will be too

difficult for the facilities on the station, and reproducing the poison will prove too expensive in any case (triple the cost above for a synthetic version).

Tent #5: This tent contains, among the other standard supplies and clothing, a fairly sophisticated medical kit. The occupant was probably someone with medical training, although no further information can be found. The kit appears to have been barely used, with only a few bandages and gauze pads missing from the box. Again, this is evidence that whatever happened to the scientists occurred too quickly for them to react.

Tent #6: This tent has two beds, but they are separate. Each pile of clothing contains a security uniform indicating that the owners worked for a private security firm of some sort. The logo on the arm patch shows a sword crossed with a rifle. A Knowledge (law) check (DC 15) allows a player to recall that the owners worked for Paladin Security, a fairly well-known security agency. Holsters among the scattered equipment are empty, as are the compartments for spare PPG power packs. There is nothing here to suggest whether or not the guards took their weapons with them, or they were taken later on.

Tent #7: This tent includes some scientific gear and chemist's instruments, as well as empty stands that might once have been occupied by larger equipment. Most of the tubes and glassware have been smashed, so that whatever was contained within is now gone. Two remain, one containing a solution of formaldehyde, the other a very small quantity of hydrochloric acid. A testing apparatus nearby has been crushed, perhaps by a heavy blow or kick. Anyone searching this area carefully will, on a Spot check (DC 15), discover a torn shred of black clothing attached to a shard of glass. If this is compared with all the scattered clothes in the other tents, a process taking perhaps half an hour, no match will be found.

The Central Dome: This provided the common area, food preparation, and main power system for the camp. If the players enter, read out the following.

A hiss and rush of air greets you as the door swings open, indicating that the dome was still pressurised. Inside, you see a few tables, a blank drawing board, a number of cabinets, a refrigeration unit, and a small power station. The metal floor is covered with a thin layer of dirt tracked in by the previous occupants. There are no half-eaten meals or similar evidence of a sudden departure, although a few pieces of silverware can be seen scattered about. Based on the darkness level inside, the power does not seem to be working.

The power supply, which must have been quite large, is missing, so if the door shuts, the room will become too dark to see. Also, the refrigeration unit that held most of the scientists' food has been out of power for days. Most of the contents have by now spoiled, although some carefully wrapped cheeses and vegetables are still edible. The generator is of a fairly common type, and any player who inventoried the *Liberty's* supplies will recall seeing a modular power source among the spare parts. If someone fetches it, the dome will have power, and will make a good base of operations.

Unlike the other tents, the dome is still sealed against the outside, so the atmosphere inside is breathable without masks (assuming the players don't leave the door open for more than about half a minute). The dome has also been ransacked, and anything else of value taken away. The only things left are some silverware amongst the supplies, a few scattered towels, and a large drawing board along the side wall near a large table. Although the board has been wiped clean, anyone looking at it closely can see the impression of what was drawn there last—a sketch of something oblong, with a few unreadable scribbles underneath.

The floor of the dome is also marred by clumps of tracked-in dirt that are scattered throughout the place. If a player takes note of this at once, and studies the debris before anyone else disturbs it, he will discover that the patterns suggest some kind of heavy boots. (No boots were in evidence in any of the tents, not even spares.) Although they won't know it, the Llort made the tracks when they ransacked the place, looking for valuables.

The Ruins

Eventually, the players will get around to investigating the ruins. These are little more than a series of collapsed and rusted metal buildings. In fact, they are a Minbari structure that is over a thousand years old, dating back to before the previous appearance of the ancient aliens that are stirring once again. Before the Minbari knew of that particular threat, they discovered a strange vessel buried here without knowing what it was. They excavated it and built the roof overhead to hide it from anyone searching from above. Eventually, the vessel awoke and broke loose on its own, destroying the facility. As it flew off, the roof crashed back down over the ship's former home, and over the years was gradually covered by blowing dust and dirt until it resembled just another piece of the desert. The Minbari survivors and their equipment were evacuated, and the place was left to rot. Nothing is left now but a few collapsed buildings and hints of a series of underground tunnels that would take years to dig out.

The scientists have not yet been able to identify the alien race that built the ruins, but they do know that what was

buried here was very similar to what was discovered recently on Mars. Just before the Llort arrived, they found their way into the carved-out cave. They were just beginning to search this cavern when the Llort arrived and captured them all.

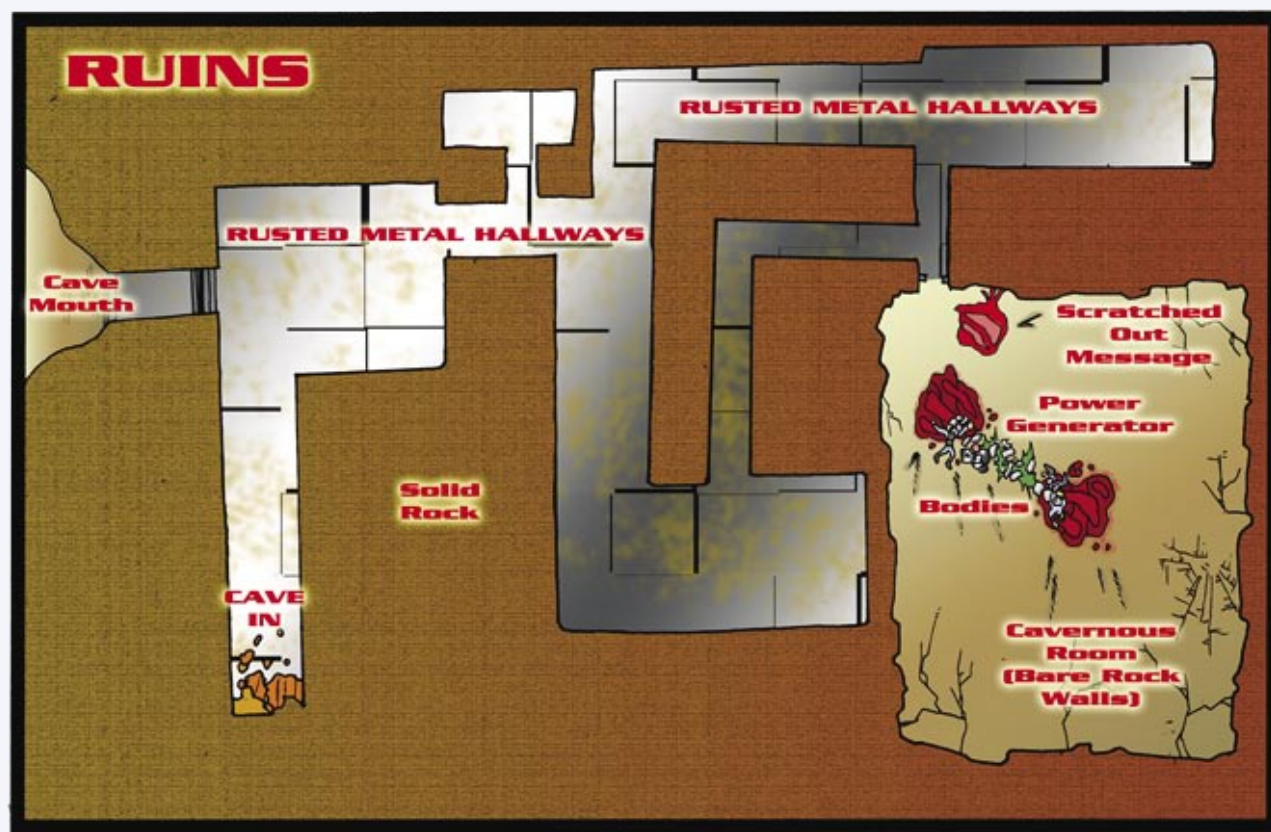
Ahead of you stands the rusted remains of an ancient set of buildings. If not for the fact they were metallic, you might not even recognise them as anything special. A few scraps have been piled off to one side, and a clear pathway extends through the rubble towards a dark cavern dug out of the ground. The piles of earth to the side appear to have been excavated recently, perhaps within the past few weeks.

The shadowy entrance leads to a dust-filled basement and series of corridors. In one direction, what was once a passageway is now filled in with debris and fallen rock. The other way leads to a series of connected chambers, all of which are empty except for dust, footprints, and the occasional crawling insect. So many feet have walked through this area that clear prints are impossible to locate.

At the end of one of the corridors, a pile of rubble has been dug away from one wall. Scraps of mouldy cloth hang in tatters, in a spot obviously recently exposed by the science team. A few notes are pinned alongside, held to the surface by metal tacks. These notes indicate places where, if one uses a magnifying glass, they can spot imprints of some kind of unrecognisable script. A Minbari or character who has studied the Minbari will identify these as Minbari in origin but no one else will have the slightest clue what these are. Even if the symbols are recognised, they are too faint and worn to be read or interpreted by the character. They can, however, be taken back to Babylon 5 later for further examination. See the Aftermath section for more details on this.

After a few minutes of exploration, the players will discover the massive door mentioned in the journal. This has been cut through by some kind of laser or other device, although there is no sign of that particular machine. If the players step through, they discover an immense cavern with a metal ceiling, exactly as the journal described.

Shining your lights about, you easily see that the cavern stretches out for some distance. The floor is no longer made of rusted metal, but rock and dust. Footprints are everywhere, and off to one side, you see a pile of discarded trash. As you look about you, a smell begins to penetrate your oxygen masks—the smell of death!



The pile of trash consists of some tattered clothing, the wreckage of a portable power unit, and two bodies that have been piled underneath like garbage. These are the two security guards who formerly occupied Tent #6. What killed them will be painfully obvious to anyone with the stomach to look at a five-day-old rotting corpse—they were both struck by multiple hits from energy weapons. They wear empty holsters and their oxygen masks were damaged by weapons fire. There are also score marks on the generator, which was apparently ruined in the fight, suggesting one or both of the guards took refuge behind it during the battle.

A careful search of the entrance area to the cavern reveals several pieces of information:

Boot Prints: Amidst the footprints scattered about, several complete boot prints can be seen. These did not come from human feet, for they are much too wide for that. Unless one of the players is very familiar with Llort physiology, he has no chance of identifying who left these prints behind (the computer database on the *Liberty* did not have enough information to make that call). However, anyone who knows anything about Drazi physiology will know the

footprints are not shaped the same as a member of that race. They are much too narrow for Drazi to have created them.

Blood: In addition to the pool of dried blood underneath the guards' bodies, there are also several other blood spatters in other locations. One, to the left of the entranceway, is much lighter than the nearly black specks found elsewhere. Anyone with medical knowledge will realize at once that this blood is not from a human. However, lacking any access to a medical database, he will not be able to figure out whose blood it really is.

Partial Message: Amidst the dirt on the floor near the left-hand wall, someone has traced an angled line in the dirt. It could be a letter V or L, or might be the start of something else he never had a chance to finish.

Other than this, the cavern has little of interest. The players can explore the immense area, about the size of a football field, but will find little except insects and lots of dirt. There are plenty of footprints here, suggesting the area was thoroughly explored, but nothing to suggest a struggle. Some parts of the wall have had the dust brushed off, revealing ribbons of rock that were once clearly cut by something, but it could've been years or centuries ago.

Random Encounter: Alien Ant Lion

Not all the creatures on this world are small and innocuous. A large insect similar to an ant lion digs conical pits amidst rocky areas, then lurks at the bottom under a light dusting of sand, waiting for something to topple inside. Once it does, the creature grabs hold with its pincers and drags it underneath to be devoured. While the beast is probably too small to kill a player outright, it can immobilise a lone character or cause serious damage.

This encounter can be used any time the players are moving around on the planet's surface. Examples include during the initial trip to the camp, during any exploration of the surrounding region, if anyone is out searching for desert worms, or during the long walk to the Llort vessel prior to Encounter Five.

Levana Ant Lion

Small Alien Creature

Character Level: 1 (6 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 10 ft.

DV: 13 (+2 Reflex, +1 size)

Attacks: +4 melee

Damage: 1d2

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 3, Immobilise Prey

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +1

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +8, Jump +2, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Spot +4

Feats: Improved Initiative

Immobilise Prey: Upon a successful attack roll, the ant lion will automatically lock its jaws on to its prey and begin dragging it beneath the surface of the sand. Breaking free of this grip requires a standard action and an opposed Strength check. While immobilised in this way, the victim will automatically suffer 1 point of damage per round. The ant lion will drag its prey under the sand, taking three rounds to do so. Once under the sand, the victim will begin to suffocate, as detailed on p63 of the main rulebook.

These three-foot long insects are sessile, remaining quiescent until a victim falls into the pit above their lair. Then they strike, grabbing hold of whatever it is and dragging it under the sand. The creature is not smart enough to care how large the intruder is - even a large victim can die of asphyxiation, and that will simply grant the ant lion a bigger meal.

You are moving along briskly, picking your way through the rocks, when one of them gives way beneath you. In an instant the ground slides away and you topple into a shallow pit. You are unharmed, but feel foolish for being so clumsy. Then you feel something bite your ankle - hard!

Once the players have encountered this creature once, they will be able to spot their pits from then on and avoid them easily enough.

Encounter Four: The Llort

Needless to say, the Llort are well aware of the players' presence on Levana IV Beta. They saw the *Liberty's Fortune* land, but are unsure of who was on it or what they know. Still, they are certain the new arrivals are not in league with the Drazi Sunhawk now lurking elsewhere in the system. Since the Drazi will attack a Llort ship on sight, the Llort figure they are stuck here for some time.



The Llort

The Llort (pronounced 'lort') are a humanoid race whose people dwell in sprawling underground cities on their homeworld of Vartas. They like to collect things and are often thought of as 'pack rats' but in truth, they do not recognise the concept of ownership. To them, possession exists only from moment to moment. If they see something they want, they simply take it for their own. Amazingly, the Llort rarely fight each other because if someone else desires the item, it is usually given freely. This alien mindset is difficult for outsiders to grasp and, because of it, most other races see the Llort as thieves, or at worst, dangerous lunatics to be avoided. Llort are fairly tall, usually ranging between 6 and 7 feet. Their bodies are covered with a thick series of interlocking armour plates in most areas, with the exception of the joints and face. Their eyes are much farther apart than those of humans, giving them a wider peripheral vision. The Llort are adapted to underground life and make excellent climbers, diggers, and explorers.

Llort Racial Traits

- 5 All Llort are of medium size.
- 5 Llort have a base speed of 30 feet.
- 5 +2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom: Llort are naturally curious, inquisitive creatures who can absorb a great deal of facts but have little self-control.
- 5 Because their bodies are well protected by scaled armour, Llort have a natural Damage Reduction 1.
- 5 Darkvision: The Llort dwell underground and are perfectly capable of seeing in pitch darkness.
- Utilising infrared light waves, Llort can see at night by the heat imaging of their surroundings, to a range of 60 feet. They do not require any amount of residual light for this to function.
- 5 Automatic language: Vartan (plus English for any who travel extensively).
- 5 Favoured Class: Agent. When determining whether a multiclass Llort suffers an XP penalty, their Agent class does not count.

The Llort craft is not a large ship, but a light combat vessel equipped with a long-range travel pod. There are only half a dozen left among the crew (the rest having flown the captured shuttle back to their homeworld), and one of these was injured in the firefight with the now-dead human guards. They also have the captured scientists imprisoned in their cargo bay, hoping to find out what secrets they're keeping. Sadly, the scientists have already revealed all they know, but the Llort don't believe it. Surely no one would bother digging up this old ruin if there wasn't something more interesting to find!

Llort Daggaden Penetrator

The Daggaden is a light combat vessel, a type of ship normally used primarily for local defence due to its extremely short flight range. The Llort have developed a special pod attachment that enables the Daggaden to travel much longer distances, permitting its use as a cargo transport, patrol ship and long-range raiding craft. In the latter role, the pod is usually dropped prior to any attack, then picked up for the return trip home, filled with booty. Daggadens are asymmetrical, the port side containing the pod attachment while the right contains the main armament. The ship is equipped with a single plasma cannon, a light particle beam and a twin particle array for anti-fighter work. When employed as a patrol ship, these vessels normally travel in squadrons of four to ten.

Gargantuan Spacecraft; hp 55; DV 10 (-4 size, +4 agility); DR 5; Spd 30; Acc 2; Dec 2; Han +4; Sensor +1; Stealth 14; SQ Atmospheric Capable, Long-Ranged; Cargo 400 lb. (pod adds 3,500 lb.); 1 pilot, 5 crew.

Weapons:

Medium Plasma Cannon; Boresight; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 30+6d10; Critical 19-20; Range 2
Twin-linked Particle Beam; Boresight; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 2
Particle Beam; Boresight; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 3d10; Critical 20; Range 2

The Llort captain, Torashkavall, sees an opportunity here to capture another prize, and maybe learn the secret of this research effort at the same time. Leaving two of his people behind, he and the three unwounded crewmen set off to pay another visit to the camp. They plan to evaluate the players from hiding, then figure out a way to ambush them and get their hands on another spacecraft. Approximately three hours after the players arrive on the planet, the Llort party reaches the camp and sets up their surveillance.

First of all, Torashkavall is looking for an opportunity to capture one or two prisoners for interrogation, but he won't attack a well-formed group. He is looking for a way to get someone who's alone or away from the others. If anyone is sent back to the ship to get a power pack, or is out in the landscape hunting for desert worms, they will be the most likely target. Take the players aside and read the following:

Torashkavall

Fourth Level Llort Officer

Hit Points: 15

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 16 (+6 Reflex)

Attacks: +5 melee or +7 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (fleet), Rallying Call

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +4

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14

Skills: Bluff +6, Computer Use +2, Concentration +2, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +3, Listen +4, Medical +2, Pilot +9, Spot +4, Technical (electronics) +2.

Feats: Data Access, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Spacecraft Proficiency.

Standard Equipment: Breather mask, knife, W&G Model 10 PPG

Like most of his kind, Torashkavall is as much an adventurer as he is a military officer. His duties normally include the defence of his homeworld from invaders and all-too-frequent raider attacks, but he also occasionally roams around looking for anything he or his people might want. Times have been hard on him of late, and he now finds himself flying a mere light combat vessel, the sort of thing normally suited only to border patrols. With the long-range pod extension attached, however, it can roam some distance from Llort space. He was pleasantly surprised to discover an unarmed science vessel entering the Levana system, and naturally pursued. Subduing the scientists proved to be a simple matter once their two guards were taken care of. In fact, they surrendered willingly, exactly as expected. Now, a second ship has arrived, bringing with it the promise of even more treasures, sure to result in his return to high status back home. He will not let this opportunity slip by!

Llort Bodyguards (3)

First Level Llort Soldier; hp 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; DV 14; +2 melee, +3 ranged; Fort +3, Ref +4, Wis -1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Balance +3, Climb +2, Concentration +2, Intimidate +0, Jump +2, Listen +0, Spot +0; Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (PPG rifle)

Standard Equipment: PPG rifle

One of the bodyguards is injured, with only two hit points remaining.

You are walking near a cluster of boulders when a sound off to the side startles you. Looking that way, you suddenly find yourself confronted by three aliens wearing brown uniforms, thick boots, and determined expressions. They are each holding rifles levelled at you, and one of them barks an order in a squeaky voice. A translator at his side repeats his order in broken English: 'Give up must, or you die!'

The players can attempt to resist or flee, but the three Llort will attack. The fourth Llort, on lookout, is still hidden and will join the fight after two rounds. In all likelihood, any character involved in this battle will be injured or killed because of the ambush situation. Their best bet is to surrender. If they win, however, you can skip the rest of this section and proceed directly to Encounter Five.

The Llort will take their captive to the *Liberty*, which Rasheed keeps sealed up for security. Along the way, the players will probably speak to the Llort occasionally, or else Captain Torashkavall will give them the occasional order. The translation will always be weak and broken, with important words dropped or misaligned. 'All your base are belong to us' for example.

Once the player has been carried or dragged to the ship, the translator will give the following command: 'Enter get us, or else die you do!' If the player doesn't understand or hesitates, Torashkavall thrusts a comm unit in his face and repeats, 'Enter get us! Now!'

At this point, the player can say just about anything in the speaker except an outright betrayal. A smart player will say something like, 'Rasheed, I have some friends here who want you to open the doors now,' or something else that suggests he's a prisoner. If this is done properly, Rasheed will activate the ship's anti-hijack systems, then open the

door. The Llorc will all but drop their captive in their mad rush to seize the bridge, only to be cut down by a defensive stunner system designed to prevent that very occurrence. The Llorc can then be imprisoned in one of the staterooms for later interrogation.

If, on the off chance, the player lets the Llorc on board without giving some kind of alarm, Rasheed will be captured without a chance to resist. However, he does have the ship's controls locked out, so the pirates can't just fly off with it. The players will now have the added challenge of extracting the Llorc from the *Liberty*, as well as figuring out where the scientists are being held. Since cutting their way inside is impossible, about their only option is to convince the Llorc to leave, and that won't happen unless they have something to trade—such as the Llorc vessel hidden several miles away. Fortunately, if the players search carefully, they'll find the raiding party's boot tracks and a clear path back to the alien ship.

Alternate Attack Method

If the Llorc do not have an easy opportunity to seize one or two lone characters, their other option is to set up a diversion and attack from multiple directions. Their goal, remember, is to capture at least one prisoner and distract the others long enough to get aboard the ship and steal it. If they cannot do so, they will retreat back to their own vessel.

The attack Torashkavall plans is a simple one. First, he will wait for the players to enter the dome or the ruins all together, then send one of his people to destroy one of the prefab tents with a grenade attack. He will then flee into the rocks beyond without attempting to fight. In theory, the players will pursue, and Torashkavall and his remaining two crewmen will ambush whoever is bringing up the rear. The diversionary Llorc will run as fast as he can in a long circle, hoping to evade the players or find an appropriate hiding place, while the others capture their prisoner and fight off anyone else who happened to see this take place.

There is a significant chance that the players will capture the one making the diversion, but he has no translator, so talking with him will be impossible. The players will, however, easily recognise him as a Llorc (assuming they performed even the slightest bit of research). Once captured, he will be completely submissive, not making any attempt to resist or fight further.

If the Llorc party captures someone, they will hurry towards the ship and attempt to get on board as mentioned previously. If pursued, a running battle may develop. Torashkavall will not murder his captive, however. He has no problem using them as a shield or to get what he wants, but he's not the vindictive type.

If the Llorc are defeated, they can be imprisoned in one of the staterooms aboard the *Liberty*. They will not resist or fight once captured, but also will not reveal information easily. Someone will need to intimidate them to get them

to reveal where their ship is located. Of course, their tracks can always be followed as well, as noted above.

Encounter Five: Rescue

The final encounter features the players' assault on the Llorc vessel, which is concealed under a camouflage web within a small valley about three miles away. As the players approach, read the following:

As you top a small rise, you immediately spot the glint of metal in the distance. Dave and Alison quickly drop to ground level, urging you to follow suit so as to avoid presenting a silhouette against the sky. You each take turns examining the ship with your field glasses, and you note several things of interest. Some kind of camouflage net has been placed over the vessel, so spotting it from above would be difficult if not impossible. The ship is only about twenty meters long, and looks unusual because it is asymmetrical. Some kind of long pod or tube appears to be attached to one side, but you have no idea what its purpose could be. There are no Llorc visible nearby.

The obvious way to proceed from here is to approach the ship from an angle where the players cannot be seen. A quick survey of the area will show no easy way to do this, but if the group circles around a bit, they will spot some large boulders they could use as concealment during an approach. Using this method, they will easily reach the ship without being spotted and achieve surprise. If they simply walk boldly up to the vessel without any attempt to hide, they will be detected and the two (or more, if others escaped to return here) crewmen inside will be waiting for them.

Getting inside the ship is not as difficult as it might appear. Among the supplies on the *Liberty* are several grenades that can cause an explosion strong enough to blow open the exterior hatch. The players might also attempt to bluff or coerce their way in, perhaps using a tactic similar to what Torashkavall attempted (or intended to attempt) with the *Liberty*. This will fail, however, unless a tough Bluff check (DC 24) can be beaten (direct roleplaying should also be required in order to earn this check, but remember that the Llorc are *extremely* suspicious). The players can also attempt to hack their way through the external lock, but this requires a Technical (electronics) check (DC 23). A final option is to simply blast their way in, but that will take several minutes of firing and give the crew inside plenty of time to prepare.

The defenders will try to hunker down behind computer consoles, firing with the equivalent of three-quarters cover. Prying them loose will be a difficult proposition at best.

The players basically have these options:

Fight to the Death: If the players attack, the Llort defenders will fight to the death. They hold a position where they can see the entire interior of the ship, and will shoot anyone who approaches. If the players have grenades, they might have more luck.

Rescue the Scientists: The players don't actually have to kill the Llort to complete the module. All they have to do is get someone through the side door into the pod, where the scientists are imprisoned. From here, they can untie the prisoners, then lead them back out the way they came, laying down covering fire to prevent a counterattack. Alternately, a smoke grenade or similar device can obscure the rescue.

Diplomatic Solution: The Llort will not surrender willingly, but if the players can communicate with them, they might be able to arrange a solution. All the players want are the scientists back, after all. However, the Llort, being what they are, will want something in return. The players will have to make them a good offer to arrange a transfer, and that offer will necessarily include any captured Llort crew as well. Note that the Llort will be easily fooled by any kind of trick the players might come up with, so let them get creative, and reward them for it.

Aftermath

Depending on the path taken during the final encounter, the players might wind up with the Llort light combat vessel as booty. However, the ship is far too large to fit aboard the *Liberty*, and more than likely, no one in the party will be able to fly it. If they try, the Drazi ship will immediately swoop into view and demand its surrender (and will open fire if they refuse). The little Llort ship will have little chance of defeating a Drazi light cruiser in battle, either. Upon discovering humans operating the ship, the Drazi will simply kick them off, seize the Llort ship, and fly off with it. The Llort ship should not wind up in the hands of the players after the module is over.

Aboard the Llort ship are 6 explosive grenades, 4 Llort PPG rifles, 6 PPG pistols, a variety of miscellaneous mechanical and electronic equipment designed for Llort use, and everything of value that was stolen from the scientists. The players can keep the weapons or sell them, and the sale of the remaining equipment will total 850 credits they can distribute amongst themselves.

If questioned about their findings, the scientists will reveal they learned what they could, but are ready to leave now. If the players made a deal with the Llort, the scientists will be in an even greater hurry to depart. They will not reveal their findings under any circumstances, and in fact will keep to themselves during the return trip. If they say anything, it will be that next time they go on a research mission like this one, they will be sure to bring along more security!

Once back on the station, Roland Anderson will congratulate the players and hand over their fee, plus any

expenses to replace lost personal equipment. He will also usher the scientists away and see to it they are shipped back to Earth on the next shuttle. Any Llort prisoners will be handed over to EarthForce security for prosecution as kidnappers. However, if the players keep an eye on these proceedings, they will find out the Llort were simply returned to their people without any further incident. The incident occurred on a Descari world between two races who should not have been there, and neither side wants any further trouble over this. Besides, Anderson has what he wants, after all...

Experience Point Awards Per Player

Successful rescue of the scientists: 900 points

Returning with at least one sample dose of desert worm poison: 100 points

Tricking the Llort, either upon entry to the *Liberty* or in order to defuse the ending battle: 100 points

Other Possible Post-Module Events

If the players turn in the desert worm poison for analysis, the process will take about a week, whereupon they will be told it is too complex to synthesise. Upon his next return to the station, Roland Anderson will casually mention that any similar discoveries should be turned in to him first, because he might know of potential markets beyond the reach of the Earth Alliance.

If the players return with a sample of the Minbari tapestry from the ruins, and either accidentally or purposely show them to a Minbari diplomat (such as Lennier or Delenn), they will immediately pronounce it as a recognisable script. After finding out where the player got the item, they somewhat anxiously ask if they can examine it more carefully in the hopes of learning more about it. After taking the scrap(s), they then hurry off. However, they do not mention it again, and if asked after a couple of days or so, they reply that it turned out to be nothing. However, the chunks of cloth were regrettably destroyed in the analysis. This could lead to a side scenario later for if the player proves himself worthy of attention to the Minbari, as part of their own interest in the looming threat, they might eventually inform the player what he really found - ancient Minbari excavation of an alien vessel from over a thousand years ago.

If Ivan Torkovski was with the group, he will announce to his friend that he intends to spend his earnings on passage back to Earth. If the player does nothing to stop him or convince him otherwise, that is exactly what he does, and he safely exits the campaign (unless the Games Master brings him back later for a side scenario). The player could, however, convince Ivan to stay if he comes up with a good enough reason. Let the player get creative here. Perhaps if the two pool their resources, they can arrange for better quarters and a higher standard of living, and possibly find a job that gets them out of Downbelow. After all, the Nova Nine is hiring...

Module Two:

Raid on Ranasha

The first team has been assembled, as you can see. A wide range of individuals, with a vast array of skills, just as indicated in the instructions. They performed well, although it seems obvious they still need to learn the meaning of teamwork. That will come, in time. We are in no hurry as of yet...our true need for their abilities lies far in the future.

Now, the second phase of training shall commence. They have been left to their own devices for a time, and we have left them alone. A new opportunity has come up, however. Attempts to retrieve Matthew Hendrix from the hands of the Drazai have so far been unsuccessful, and while the diplomats have lodged their formal protests at

his detainment, we need to get him out before he reveals what he knows to his interrogators. This sounds like a perfect task for our new team. After all, if things go wrong, there will be no way to trace them back to us...

Background

Give the players Handout Two.

Ranasha is a Drazai prison asteroid in the Tirrith system, an area well known as a 'free zone' where no race holds formal sway. It is not particularly well guarded, and in fact is (according to the Drazai) not actually an official detention centre. This is the place where the Drazai send prisoners who create a particularly difficult political situation—ones they are holding without sufficient evidence, for example, but do not wish to release just yet. The place is harsh by Drazai standards so, not surprisingly, few humans survive the experience of a long-term stint on Ranasha.

Module Summary

- ⑤ Anderson hires the players to rescue Matthew Hendrix from a prison asteroid called Ranasha.
- ⑤ The players are involved in a pirate attack on two Brakiri freighters.
- ⑤ The group explores the Tirrith *Freedom* base looking for a way to get to Ranasha.
- ⑤ The players hijack or stow away on a Drazai supply ship on its way to the prison.
- ⑤ The prison is searched for Hendrix's location.
- ⑤ Hendrix is rescued and the players must race back to the *Freedom* ahead of pursuit.

Names and Places of Importance

- ⑤ Matthew Hendrix: Missing associate of Anderson's whom the players must rescue.
- ⑤ Jimmy 'The Rat' Murphy: Owner of a missing soul globe (side scenario).
- ⑤ T'Val: Narn backup assassin intended to make sure G'Kar is killed (side scenario).
- ⑤ *Veil of Tears*: Brigantine class ship the players use for this mission.
- ⑤ *Freedom*: Name of the base where the players are initially sent.
- ⑤ Morris P. Torgrimson: Captain of the raider Brigantine *Veil of Tears*.
- ⑤ T'Shon: Narn 'knowledge broker' on the *Freedom* station.
- ⑤ Targo Rashi: Centauri agent on the *Freedom* station who has been to the prison before.
- ⑤ Frank: Human who operates a black market store on the *Freedom* station.
- ⑤ Kareel: Drazai intelligence operative who attempts to betray the players.
- ⑤ Commandant Nelztor: Commander of the Drazai prison of Ranasha.
- ⑤ Marcan Trillig: Centauri con man imprisoned on Ranasha.
- ⑤ G'Rork, T'Nath, K'Prel, G'Tul, and Na'Shen: Some Narn prisoners on Ranasha.
- ⑤ Hermes: Class of EA ship the Brigantine strongly resembles.
- ⑤ Tirrith: Independent system in a 'free zone' (has a high Raider population).
- ⑤ Tirrith Free State: Raider group nominally in control of Tirrith.
- ⑤ Ranasha: Drazai asteroid prison in the Tirrith system.
- ⑤ Hilak 7: Drazai colony where Matthew Hendrix was apprehended.
- ⑤ T's Bar: Location of T'Shon on the *Freedom* base.

Tirrith

Tirrith is an unusual system located near the edges of Brakiri, Hyach, Narn, Balosian, Abbai, and Drazi space. At one time or another, all six of these races have had claims to all or part of Tirrith. During the Dilgar Invasion, the Dilgar seized control of this resource-rich area and began building a huge military complex, which served as the jumping-off point for attacks into most of the bordering territories, and eventually, the rest of the League.

Following the defeat of the Dilgar, Tirrith was declared a 'free zone' where no one race held dominion. Resources in the area could be claimed by whoever had the wherewithal to construct and protect the facilities needed to mine or process them. Although this might seem to be a prelude to anarchy, the declaration instead produced an uneasy semblance of peace, chiefly because of the Tirrith Free State.

A merger of several strong raider bands created the Tirrith Free State, which is usually referred to as the TFS. The resulting organisation seized control of an abandoned Earth Alliance forward operations base left behind after the Dilgar War ended, renaming the facility the *Freedom*. The base became, for all intents and purposes, the raider version of Babylon 5. It is ring-shaped, with a central docking section that has been built up over the years until it is capable of handling dozens of ships at a time (all docked externally). The TFS also possesses a significant (for raiders) navy and several squadrons of fighters with which to defend itself. Since these 'reformed raiders' actually keep the peace in Tirrith and have brought piracy to a minimum, neighbouring races tolerate their presence without too much complaint.

Tirrith lies approximately a week away from Babylon 5, and the route to it passes through the heart of Brakiri space.

Matthew Hendrix, an IPX researcher and friend of Anderson's, was on the Drazi planet of Hilak 7 with a small group of fellow 'archaeologists,' tracking down a rumour that the Drazi had themselves discovered a special ancient artefact in a series of previously unknown caves. Unfortunately for Hendrix and his friends, the 'archaeological dig' was just a cover to hide an underground weapons testing facility being constructed by the Drazi. Hendrix and his group discovered this by sneaking into the caves through a side tunnel. Instead of retreating as they should have done, they pressed on

into the facility, trying to find out if it really did have anything to do with the alien race IPX is so interested in. It did not, and the team was discovered. Hendrix was captured, but the rest of the group was killed in the firefight that resulted as they tried to flee.

As soon as IPX learned of Matthew's capture, they protested to the Drazi government. In response, he was transferred to Ranasha, and in fact is on his way there right now. Roland Anderson has learned of this, but knows he does not have the resources or the time to intercept the freighter performing the transfer. Instead, he now hopes to rescue Hendrix before he is tortured and spills what he knows, or the purpose of his mission, to the Drazi. Matthew has been trained to resist torture and mind probes, as with any other high-level IPX operative, but no one really knows the capabilities of Drazi interrogators. There have been stories, of course, but no one is certain just how much they can drag out of a prisoner before his death.

In addition to that, Anderson needs to learn what Hendrix discovered on Hilak 7. Roland does not know anything about the results of the mission, and has no clue it was a failure. After all, if the Drazi have an ancient alien ship in their possession (like the one that escaped on Mars), it would be worth any cost to seize it for IPX's use—or destroy it before the Drazi find a way to use its capabilities. Ancient technology would be too dangerous in the hands of the belligerent Drazi. Therefore, at this stage of the game, Hendrix's survival and return for questioning is of paramount importance. Anderson would gladly sacrifice the players, and even his other operatives, to retrieve the information he holds, even if that data turns out to be useless.

Between Modules One and Two

Approximately a month and a half passes between Module One and Two. This gives the players quite a bit of time to recuperate, return to their 'normal' lives, and possibly take on a few side scenarios. These can be new ones created by the Games Master, or part of an interlocking secondary arc. Some suggestions are provided hereafter. In general, the players should be second level by the time the actual module begins. Some possible examples are included here, linked to actual episodes of the television show, as detailed in Chapter Eight of the main rulebook.



Infection

In this episode, found on p183 of the main rulebook, Dr. Vance Hendricks (no relation to Matthew Hendrix) and his assistant Nelson Drake smuggle an alien artefact onto the station in the hopes of selling it to an Earth weapons-development corporation. Eventually, Drake becomes infected with alien nanotech, turning him into a bio-cybernetic killing machine that almost lays waste to the station until Commander Sinclair discovers a solution. The race that created this technology (the Ikarrans) was destroyed by it, and once he explains this to the man-monster, it destroys itself out of shame.

Roland Anderson is not on the station when these events begin, but one of his operatives will learn of it and contact him, explaining the situation. IPX wants a sample of the cyborg's blood or other cells, or failing that, some fragment of its exoskeleton for analysis. Anderson will get word to Dave McCullough, who then contacts whichever player he feels has the resources to get these samples and is willing to do so. He has a buyer, he explains, who will gladly pay 250 credits for a sample of the exoskeleton, or 500 for a living cell sample. Just do not come in contact with it, he insists, explaining what happened to Nelson Drake. 'Should be a simple enough acquisition for someone of your skills,' he says.

Unfortunately, as the player will learn if he investigates this closely, Dr. Franklin was forced to send all samples of the alien technology to the bio-weapons division of EarthForce.

The location where the cyber-killer finally went down can be searched carefully, but no evidence of any exoskeleton will be found. However, eyewitness reports will indicate material did in fact fall off and crumble, so some segments should be around somewhere. Most were collected by cleanup crews and is now on its way to Earth for analysis, but some chunks were recovered by agents of N'Grath, the insectoid underworld crimelord (see p179 of the main rulebook). He can get a piece to the players...but he starts the bidding at 500 credits, and even with some good haggling, the lowest he will go is 350 credits. The players would be fools to buy it for that, since they will only be paid 250 credits but if they do anyway, this might be worth some experience points. Alternatively, they could point out N'Grath to McCullough, who will get his sample and hand the players a paltry 50-credit finder's fee for the information.

Suggested experience for this side scenario: 200.

T'Val

Fifth Level Narn Agent

Hit Points: 16

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 17 (+7 Reflex)

Attacks: +3 melee or +6 ranged

Special Qualities: Security Systems, Sneak Attack +1d6, Low-Light Vision

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +1

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12

Skills: Balance +7, Bluff +3, Climb +2, Computer Use +3, Concentration +3, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +9, Gather Information +7, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Jump +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Search +7, Spot +7.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (knife), Weapon Specialisation (knife).

Standard Equipment: 2 Knives, Narn battle suit (DR 3)

T'Val is an enforcer for the Thenta Makur. He is not actually on the station to carry out G'Kar's murder but rather to see Tu'Pari does the job. Tu'Pari is a flashy sort who prefers to play with his victims instead of just killing them like a good assassin should - he was the one who taunted G'Kar by leaving a black rose on his pillow, when he could simply have cut the ambassador's throat and been done with it. T'Val's mission is to keep an eye on Tu'Pari and kill him should he fail to carry out the contract.

T'Val is highly skilled with a pair of long, deadly daggers in combat. If he has time to prepare for combat, he will coat each blade with a poison that can immobilise a target and set them up for a coup de grace.

Narn M'Kur Poison

Type: Injury DC 15

Initial Damage: Paralysis for one minute

Secondary Damage: Paralysis for 2d6 minutes

Cost: 250 cr.

The Parliament of Dreams

This side scenario takes place during the weeklong religious festival mentioned in the newspaper text. Ambassador G'Kar has an assassin hunting him, and his aide Na'Toth (who just arrived on station and is an unknown element) is under suspicion. She will approach any Narn player and ask for help tracking down the assassin. Actually, there are two assassins: Tu'Pari, who will actually abduct G'Kar, and T'Val, a backup sent without Tu'Pari's knowledge.

T'Val masquerades as a follower of G'Quan, one of several Narn religious groups represented at the festival. If the Narn player asks Na'Toth for advice on where to start looking for an assassin, she will suggest the religious attendees. An investigation of their identities in Narn records will show nothing unusual, but if the player crosschecks with station security (presumably with the aid of other players who have access to such things), they will learn T'Val was not on the original

attendance schedule. In fact, he was a late entry to the festival, giving a story about how he heard about it only at the last minute. He had the proper entry papers at the security gate, however, so they let him pass.

Naturally, this is a big arrow pointing at T'Val. If the players follow him, trying to ascertain his intentions, they observe that he makes sure he attends any event that involves G'Kar. Players who make an easy Knowledge (Narn Religion) check (DC 11) will recognise at once that he does not actually appear to be a true follower of G'Quan. In fact, he does not even carry the Holy Book that all true followers possess. Still, T'Val does nothing that warrants an arrest. The players might, of course, detain him anyway, since he is obviously here under false pretences. Even if they do not, he may eventually notice them following him (keep having the players make Hide checks). In either case, he attempts first to flee, then turns to fight.

After the players subdue T'Val, they can interrogate him at their leisure. If conscious, T'Val demands they release him at once, because they are preventing him from completing his mission. He will not explain that mission, however, unless they successfully make an Intimidate check. If a Narn is doing the interrogating, grant a +2 circumstance bonus, but they receive no benefits from physical torture. The only threat they can make that permits further checks is the promise of incarceration, which will prevent T'Val from completing his mission.

If the players get him to talk, he reveals that he is not really here for G'Kar, but to ensure the real assassin completes his mission. Shortly after this confession (or during the players' failed attempts to get him to talk), Na'Toth calls the Narn player to tell him Tu'Pari has been defeated. 'Oh, no!' T'Val exclaims. 'You must let me go! If Tu'Pari has failed, G'Kar has won his life, but the assassin must not be allowed to leave this station!'

If the players escort him to the hangar deck, they can observe from afar as G'Kar hustles the defeated Tu'Pari onto a shuttle. T'Val wastes little time in following, slipping onto the craft from the opposite entrance. Shortly thereafter, the shuttle departs to leave the players wondering which of the two Narn assassins survived the resulting encounter.

Suggested experience for this side scenario: 200 (100 point bonus if they managed to deal with T'Val without violence).

Encounter One: The Briefing

Either by himself or through his network of contacts, Roland Anderson calls the players together at their favourite gathering place (quite possibly the Nova Nine). He has one of the meeting rooms reserved, and ushers them quickly inside.

Roland Anderson seems a bit more hurried this time as he motions for you all to be seated. 'Thank you all for coming so quickly,' he says as soon as the waitress takes your drink orders and departs. 'I'm afraid time is of the essence. As you know, I represent a variety of different clients, mostly research and development firms. Recently, a highly placed executive in one of these companies was kidnapped while operating as a liaison in Drazi space. The Drazi accused him of spying on one of their military installations, and have shipped him off to the prison colony of Ranasha. Conditions there are harsh, as you probably know, and he likely won't survive. Unfortunately, attempts to arrange his release diplomatically have failed, so I've been forced to turn

to...alternate means, if you understand my meaning. My clients were uncertain, but after I explained how well you worked out last time, they've agreed to make the attempt. If you're willing, that is. I can pay you 2,000 credits each, plus the usual expenses and the like, if you bring their man back alive. What do you say?'

Naturally, the players will have questions. Here are some anticipated queries, along with Mr. Anderson's likely responses.

'Who is this guy and why is he so important?' 'His name is Matthew Hendrix, and before you ask, he has no relation to the scientist involved in that cyborg incident recently. Matthew's last name is spelled with an X, you see. To be honest with you, I'm not entirely sure why he is so important, but my clients insist his loss would be devastating to them—hence the enormous fee they're willing to pay for his recovery. All I know for sure is he's a high-level executive.'

'Who are your clients?' 'I'm not at liberty to reveal that information to you at this time, and wouldn't do so even if I were. After all, the primary advantage of employing your services is that you cannot be traced back to them. I'm sure you understand the need for deniability in the unfortunate event of your capture. Not that people of your skills would allow that to happen, of course.'

'What is this 'Ranasha' and how do we get there?' 'Ranasha is a Drazi prison colony on a remote asteroid in the Tirrith system. Tirrith is a free zone, so they send troublesome foreign prisoners there to avoid diplomatic repercussions. They call Ranasha a 'work camp,' but it's really forced labor. Those stuck on the asteroid are required to mine for Quantum-40 all day and are tortured all night. As for how you get there, my clients have provided a ship for your use that will take you to the *Freedom*, an independent base in Tirrith's free zone. You will have to find your own way to the prison from there, but I'm sure you will have no trouble arranging such a trip with the locals. They are, after all, mercenaries at heart, and will do anything for money.'

'Are you coming along this time?' 'Ha, ha! Sadly, no. I have other responsibilities and other clients. I will leave you in the capable hands of Mr. McCullough, however, and Ms. Fernandez as well, if she wishes to participate.'

'Why can't you just get EarthForce to intervene? Isn't this more a diplomatic matter? Hendrix is an Earth citizen, isn't he?' 'Yes, that's true, but remember,

the Drazi aren't officially holding him within their borders, so all we can do is lodge protests and suggest sanctions. EarthDome told us they are working on the matter, but that could take a long time—and survival on Ranasha is difficult. It's a very cold and dark place, and the other prisoners are mostly aliens. Besides which, I'm certain Matt will be tortured. He could be dying right now for all we know.'

'How long ago did this happen?' 'According to my clients, he was accused last week and sent to Ranasha three days ago. He was on Hilak 7, so the trip there will take about a week. Sadly, there's no way we can intercept him en route, and by the time our ship gets you to Tirrith, he'll have been on Ranasha for four or five days. I just hope he can last that long.'

'What if we say no?' 'Well, as I said, I have others I can ask, but your team met with such success the last time I asked for your help, I simply hoped you would agree. My clients also seemed impressed with your abilities and skills, so much so that I suspect future work would be forthcoming if you are successful again...'

Anderson also answers any other queries the players may have, but hides from them the true nature of Hendrix's mission, his real identity, and the reason he was arrested. The most he will tell them is that Matthew's imprisonment is unjustified and that he is alone (he will not mention the rest of the 'archaeologists' who were killed while attempting to get out of the Drazi base). He will also not tell them why Hendrix was on Hilak 7 in the first place, except to make vague allusions to a 'liaison' position. Under no circumstances will Anderson discuss his mysterious 'clients.'

Once the questions are done, Anderson will ask for the players' answer on his proposal. If they decline, he hangs his head in disappointment and wishes they would reconsider, even going so far as to up the payment to 2,500 credits each. If they still refuse, he wishes them well and departs, leaving McCullough and Fernandez there. The two of them will then attempt to convince the players to change their minds. 'Don't you care?' Alison will ask. 'That poor man is going to be killed in a matter of days unless we do something! I'm going anyway, even if I have to try it myself. Dave, are you with me?' Of course, he agrees and the two stride off towards the door purposefully. 'We're going with or without you,' McCullough intones. 'We're leaving within the hour. If you change your minds, we'll see you at Bay Fifteen, where we'll take a shuttle to the *Veil of Tears*. If not, well, good luck to you.' Then they depart.

Of course, if the players do agree, they are told where to find the shuttle and to be there as quickly as possible. As soon as everyone is there, the mission begins.

Encounter Two: A Bit of Raiding

You arrive at Bay Fifteen as scheduled. Roland Anderson and his two compatriots seem happy to see you. 'I appreciate your helping me in this,' Anderson says, emphasising his words in that odd way of his. 'I was afraid you might change your mind. Do you have any final questions?' (pause to let the players ask anything further) 'Good, good. Then you must be off. Good luck!'

He backs away and waves one final time while Dave McCullough ushers you aboard the shuttle. As soon as you're all aboard, he moves to the front and sits down in the pilot's chair. (Any player who wishes to take this role instead may do so if they wish.) A few moments later, you lift off, pass through the docking ports, and head out into space.

*You do not go far, however. Silhouetted against the stars, you see a large ship waiting for you. This vessel is far larger than the pinnacle you used to go to Levana. It is shaped something like a snub-nosed, shortened coffin with short, sharply angled fins jutting out from the sides. As you approach and enter the waiting hangar, you see it is not a huge ship, but it's still a far cry from the stuffy confines of the *Liberty's Fortune*. This time, it appears, you'll be travelling in style!*

The shuttlecraft launches within a few minutes of the group's arrival. The players are taken to a large ship hanging in the void of space a few thousand kilometres from Babylon 5. This is the *Veil of Tears*, supposedly a civilian trading vessel and the players' ride to Tirrith—a far cry from the tiny craft they used to reach Levana. Anyone who might be versed in Earth Alliance ship designs will recognise the class.

The *Veil of Tears* is an Earth Alliance Hermes-class transport (see sidebar), the kind of ship frequently seen in Earth space to deliver high-priority cargo and passengers to their destinations. It is not a diplomatic vessel of any kind, but is more like a high-speed, high-class taxi or freight service. Hermes-class ships are so common that the presence of one near Babylon 5 does not even raise an eyebrow.

Hermes Transport

Originally, the Hermes was a military vessel intended to bring critical war supplies and personnel to the front lines in combat. Armed with two missile racks, as well as four defensive particle beams, the Hermes is also capable of defending itself from raider vessels and enemy frigates that attempt to slip past the lines to attack this valuable logistical element. The ship not only carries a flight of six Starfuries for its own defence - or for delivery to carriers in need of replacement fighters - it is also capable of opening its own jump point into hyperspace. In fact, it is the smallest Earth Alliance vessel that can accomplish this feat.

Ships of the Hermes class are not known for their battle prowess like the larger Hyperion, but have nevertheless been a vital part of the Alliance since the late 2100s. Since that time they have performed many dangerous and difficult missions, including the evacuation of numerous Earth colonies during the Earth/Minbari war. Despite the fact that they were massively outgunned, many Hermes stood up to the Minbari at the Battle of the Line and were destroyed in huge numbers.

Colossal Spacecraft; hp 350; 8 (-8 size, +6 agility); DR 16; Spd -; Acc 4; Dec 3; Han +2; Sensor +4; Stealth 16; SQ Jump Point; Cargo 50,000 lb.; 4 Officers, 6 Pilots, 4 Sensor Operators, 16 Crewmen

Weapons:

Four Particle Beams; 2 Front, 1 Left, 1 Right; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10; Critical 20; Range 2

Two Missile Racks; Boresight; Guidance 8; Damage 50+3d10; Critical 20; Speed 10; Fuel 5; Reloads 20

Two Mk I Interceptors; 1 Front, 1 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10; Critical 20; Range 1; Rapid Fire

Craft:

6 Starfury Fighters, 4 Shuttles

Once the players arrive and the ship departs, however, it quickly becomes obvious that this is no normal Hermes. In fact, it is a raider ship referred to colloquially as a 'Brigantine.' Outwardly and officially it operates as a free trader, but it is also heavily armed (its weapons are concealed behind removable panels) and engages in commerce raiding whenever the crew feels they can get away with it. Even if the ship's weapons were to be discovered during a boarding inspection, this is not in and of itself a violation of interstellar law, so that makes locating and prosecuting this kind of pirate very difficult. They must either be caught in the act of piracy or found to have stolen goods aboard before any arrests can be made. (Be sure to make this clear to any EarthForce officers who might be part of the team - if they search

the vessel on their own, all they'll find is legitimate cargo.)

Raider Brigantine

Also sometimes known as a 'Brig,' the Brigantine is a raider conversion of captured or purchased Hermes transports. Some of these may even be built directly by more affluent raider bands, although this is rare. No shipyards capable of constructing such a ship have ever been located outside of Earth Alliance territory.

Brigantines are designed to appear exactly like a standard Hermes, both externally and to electronic scans. Their plasma weapons, pulse cannons, and twin particle arrays are concealed behind panels and left deactivated until combat is inevitable. Since raiders have difficulty maintaining and operating jump engines, Brigantine owners almost always strip theirs out (selling the Quantum-40 to help finance the ship) and use the extra room for cargo space. Instead of Starfuries, the Brig carries standard Delta-V fighters.

Colossal Spacecraft; hp 350; 8 (-8 size, +6 agility); DR 16; Spd -; Acc 4; Dec 3; Han +2; Sensor +4; Stealth 16; SQ Jump Point; Cargo 30,000 lb.; 4 Officers, 6 Pilots, 6 Sensor Operators, 24 Crewmen

Weapons:

Four Particle Beams; 2 Front, 1 Left, 1 Right; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10; Critical 20; Range 2

Two Medium Plasma Cannon; Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 30+6d10; Critical 19-20; Range 2; SQ Disguised as missile racks to external scans

Two Medium Pulse Cannon; Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10; Critical 19-20; Range 4; Rapid Fire; SQ Concealed from external scans

Two Twin-linked Particle Beams; Boresight; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 2; SQ Disguised as Interceptors to external scans

Craft:

6 Delta-V Fighters, 4 Shuttles

Of course, the ship's captain, one Morris P. Torgrimson, will never admit to being a part of any illicit operations. Anyone who asks what the weapons are for, why the crew walks around armed all the time, what happened to the jump drive that should be in the aft section of the ship, or why the cargo bay is optimised for high-speed cargo transfers will simply be told these modifications

were made to keep up appearances. After all, the place they're going is first and foremost a Raider stronghold, and those people don't get much in the way of 'ordinary' freight passing through.

Captain Morris P. Torgrimson

Seventh Level Human Officer

Hit Points: 20

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+3 Reflex)

Attacks: +7/+2 melee or +8/+3 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (fleet), Rallying Call

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +7, Computer Use +5, Concentration +3, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +11, Listen +5, Pilot +9, Sense Motive +7, Spot +5, Technical (space travel) +5.

Feats: Data Access, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reload, Point Blank Shot, Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Focus (PPG)

Captain Torgrimson, who is referred to as 'skipper' by his crew but *never* by passengers, is a tall, husky man whose smile reveals many missing teeth. He got to his position by fighting his way to the top, yet he also managed to retain the respect and admiration of his men through skill and charisma. He speaks with a lazily slurred voice with plenty of slang and run-together words, yet makes himself understood well enough.

Despite the fact that he appears poorly educated and unkempt, Torgrimson is an extremely efficient leader and captain who is not afraid to dive right into menial tasks alongside his men. His ship is his life, and is second only to making money and keeping his crew happy. At first he will consider the players little more than cargo to deliver as agreed in his contract with Roland Anderson but if they help him out, he will not forget his debts.

Torgrimson, and the rest of the crew for that matter, know nothing about the players' mission, and even if they learn of it, they will not care. All he knows is he has to take them to Tirrith, wait for them to do what they need to, and then bring them back to Babylon 5. The captain and crew have no intention of asking questions or getting involved further.

The *Veil's* crew is a rough-and-tumble band of humans (no aliens at all) who will keep their distance from the players. If anyone attempts to press them for information, or find out more about them, the response will be disdainful shrugs or hostile demands to mind their own business. Further efforts will result in violence, as the pirates do not like their affairs being looked into all that closely. If the players do become involved in a brawl, the pirates will help each other regardless of the situation, incapacitating the group and locking them in their quarters for the duration of the voyage. They will not, however, use deadly force unless the players initiate its use.

Pirate Crewman (39)

First Level Human Soldier; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 11; +1 melee, +2 ranged; Fort +2, Ref +1, Wis +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Hide +2, Listen +1, Move Silently +2, Spot +1, Technical (varies) +4; Spacecraft Proficiency, Toughness, Weapon Focus (varies)

Standard Equipment: Toolkits (varies), Weapon (knife, PPG or shock stick)

The typical pirate aboard the *Veil* is an experienced raider with a set of skills centred around combat and shipboard operations. The stats shown above should be used as a baseline only—each individual is different, of course. They come from a wide range of backgrounds (feel free to improvise accents, and there are females among the crew as well). One unwritten rule among them is to not ask questions about one another's past or goals, so any attempt by the players to do so will be met with hostility.

The players can take their time exploring the *Veil of Tears* as they wish. The ship is shaped roughly like a police box placed on its side. The engines and cargo bays are located aft, passenger and crew quarters amidships, and control areas forward. The hangar bay is internal, with Cobra-style bays capable of dropping six fighters into combat simultaneously. Currently, six Delta-V fighters are aboard but this is not in and of itself unusual. The Delta-V is a civilian fighter as well as a raider one, and it is not uncommon to see them attached to merchantmen for their own defence.

The trip to Tirrith takes the ship through Gaim and Brakiri space, but the players will not be involved in any special events at any of the border checkpoints. In fact, if they try to get onto the bridge or to a position where

they can monitor these activities, they will be denied access. Dave McCullough and Alison Fernandez, if asked for help in this or similar matters, will advise the players not to press for information too closely. After all, they are only passengers on this ship, not in charge of its operations. Captain Togrimsen will do what he needs to do to carry out the mission.

After a while, though, something interesting will finally happen...

Your journey to Tirrith stretches into its sixth day, and life aboard ship has become boring and dull. The crew doesn't speak to you, and there is no entertainment or other services to keep you interested. Even swapping stories is no longer interesting. You occupy your time playing cards, reading, watching vids, or sleeping... whatever you can think of to while the days away. The only solace you have is that at least you're getting paid for this.

Then, with a startling suddenness, the quiet is shattered by a loud klaxon. The crew jumps into immediate action, taking off towards their duty stations without any interest in you whatsoever. Quickly, you all gather in the galley, where you agreed to meet if anything went wrong during the flight. Alison is already there when you arrive, and Dave arrives a moment later. 'We're not under attack, if that's what you're worried about,' he tells you breathlessly. 'We're the ones doing the attacking!'

In fact, the *Veil* has tracked and located a pair of Brakiri freighters on their way to Comac, the last system on the route to Tirrith. The fighters are on their way to stop one freighter while the *Veil* captures the other. This presents quite a dilemma to any players who are associated with a law enforcement agency (or if they are Brakiri). After all, they are now witnesses on the scene of a pirate attack! Yet, if anyone insists on taking action, Dave will advise against it. 'Remember our mission,' he reminds them. 'We have to look like a raider ship. If we make a raid right before visiting the base, that only cements our disguise. So sit tight and let these guys do their job.'

What the players don't know is one of the freighters is actually an armed Q-ship (a military ship designed to look like a civilian craft, much like the *Brigantine* itself). When it fires on the *Veil*, the ship takes significant damage. The deck rolls under the players' feet, lights flicker, and the steady hum of the engines begins to waver. A voice then announces that damage control teams are needed in the engine room at once. The players may rush to the scene to offer whatever help they

can. If so, read the following box text and the remainder of this encounter. Otherwise, once the fight ends, the captain confines them all to quarters because wandering around the damaged ship will be too dangerous for 'mere passengers.'

You arrive at the engine room following a long run through smoke-filled halls, dodging frantic crewmen on their way to damage control stations. Engineering is a wreck, although fortunately it is not open to space. Sparks are flying and a team is busy putting down a major blaze along the far wall. The instant you appear, one of the officers spots you. His face is covered with black ash. 'You! What are you doing here?' he screams. 'Unless you're an engineer, get out of here! Now!'

If the players insist they are engineers, the officer will reply, 'Well, why didn't you say so? Get over there and help out! Anywhere you can! Hurry!' Any players with ship repair experience, particularly in engineering, can take this opportunity to help out. Give each appropriate player three Technical checks (of any subcategory—there are a lot of things broken in this room!) against DC 11, 14, and 18 respectively, recording only if at least one person succeeds in each specific check. For example, if there are two players rolling, the first rolls 13, 17 and 9, and the second 5, 17 and 15, then there were two successes and one failure. The fact that both beat the DC 14 check does not matter. Do not allow any co-operative checks, as each player will be helping out in a different part of the engine room.

Each success increases the speed at which the ship gets back into the fight, reducing further battle damage and earning more gratitude from the pirates once the attack is over. The ship will take three further hits in combat, minus one for each successful Technical check. Since all this damage would otherwise need to be repaired later, the pirates will appreciate any help. Even if the players fail in all three checks, it is important that they tried, and the crew will take note of this and appreciate it.

Shortly after the repairs are completed, the battle will be over. The *Veil* will dock with the subdued freighter and quickly offload its cargo into the mostly empty aft bays. During that procedure, the fighters return with the news that the other freighter reached the jump gate and escaped. After approximately fifteen minutes, the pirates wrap up the job and head off to the gate themselves, now on the last leg of the journey to Tirrith.

Once the fires are all put out, Morris Togrimson comes to pay a visit to the players. Modify the following box text depending on how well their repair efforts went.

Much to your surprise, the Veil's captain looks as if he's been right in the thick of the repairs. His face and uniform are covered with grease and black ash, and he doesn't seem to mind the fact that he hasn't cleaned up. In fact, he wears the grime like a badge of honour. 'I wanna thank y'all,' he says with a smile. 'Y'had no reason t'help us out like that, 'specially considerin' how the men have been treatin' ya. Don't worry, though, they act that way whenever we got passengers. You haveta, in this business. Anyway, I wanted to letcha know, without yer help we woulda taken a bunch more damage out there today. That Brak was a Q-ship, turns out, and the first shot took us by surprise. We needed a lot more time to disable 'em than we wanted, and things coulda been bad if the fighters didn't come back when we needed 'em. They woulda got in a few more potshots at us if ya hadn't gotten the thrusters workin' again, too. So, ta letcha know how much I 'preciate yer help, I'm invitin' ya ta dinner tonight, at the captain's table in the mess. I think the crew needs ta see not all passengers are worthless scum, y'know?'

If the players accept the captain's gracious offer, they'll enjoy a sumptuous meal at the captain's private table in the galley, and the crew no longer treats them like outsiders. During dinner, Togrimson even takes a moment to toast their efforts, and the rest of the crew gives a hearty cheer.

The meal provides a perfect opportunity for the players to ask further questions about the *Veil* and her mission. The captain explains that they normally operate as an armed trader or convoy escort, but occasionally takes on other missions. They aren't raiders, he says (of course, this is a lie, and any telepath in the group who can read surface thoughts may pick up on this quickly), but must operate like them in order to convince the dockmasters in the Tirrith Free State to let them come aboard. The captured cargo will be sold, in order to keep up appearances, but the money will be returned to the Brakiri later (another lie... actually it will be used to keep the crew entertained while they loiter around the *Freedom* base waiting for the players to return from their mission).

The captain will also explain more about the raider base, allowing the Games Master to reveal all the information shown in the sidebar at the beginning of

Encounter Three. He then invites them to help with any other repairs they might be qualified for, and repeats his appreciation. He owes them a favour, he says, and never forgets his debts. This could lead to further side scenarios later in the campaign...after all, you never know when you might need to call in a raider captain's marker!

Encounter Three: Welcome to the Freedom

Now that the captain has unlocked your cabin viewscreens, you are able to see what's happening outside the ship, so you get a chance to watch when you return to normal space. Ahead of you hangs the slowly rotating ring that is the TFS base named Freedom, and as you draw closer, you can see several other ships floating nearby. These must be Tirrith Free State vessels, you realise, and they are a motley lot indeed. You recognise at least two obviously Drazi hulls, including one that looks like two Sunhawks welded together amidships. There are also two small Brakiri, one large Narn, and one small Centauri ship arrayed about the station, all painted in the gaudy blue and gold colours of the TFS.

After a couple of minutes, a squadron of Delta-V fighters takes up position alongside the Veil of Tears and escorts you in. Your ship approaches a docking port between two other freighters, one of which is obviously Narn. The other is sleek and sports obvious weapons along its hull, but you do not recognise the design. The Veil slows, then you feel a barely noticeable bump as the docking manoeuvre is completed. 'All hands, we have arrived,' a voice announces over the ship's speakers. 'Cargo unloading will commence in one hour. All passengers, please report to the cargo bay for further instructions. Captain out.'

When the players arrive in the bay, Captain Togrimson tells them they're on their own from this point. If he has not already done so, he explains the 'measured anarchy' of the base's citizenry, warning them to 'watch yer backs.' He also lets them know if they get into trouble, he and his crew will not be able to intervene. After all, he cannot in any way appear connected with them or their mission. The only thing he asks is if they leave the station, they let him know. He will only stick around for three days without hearing from the group, and if that time passes, he simply departs, leaving the

players stranded wherever they may be. If they request it specifically, they can get more time, but only if they helped in the engine repair efforts after the battle with the Q-ship.

If the players ever wind up stuck on the station for any reason, they can eventually book passage on a Narn armed freighter that happens to be heading close to Babylon 5. However, this trip takes two weeks to complete, leaves the players stuck in a cargo hold for the entire time, and costs 1,000 credits per person!

If the players ask where they should start looking for information, Torgrison tells them they are on their own. After all, he does not come here that much but if they press him at all, he admits he does know one name he can give them: T'Shon, a Narn who operates a bar

called 'T's.' It is located in the Alpha Section. T'Shon, he explains, is someone who can find out what needs knowing. 'Or at least, that's what I heard, since I never met the fellow meself...'

Getting Around on the Station

The station is a ring with four spokes. In addition to their use as transport tubes between the docking hub and the ring, the spokes divide the outer sections into four zones: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta. Alpha contains almost exclusively entertainment, dining, and shopping establishments, while Beta and Gamma are living quarters and internal services. Delta section is exclusively for those aliens who breathe exotic atmospheres, and is rarely visited by others.

The Freedom Base

During the late stages of the Dilgar War, the Earth Alliance built a number of small forward operations bases to use as logistics and supply centres. Most of these were simply left behind after the war, where they fell into the hands of the League and used during refugee and rescue operations. The one in the Tirrith system, however, suffered a different fate. It was captured by raiders and became the trading hub of the entire system—a place where anyone can conduct business without fear of tariffs, taxation or any race's law enforcement personnel.

There are, however, rules to be followed. The Consortium, an organised crime cartel made up of the leaders of seven different raider bands, runs the Tirrith Free State from the bridge of the *Freedom*. All these leaders have agreed that none of them hold any sort of special dominance, and there shall be no warfare between them within the boundaries of the Tirrith system. They still prey on the other races who maintain mining colonies in the region but those efforts are so well defended attacks occur only rarely. Besides which, the greater riches can always be found farther out, in neighbouring systems and deeper in League space.

Aboard the *Freedom*, there are no law enforcement officials. TFS employs some security teams to keep order but they are notoriously unreliable, and rumours insist they can be bought. Nonetheless, fighting is considered inappropriate, and witnesses will likely as not simply shoot anyone caught committing a crime. There are no courts or appeals, so any individual is completely on his own. Not surprisingly, few people travel alone within the station. While some would think this level of anarchy has no chance of working, the base has operated in this manner for over 20 years, so apparently everyone there seems to have come to an understanding.

The base itself is ring-shaped, in the manner of the EA's much larger Orion-class starbases. Gravity of 0.9 Earth normal persists on the outer ring, thanks to centrifugal force, but inside the hub (where the docking areas are), or the four spokes, gravity is nil or virtually unnoticeable. Atmosphere is oxygen-nitrogen on three-quarters of the station, with one side segment reserved for methane-breathers and other exotics.

Colossal III Spacecraft; hp 750; DV -2 (-12 size, +0 agility); DR 20; Spd -; Acc n/a; Dec n/a; Han n/a; Sensor +4; Stealth 10; Cargo 500,000 lb.; 24 Officers, 40 Sensor Operators, 200 Crewmen

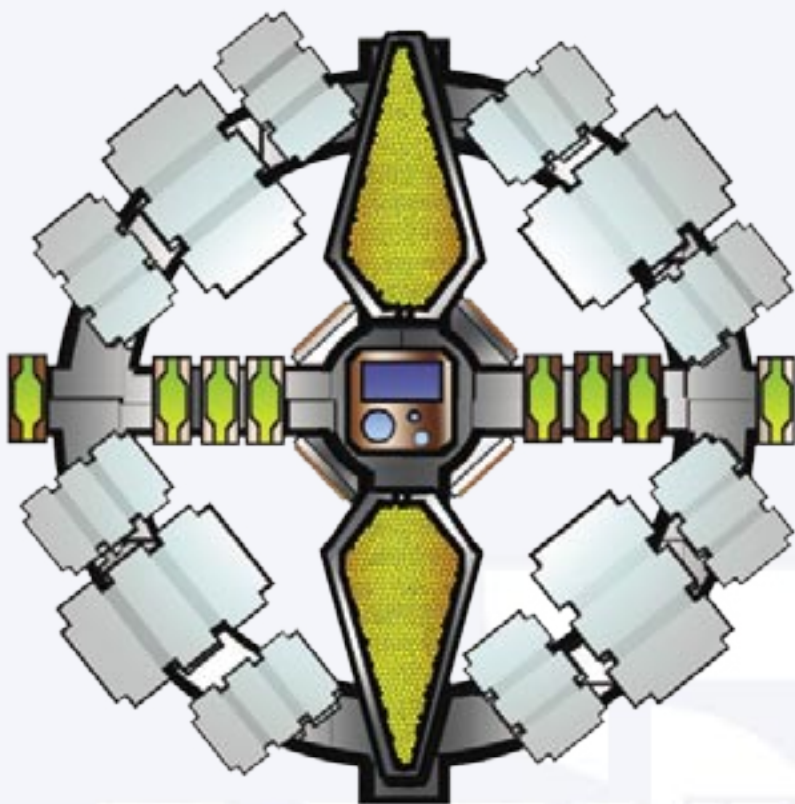
Weapons:

Four Twin-Linked Particle Beams; 1 Front, 1 Left, 1 Right, 1 Rear; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 5+2d10; Critical 20; Range 2

Four Twin-linked Particle Cannons; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+3d10; Critical 20; Range 8

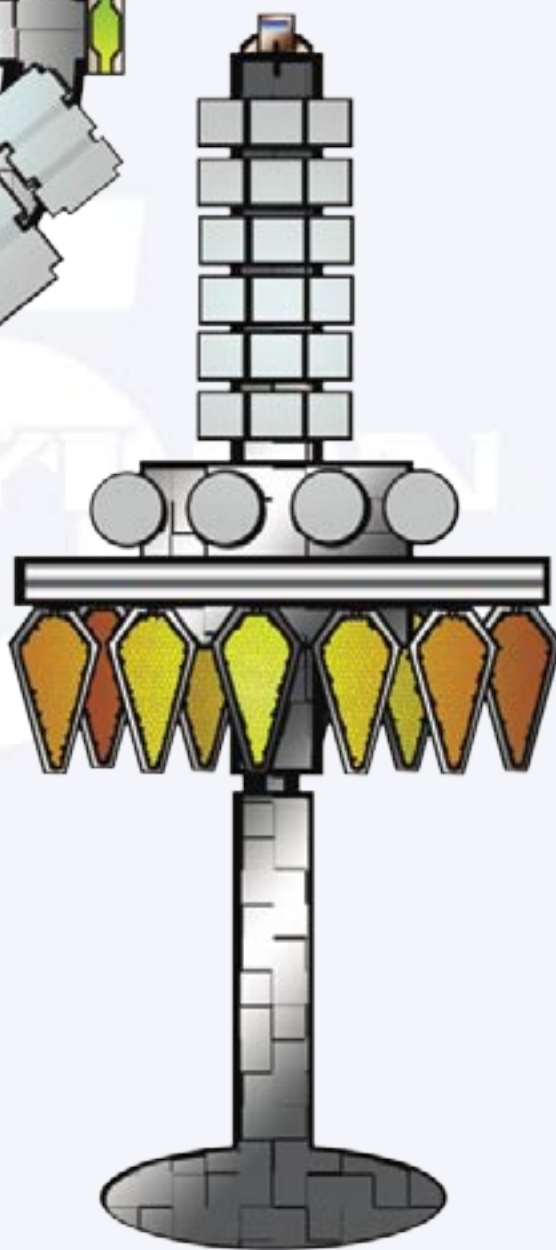
Craft:

24 Delta-Vs and 4 Shuttles evenly divided between 4 bays



To move between the sections, players must pass a guard station that checks for station identification. Only those who live in the Beta or Gamma zones, or are escorted by someone who does, are allowed entry. Alpha Section is the only one that permits complete freedom of travel, so the players will almost certainly spend their entire time on the *Freedom* in the Alpha Zone.

If the players already know the name of T'Shon, they will probably want to head directly for his bar. If they didn't get that information from the captain, they will need to talk to someone else, either in the docking station or Alpha Sector. Security guards are likely candidates, or they could walk up to virtually any station resident. Fortunately, most people know the name of T'Shon and his reputation as someone who 'knows things.' However, they may need to slip a coin or two into someone's pocket to get that name to come out. Alternatively, they might simply walk around looking for a bar, and enter his place entirely at random. In any case, read the following as they enter the station proper, skipping the last paragraph if they don't yet have their final destination in mind.



A pair of security guards, dressed in the blue and gold of the Tirrith Free State, eye you warily as you make your way through the bulkhead and drop to the floor. Two doorways present themselves to you, facing opposite each other in the circular chamber. A sign, written in a dozen languages, identifies one as leading to Alpha Sector, and the other to Beta. The Beta Sector door appears to be accessible only to residents, so you go the other way.

The door opens easily, revealing a wide corridor curving gently away ahead of you. The sight ahead reminds you of one of the worst slums on Earth. Alpha Section is a hodgepodge of businesses, establishments, and eateries that each looks worse than the last. Each one is constructed out of whatever materials the owner was able to scavenge, giving you the appearance of meandering through a junkyard lit by flickering neon signs. Absolutely nothing is clean, leaving you to wonder if there are any custodians here at all. This is what Babylon 5 could be like, you realise, if things went horribly wrong.

As you walk along, the residents either pay you no heed, or watch you cautiously out of the corner of their eye. Nearly every resident you pass is a non-human of some race or other. Just with a casual glance, you recognise Narns, Centauri, Brakiri, Drazi, Vree, and even Llori among the crowd. Some are dressed in the tattered remains of uniforms from their respective nations. Every now and then you encounter a group of five or six people, and you get the feeling they're evaluating you quite closely. No one follows you, though, much to your relief.

Eventually, you come to a weakly flickering letter 'T' hanging from a maze of pipes and tubes that criss-cross the ceiling above. 'This must be the place,' Dave says, and you push your way through the swinging door into a murky, smoke-filled bar. A sound like distant drums assails your ears as you look around at the rickety tables and half-drunk patrons, most of whom are Narns. A Brakiri group occupies one distant corner, and two Pak'ma'ra are seated in a section by themselves. No one pays you any heed whatsoever.

T's Bar

A Narn named T'Shon runs this bar, although he will not be immediately visible upon entry. The players will have to ask the waitress, who is also Narn. She tells the players she'll be right back and goes to fetch him, but only after they order some drinks.

T'Shon is a very dark Narn, so dark that the usual mottling in his skin can only barely be detected. He moves like a limping shadow in the gloomy interior. 'I don't get many humans in here,' he growls as he approaches. 'What do you want? I'm quite busy, you know.'

T'Shon

Fourth Level Narn Officer

Hit Points: 16

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 15 ft.

DV: 11 (+1 Reflex)

Attacks: +5 melee or +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (ground forces), Rallying Call

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10

Skills: Bluff +4, Computer Use +1, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (Tirrith station) +8, Medical +1, Pilot +1, Sense Motive +4, Spot +3, Technical (electronics) +3.

Feats: Iron Will, Toughness, Skill Focus (knowledge – Tirrith station)

Standard Equipment: 275 credits, Hand computer, PPG rifle

T'Shon was once an officer in the Narn ground forces, but was disgraced for showing cowardice in the face of Gaim warriors during the failed invasion of N'chak'fah. He spent many years in the company of raiders before receiving a leg injury that almost crippled him. He considers operating this bar the equivalent of retirement, and enjoys his new life immensely. Most residents of the *Freedom* think of him as someone who knows a lot, and what he doesn't know, he can find out quickly enough.

Some questions the players may ask T'Shon:

'Who are you?' 'My name is T'Shon, and that's all you need to know.' Any Narns in the party will not recognise the name. He just wasn't that important unless, of course, their own background involved participation in the Gaim invasion, in which case they will recall that he was someone who left the service in disgrace, but that's all they can remember.

'Why is your skin so dark?' He sighs. 'A small percentage of Narns are born with increased pigmentation. Nothing to be concerned with, I assure

you.' Narn players will also know that these are called 'alreth,' and are actually quite rare. They are the Narn equivalent of albinos on Earth.

'We need to get to the Ranasha prison colony.' 'I see. I will not ask your reasons, as there can be only one possibility. I require payment in advance for my answer - 100 credits, non-negotiable.' Actually, he will haggle down as low as 75, if the players are skilled with bartering. Let them roleplay it if you wish, or employ a Diplomacy check (DC 15) to haggle the price down as far as they can. After he takes the money, he resumes. 'Very well, I can think of three possible ways to reach the asteroid. One is to fly there yourselves but, of course, you must then contend with Drazzi defences so unless you command a fleet of warships, I wouldn't recommend it. The second is to get arrested by the Drazzi and charged with a crime severe enough to result in your incarceration there. Unless you have a death wish, I do not suggest this option, either. The third is to either stow away upon or commandeer the prison supply shuttle. It comes in weekly, disguised as ordinary traffic but I know where it will be. Tomorrow, at fourteen hundred hours, it will dock to hub port four. It takes the form of a Drazzi Sky Serpent fighter but one that has been optimised for cargo transport.' He can also describe a Sky Serpent quite well but asks 50 credits for this information.

'What can you tell us about Ranasha?' 'It's a harsh place. The asteroid has only the thinnest of atmospheres and is covered with frozen methane, which as you might imagine makes mining difficult. The prisoners are given only the bare minimum they need to survive. If the one you wish to rescue is suspected of holding information, they will torture him until he either dies or can no longer stand long enough to dig through the rock. Then he will simply meet with an accident of some sort and that will be the end of him.'

'Is there anyone here who's been on Ranasha?' 'Not in this bar, no. However, I know of a Centauri who has been there. For an additional 50 credits, I will tell you where he might be found.' After the players present the cash, he continues. 'His name is Targo Rashi, and he is located on the opposite side of Alpha Sector, in the Centauri ghetto. Be wary as you enter that sector—they will not appreciate your presence. I can give you no further advice except to be prepared for anything.'

'Is there anyplace around here I can buy supplies?' 'There are several places, but most of them do not cater to your kind. The only suggestion I have is Frank's General Store, two doors spinward from here. They

have a variety of items you might wish to purchase, though you might find the prices higher than your liking.'

The Obligatory Bar Fight

It's a tradition to have a bar brawl take place in situations like this, so if you wish to challenge your players, here's an excellent opportunity to do so. As the players finish up their business with T'Shon, some of the Narn patrons approach. 'What are you doing talking to this human trash?' their leader mutters. 'They should stay with their own kind, I say. Too much like the fanheads for my tastes.' (If there are any Narns with the group, they have a few words for him as well: 'Not to mention this honorless worm, who prefers the company of pale flesh to that of his own. Bah! I spit on all of you!') He provides members of other races with similar slurs as well.)

The insults continue, with the leader's five friends laughing and egging him on, until the players either leave the bar or show their intent to defend themselves. If one of the players stands up to face him, he takes a swing at once, and the battle is on. T'Shon retreats to a corner, drawing a PPG rifle but does not participate. None of the Narn brawlers use deadly force (such as knives or pistols) unless the players do so first. They fight until unconscious or knocked down to 2 hit points or less, in which case they stumble to the exit and flee.

Narn Brawlers (6)

First Level Narn Soldier; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 11; +3 melee, +2 ranged; SQ Low-Light Vision; Fort +3, Ref +1, Wis -1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Balance +5, Hide +3, Spot +1; Improved Unarmed Strike, Toughness, Weapon Focus (fist)

Standard Equipment: One Narn has a club

Everyone else in the bar simply watches the action. A sharp-eared player who makes a Listen check (DC 13) may hear the Brakiri in the corner making bets on the outcome. Partway through the fight, two security men enter, but do nothing to halt the battle. However, after it concludes, they see to it enough money is collected from the losers to pay for any damages. There are no 'charges' from T'Shon, who simply shrugs and mutters that he loses more good tables this way...

At the conclusion of their meeting with T'Shon, the players can either explore the sector further, go looking for Targo Rashi, visit Frank's General Store, or simply return to the *Veil of Tears* to await the arrival of the Drazi prison supply vessel the next day. If they seek out the Centauri, go to Encounter Four. If they head to Frank's, see the description on the next page. If they go back to the ship, simply let them do whatever preparations they feel they need to make before the next afternoon, then jump to Encounter Five.

If they choose to go exploring, they discover something very quickly - the Alpha Sector becomes more and more racially oriented the further in they go. Near the edge, aliens can be seen mixed together but towards the centre of the station's ring segment each cluster of buildings admits only members of the race that works there. An integrated group is viewed with suspicion and distrust, and anyone trying to enter an establishment of another race is quickly shown the door - sometimes forcefully. The inhabitants will not hesitate to draw weapons either, and security forces will be of no help. In fact, the farther the players go from the entrance to Alpha Sector, the fewer security patrols they see.

Virtually any establishment you can imagine will be found in the Alpha Sector. Bars and restaurants are, of course, the most common but the players will also find supply shops, bordellos, holo-theatres, animal trainers, repair stations, and so on. However, few of these places are operated by humans, who are plainly in the minority on the *Freedom*. The Games Master can feel free to let the players roleplay their explorations to their heart's content, perhaps inventing one or two unusual shops for the players to visit. One possibility is shown on the sidebar provided here.

Exotic Pets

As the players look over the various shops, an elderly human woman notices them and comes out. 'Looking for a pet?' she asks, apparently eager to make a sale. 'Come in, come in! I have several creatures that might strike your fancy!'

Inside the 'Companion Exotica' shop, the woman sells a variety of alien creatures. These include a sand slitherer (a four-legged reptile that can move sideways as easily as it can forward or backwards), a Fireel bird (a canary-sized blue creature with a consistently warbling chirp), two reta (ratlike creatures with a prehensile furry tail), a cage full of hamsters, and several tanks containing colourful, exotic fish from different worlds. There is also a ten-centimetre-long silvery egg inside a glass case.

Anyone with the appropriate skill can identify these creatures on a Knowledge (Alien Life) check (DC 13; DC 17 for the egg). Check for each creature, not once for all of them as a group. Success on each one reveals the following information:

The sand slitherer is a fairly rare creature known in Narn space. Slitherers spend most of their lives sleeping except for rare periods where they become hyperactive. They only eat during the two days or so a month that they are in 'hunting mode,' and if they do not find prey (something the size of a mouse or hamster), they die. It's impossible to tell when this one will enter hyperactivity, although the proprietor says it should be in a couple of weeks. Actually, it happens in three days. Hopefully, the players also buy a hamster to feed the beast with, or it will surely perish. Asking price: 500 credits. In the unlikely event any player has skills or experience in trading rare creatures, they can make an Appraise check (DC 12) to learn this is about five times higher than they could fetch back on Babylon 5 - and the reptile will have to undergo a one-month quarantine before it can be brought onto the station.

Fireel birds are beautiful and their songs soothing, but they have one disadvantage—they never shut up. Their warbling cry ceases only when they eat, and if the birds actually sleep, they obviously chirp while they snore. A player who buys one of these creatures will quickly become irritated by the annoying noise. The only solution is to build a soundproof chamber in their quarters, or get rid of the pesky bird. Asking cost: 250 credits (about 10 times what it's worth). Quarantine period on Babylon 5: One week, after which even the security officers watching it will be irritated beyond measure.

Reta are the Centauri equivalent of rats. They are mostly blind and get around with their excellent senses of smell and hearing. Their furry tails are as long as their bodies and can be used to cling to protrusions while the reta swings dextrously to a new perch. Centauri consider them vermin and would be insulted to pay money for one but a human might consider the long-eared creatures somewhat cute. Sadly, they have a tendency to bite if held, making them difficult to train as pets. Asking price: 150 credits (actual value, virtually worthless). Quarantine period on Babylon 5: Two weeks, and the creature must be neutered to prevent breeding if it should escape.

Hamsters are, of course, hamsters. The ones in the cage here are unfortunately infested with several different kinds of parasites, one of which is similar to the Earth

flea and just as difficult to get rid of. If the players purchase any hamsters and do not decontaminate them immediately, they'll find themselves itching constantly, rendering them unable to sleep. Unless they clean themselves very thoroughly and get rid of the hamsters, they'll suffer the effects of one point of subdual damage for the duration of the module.

The fish are colourful and pretty but nothing special. Each one sells for 25 credits, although this is about 25 times what they are worth. Back on Babylon 5, getting hold of pet fish like these is not particularly difficult (a fact that is common knowledge).

The egg is that of a Thrakallan dragon, a reptile that can grow to almost two metres in length. The egg will not begin to hatch unless warmed consistently for a period of two straight days (otherwise it remains comfortably dormant). Unlike the dragon you might envision, this one has a long, sinuous body and tail, with only a single pair of vestigial legs. When it is on the ground, the dragon moves like a snake but it also possessed a pair of bat-like wings that enable it to fly for short distances. On its homeworld, the creatures use these to carry it into the high tree branches, where they hunt for prey along the ground while remaining safe from surface predators. As pets, however, Thrakallan dragons leave much to be desired. They do not like creatures larger than themselves, and once they've grown to full size, they start looking at their owner as food. On the other hand, the egg (if left unhatched) is something that can actually be sold for a profit. The asking cost is 1,000 credits, but the players can make up to double that if they look around once they get back to Babylon 5. An Appraise check (DC 12) by someone with experience in dealing with rare animals will let the player know these are something that could be profitable. Ambassador Ximeel of the Vree will pay up to 3,000 credits for the egg (and as soon as the players place it in the required one-week quarantine, he will find out about it and come looking to buy it).

The store's proprietor will give out only some of the information stated above. Since her intent is to make the sale, she will not reveal any of the bad features but instead enhance the good. The retas, she says, are playful and friendly, while the sand slitherer is a fascinating hunter, and the Fireel bird will give the player 'a lifetime of beautiful songs.' Oh, and of course, all sales are final.

Frank's General Store

The store has only a crudely painted sign out front, and looks more like a hole in a bulkhead than a shop. You enter, prepared for the worst. As soon as you step inside, the lights activate automatically, revealing row after row of crates and supplies. A few seconds later, the proprietor steps out, hand carefully wrapped around the gun at his side. He is a dark-skinned, enormous man standing just shade under two metres high. The instant he sees you, his face widens in an immense grin. 'Welcome!' he says enthusiastically. 'I'm Frank, and I've got the stuff you're looking for!'

Frank's General Store is basically a black market shop. Virtually anything the players might want to buy can be found here, even items listed as 'rare' in the main rulebook and its supplements. Prices will be 50% higher than listed in the book, but Frank insists that he can do no better. In fact, the price he gives the players is half that listed on the tags, so at least they know he's being truthful with them. Large or expensive items will not be on the floor, but hidden deeper within his establishment. Frank also has a couple of things for sale that aren't available elsewhere (see sidebar).

'Frank' is the only name this man gives, having voluntarily forgotten his own last name. He is a deserter from the Earth/Minbari War who is now too ashamed to return to human society, even under another guise. He makes his home here, helping out human travellers whenever he can, as if that were his own kind of self-imposed penance. He has little patience for raiders, however, seeing them as scum. He is an excellent judge of character, however, and as soon as he sees the players he can tell they aren't pirates. He will sell them whatever goods he can at a decent price, and point them in T'Shon's direction if they have not been there already.

Rare Items

Frank has a couple of rarities available, as shown below. He has only one of each of these for sale, attesting to how difficult they are to find or construct.

Psi Blocker Helmet: This item completely covers the head of the wearer, all the way down to the neck level, and is made of a series of interlocking plates interlaced with radioactive elements that interfere with telepathic readings. The helmet imposes a -3 circumstance penalty to all Telepathy checks made for abilities targeted at the wearer. The wearer himself may not use any telepathic

abilities while wearing the helmet. Cost: 750 credits. Note that these helms are designed for humans, and will not fit on oddly shaped heads (such as, Minbari, Narn, or any Centauri with ostentatious hair). Psi Corps is aware of the existence of these helmets, and its operatives tend to assume anyone wearing one has something to hide.

Pain Nullifiers: These pills enable the wearer to essentially ignore pain for short periods of time. The effects take ten minutes to begin, lasting a full hour thereafter. While protected from pain, the player suffers no ill effects from damage (other than the loss of hit points) and is immune to any pain-induced intimidation or torture. For the purposes of any Constitution based checks, the player gains a +4 circumstance bonus for the duration of the effects, as he can simply ignore protesting muscles and other difficulties. Note, however, that this could have dire effects later on. Wounds may not be noticed and might bleed uncontrollably, while a person exerting himself beyond his limits might cause himself unexpected injuries that will not be noticed until the effects wear off. Pain nullifiers are not cumulative but if taken properly, their effects can be made to overlap. Cost: 25 credits per pill (the bottle has 10 pills).

Note: Although Roland Anderson has told the players he will pay for their 'reasonable expenses' during the mission, that does not include supplies, pets, bribes, and any frivolous expenditures. They are expected to bring their own funds for such things, and whatever they buy in Frank's store will not be reimbursed. Dave McCullough, if present, will be sure to point this out.

Encounter Four: The Centauri Listening Post

This encounter is optional. If the players speak to the Centauri, they can acquire a map and certain pieces of useful information but these are not essential. Some parties may not be able to get through this encounter simply by their nature—a group made up entirely of Narns or League races will probably be ushered off the premises (or, in the case of Narns, fired upon at once).

Hidden amidst the various establishments on the station is a secret Centauri listening post. From here, Centauri agents use their contacts on the *Freedom* to keep an eye on Narn activities in the Tirrith system and nearby. Since Tirrith is on the opposite side of Narn territory from the Republic, this is one of the few locations where they can safely watch the Narns without fear of

discovery. Unless, of course, some nosy humans show up and start poking around!

Targo Rashi is one of the Centauri assigned to the listening post. Approximately a month ago, he was sent along with a small team of operatives to Ranasha but not to effect a rescue. Instead, he went in to perform an assassination. A Centauri traitor, suspected of selling military secrets to the Drazi and other League races, was betrayed by his own contacts and sent to Ranasha. The Centauri, however, wanted to take no chances and sent Targo and four others in to silence him. They succeeded, but only Targo escaped the base with his life.

As a result, Targo Rashi is the only person on the *Freedom* who knows what the inside of Ranasha's prison facility looks like, or where Matthew Hendrix might be held. The players can get along without Rashi, but talking to him will make things easier on them later. The trick is going to be getting to him—and he will not simply fork over his information willingly. The players are going to need to do him a favour first...

Targo Rashi

Sixth Level Centauri Agent

Hit Points: 17

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)

Attacks: +3 melee or +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Security Systems, Skill Mastery (Bluff, Disguise, Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently), Sneak Attack +1d6

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +4

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 14

Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +1, Computer Use +6, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +10, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Move Silently +6, Pilot +4, Search +8, Sense Motive +6, Spot +8

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Resist Scan

Standard Equipment: 158 credits

Targo is a highly trained Centauri intelligence specialist capable of performing a wide variety of missions. He has been assigned to the *Freedom* for the past year and a half, spying on the Narns and nearby League races in the guise of a junk dealer. The sign out in front of his shop suggests that he can repair just about any ship or vehicle if the price is right but those repairs are not done by him, but members of his staff. Targo instead spends most of his time listening in on conversations elsewhere on the station, or going over intelligence data gleaned from other sources outside the TFS.

After fifteen or twenty minutes of fighting your way through the debris that lines the corridors of Alpha Sector, you finally reach the Junkyard. A large sign hangs out front in Centauri script, but even those of you who can't read Centauri have no trouble figuring out you're in the right place. Behind a makeshift fence, you can see stacks of broken vehicles, spacecraft parts, scrap metal, and other junk. Several Centauri, with their hair cut short, can be seen working on various items, and just on the edge of your vision you see sparks flying from a damaged shuttle. How they got something that size down here, you have no idea, but there it is.

As you approach the entrance in the fence, a burly Centauri in greasy overalls steps up to you. 'Where do you think you're going?' he says angrily. 'We don't do business with your kind!'

No matter what the players say, the guard will not allow the players past. Even if they have a Centauri citizen in their group, this does no good - he considers any such individual a traitor to his people for consorting with other races. After a couple of exchanges, several other Centauri begin to gather around in case a fight breaks out. Eventually, if the players do not depart, the central door opens and Targo himself steps out. 'What's going on here?' he demands. 'Get out of here, or I'll have my people open fire!' He indicates a couple of slots in the wall, where the tips of rifles can now be seen pointing at the players.

Allow the players to roleplay their negotiations as best they can, then make a Diplomacy check (DC 12) for the group's spokesman. If they do a poor job of it, Targo simply orders them to leave and walks off. Unless they offer him an immediate bribe, they have lost their chance to get information from him. Targo will accept money, of course, or parts. To the players' surprise, he knows they came in on a Hermes-class ship. In order to give them the information they want, Targo demands a primary thrust regulator from the *Veil of Tears*. That is his price, and he will not negotiate.

Anyone in the group who has any engineering knowledge will realise that a primary thrust regulator stands about a meter high and weighs two hundred kilos. Getting one off the *Veil* will not be easy. Of course, the players could simply ask the captain for it, and if they helped out in the fight, he might hand it over but they cost 10,000 credits, so he wants the right to ask the players for a favour later on. If they agree, he gives it to them - and now the tables are turned, and the players owe *him* a marker!

On the other hand, the players can attempt to steal the regulator (just remember, they have less than a day to pull this off before the Drazi supply ship arrives). Fifteen minutes of surveillance around the engine room will be enough to show that getting an active regulator out of the thruster will be impossible unless they come up with some amazing reason to explain why it has to come out. Their best bet will be to search around the storage areas for a spare and, if they do this, they will find one after about an hour of looking. Then they just need to get it off the ship. Let them get creative here. If they can find something to put it in, such as a crate or something similar, they can probably bluff their way to the cargo hold with some story about moving equipment they need for their mission. Anyone who wants to look inside can be told it's none of their business. Once the crate reaches the hold, offloading it is a simple matter. After all, the crew will still be busy moving their stolen cargo onto the station for sale to fences and other sources. No one will even question the players as they transport the stolen regulator to the Alpha Sector.

Unfortunately, if the players choose to steal the regulator, this will have consequences later. While they are on their mission, Captain Torgrimson will discover the theft and put two and two together. When the players return to the station, they will find him less than pleased. See 'Aftermath' later on.

In any event, delivering the regulator to Targo will get the players the information they need. The Centauri operative will hand over a complete schematic of Ranasha (give them a copy of the map from Encounter Five, along with a brief description of each area). Targo shows them where a human prisoner will be most likely quartered, and will suggest the players also consider taking him from a work detail. He will also answer any other questions about the base, although his answers will lack any specifics. After all, he was only there a short time, just long enough to perform his mission and get out.

Some other questions the players might have:

'What did you need the regulator for?' 'I had to turn someone away last week who needed that part. You'd be surprised how many Hermes-class hulls come through here. Next time, I'll be prepared.' This is a lie, actually. The regulator will be installed on a raider Brigantine that is presently out looking for freighters to capture.

'How did you get onto Ranasha in the first place?' 'I'm afraid I can't reveal that information. Sorry.' No amount of coaxing or bribing will get this information

out of him. Telling the players will be revealing state secrets. If the players have a telepath or other means of dragging the information out, they will also discover his true nature, and that he slipped in on a top secret Centauri stealth fighter known as the Rutarian class.

‘What was a Centauri junk dealer doing going to a Drazai prison colony, anyway?’ ‘None of your business! Bringing me the regulator bought you information on the prison, not my personal affairs!’

‘We’re planning to hijack (or sneak aboard) the prison supply ship. Do you have any advice for us?’ He narrows his eyes, and thinks about it for a moment. ‘It’s not a bad plan, but you’d better have a Drazai on board who’ll talk for you. Otherwise, you’ll never get past the landing protocols.’

‘What else can you tell us?’ ‘Good luck—you’ll need it! Now get out of here. I have work to do, you know.’

Encounter Five: The Supply Ship

Unless the players have been totally discreet, without visiting anyone other than Frank, word of their presence will make its way around the station. The Centauri are not the only ones with listening posts and spies lurking around, so it will not take long for intelligence analysts for other parties to discern their motives. Not only that, but some of the pirates aboard *Veil of Tears* will sell information about them to make a quick buck while on the *Freedom*.

While they are competent as warriors, the Drazai are not particularly adept at information gathering or subterfuge. They have made an attempt to establish a spy ring within the TFS but corruption and graft mar the operation. Worse, the members operate independently, the theory being that will give them greater autonomy, but in truth it simply allows them to do whatever they want on the station without any real checks or balances.

One of these Drazai spies, who goes by the name of Kareel, has become aware of the players’ intention to visit Ranasha. He does not know why or how they intend to go but he wants to thwart their efforts in order to secure his own personal glory, and hopefully a transfer to a ‘real’ assignment. To this end, he has told no one else about the players’ plans, justifying this decision in his head by telling himself that if his superiors knew, they would simply make the arrest themselves and take all the credit—credit that should rightfully be his!

Kareel is rather cunning for a Drazai, and concocts a story about his brother Larza being sentenced to life in prison on Ranasha for murdering a superior officer (a crime for which he claims he is innocent). He then approaches the players at the earliest opportunity:

As you walk through the debris-choked corridors, you are startled to see a lone Drazai waving at you from the shadows. ‘Come here!’ he hisses. ‘I must speak with you at once!’ If the players refuse, he barks ‘Please! This is very important. It has to do with your plans to reach the Ranasha colony!’

Kareel

Fifth Level Drazai Agent

Hit Points: 15

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+4 Reflex)

Attacks: +3 melee or +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Security Systems, Sneak Attack +1d6

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +3

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 13

Skills: Balance +4, Bluff +7, Climb +2, Computer Use +8, Disguise +5, Drive +2, Gather Information +11, Hide +6, Intimidate +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +3, Pilot +2, Sense Motive +6, Spot +4.

Feats: Alertness, Latent Telepath, Toughness.

Standard Equipment: 34 credits, padded armour (DR 2)

Like many Drazai in his situation, Kareel is of the sort judged unfit for assignment to a starship. He believes this assessment was unfair, but since he has trouble defeating any of his own people in personal combat, he was never able to convince them they were mistaken. Instead, he has spent his career in various intelligence-gathering operations, where his unusual mental aptitude serves him well. He wants a command position on a ship more than anything, though, and is constantly on the lookout for ways to ‘prove himself’ to his superiors.

Kareel stands with his back curved forward, so he appears to constantly hunch over. Looking up at others has given him permanent neck problems, so that his head now bobs up and down in an unsettling manner. He speaks rapidly and nervously. He is not a coward and will not flee from battle.

If that gets the attention of the players, Kareel explains that he bought information about the players from the black market, where anything is available for the right price. He then tells his lie about his brother being held on the station. He wants to help the players get there so he can get his brother out safely (but of course, what he really intends is to betray them once they arrive). If the players have a telepath among them, all of this will come out with a simple surface scan. Since it is plain Kareel only intends to initiate the betrayal after they arrive safely, it will be a simple matter to turn the tables on him as soon as the ship lands.

Even if the players do not have a telepath, this whole thing will sound extremely suspicious, especially if they just left Targo after he suggested they find a Drazi to act as a guide. The players might well kill Kareel, which is certainly a viable and safe option, or they might attempt to interrogate him further. If tortured, he will reveal his true nature only on an Intimidation check. Otherwise, he sticks to the lie about his poor brother, who is unjustly imprisoned on Ranasha. The players can also find out Kareel's true identity if they return to T's and pay 100 credits for the information, but none of the other non-player characters they have met so far will be able to identify him. Frank, however, might be willing to keep the spy tied up for a while, in exchange for a similar amount of credits.

The Supply Ship

The players have two ways to use the supply ship as their means of entry to Ranasha. They can either stow away aboard (the best route if they do not have a Drazi around to help them) or attack and subdue the crew. The latter option is the most dangerous, but will also make their eventual escape from the prison colony much easier.

Drazi Sky Serpent

The Sky Serpent is a huge craft, far larger than an EA Starfury, Narn Frazi or any other heavy class. For this reason, it is usually referred to as a 'super-heavy fighter.' They are too big to fit in standard fighter bays, and normally launch from catapults attached to the exterior of larger Drazi ships. Sky Serpents carry armament rivaling that of many races' frigates, including an array of particle beams and as many as eight missiles. They are tough and hard to destroy, but because of their deployment restrictions, they are not terribly common. Within a system, they are frequently used for transport and police missions as well as the usual patrols.

Sky Serpents carry a crew of six, and can fit as many as twelve humanoids in a pinch. If modified for cargo

transport, they sacrifice their missile space for a special pod that juts out the rear. In this role, they often provide supplies to outlying colonies and mining operations in Drazi systems. They have also been known to sow small minefields from this configuration, though this process can take some time to complete.

Huge Spacecraft; hp 60; DV 14 (-2 size, +6 agility); DR 8; Spd 30; Acc 9; Dec 6; Han +2; Sensor +2; Stealth 12; SQ Atmospheric Capable, Afterburners, Ejector Seat, Grapple; Cargo 100 lb.; 1 Pilot, 1 Navigator

Weapons:

Twin-linked Particle Gun; Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 5+4d8; Critical 19-20; Range 1
Particle Blaster; Front; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 25+2d10; Critical 20; Range 3
Missile Rack; Boresight; Guidance 4; Damage 20+2d10; Critical 20; Speed 7; Fuel 2; Reloads 2

After a bit of walking, you arrive at the bay where the Drazi supply vessel is supposed to be. Locating it from its description takes you no time at all, so you observe from a position far enough away to not attract attention to yourselves. You count six Drazi around the ship, five of whom are busy packing boxes and crates into long, cylindrical pallets. The remaining crewman stands near the open cargo door, weapon in hand. It's unclear if he is the officer in charge, or simply a guard posted there to make sure no one tries to break into the vessel.

While you watch, the Drazi finish loading one of the silvery pallets and seal it up. Four of them then lift it up, straining under the weight, and bear it off into the fighter. The remaining Drazi starts sorting through the next pile of boxes, as if determining how best to pack them into the next empty pallet. The Drazi guarding the ship stays at his post while the four enter with their load, disappear from sight for a few moments, and then return with a new pallet that appears to be much lighter. They set it down, slide the top open, and begin the loading process anew.

Getting aboard the ship will be something of a challenge. The six Drazi crewmen never leave the ship unguarded. Even while the rest of them are loading supply pallets into the pod, there is always one Drazi watching the bay and the loading operation. However, if anyone asks, the pallets are each two metres long and a metre deep—plenty large enough for someone to hide within. The Drazi take them off the ship in an empty state,

load their supplies inside from crates delivered by their contacts aboard the station, and carry the filled pallets into the pod. The players have no trouble observing this procedure from elsewhere in the open docking bay, but approaching the Drazzi will be problematic.

One option is, of course, to attack the Drazzi, subdue them, and take the ship for themselves. Dave McCullough will, however, point out that doing so will be sure to attract security. After all, they do not want an incident with the Drazzi, especially here. Even if the players successfully capture the fighter and fly it away, there are still several TFS vessels out there that would very likely come after the players. Dave suggests that if they plan to capture the ship, they do so after launch. That, of course, still leaves the question of how to get on the craft.

Again, let the players get creative. One possible solution is to create a diversion (a mock fight, perhaps, or an alarm of some kind) enabling the group to climb aboard and hide in the cargo pod. Another good way would be to hide themselves within boxes of some sort and bribe someone on the station to haul them in for loading. The Drazzi, so intent on their task of loading the pallets, will not bother to inspect any item of cargo that is well-wrapped. Kareel, if present, might also be able to help with this effort, or aid in distracting the Drazzi so the group can slip onto the fighter. He could, for example, pose as an inspector, making sure they do their jobs properly. The players might come up with other plans, too.

If violence becomes necessary, use the stats in the sidebar. If the players are defeated, their survivors are imprisoned. After a few days, Captain Torgrimson eventually bails them out and returns them to Babylon 5, their mission a failure. If the players beat the Drazzi, they can then seize the fighter and fly off, but must do so quickly. If they wait more than a few minutes, station security will be alerted and the TFS patrol on duty will pursue and attack the Sky Serpent. Fighting the approaching vessel is likely suicide but a skilled pilot can evade pursuit on a Pilot check (DC 15) by diving into the same asteroid field of which Ranasha is a part. If the players fail to escape, they are incarcerated as above. If they escape, however, the mission can continue - but they will not be able to return to the *Freedom* this way. If they approach in the Sky Serpent, they will be seized on docking and the players imprisoned. Only a 1,000-credit bribe (per person) from Captain Torgrimson will get them safely out, and that money will be deducted from the players' payment at the conclusion of the mission.

Drazi Crew (6)

First Level Drazzi Soldier; hp 10; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; DV 11; +3 melee, +2 ranged; SQ DR 1; Fort +3, Ref +1, Wis -1; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Climb +2, Concentration +2; Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (PPG)

Standard Equipment: 25 credits, padded armour (DR 2), W&G Model 10 PPG

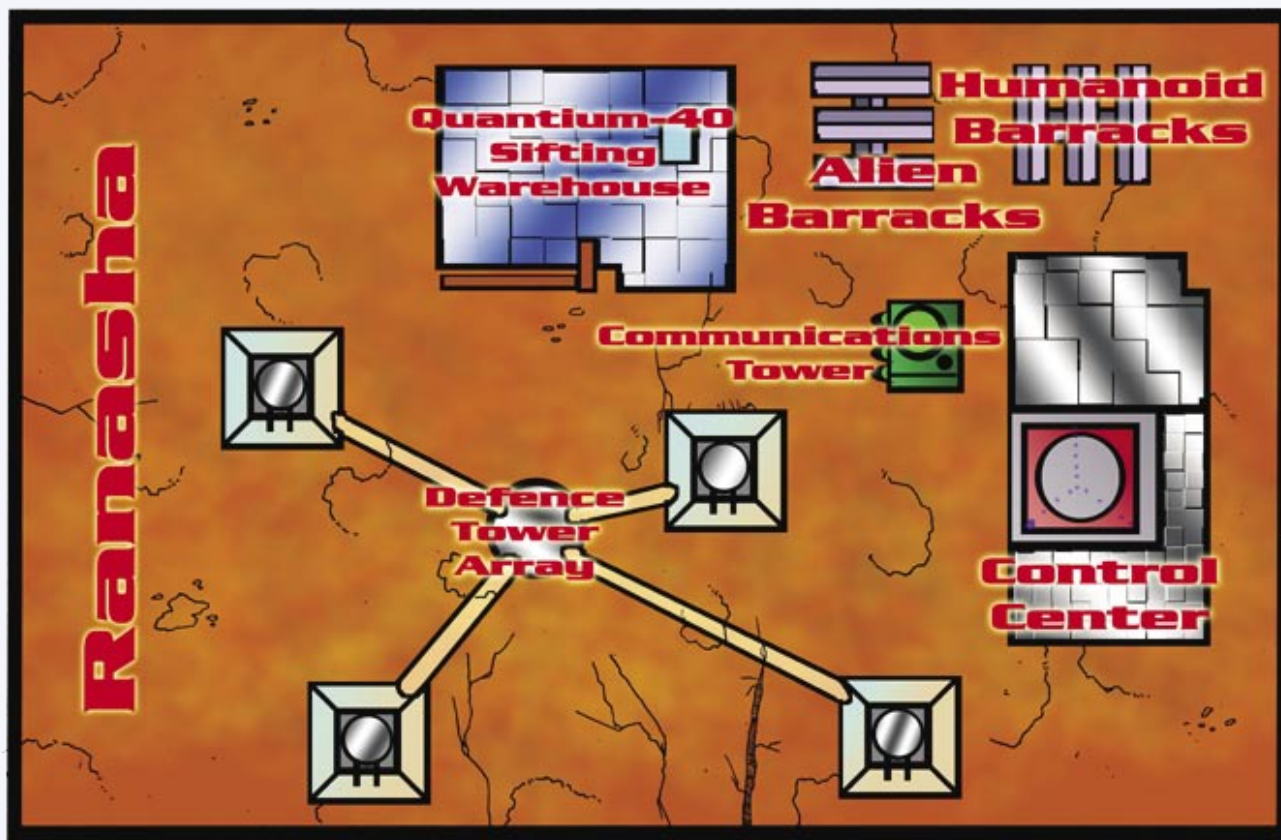
While all Drazzi have some fighting ability, these are some of the weaker examples of the race. They have grown soft from so many safe runs transporting cargo, and the only enemies they face are pacified prisoners who cannot resist torture. When confronted with a determined assault, they will panic and fight poorly. If given a chance, they attempt to flee, either into their ship or into crevices inside. If half their number are defeated and the players put on a forceful showing, the others will meekly surrender.

The Drazzi do not bother to check the cargo pod once the fighter lifts off on its way to Ranasha. The players can simply stay where they are and be offloaded approximately an hour later, or they can come out and ambush the Drazzi once the landing is over. Or, they could come out and attack during the flight. If they do this and Kareel is present, he can give the proper landing codes to arrange for docking on Ranasha. Alternately, a prisoner could be 'coaxed' into doing this by simply succeeding in an Intimidation check. Of course, someone will need to be able to speak Drazzi to get this message across. Only if the players make some colossal blunder, like trying to bluff their way down on their own, will security at the station be alerted. In such a case, some twenty-plus armed Drazzi (same stats as the crew in the sidebar) will surround the ship and demand the surrender of everyone aboard. After that, the players become prisoners themselves!

If the players take over the fighter, they can find a set of six breather masks and an advanced engineering toolkit stashed in the back. The kit is optimised for use repairing and maintaining Drazzi fighters, but could be put to use for other purposes, or sold later on.

Encounter Six: The Prison Colony

Ranasha is a fairly scattered colony consisting of six separate buildings, each with its own power supply, atmosphere, and so on (see map). The asteroid itself has only a very thin trace atmosphere, and the surface temperature is about a hundred degrees below zero. Anyone moving around outside will, needless to say,



need to be in a full-body spacesuit. Gravity is classified as Very Low (see p64 of the main rulebook).

Outside the colony, a series of ramps lead down into craters on the pockmarked asteroid's surface. This is where the mining takes place. Prisoners spend half their day there, dressed in bulky suits and digging their quota of rocks. The Drazi are hunting for Quantum-40 but while that rare element can be found on Ranasha, it appears only in the occasional grain or two. There is probably only enough Q40 on this rock to power a single jump drive, and certainly not enough to justify a mining operation. The Drazi use the mine only as an excuse to justify the prison's existence.

When the players land, the shuttle comes down in the only safe location: a raised, square platform jutting out of the largest building. Once the ship arrives, the entire platform lowers into a bay that slowly pressurises. After about ten minutes, the Drazi crew (if they have not been subdued) move out and begin unloading the pallets. They are hasty about it, just tossing the cargo aside into a loose pile. As soon as they finish, the Drazi hurry off

into the colony. Kareel (if present) explains that they are probably just in a rush to collect their travel pay and hit the bar.

If the fighter crew does not come out of the ship upon landing, a couple of Drazi will eventually show up to investigate (use the same stats as the crew on the sidebar). This allows the players a chance to capture another pair of prisoners, but little else. While the Drazi on the station are somewhat lax, sooner or later they will figure out something strange is going on and attack in force. The players ought to be elsewhere by then. Fortunately, slipping off the ship should be a simple matter, at least as long as the alarm has not been sounded. If that happens, the Drazi become more agitated and shoot any intruders on sight.

Building One: Control Centre

You look out over the hangar bay where the fighter made its landing. There are no other fighters present, though you do notice two shuttles, both in various states of disrepair. No one is working on them at the moment, and you doubt very much they will function as they are. Perhaps that is the reason a fighter was used on this particular cargo run, but if so, no one seems to be in any particular hurry to fix the shuttles. The hangar seems devoid of personnel, making you think perhaps you arrived during some sort of lull, or during the night shift.

This is where the players will likely initially land. This is where the Drazzi who run the place are quartered, and where all the supplies are stored. If the players have spoken to anyone who knows anything about the station, they will know this is not where they should begin their search. Instead, they should proceed to Building Two, either by underground transport tube or by travelling overland in spacesuits, or look for Hendrix among one of the work parties. Non-Drazzi are simply not allowed in Building One, which will make players of other races easy to detect. However, since this is where Matthew Hendrix is located at present, they will eventually have to return to this building and proceed to the third floor down.

Captured Drazzi will give the players a vague description of this building as well as the others, but no real details. If asked where a human might be, they answer Building Two and explain its purpose. Either that, or he will be on a work detail. No Drazzi the players capture will know that Hendrix is actually at present being tortured down on the third floor.

Kareel's Betrayal

If Kareel has not yet been subdued by the players, he will attempt to betray them as soon as they enter this building. He jumps the gun a bit, however, racing for the exit before he really needed to. If they were not actively watching him for betrayal, he will achieve surprise with his mad dash for the door, automatically winning initiative and moving straight for the exit. Unless the players can stop him by the time he moves next round, he will be in the elevator and under cover. The following round, the door closes. Five minutes later, the alarm sounds...

Floor One: This building consists of four levels, all accessible through a central elevator. The top floor is the hangar bay and supply storage area, which is poorly guarded. The Drazzi on this base are generally so complacent that they do not even bother to check the shuttle when it returns—they spend most of their time abusing prisoners and getting drunk.

Floor Two: The second level is where the guard barracks are located, as well as the cafeteria and a couple of common areas. Drazzi located here are just as complacent as anywhere else, and will not look too closely at the players unless they do something really stupid. Of course, if they *do* try anything, they will stir up a hornet's nest as forty-plus Drazzi in the barracks and elsewhere immediately swarm all around them. Escape from such a situation would be well nigh impossible!

Floor Three: The next floor down houses the officers and the station commandant, Nelztor. There are twelve officers on the station, and while they are somewhat better than the common trooper, they are still pathetic as regular Drazzi warriors go. Nelztor, however, is something else again. He is large and powerful, and enjoys flaunting his position and ferocity. He also delights in torturing prisoners, and that is what he is doing at this very moment. He has Matthew Hendrix in his quarters, chained to a wall, where he probes his body with various cutting and burning tools. If the alarm is sounded, Nelztor will instead be in the station command room instead, with the door to his quarters securely locked, requiring electronic tools and a Technical (electronics) check (DC 30) to bypass. Otherwise, the players will have to get the key from Nelztor's body.

Drazzi Officers (12)

Second Level Drazzi Officers; hp 12; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; DV 12; +3 melee, +3 ranged; SQ Branch Specialisation (ground forces), DR 1; Fort +1, Ref +2, Wis +2; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Bluff +1, Computer Use +3, Concentration +2, Spot +3; Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Proficiency (heavy weapons, rifles)

Standard Equipment: Hand communicator, W&G Model 10 PPG

The officers here are somewhat better trained, but are still not particularly skilled. Their main problem is a lack of any sort of true battle tactics. Instead of hanging back, setting up ambushes or fighting from behind cover, they will stupidly rush the party, firing snap shots as they go.

Marcan Trillig

Fifth Level Centauri Agent

Hit Points: 15 (currently 3)

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)

Attacks: +3 melee or +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Security Systems, Skill Mastery (Bluff, Disguise, Escape Artist, Hide, Sense Motive), Sneak Attack +1d6

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +4

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +10, Computer Use +5, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +7, Hide +8, Intimidate +4, Move Silently +5, Pilot +4, Search +6, Sense Motive +8, Spot +6

Feats: Resist Scan, Toughness

This badly beaten Centauri will drop the name of Londo Mollari, claiming to have some kind of secret history with the ambassador. No amount of further questioning will get him to reveal the actual nature of this mysterious connection, and a surface scan only shows that he is not being entirely truthful - which of course is true, since he is obviously withholding information. Considering that Trillig has been beaten severely and repeatedly, it should be obvious that attempting to torture or interrogate him to get more details will be fruitless.

Trillig, of course, has no connection at all with Mollari. He is in fact a con man of the highest order. He was caught trying to fleece the Drazi governor of Fendamar out of his personal fortune in a gambling sting operation, and now languishes here, waiting to die. Upon seeing the players enter the prison, he quickly seizes upon a plan, dropping a name he knew might well catch their interest. If it works, he might get in trouble later, for he is a wanted man in the Republic. However, as far as he is concerned, anything is better than a slow death in this hellhole!

All Trillig really wants is a ride back to the *Freedom*. If he gets there, he will attempt to quietly disappear into the station, which should not be too tough. The players can find him again later only by bribing T'Shon with 100 credits and, if confronted then, he admits he merely conned them to get off Ranasha. If the players force him to go back to Babylon 5, or if he finds no way to get free of their presence without causing a scene, he again attempts to escape and disappear into Downbelow. If they drag him to Mollari's presence, the ambassador denies knowing Trillig at all, has Vir check him out, and then arrests him when his identity as a criminal is revealed. Mollari then thanks the players for bringing Trillig to justice, whereupon he pays them each a 500 credit reward. The actual reward will be twice this but Mollari will be eager to recoup his 'administrative' fees.

Commandant Nelztor

Fifth Level Drazi Officer

Hit Points: 18

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+3 Reflex)

Attacks: +9 melee or +7 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (ground forces), Rallying Call

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +4

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +7, Computer Use +2, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +11, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Improved Unarmed Strike, Latent Telepath, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Proficiency (heavy weapons, rifles)

Standard Equipment: Hand communicator, hand computer, W&G Model 10 PPG

Nelztor is big, even for a Drazi, and looks like he could challenge a Descari in a stand-up fight. He is not as dull-witted as the others, and takes cover when the players show up. He does not surrender, either. If the characters were hoping that his defeat would cause the rest of the base to give up, they will be sadly mistaken. This will only galvanise the defenders to fight more desperately. They still will not use any cohesive fighting tactics, but they will not roll over, either.

If the players enter this floor while the station is on alert, they will have to fight their way to Nelztor. If not, they will have to sneak to his quarters. Each player making the attempt must make a Move Silently check. If they fail, they must make a Dexterity check (DC 10) in order to jump into the nearest storeroom or alcove. Failure here means they are noticed and challenged, possibly resulting in a firefight. Once they do get to his quarters, they find him alone, holding a knife in one hand and a hot iron in the other. He throws these at the party and dives for his gun, and the battle is on!

Floor Four: The final level contains the building's power supply and other machinery, but as noted previously, these affect only this individual facility. If the players manage to destroy or damage some part of it, this will only alert the Drazi to their presence. Anyone making a Technical (engineering) check (DC 10) can tell there's no magical spot where a single explosion will destroy the whole building. Still, blowing up the basement will provide a nice distraction if the players time the blast to coincide with their departure. Hopefully, they thought to bring some explosives along, though, because the Drazi do not have any lying around...

Building Two: Humanoid Barracks

The airlock door slides open, and to your amazement, no guards are present to challenge you. Ahead, you see a hallway lined with prison cells. To either side, additional hallways extend out, leading to more cells. As you remove your helmets, you can hear scattered moans and complaints from the prisoners deeper within. Their cries echo around you in a variety of languages, and after you listen for a moment, you realise none of them English.

This short building has only a single floor, which is made up of row upon row of prison cells. Most of the prisoners are Centauri or Narn, with a few scattered Brakiri, Abbai, and even a couple of Drazi. Over half the cells are empty, primarily because many of the inmates are presently down in the mines digging their share of rocks.

There are no guards at all in the building, because no spacesuits are stored inside, making a prison break impossible. When a mining shift ends, guards escort the returning group inside through a large airlock. Under cover of guns, the two sides simply exchange suits and

the new party heads off to make their quota for the day. Anyone who tries to rush the guards, or do anything else foolish, is shot. Attacking the guards outside is equally foolhardy, because the Drazi have hand controls that can blow explosive bolts on the prisoners' helmets, causing instant death. If questioned, the prisoners will not hesitate to reveal this important bit of information.

When the players enter, a quick search will show that Matthew Hendrix is not here. After all, even if they never bothered to get a good description or picture of the man, it will be obvious no humans are present. Some of the prisoners will beg for help, offering information in exchange for rescue, while others are simply too weary or disillusioned to care. Not that it matters—the players will not be able to rescue them all. Eventually, after asking a few of them where Hendrix is, a battered-looking Centauri will step up to the bars. 'I saw him taken away after the last shift,' he explains with a sigh. 'They go to the central building for the torture, where Commandant Nelztor has his fun with you. I, too, have been his victim all too frequently. If you do not care to rescue me, at least do me one favour in my final days. Take word to Ambassador Mollari on Babylon 5. Tell him I never betrayed him, no matter what they did to me.'

Building Three: Alien Barracks

You exit the airlock and can see a hallway filled with prison cells, each one not only barred but covered with an airtight seal. The indicator on your suit shows that the air outside is not fit for breathing, so you leave it on. The denizens of these cells appear to be aliens of a type that do not breathe normal air; and in that retrospect this area reminds you of the Alien Sector on Babylon 5.

The Drazi also have some alien prisoners who require special environments. There are not nearly as many of these people, however, and their life spans in the colony are even shorter. This building is laid out much like Building Two, except that the cells are completely enclosed and include custom atmospheres. Players might recognise some of the races here but none of the prisoners speak English, and will not have any useful information in any case.

Building Four: Communications Tower

From the spire that juts out of the top of this building, along with the dishes and antennas that dot its surface, you feel this tower can have only one purpose. You enter the airlock and wait for the air to cycle, and when it does, you see that you are correct. The inside contains a variety of transmitting and receiving equipment, but before you get a chance to look at it too closely, two guards approach you with weapons out. They mutter something in Drazi that sounds like a challenge, then wait for your response.

This tall spire houses the Drazi communications antenna array. Unless something is done to neutralise it, the Drazi will call for help from nearby naval forces as soon as the alarm is sounded. The players can avoid this eventuality by either not doing something to raise the alarm, or destroying the tower (with explosives applied externally, or by blasting it with the Sky Serpent's guns) before a message goes out. Note that the Sky Serpent can fire at the tower from its position on the landing pad, so this is an option if the players wish to fire a parting shot upon their departure.

If a call for help goes out, the nearest Drazi ship (a Sunhawk) will reach the area in approximately one hour. The players will have that long to complete their mission and escape. Otherwise, the Sunhawk will attack any ship trying to launch. Make sure any player with any communications gear detects the distress signal, so they know the clock is ticking. This will add a further dimension of danger to the scenario as the players must now make haste.

Another option is to sneak into the communications tower and deactivate its systems from within. There is only a single airlock, however, so this could be dangerous. Two Drazi guards will challenge anyone attempting to enter, and the instant they realise the people coming in are not Drazi, one will attack while the other runs to sound the alarm. Use the stats for the Drazi shown on p50. The first will attempt to block the players as best he can while the other does nothing but try to get to the control room. If the players do not bring him down within two rounds, he hits a button that alerts the entire base to the attack. If a further two rounds pass, he sends the distress signal to the nearby Sunhawk, and the countdown begins.

If the players subdue both the guards in time, they can easily disable the communications array from within by destroying a few consoles. Any communications or

engineering expert can try to rig the place so it appears to be functional, but actually isn't. This requires a Technical (electronics) check (DC 16) made in secret. If the player fails the check by up to 3 points (i.e., he succeeds in a DC 13, 14, or 15 check but not the required 16), he knows he could not accomplish the task and should simply destroy the machinery. If he fails by over 3 points, he thinks he succeeded, but actually did not.

Building Five: Quantum-40 Sifting Warehouse

Unlike the other buildings in the complex, this one is completely open. Huge machines collect rocks from nearby bins and place them on conveyors to be sorted. Through the thin atmosphere of the asteroid, you can hear the deep rumblings of activity from the machinery, and every time a new rock is dropped or cracked open, your suits seem to vibrate ever so slightly. As you look around, you see no one in the area, making you wonder if the entire operation is totally automated.

In this area, automated devices gradually grind up the rocks collected by prisoners. No non-Drazi are allowed in this building, which is depressurised and open to space. The place is unguarded, but every now and then a Drazi technician moves through the machines, checking for malfunctions and observing the status of Q-40 mining efforts. If a rich vein were to be struck, for example, he could call attention to it and focus the miners there.

This open facility is located between Building One and Building Two, so if the players proceed directly to their presumed destination upon departing the hangar, they will pass through or close to the warehouse. As luck would have it, a technician is meandering about at just that moment, looking at the indicators on his devices. He will be noticed on a Spot check (DC 12). Unless the players wave at him or otherwise do something friendly, he will return to his chambers and call headquarters to ask why an armed party was travelling between buildings at such an odd time. Approximately ten minutes after the players pass his location, the alarm will be sounded in the colony.

The technician is not armed, and if the players fire at him, he will run. If he takes even a single point of damage, he will keel over unconscious (and die shortly thereafter with a ruptured suit). His absence will not be noticed for several hours.

Building Six: Defence Tower Array

There can be no doubt what this collection of four towers is. The spires rising into the spire are each topped with some sort of heavy cannon on a swivel mount. The emplacements appear to be heavily armoured, and their sheer size is most impressive. You doubt the Sky Serpent could stand up to more than a moment's fire from these colossal guns.

Although there appears to be a series of transport tubes connecting the towers, each has its own airlock for entry, making you wonder if this is really one building or actually four totally independent ones.

This complex contains four hardened gun turrets arranged in a wide square, connected only by a central transport tube. The particle cannons here could easily blast the Sky Serpent out of space if it tried to launch while the base was on alert. Should the towers be activated, the players' only choice will be to speed off along the surface of the asteroid, using terrain to avoid their arcs of fire. This is a fairly easy manoeuvre to accomplish, as the defence towers are of an older design and are intended to fire upon craft making stand-off attacks against the colony. The presence of the defence towers also means the *Veil of Tears* will be unable to approach, should the players attempt to convince Captain Torgrimson to help them make a frontal assault on the prison.

The players can try to break into the towers, but this time the two guards on the other side of the airlock will stand and fight. In addition, each tower is its own separate entity, disconnected from the others. If one goes offline, the others will slam shut protective bulkheads and the alarm will sound across the colony. The players would have to take out all four of them simultaneously to avoid this unfortunate turn of events. Anyone studying the exterior of the facility will figure this out on a Knowledge check (DC 12 in any subcategory that involves building construction in any way) if they spend at least a few minutes contemplating the design.

In any event, the players' best bet is probably just to avoid this complex completely. If they intend to shoot out the communications array as they depart, they will have a few minutes of flight time while the tower crews react to the situation, and by then the Sky Serpent should be well on its way around to the other side of the asteroid.

Exterior: Mining Teams

As you look around the exterior of the facility, you notice several long catwalks winding down into holes in the ground outside. These branch off into the distant caverns and culverts, and at the end of one of these, you can see movement. Looking closer, you can tell there are quite a few humanoids there, working with heavy equipment. Occasionally the flash of a spark is clearly visible. Several other humanoids stand off from the others, but you can tell nothing more from where you stand. You will need to get closer - much closer - to determine what they are actually up to.

The players might also get the idea to search the mining teams for any sign of Matthew Hendrix. These teams are, however, guarded by four Drazzi. If the players make a Hide check as they approach, they can view the proceedings from hiding. The prisoners can be seen spread out along a ridge, chopping at rocks with hand axes and occasionally carving off a new chunk with a micro charge.

If the Drazzi spot the players, or if they attempt to approach and feign friendliness, the guards immediately drop down behind the nearby ridge and begin firing. Use the Drazzi stats on p50 for this battle, except that these guards will not retreat.

On the second round of combat, five of the prisoners will suddenly rush the cowering guards, overpowering the nearest one with their tools. One of the remaining Drazzi turns and sees this, then starts punching buttons on a console on his arm. If the players do not slay him immediately with opportunity fire, the helmets on the five rogue prisoners explode, killing them instantly. Should the prisoners avoid this, they continue on to the next Drazzi, repeating this process until either all Drazzi are dead or the five assailants are slain.

After the battle, the helpful prisoners beg for rescue (the others are too weak to do much of anything). All five are Narns who were captured while spying on the Drazzi in the Hilak system. They claim they will do anything to help out, and are strong enough to fight. They could easily add some extra firepower to the group, but like the Drazzi, they have no interest in subtle combat tactics. If confronted with an enemy, they will simply charge in, screaming a battle-cry. The players' best bet is probably to use these Narns as a diversion while they themselves escape, but leave that up to them.

Enthusiastic Narns (5)

3rd Level Narn Soldier; hp 16 (currently 8); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 14; +5 melee, +4 ranged; SQ Covering Fire, Low-Light Vision; Fort +4, Ref +4, Wis +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Balance +5, Climb +3, Hide +3, Move Silently +2, Spot +1; Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (PPG rifle)

Standard Equipment: Tools (count as clubs)

G'Rork, T'Nath, K'Prel, G'Tul, and Na'Shen are the last survivors from a Narn Var'Nic class long-range destroyer outfitted for silent running. They were using this ship to spy on Hilak and other Drazi systems, making sure their aggressive neighbours were not planning any sort of military operations against them. When the ship was destroyed after a running battle, the surviving crew was sent here, but most are dead now. The remainder want only vengeance, and will do anything to achieve it. Given a gun, they shoot the next Drazi they see; given a knife, they go for the next Drazi throat they can find. If any of the players happen to be Drazi, they should probably keep a good distance from their new allies.

Should any of these Narns survive to escape Ranasha, their battle-lust will gradually fade and they ask to be returned to Babylon 5. If this is done, Ambassador G'Kar thanks the players for their assistance in returning his people, and pays the players each 100 credits for their efforts, wishing it could be more.

Getting Off the Colony

If the players have rescued Hendrix, it is likely the alarm has been raised and they have been forced to fight their way off the third floor and into the elevator. Five more Drazi guards will be in the hangar upon their return there, hidden behind the still-unpacked cargo pallets. The players will have to fight their way across the open hangar to the Sky Serpent. If the enthusiastic Narns are present, they will rush the Drazi, hopefully providing a reasonable distraction to enable this to happen. In the event the players are bringing a stream of prisoners along, hoping to rescue them for a reward, just about any stray shot will clip these unfortunates and take them out of the picture.

Hendrix is a problem by himself. He is completely unfit to move, alternating between unconsciousness and half-insane babbling. The team's medic will need to keep him stable, and the players will have to carry him to the ship while dodging fire from the defending Drazi. Fortunately for the group, though, no Drazi have enough smarts to duck aboard the Sky Serpent and shut the

doors. Even if they do, one would hope the players have a contingency plan for that...

The next problem is getting the launch platform into place. The players cannot activate it from within the Sky Serpent, so someone will have to stay behind to do it. A wounded prisoner, knowing his injuries are mortal, might volunteer, and so too will one of the Narns, if any survived the battle. Of course, the players can also risk firing the Sky Serpent's particle beams at the ceiling, too. This will damage the ship, but not severely enough to prevent their escape. Anyone with any construction or weapons expertise will advise against this manoeuvre, but in true heroic fashion, the ship's gunner will be able to pull it off.

Next, the players need to zip away from the base at ground level, keeping the buildings between themselves and the gun towers. They might also shoot the communications tower, though it might well be too late for that to do any good by this point. Once safely around the horizon, they can set off for the *Freedom* in relative safety.

If, however, the comm tower got off a message, the Sunhawk will soon come calling. The pilot will first detect it on his scanners, and then will receive a message demanding he heave to and prepare to be boarded. Fighting will be suicide, so the best the players can do is dodge and weave and try to get to the *Freedom*. Then, after a few tense moments, a new blip appears on the scanners—the *Veil of Tears*! Captain Torgrimson orders the Sunhawk to turn back or face destruction, but of course no Drazi worth his salt would turn from a fight with a mere raider ship! The two ships engage, weapons blazing, and hopefully the players will join the battle, strafing the Sunhawk with the Sky Serpent's particle guns.

The battle lasts a few minutes while the two ships trade salvoes, and then two more ships appear on the scene—the blue and gold warships of the Tirrith Free State! The Sunhawk immediately runs, and the *Veil of Tears* opens its hangar bay to take on the Sky Serpent before they get too close. Torgrimson tells the Tirrith ships some story about being lured out by a false distress signal, which the TFS captains accept without too much concern. Such events are common in the Tirrith system, after all. Just another day in the life of a raider...

Aftermath

The *Veil* has sustained some damage in the fight, but not too much. Most of the firing took place at medium to long range, after all, since the Sunhawk did not wish to get too close to the Brigantine's plasma guns. Torgrimson shrugs if the players ask him how he can afford the repairs. He has a Drazi Sky Serpent now, he explains, pointing at the players' escape vessel. He figures taking that should just about cover the damages. If the players argue, he insists on keeping it - and it's his ship, after all, so what can they do? Besides, they should be grateful he pulled their butts out of the fire!

The *Veil* docks for two more days while the ship makes repairs or, if the space battle proved unnecessary, simply have the ship hang around a bit while the captain does some more dealing. In this case, the Sky Serpent will have to be abandoned on the station, because within moments of its landing, the Drazi will show up to find out why it's there. The players will not be able to keep the fighter in either case. This allows the players some time to recover, tie up any loose ends, or do some more exploring. After that, the *Veil* heads back to Babylon 5 the way it came. By the time it gets back, its weapon ports are safely covered, so the ship looks like a regular Hermes once more. Captain Torgrimson thanks the players for their help, pronounces them a friend to him and his crew, and sends them back to the station on his own private shuttle.

Roland Anderson is ecstatic to see Matthew Hendrix alive, though he only barely survived the journey. The group's medic will need to spend almost the entire voyage watching his vital signs closely. He has multiple internal injuries as well as a dozen broken bones, and there might be brain damage as well. From their joyful reunion, the players get the distinct impression Hendrix is not just another client, but possibly a close personal friend or relative. Anderson does not confirm or deny this, but simply pays the players their fee without much thought and ushers Matthew away. Shortly thereafter, the two depart Babylon 5 on a ship bound for Earth, and that is the last time the players ever see Mr. Hendrix.

During the trip back, the players might attempt to learn what Hendrix was hiding so carefully from the Drazi. 'Nothing,' he will say through his broken jaw. 'I don't know anything. I didn't see anything.' A telepath will insist he is telling the truth, or at least thinks he is. They will be able to get nothing more from the poor man. The questions of who he was and what he was doing will just have to remain unanswered...for now.

Experience Point Award Suggestions

Successfully rescuing Matthew Hendrix: 2,000 points

Returning at least one of the Narns to Ambassador

G'Kar: 200 points

Helping repair the *Veil* during the initial raid: 150 points

Using Kareel to get to the prison even if the players know he is going to betray them: 300 points

Handing over Marcan Trillig to Ambassador Mollari: 150 points

Other Possible Post-Module Events

If the players stole the thrust regulator from the *Veil*, the ride home will be somewhat less pleasant than as described above. Torgrimson takes the Sky Serpent (if available) as payment for the regulator and damage to his vessel but that does not let the players off the hook as far as he is concerned. He locks them in their quarters for the ride back to Babylon 5, and when they leave, insists that they still owe him a debt he intends to collect someday. Only his need to collect his payment from Anderson for their safe return keeps him from jettisoning them right out the airlock for stealing his property.

Any items the players bought in the *Freedom's* black market will need to be carefully concealed or smuggled back onto the station. Anyone who works for security or is with the Earth Alliance will obviously feel the need to report the presence of such items, as well as any other events he witnessed during the module. Players who inform their superiors of the *Veil's* hidden weapons and obvious raider nature will be quietly informed that its status is already known. They will be dealt with in time but that is not for the player to decide. The report has been duly logged, however. Why the ship has not been detained is just another mystery for the players to wonder about.

Module Three: To Kill a Thief

They are becoming more confident now, aren't they? Just watching them is intriguing in and of itself. I wonder if any of them ever realised their true potential before we began to put them to the test? Probably not. Most would have just lived ordinary lives, ignorant of what is truly going on around them. Is it time to tell them more? I believe so. I think they are ready to handle it now. We shall see...

Background

Give the players Handout Three.

IPX's investigations into the mysterious alien race have taken their people to all corners of the galaxy. A couple of weeks ago, a team discovered a shattered craft on a

desolate moon near the Rim. The twisted wreckage bore a strong resemblance to the sort of technology observed on the alien craft found on Mars several years before, but was far smaller. Analysis of the site showed the ship had been there for about a thousand years.

At the core of the jagged remains, a skeleton was located—the first time any physical remains of the mysterious aliens has ever been discovered. However, simple tests quickly proved that whoever this was, they were not ancient—the skeleton was of a Yolu! Since the Yolu have never demonstrated any sort of access to this level of technology, the scientists had no explanation for the body's presence on the crash site. They did, however, discover tendrils from a piece of alien machinery wound about within the dried husk that was all that was left of him. With some work, they were able to extract this device from the wreckage and withdraw the black wires from the body. The moment this was done, the tendrils retracted inside the alien box of their own accord.

Module Summary

- 5 Anderson hires the players to track down a missing science ship and an important alien artefact.
- 5 The players proceed to the Ulata system and find an escaped shuttle.
- 5 Clues from the shuttle lead them to the planet Orema where the missing ship is found.
- 5 The players explore the ship and find the crew dead, plus an alien lifeform infestation.
- 5 Evidence on the ship leads the players after Captain Travis, who took the artefact and went mad.
- 5 The players find Travis in charge of superstitious natives of the low-tech planet and must fight him.

Names and Places of Interest

- 5 Ian McLeary: Old friend of Alison who helps her discover why she lost her old job (side scenario).
- 5 Yusef Amaldi: Ambassador who helped get Alison fired (side scenario).
- 5 Dr. Manuel Rodriguez: One of the scientists who left some log entries behind.
- 5 Dr. Ivan Reinhardt: Dead scientist discovered aboard an escape shuttle.
- 5 *Eagle Eye*: Converted bulk freighter used to transport the scientists.
- 5 Dr. Helen Taylor: Survivor found aboard the *Eagle Eye*.
- 5 William R. Travis: Captain of the *Eagle Eye* who activated the alien artefact and went insane.
- 5 Goren, Ladal, Tyrie, Neshka: Native priests who will try to help the players.
- 5 Ulata: System where the science vessel was last seen.
- 5 Yolanda: First system the players pass through on their way to Ulata.
- 5 Djinn: Second system the players pass through. One world, Orema, is inhabited.
- 5 Orema: Low-tech world where the missing artefact has been taken.

Seeing that this artefact still functioned, at least in some way, the scientists hastily packed up their supplies and boarded their ship, intent on returning to IPX at once. However, they did not reach Earth space. IPX received a single, brief distress call from somewhere along the route home, and then nothing. A rescue mission has already been launched, but Babylon 5 is so much closer that Anderson knows his team can get there faster.

What happened on the ship was this: The captain, who was not a part of the research team but dabbles in archaeology as a hobby, tried to secretly take a closer look at the alien artefact. It activated in his hands and shot its tendrils through his body, quickly merging with his personality. Originally, the device was an interface between a living being (in this case a Yolu servant) and the alien craft, but now it has been damaged and is incomplete. Unable to handle the conflicting voices in his head, the captain went insane, killed most of the crew, disabled his ship, and fled in a shuttle towards a nearby world.

Worse than that, one of the scientists brought an alien life form onto the shuttle from the moon's surface, intending to examine it later. The creature was freed during the captain's rampage and has since grown by feeding on the bodies, and later, the surviving researchers. It now lurks in the dark corners of the ship, waiting for new prey.

After fleeing, the captain made his way to Orema, a world populated by humanoid aliens with a Bronze Age culture. He defeated their best warriors and showed powers marking him as a god, so they now worship him like true fanatics. The players will be treated as enemies of the Mad God, and fighting their way through his army won't be an easy task.

Between Modules

Four months have passed between Modules Two and Three. This provides the players with plenty of time for

Yolu

The Yolu are an old race, perhaps as old as the Minbari. While they are highly advanced technologically, they do not flaunt or abuse their strength. They defend their homeworld of Pa'rl and their colonies with powerful warships, but avoid leaving their space whenever possible. Even during the Dilgar War, after the Dilgar invaded their territory and heaped many atrocities on their colonies, the Yolu refused to participate in driving the Dilgar back to their home planet. Some believe this is a sign of weakness, but the Yolu are anything but weak. They are simply aloof and uninterested in Galactic affairs, focusing most of their attention on internal matters.

This attitude has apparently existed for some time. A thousand years ago, when the ancient enemy rose again, the Yolu refused to fight in that war as well. Instead, they hunkered down in their own space and circled the wagons. Even today, the Minbari still remember that, faced with ultimate destruction, the Yolu refused to do anything other than cower behind their fortifications.

The Yolu are technically a member of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds, although they rarely attend meetings. They are best known for spreading the Mutai, a ritualised style of combat, among the League and other worlds. It is not known if those responsible for the Mutai are a banished faction of the Yolu race, or if they merely seek to challenge the best that other races offer.

Yolu Racial Traits

- 5 All Yolu are of medium size.
- 5 Yolu have a base speed of 30 feet.
- 5 The Yolu are a spiritual, enlightened people who work hard to keep their minds or bodies in top form, but their isolationism has caused many to become dependent upon technology to get by. An individual receives either +2 Strength or +2 Wisdom but suffers -2 Intelligence and -2 Charisma.
- 5 A Yolu who has +2 Wisdom is a spiritualist with a significant command of his mental faculties. Such an individual receives Alertness, Iron Will or (if a Telepath) one telepathic feat as a bonus.
- 5 A Yolu who has +2 Strength is focused on his physical well-being and engages in ritual combat to better himself, choosing the way of the fighter. He receives either Blind-Fighting or Endurance as a bonus feat.
- 5 Automatic language: Yolu, plus a special combat language for those who choose the way of the fighter.
- 5 Favoured Class: Any. When determining whether a multiclass Yolu suffers an XP penalty, their highest level class does not count.

side scenarios and more mundane events. By the time this module begins, the players should be third level. A few additional scenarios are suggested here.

Survivors

In this episode, Security Chief Michael Garibaldi is accused of planting a bomb on Babylon 5. He flees into Downbelow and hides there, wallowing in self-pity, until finally he goes on a drinking binge in a low-class bar and is captured.

If the players are associated in any way with station security, or have developed a reputation as people who can find things in Downbelow, they are asked to provide assistance in locating Mr. Garibaldi. Their contacts insist that Garibaldi is not to be harmed or approached. Instead, the players are simply to call in with his location, and then wait for authorities to come pick him up. If he moves, they can follow, but nothing more.

Let the players wander around in Downbelow for a bit before overhearing a conversation:

As you move gradually along through the dark corridors of Babylon 5's underworld, you are not only looking for Garibaldi, but also listening carefully for clues to his whereabouts. At the sound of his name, your ears perk up, and you turn to see four men engaged in conversation against a nearby wall. One of the speakers appears quite animated. 'I tell you, I saw him!' says the excited-looking man. 'Michael Garibaldi! By himself, right here in Downbelow!'

'It must be a trap,' says one of the others. 'He wouldn't come down here unless he had agents already in place.'

'No, no!' the first man continues. 'Haven't you heard? They think he's a saboteur! There's a warrant out for his arrest! He thinks he can hide in Downbelow—that he'll be safe here! Can you imagine?' They all start laughing, and then the instigator goes on. 'I say we take him out. It's the perfect chance! No one will even blame us. We can say it was self-defence, that he went on some kind of shooting spree!'

The others agree, so the man gathers them up and starts off down the corridor. 'Come on!' he says breathlessly. 'I know exactly where he is!'

If the players follow, the group of men takes a few turns, then stops at the entrance to a pathetic-looking dive at the end of the hall. The leader peeks in through the crud-covered window, then turns to the others. 'There he is,' he says in a low voice. 'Come on, let's get him now!' And with that, he reaches under his cloak and pulls out a PPG!

If the players do not intervene here, the ruffians will burst in and begin shooting at Mr. Garibaldi, who is by now too drunk to do much but duck and cower under the table. Give the players another chance to help him out. If they do not, you can either let him get shot (if running a non-canon campaign) or have a security team rush in through another entrance in just the nick of time. Of course, if this happens, the players will get no reward or recognition for helping out.

Armed Ruffians (4)

Second Level Human Lurker; hp 11; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; DV 14; +2 melee, +3 ranged; SQ Lurker's Knowledge, Survivor's Luck; Fort +3, Ref +4, Wis -1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10
Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Balance +6, Escape Artist +4, Gather Information +4, Hide +7, Intimidate +4, Listen +1, Move Silently +4, Search +3, Spot +3, Technical (mechanical) +3; Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness
Standard Equipment: Club, knife

These men all have a grudge against Michael Garibaldi and wish to see him dead. They are armed with crude knives or improvised weapons, but have only one pistol between them. If they attack him, their target ducks under a table and crawls behind the bar. Hopefully, the players will intervene before this point, however, and attack before they actually get inside the room. In this way, they become part of the episode without ever emerging from behind the scenes.

If the players successfully report Garibaldi's presence to the authorities and save him from the four ruffians, the security section gives them a reward of 50 credits each for their help. Also, after the business with the bombs is over, Garibaldi buys them all a drink - but he, of course, abstains.

Suggested experience for this mini-scenario: 200.

By Any Means Necessary

This is the lead story in the Universe Today issue found on Handout Three. To involve the players in the dockworker strike, have those who meet the qualifications answer an emergency call for workers to help unload cargo. Of course, this puts the players in the role of 'scabs,' which will not be appreciated by the striking workers. Shouts and threats are eventually replaced by violence as angry station personnel attack their replacements.

Angry Dockworkers

Third Level Human Worker (blue collar); hp 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 12; +3 melee, +2 ranged; SQ None; Fort +4, Ref +2, Wis +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9

Skills and Feats: Bluff +1, Climb +8, Computer Use +4, Concentration +5, Drive +7, Jump +8, Listen +1, Profession (dock worker) +9, Spot +1, Technical (engineering) +6; Endurance, Skill Focus (profession – dock worker), Toughness

These men are upset and desperate. They feel they have no choice but strike, and by taking their place, the players are attacking their way of life. They attack with fists, but do not use deadly force. If not knocked unconscious, they continue to fight without any chance of routing.

To run this battle, set up the players in a section of an open cargo bay with several boxes scattered about. Then pit them against an equivalent number of angry dockworkers. Each time one worker is subdued, another rushes in to take his place. A player who refuses to fight will still be pummelled mercilessly, even if he drops to the floor. Let this battle go on for several rounds, emphasising how hopeless the situation appears, until finally a security team shows up and fires several shots into the air. The fight concludes at the end of that combat round, and the ‘scabs’ are rushed off the floor to safety. Any player participating

in this will be paid a full day’s wages at the conclusion of the strike.

Alternately, if the players already happen to be dockworkers, then let them be part of the rioting on the worker’s side! Use the stats given for the Angry Dockworkers in the sidebar for their replacements instead and run the battle as above.

After Orin Zento invokes the Rush Act, Commander Sinclair ends the strike at once and all hard feelings are forgotten. Things immediately become much better in the docks, and any players working there find their wages increased by 20 percent.

Suggested experience for this mini-scenario: 150.

TKO

The Mutai is, as the newspaper article said, running public events next week. Any non-human aliens in the party might wish to challenge one of the fighters during the festivities (assuming they feel they are good enough). However, just watching one of the bouts should be enough to convince them they are not even in the same league. If they choose to participate, however, they need to insult one of the combatants in order to get his attention. See the sidebar for appropriate statistics for a Mutai initiate.



Mutai Initiate

Seventh Level Drazi Soldier; hp 30; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; DV 18; +10/+5 melee, +11/+6 ranged; SQ Covering Fire, To The Limit; Fort +9, Ref +8, Wis +1; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 7

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +8, Jump +7; Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (fist)

Fighters in the Mutai are at the pinnacle of physical strength and prowess. Many train for life just for the chance of participating in the blood-sport. Even this initiate, who is considered puny by Mutai standards, should be able to easily crush any player who challenges him.

A human may not participate. If any try, the combatant simply ignores him. Shortly thereafter, however, a truly gifted human, Walker Smith, will manage to say just the right words to the Mutai champion, resulting in a battle on centre stage. Although the fight is a draw, Walker's actions open the door to human participants. A human player could make a challenge thereafter, but will likely be beaten just as easily as a member of another race.

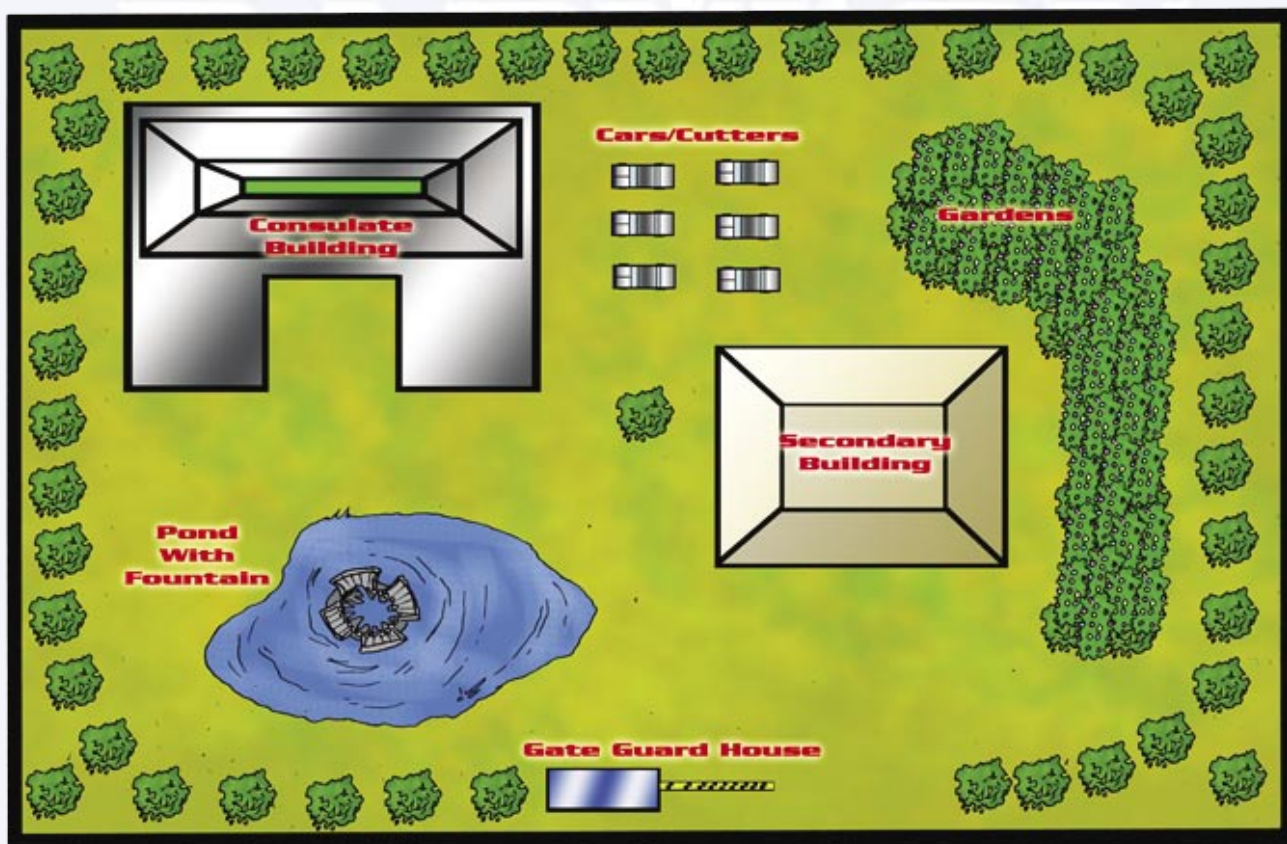
Suggested experience for this side scenario: None. Fighting in the Mutai would be foolhardy, and not deserving of an experience award!

Who Framed Alison Fernandez?

At some point, an Earth ambassador by the name of Ian McLeary arrives on the station on his way to Centauri space. He spends some time chatting with Sinclair and might be noticed by any player who regularly visits Council meetings or has diplomatic connections. However, nothing seems unusual at first.

After a short while, though, Alison Fernandez approaches the players (whichever one of them she is involved in a relationship with, if any). She tells them Ian McLeary was one of those on the Earth diplomatic staff when she met with the disaster that destroyed her career. She always wondered if McLeary was involved in that activity, and she wants to confront him along with the help of the players. Surely if anyone can convince him to talk, they can do it.

Whether or not the players agree, Ian seeks out Alison on his own. He asks to speak to her privately, but she insists her friends can hear anything he has to tell them. He agrees and explains that he found out recently that the bribery



accusation was deliberately planned, for a specific purpose. McLeary apologises for being an unwitting part of the proceedings, but he honestly thought, back then, that she was in the wrong. He knows different now, and wants to help her find out who arranged everything.

To do that, he explains, he needs access to a secret computer file back on Earth. The file is located in the diplomatic in Geneva and is well guarded. However, it should contain the records of all communications involving Yusef Amaldi, the ambassador who participated in Alison's dismissal. It was he, Ian explains, that arranged the entire thing, but not for himself—on behalf of someone else. In exchange, he apparently received hundreds of thousands of credits in bribes.

Alison insists on checking this out, and agrees to go with McLeary. If the players do not tag along, then she is not available for the rest of the module. If, instead, they head off to Earth on the next shuttle, delay the start of the module until their return to Babylon 5. When they return, Roland Anderson will be impatiently waiting.

Getting to Earth is a simple matter of booking passage, at 750 credits each for the round trip. Neither Alison nor Ian will pay their way, and will only roll their eyes if they request it. 'If you can't afford it,' says Alison, 'why are you coming along? After all, we won't be paying for your help, either. In case you've forgotten, I'm just as poor as you!'

The shuttle docks at a transfer station on Io, where the players board another that heads to Earth. From there, they transfer again to a ship going to Geneva. This all takes place without a hitch, and eventually, they wind up at a hotel near the consulate. Ian shows the players a map of the area and points out that not only will the main entrance be guarded, but the grounds are constantly patrolled. There are also alarm systems in place within the buildings, but the only one the players need to enter is the office building on the right side of the complex.

There are three possible ways into the consulate compound (under normal circumstances, that is—the players may have some other way, depending on what equipment and skills they have available). The first is to bluff their way past the gate, the second is to fight their way past the defenders, and the third is to sneak in.

The Gate: There are always two guards at the gate, one inside the shack and the other outside. It is the second one's job to check identification and scan any vehicle to ensure it is not carrying contraband, explosives, or unauthorised personnel. Ian McLeary knows this procedure well, and while he is certain he can get inside the gate this way, he is positive no one else will be able to get inside. He might be able to explain Alison's presence in his vehicle, but none of the other players or their gear. Ian also does not wish

to jeopardise his own career if he can avoid it, so he will refuse to take any foolish risks where the gate is concerned. Plus, he knows he cannot break into the computer system by himself, so he needs the players, one way or another.

The best and safest way to bluff through the gate is by forging identification and entering during the day. Going in at night will be more difficult, besides which they will need to have a good cover story for being there at such an odd hour. Everyone in the vehicle must have an appropriate ID. Ian will provide a good sample and forging similar documents will require a Forgery check.

In the event the check is a failure, the guard will notice something odd about one of the IDs and ask the player in question to get out of the vehicle. As long as they do not panic, and fast-talk the guard successfully (make them role-play it), he will let them pass, but not without assigning a guard to escort the team. Use the stats for the gate guards in the sidebar. If this man is not neutralised later, he will sound the alarm if the players do anything the slightest bit suspicious.

Gate Guards (2)

Second Level Human Soldier; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 11; +2 melee, +3 ranged; Fort +3, Ref +1, Wis +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8
Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Hide +2, Listen +1, Move Silently +2, Spot +1, Technical (varies) +4; Endurance, Toughness, Weapon Focus (PPG)
Standard Equipment: EA identicard, Auricon EF-7 PPG, shock stick

These men are competent security guards. One remains in his shack at all times, so he receives a half cover bonus should things become violent. Rather than fight, his first action in any combat situation is to duck, and his second is to call in a warning to the rest of the security force. Use the statistics given here for any other security men the players encounter during their attempt to gain access to the complex.

If the players choose to fight their way into the complex, they can make an attempt to ambush the guards at the gate. The primary requirement will be to neutralise the man inside the shack, before he can sound the alarm. If they do this, however, they must also then replace the two guards, or else the next time someone visits the gate, they will know something is going on. Anyone left in position there will be approached about ten minutes later by one of the roving patrols. These guards will be surprised not to see the men they expected, so the players either need to come up with a decent explanation (say, that the others got called away, or went off duty). The patrol will not buy it, though, and will tell the players they want to call it in. The players can

get a round of free actions if they attack at that moment. Otherwise, the patrol will quickly learn there was no scheduled switch of the gate guards, and the alarm will be sounded. A fight with the patrol is inevitable at this point.

The Fence: Another option is to get past the fence and sneak into the compound. The fence itself is electrical, but more than that, it is alarmed so that if it is cut or the power interrupted, the alarm sounds automatically. It stands five metres high, so getting over it will be a challenging task. Digging underneath is also a possibility, but the players will need to move quickly, because patrols roam the area, passing by every five minutes or so. Since the consulate is a favourite target of terrorists and protestors, the guards are quite thorough. Also, breaking in during daytime will be impossible (too many civilian witnesses wandering about), so this option can only be chosen at night.

One possible means of gaining entry via the fence is to create a diversion along one wall (e.g., throwing some object into the wires, or cutting them with weapons fire) while the rest of the team enters from another direction. Since Ian McLeary, who admits he is not all that athletic, will refuse to take part in anything physical like vaulting over the fence, the players' best bet is to have him meet the others inside. After all, he can enter and depart the complex at will. The gate is Hardness 12 with 4 hit points per 1 metre section. Touching it deals 1d8 subdual damage.

The players may also suggest simply getting their hands on a shuttle or flying vehicle of some kind and landing on top of the office building, but Ian will quickly point out the folly of such a plan. Any vehicle in the air will be detected (thanks to the anti-terrorist defences), challenged, and shot down. Even if such a craft did manage to land successfully, the ground security teams would be alerted to their presence, and there will not be enough time to steal the files.

The Office: Where the players need to go is Yusef Amaldi's office, located on the sixth floor of the secondary administrative building. If the group has done any preparation at all, they will already know this and have a map of the facility, so they can proceed directly to the site. There is a guard inside the main entrance, so if they have IDs, they can simply walk in without a care in the world. Without an ID, they will need to bluff the man or subdue him. If they act suspiciously, or are toting visible weapons, he will sound the alarm. If there are any aliens in the group, the players will need to explain their presence (one good possibility is to have such an individual masquerade as an ambassador, or an ambassador's aide).

There are no guards actually stationed on the floors, but patrols pass through the area every ten minutes. To get into Amaldi's office, someone must make a difficult Technical (mechanical) check (DC 20).

Inside the office, there are motion detectors and heat sensors controlled by a panel on the nearer wall. A player can attempt to bypass these with a Technical (electronics) check (DC 19) but this takes one minute by itself per check, so a patrol will likely interrupt the attempt. Since no one can enter the room while the disarming is going on, they cannot hide inside, so there is no way to avoid the guards. The group could, however, set up an ambush by hiding in a nearby storeroom.

Another way into the office is by gaining access to the air ducts and crawling through, but the players must still contend with the alarm system in any event. Unless they have some means of defeating infrared and motion detectors, this plan will do them little good. Any alarm that is tripped will be silent, and sends a team of six guards to the floor, arriving two minutes later. Even if the group defeats these men, the alarm sounds and five minutes later the building is swarming with troops.

If the alarm sounds while the players are attempting to enter the complex or the office, Ian will panic and insist they must depart at once. If the players refuse, and insist they can still complete the mission, he refuses and leaves (unless they restrain him). He is simply not willing to stick around and get arrested! If the alarm is activated while the players are in Amaldi's office, he will want to depart at once, but some quick talking will convince him to stay for at most another two minutes or so. After that, he panics and rushes away. However, if the players are already downloading the files, they do not need him any further. He will meet up with them later to go over the stolen data.

Should the players get to the computer successfully, the hacker must make a Computer Use check (DC 15) to locate the files, and another check (DC 20) to break through the encryption. If Ian McLeary is present, he can make suggestions that provide a +2 competence bonus to the check. The player can make multiple attempts to crack the protections (each one taking five minutes of work) but if he fails three times, security is alerted to a hacker's presence and a six-man guard team is sent to investigate, arriving two minutes later. The player will have at most two more chances before a swarm of guards descends on the group.

Should they actually succeed in breaking the protections, copying the information to a data crystal takes another five minutes. They do not have time to sift through it all on site. Then, the players can either go, or spend another five minutes and make a Computer Use check (DC 15) to reset the computer so it looks like no one was there. If this roll fails, or no attempt is made, security will be alerted as they depart and a final battle will occur. Only if they successfully do this, and have not made any other mistakes, can they hope to leave the complex without violence. If that is the case, skip the encounter below.

As the players make their way out of the building and back towards their ride (or other means of exit), a group of guards spots and challenges them. These will be six men using the guard statistics on p50. If no alarm has been sounded, the guards will be surprised and/or distracted, affording the group one round of free actions while the patrol tries to react and gets their weapons ready. The players should be able to escape, either by fighting their way past this patrol or by fleeing. Afford them the opportunity to get creative in any escape they might attempt, perhaps using smoke bombs or other stealthy means to get away.

The Data: If the players successfully get the data, Ian will spend several hours going through it before finding what he wants. He shows Alison right away, along with the rest of the group. Apparently, Yusef Amaldi took several large, secret payoffs at just the time Alison was accused of the bribery scandal. While this in and of itself does not prove anything, and would not be sufficient evidence in a court of law, the identity of the organisation making the arrangements is clearly noted—the IPX Corporation. Why would IPX want Alison's good name smeared, though? There is nothing in the records to give an answer to this, unfortunately.

Ian spends some more time investigating, but finds nothing more. He promises Alison he will continue looking for the reasons, and suggests she return to Babylon 5 for now. The players might also want to take a look at the information, but all they find are boring logs of meetings and such that Amaldi sat through for the past several years. Let them roll as many investigative checks as they like, but they discover nothing useful.

The players might get the idea that confronting Yusef Amaldi directly could get them the data they need straight from the horse's mouth. However, Ian will advise against it. So far, all they have done is some breaking and entering (and self-defence, if they fought any guards). Attacking a diplomatic attaché directly is another matter entirely. Besides, from the records shown here, Yusef might not even know IPX's reasons. All he did was take a payoff—they may never have explained their actual intent, and in fact, would have been stupid to do so. The answers Alison seeks lie deep within IPX, and that is a question best left for later.

In the event they do challenge Yusef, presumably by kidnapping him somehow (a difficult effort beyond the scope of this product), or by scanning him telepathically, they learn the above analysis is true. He simply took a payment to plant some incriminating documents in Alison's possession. IPX never told him why, and he found out they were IPX only on his own initiative. The best he can give them is that they needed her for something they could not have as long as she worked as a diplomat.

Suggested experience for this mini-scenario: 1,000 (1,500 if they make it out of the complex without killing any guards).

Encounter One: The Briefing

Things have been going normally for a while. Too long, you think. Babylon 5 seems almost boring after all this time, and you could use a chance to get away for a while. That's why when Dave McCullough knocks on the door of your quarters, you're quite happy to see him. You can tell from the look on his face that something interesting is brewing.

'Guess what?' he says with a twinkle in his eye. 'Roland's back. He's having me call everyone together in the usual place, and he sounds like he's in a hurry. I think he wants to send us on another off-station trip, so if you need another working vacation, here's your chance. I'm going to go round up the others. See you at the Nova Nine in a half hour!'

The 30-minute delay should give the players enough time to prepare or notify any of their patrons or dependents about the meeting. When the players arrive, Roland is there, impeccably dressed as always. He smiles and greets each of the players as they enter. Alison Fernandez comes in last.

The waitress takes your drink orders, and Roland Anderson looks you all over. 'I'm glad to see you well,' he says amiably, but there is a tone of urgency in his voice. 'I'm sorry for the short notice, but I have urgent need of your services once again. One of my clients recently made a major discovery in the Ulata system, but we lost contact with their ship shortly thereafter. They were supposed to make their way back to Earth, but we don't know if they ever left the system. It'll be weeks before my clients could arrange another mission out there, but you could get there in four days. The Liberty's Fortune is docked in Bay Twelve right now, and if you're all available, I'd like to send you without any further delay. I can pay you each 2,000 credits, plus the usual expenses and the like. Do you have any questions?'

Anderson will not explain the nature of the artefact, primarily because he honestly does not know all that much about it. All he knows is that the scientists felt it was of the highest level of importance. Here are some of the answers he will give to potential player questions:

'What did they find that's so valuable?' 'I'm not sure, actually. My client was rather guarded about that, I'm afraid. All I know for certain is they found something on

one of the moons of Ulata VII and were terribly excited about it. Their last message said they were bringing it back for analysis.'

'Can we hear that last message?' 'Certainly. I actually have logs of several transmissions for you to review. You can take a look at those after you depart.'

'Why don't you contact EarthForce and have them send a rescue ship?' 'My clients have attempted to do that, but apparently the Earth Alliance military is too busy right now to send a warship off to search for some missing scientists.' Actually, no such request has been made, and anyone who has the authority to make inquiries along those lines can

find that out, if they act quickly. The real reason is that IPX doesn't want the wrong people getting their hands on the artefact or the wreckage.

'Who are these people we're looking for?' 'A survey team led by Dr. Manuel Rodriguez—you may have heard of him, since he's one of the bigger names in the field.' Actually, he isn't all that well known. 'The team consisted of about two dozen personnel, mostly geologists and biologists.'

'Where were they again?' 'The Ulata system. It's recently discovered, actually. One of our Explorers out on the Rim dropped a jump gate there about six months ago. Not much to see—the inner planets are too dangerous for use as colonies, and the outer ones are gas giants with too much

Transmission Logs

There are quite a few, but most are routine reports of scans, surveys, and boring scientific data. Only the last four are of any interest. All feature the same person's face on the screen, a white-haired Hispanic man with a prominent birthmark on his forehead. The man's name is Dr. Manuel Rodriguez, although he does not identify himself in any of the reports. The players will need to get the name by requesting that information from Anderson before departing.

Here are the transcripts of the four messages of importance:

'Day 16 of our exploration of this desolate system. Absolutely nothing of any interest to me so far. The geologists are having a field day going over the deep core samples we pulled out of the larger moon, and the xenobiology team has literally an entire menagerie of critters swarming around back in the aft pod. Scans have picked up several formations of interest on VII Epsilon, so as soon as the teams are done on VI Gamma, we're going to cruise on over there. I just hope I have something to do sometime soon, or I'll retire my archaeology PhD and start studying geology!'

'Day 17, and things are looking up! We sent shuttles down around four of the interesting rock formations we spotted from long range yesterday, and one of them turned up something interesting. There's something buried in the ground near a crater, something made of a strange black metallic substance like nothing the geologists had ever seen. I'm going down there in an hour to check it out, so I'll get back with you then.'

'Same day. As our geology team would say, I think we hit the mother lode! The black metal was the remains of some kind of wrecked ship. It's incredibly old—at least a millennia, near as the datings on the rocks nearby are showing. This moon is within the outer edge of the gas giant's atmosphere, which is corrosive, so there's not much to gain from the wreck itself, but inside we found a body! It was all mummified, but we could tell it was alien. There were wires going into it, too, attached to some kind of box on the corpse's back. As soon as we pulled some of these lines free, they retracted into the case on their own! Whatever this thing is, it still has power, even after all the centuries it must've been here. We brought it aboard, and the body as well. I'll report in again when we have more information.'

'Day 18. We've finished salvaging the wreck, and it's on its way up on the shuttle right now. There isn't much to it—the metal didn't seem to survive in the gas giant's atmosphere very well. It's a miracle the interior lasted as long as it did. Strangely, we didn't find any controls of any kind in the chamber where the pilot was. He might've been in a stateroom or a corridor for all we know. Still no idea what the black case is all about, either. We can't seem to get it open, and all the wires retracted inside as soon as we moved the body. We're going to put it in the storage compartment for now, and put the body on deep freeze for the trip back to Earth. I just received further instructions from [static]...we're leaving the system as soon as all the shuttles are back. I'll send in another report when we reach the first transfer gate.'

If the players ask about the static, tell them the recorded message took a burst of interference at that moment, which of course will seem awfully convenient. Anyone running the message through the computer for analysis can determine, on a Computer Use check (DC 13), that the static was deliberately placed there. It did not appear accidentally.

radiation to risk for long-term mining. There is life on one of the planets, I think, but I'm not sure. Maybe there's more information about that in the messages you can watch later.'

'What kind of ship were they in?' 'I'm not actually sure. A converted freighter of some kind, I think.' After watching the early mission logs, the players will discover it is a bulk freighter named the *Eagle Eye*.

Your drinks are almost empty by the time you finish asking questions and discussing the mission to come. The waitress asks if any of you want anything to eat, but Roland Anderson shoos her away. 'We won't have time for that, I'm afraid,' he announces quickly. 'You need to get moving as soon as you can. If anyone attacked the ship and made off with my client's property, we need to get on their trail fast. There's also a chance they just broke down and are in need of assistance, so I've made sure the Liberty's Fortune is loaded with extra supplies just in case. You need to find out what happened, save the ship and the team if possible, but no matter what, bring back what they found, all right? Now, get going! The ship leaves in half an hour from Bay Twelve. Good luck!'

The players must move quickly if they need to do anything else before the scheduled departure time. Getting to their quarters to collect their gear will use up most of what they have, so trying to search for further information isn't an option. A player might have enough time to pull up data on the Ulata system (which has seven planets, four of which are gas giants), look to see if anyone put in for a rescue mission to that system (if they have the authority to ask), or find out who Dr. Manuel Rodriguez is (a researcher without anything important to his credit). That is about all, however. If they work for anyone or are part of any secret organisations, they have just enough time to pass along their mission information before they have to make their way to the hangar.

At Bay Twelve, the familiar sight of the Liberty's Fortune awaits you. Roland Anderson is not there to see you off, so Dave and Alison hurry you aboard without much fanfare. A smiling Rasheed Isanda waves to you from the pilot's seat, then starts the takeoff sequence. In a few minutes you find yourself entering the jump gate, on your way towards the Rim.

The pinnacle is exactly the same as last time, except that two of the staterooms and most of the cargo areas are packed with crates containing food and other supplies. Rasheed tells the players these were loaded on board in the hour

preceding their arrival. The *Liberty* was on the station only for a couple of hours, so obviously Anderson was quite busy making the arrangements, or else had the transaction set up ahead of time. Rasheed doesn't know which, however.

If anyone makes any small talk with the pilot, he explains he's been busy transferring Roland Anderson and a variety of other passengers around in Earth space for the last couple of months. He did make the run to Babylon 5 twice since the players last saw him, but didn't have time to look for them, and in fact never left the ship. He heard about the rescue of Matthew Hendrix (or the failure of that mission, if appropriate), but doesn't know what became of the man since then. He asks the players to tell the story, and listens intently as they speak. If the players ask if Rasheed knows anything else about Anderson, Hendrix, or anyone else, he tells them no—Anderson rarely speaks to him when they fly, and if he does, it's only to give orders.

Encounter Two: The Moon

The trip to Ulata takes four days and trips through three of the little-used jump gates that pepper the Rim. The first system, Yolanda, has an Earth Alliance outpost but no other colonies or planets of any worth. Getting here takes only about 10 hours. When the players pass through that gate, a couple of Starfuries come over to check out the *Liberty's Fortune*. Rasheed transmits his flight plan to the authorities at the base, though, and is given permission to continue without any trouble. Scans show a number of fighters patrolling the area, but no ships appear to be present.

The second system, Djinn, is filled with asteroids that are currently being surveyed by a half-dozen corporations and industrial firms looking to strike mining claims. There is also a single inhabited world named Orema, but that planet has its own indigenous, low-tech race and is off-limits to exploration. The players will likely return to this world later in the module, but at the moment have no reason to visit the place. The trip from Yolanda to Djinn requires about 18 hours. No ships are detected in this system at present.

Uлата VII

This is a large gas giant about the size of Saturn, but lacking any kind of ring system. The planet spins very fast, causing the atmosphere to flatten out at the equator so the world takes on an egg-shaped appearance. There are six moons of significance, designated by Greek letters in the typical Earth Alliance fashion. Epsilon is the fifth largest, and possesses no atmosphere of its own. However, its orbit takes it through the outer edge of the caustic gases that surround the gas giant itself, which have a slight erosion effect. The

moon looks smooth from a distance, revealing details only on a close approach. Because the atmosphere is gradually slowing the orange-coloured lump of rock, it will eventually - perhaps in another ten millennia or so - fall into the giant's clouds and vanish forever.

Because the moon is so smooth, locating the excavation site is not terribly difficult. Rasheed overflies the surface for about an hour before spotting an unusual depression in the surface, whereupon he takes the ship down to investigate. Very little can be seen from inside, however, so the players will need to depart through the airlock. Rasheed warns them that his scans show high levels of radiation outside, so they should not stay out for more than an hour or so.

Journeying to the site is relatively simple. The players find little of value, however. Anyone making a Spot check (DC 17) will discover a chunk of black, metallic material amidst the rocks and dust. This unidentifiable substance is about the size of the player's fist. There is nothing else at the site of any interest whatsoever, and no sign of the *Eagle Eye*.

While the players try to figure out what to do next, possibly moving to investigate the other planets in the system, the jump gate activates. However, the vortex is far too

distant for sensors to reveal if anything came through or not. Rasheed scans as best he can, but detects no engine signatures at all. Still, something must have opened the vortex, and since he picked up no engine traces heading towards the gate, that means there must have been an entry into the system.

If the players check out the other planets, they find little of interest. The message vids suggest the *Eagle Eye* visited all of them in turn, but found little of value. The second planet is covered with clouds, but has some indigenous life—a couple of the vids explain how a xenobiology shuttle returned laden with samples for further study, but no details. Otherwise, there is nothing of any importance to be found in the system. Eventually, the players will have to head back towards the jump gate, and when that happens, read the following:

Alternate Module Path

About a day after the players reach Djinn, the *Eagle Eye* will show up, concluding its journey from Ulata back to this system. There is a chance the players will stick around in Djinn waiting to see if this will happen, or because they are asking survey teams if they saw any vessels pass through the area. The Games Master should use Dave McCullough to suggest that the *Eagle Eye* would have been here by now if it left on schedule, so the best place to start the search is at Ulata. If that fails, and the players witness the ship's arrival, proceed along the path outlined here.

First, the *Eagle Eye* makes no attempt to communicate with the *Liberty* and instead makes a beeline to Orema. If the players follow, after about ten minutes a gun turret pivots around and starts taking potshots at the *Liberty*. Though the shots are poorly aimed, Rasheed immediately heads off to a safe distance rather than wait for the gunner to get lucky.

When the *Eagle Eye* gets close to Orema, it enters an orbit and disgorges a single shuttle, which heads quickly into the atmosphere, where it dives into a storm. The players will be too far away to see where the shuttle goes, or to follow if they wish to risk passing close to the *Eagle Eye*. They could always enter the atmosphere some distance away and fly low to the shuttle's previously reported position, but by the time they get there, they find no immediate sign of it. Locating it requires a detailed scan as mentioned in Encounter Four.

At this point, the players can either approach the *Eagle Eye* (which will not fire at them again) and dock, in which case proceed with Encounter Three. If they instead skip the ship entirely and go to the surface to follow the shuttle, go on to Encounter Four. It is possible that they might experience Encounter Four first in this way, if they return to the *Eagle Eye* later on, but that should not disrupt the flow of the module.

The trip to the gate is a long one, so you amuse yourselves by playing cards, watching vids, or whatever else strikes your fancy. As you get close, though, Rasheed's voice interrupts your reverie. 'Better come up here,' he calls out. 'I think I figured out what came through earlier.'

When you get to the bridge, he points at the scans on his panel monitor. 'It's pretty small, so I almost missed it,' he tells you. 'I'm not even sure how it made it all this way through hyperspace, but it's a short-range shuttlecraft.'

The shuttle is drifting in space, and no one aboard answers any calls from the players. They can detect power from the ship, but it does not respond to anything they try to do. Since the cargo bay is full of supplies, Rasheed cannot grapple the craft aboard, either. The players will have to visit it by either spacewalking, or docking to the slowly tumbling shuttle. Rasheed will fail any attempt to dock, but a player can succeed using a Pilot check (DC 20). If the player pilot fails to make the check by 10 or more, Rasheed will try again and succeed on the second try.

Inside the shuttle, the players discover a dead man crumpled in the pilot's seat. The corpse is that of Dr. Ivan Reinhardt, a geologist from the survey team, a fact obvious from the identification card in his left pocket. While it is obvious he has a deep wound in his chest, the player must make a Medical check (DC 11) to discover this was made by a serrated knife, and a second Medical check (DC 13) to determine that the victim has been dead for approximately 36 hours. Even if this latter check fails, the player will know the person died some time ago, as rigor mortis has clearly set in.

During the course of making these rolls, allow the player a Spot check (DC 13) to notice that some of the blood seems to have been disturbed, as if scraped around somewhat, but this was done well after death. Whatever made the thin scratchings must have been fairly small. Actually, they were made by a mouse-like creature that stowed away aboard the shuttle when the alien life forms in the *Eagle Eye's* xenobiology lab were released, as described later in Encounter Three.

Any pilot will see, after a few minutes of examining the shuttle's controls, that it was set on autopilot and directed to follow the beacon back to this jump gate. There is blood on the console, but the team's medic can easily determine this came from Reinhardt himself. He apparently had enough life left in him to set the course before perishing. Blood on other consoles also suggests that he might have left some kind of recorded message as well, and after a moment's checking, the players discover this is true. In fact, the

recording is still in progress! After they stop it and move to the start of the message, read them this:

After flaking the dried blood off the controls, you manage to engage the playback on the message Dr. Reinhardt left you. An image of the dying man appears on the monitor beside you. He is clutching his chest and blood is oozing around his fingers. With a raspy voice, he wheezes: 'Dying...setting auto...take shuttle back...only place I can...won't go to Djinn...he will be there! Help will come...I know it will! He went mad...couldn't handle...tried to remove, couldn't...then, the thing! Killed...so many dead...I escaped...get word to...ohhhh...'

At that the face on the screen slumps backwards in his seat. You can see the head loll backwards, twitch a couple of times, and then lay still. The image remains like that for some time, so after a bit you start fast-forwarding. The picture on the screen doesn't change at all, and you can't see any signs of motion from the face at all. He's obviously dead.

If the players patiently fast-forward through the recording, after about 10 hours of recorded time (15 minutes of actual elapsed time), anyone making an easy Spot check (DC 10) notices some motion on the edge of the screen. Something small and furry is just barely visible there, but they cannot discern any details. Actually, the mouse is busy scraping dried blood off the body for food. Fast-forwarding further, they finally reach the point where the screen flashes with yellow light, as the shuttle passes through the jump gate at about the 15-hour point. A few hours later, they see themselves enter the field of vision and start examining Dr. Reinhardt. The image cuts off when they engage the panel's playback function. No further sign of the strange creature is seen anywhere in the image.

Should the players check out the shuttle in any further detail, allow them each a Spot check (DC 14) to discover the mouse-sized rodent hiding in the shadows. If they are already aware of the creature's presence (either because they noticed the scratchings in the blood, or saw the furry critter on the recording) and are actively looking for it, they receive +4 circumstance bonus on their checks. Once noticed, the creature is easily captured. It is similar to a mouse, with thick, bristly brown fur, but underneath it possesses a thick armour shell similar to a carapace. A Knowledge (alien life) check (DC 13) will reveal that the creature has more in common with insects than mammals, but the player will not recognise the species no matter how well he rolled unless he has, by some miracle, been in the Ulata system before.

In fact, the mouse-like alien was one of a number of beasts captured and brought aboard by the xenobiology team during its visit to Ulata II. When the *Eagle Eye*'s captain went insane, he released these aliens, which are now roaming around in that ship. This one made its way onto the shuttle and came along for the ride with Reinhardt. During the passage, it got hungry, climbed up on his body and fed on the dried blood it found there. Since it prefers dark places, though, it did not linger in the light for long. The players will notice this tendency easily. The creature eats nearly anything, and could easily be kept as a pet if someone wants it. However, it has no sale value.

Examining the shuttle's autopilot settings also reveals that the ship followed the Djinn-Ulata jump beacon all the way here from a point somewhere within hyperspace, about halfway between the systems. This should prove to the players that the *Eagle Eye* was bound for Djinn, suggesting that they return there at once.

Encounter Three: The Ship

The flight back to Djinn will take slightly longer if the players insist on bringing the recovered shuttle along with them. Rasheed will explain this, but also notes that carrying the added mass should not affect his ability to pilot the *Liberty* through hyperspace. If they do encounter a whirlpool or some other dangerous phenomenon, he can always drop the shuttle if he needs to.

If the players don't suggest it on their own, Dave McCullough will insist the players do something about the dead body of Dr. Reinhardt. Otherwise, after a couple of days, the interior of the shuttle will start to get unpleasant. Their best bet is to wrap him up carefully and put him in one of the cargo pallets (after emptying it, naturally). They might also give him a space burial if they wish. In any event, anyone with any religious background should probably say a few words over the body. This is a good roleplaying opportunity - what kind of eulogy do you give a man you know nothing about?

Once the *Liberty* arrives back in the Djinn system, read the following:

At long last you arrive at Djinn once again, hoping you can find some sign of the Eagle Eye here. Perhaps one of the mining survey teams spotted it entering the system and saw where it went. After a moment, though, you realise that won't be necessary. Rasheed points at his scans excitedly and indicates a bright blip easily visible there. 'I think that's it!' he tells you. 'It's the right size, and matches the freighter configuration we were told to look for. Funny, though - it's orbiting Orema, and that planet's supposed to be restricted!'

Orema

The third planet of the Djinn system is similar to Earth, though a little hotter and drier. The atmosphere is oxygen-nitrogen, gravity is close to Earth normal, axial tilt 19 degrees, and the mean temperature is about 5 degrees above Earth's. The planet's orbit is much more elliptic, however, so the seasons reach greater extremes.

Orema was investigated as a potential colony site early after its discovery but is home to an intelligent humanoid race with a Bronze Age culture. A few scientific missions were undertaken there before EarthGov quarantined the planet under the Primitive Societies Protection Act of 2205. As a result, their language is known (though not in the *Liberty*'s limited computer banks), and that is where the name of their planet came from. The people themselves stand about a meter and a half tall, are dark-skinned, and have two fingers and a thumb on each hand. Their heads are more rounded than a human's, and their eyes are protected from the sun by ridges and thick eyebrows. In the harsh winters, they grow thick black hair over their bodies, but this moults off in the spring. They are primitive and polytheistic, with short lifespans and high birth rates. Their society is tribal and warfare between groups is common. The few science missions that visited the world found them very superstitious and likely to attack anyone on sight who struck them as different or frightening in any way.

Getting to Orema takes two hours. During the flight, the players can look up the information about Orema found in the sidebar, and can also contact any of several mining teams on asteroids scattered throughout the system. The surveyors do not want to be bothered but if pressed, will admit they saw the ship come through the jump gate a little over two days ago. Even though the ship went into orbit over a quarantined world, they paid no real attention. If it wasn't a raider, or a competing miner, they did not care what it was up to over there. The miners did not see the shuttle launch and enter Orema's atmosphere, because they were not looking that closely.

Bulk Freighter

Bulk freighters are civilian ships with two cylindrical, internal cargo pods. These vessels are much larger than a typical standard freighter or fast freighter, but are slow and difficult to manoeuvre. They are armed with two plasma cannons and four particle beams, enough to fend off a small contingent of raiders, but not a determined assault.

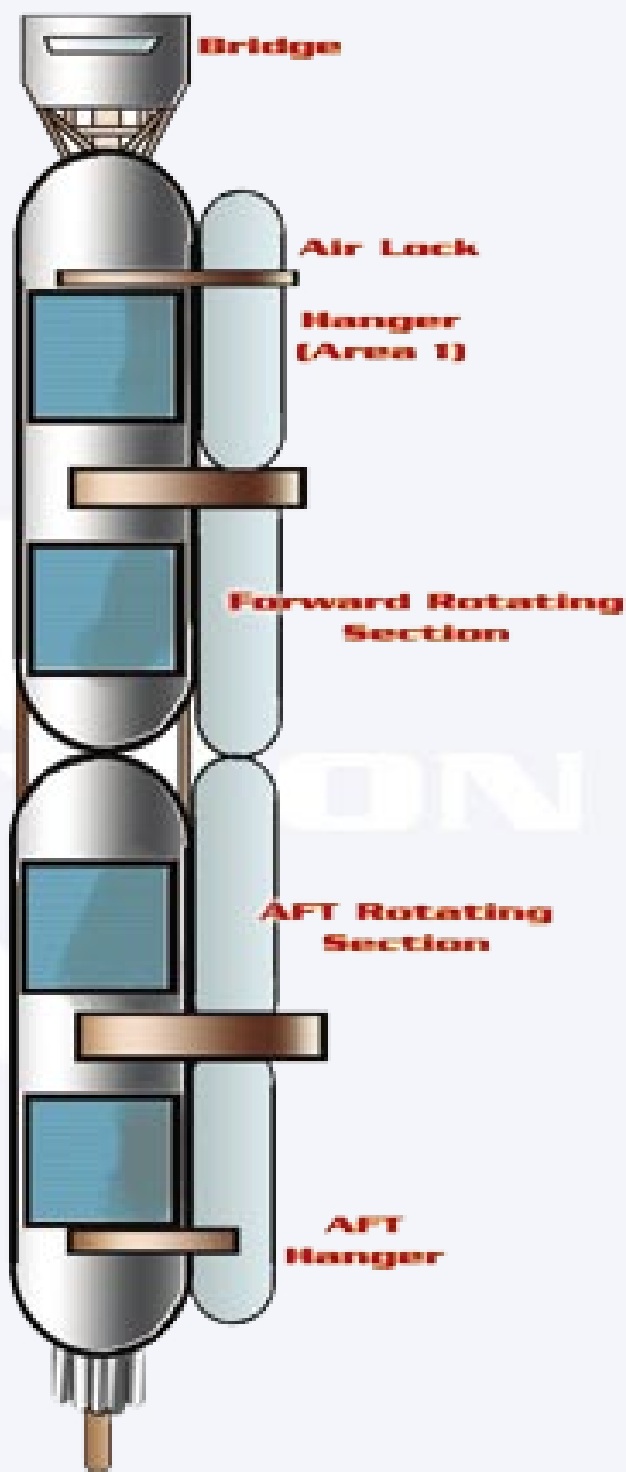
The two interior segments are designed for large and bulky cargo, but can also be modified fairly easily into auxiliary carriers, fielding six fighters per bay. The bays can also be fitted with rotating sections and passenger compartments



Forward Rotating Section



AFT Rotating Section



for simulated gravity when transporting personnel. In this mode, they can occasionally be found operating as long-range colony transports or mobile scientific labs.

Colossal II Spacecraft; hp 300; DV 3 (-10 size, +3 agility); DR 8; Spd -; Acc 1; Dec 1; Han +0; Sensor +0; Stealth 12; Cargo 600,000 lb.; 6 Officers, 1 Sensor Operator, 12 Crewmen (Configured as a Laboratory: Cargo 50,000 lb.; 2 Officers, 1 Sensor Operator, 24 Crew)

Weapons:

Two Medium Plasma Cannon; Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 30+6d10; Critical 19-20; Range 2

Two Twin-Linked Particle Beams; 1 Left, 1 Right; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 5+2d10; Critical 20; Range 2

Craft:

4 Shuttles

As you approach, you can see that the Eagle Eye is in fact nothing more than a converted bulk freighter; a civilian vessel about the size of the Veil of Tears. The freighter looks like two thick cylinders attached by a central strut, with a single thruster on each end and a bridge section sitting in the centre. The cylinders themselves are visibly rotating, ostensibly to provide gravity to anyone occupying those sections. There are two shuttle bays, one attached to each section just above the thrusters. As you circle around the vessel, you see that the forward bay is open to space, as if inviting you to enter.

The *Liberty* is too large to fit in the bay, but if the players still have the recovered shuttle, they can use it to get aboard the *Eagle Eye* easily enough or simply dock to one of the aft external ports. There are no responses to any hails, and no activity from the ship of any kind, save the steady rotation of the pods, so nothing prevents the players from boarding. If they dock, the entry tube takes them into one of the hangar airlocks. Interestingly, both bays are missing one shuttle. The one the players have is from the closed bay, while the one the captain took is from the open bay.

Area 1: Forward Hangar

The open bay is at the front end of the ship. If the players land here, or want to investigate this bay at all, they will need to close the bay doors. When they do this, either through a manual switch inside the bay (while in pressure suits), or from outside using a failsafe, the area pressurises automatically.

At first glance, there appears to be no one here, but if the players enter the remaining shuttle, they are immediately attacked. The blow comes from a scientist, Dr. Helen Taylor, who wields a wooden broomstick and aims it at the first player's head. If she misses, she screams in panic, drops the broom handle, and flees to the back of the shuttlecraft. If she hits, she swings again and again in desperation, striking even if the player has already retreated. After about six blows, or after she runs to the back of the ship, she collapses and starts sobbing on the floor.

Dr. Helen Taylor

Fourth Level Human Scientist

Hit Points: 10

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 11 (+1 Reflex)

Attacks: +1 melee or +2 ranged

Special Qualities: Primary Area of Study (Knowledge - alien life)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 9, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 12

Skills: Computer Use +11, Concentration +10, Knowledge (alien life) +16, Knowledge (history) +11, Medical +11, Profession (research scientist) +10, Speak Language (Drazi) +4, Speak Language (Centauri) +4, Spot +10, Technical (electronics) +10

Feats: Alertness, Alien Anatomy, Skill Focus (knowledge - alien life)

This 40 year old woman was one of the xenobiologists on the science team. Now, after the events of the past few days, she is almost completely mad with terror. She has seen Captain Travis go insane, kill some of her closest friends, and hunt her down until she hid inside this shuttle. Then, when he left, he stuck her inside for the past few days. She does not know how to fly the ship and there are no pressure suits aboard, so she cannot leave, and supplies inside ran out some time ago. If the players failed to find her within eight hours of their arrival on the *Eagle Eye*, she would be dead of thirst.

After a few hours and some decent companionship, Helen will settle down and might even be persuaded to lend her skills to the players during their time on the ship. She will not fight, however, and will not accompany them down to the planet. If they leave her alone on the ship, she locks herself in her quarters until they return.

If the players approach her, she screams and tries to crawl away, then drops into a catatonic state. If they talk to her, she only whimpers uncontrollably, ignoring their questions until finally falling unconscious after a couple of minutes. An easy Medical check (DC 9) will determine she is badly

in need of food and water, and judging from the look of her, she hasn't slept much, either. A successful Medical check (DC 17, +2 synergy bonus if the player has psychology as a profession) will tell the player she has been through some kind of terrible ordeal, but nothing more.

After an hour, a Medical check (DC 14) will bring Helen around. Each point of failure adds a further 30 minutes before she can be revived - only one check is permitted. She will be terrified at first and cannot answer questions, but a Medical check (DC 19) or a good dose of sedatives will calm her down enough to get her story. A telepath attempting to read her thoughts before this occurs will receive only a jumbled mess—visions of blood, dead people, a terrifying spider, and other horrid images.

Still whimpering a bit, the woman manages to speak, if only with difficulty. 'The specimens got loose. That was when it all started going wrong...' She snuffles a bit and then continues. 'I was looking for the big spider when we found the first body. Dr. Miller...the blood...' She starts crying again. After a moment, she presses on bravely. 'W-we thought maybe the spider did it, but it was a cut. Some kind of knife...we went to the bridge to tell the crew, and they were dead too. No one was flying the ship! I tried to find the others, but someone came out of the shadows and attacked Dr. Bruell...I saw the knife flash, and...' She breaks down completely, and you don't get the rest until a couple of minutes pass. Then she suddenly seems to get control of herself. 'It was the captain. Captain Travis. He was mad, totally crazy. Dr. Bruell fought. He was a big man, but he never stood a chance. Travis moved like—like nothing I've ever seen before. He cut him. The blood! God, I'll never forget that sight. I ran—I couldn't do anything! If I stayed, he would've killed me. I heard him following, but I got to the lift in time. I ran into the shuttle and hid—I don't know how long I was out. When I went to leave, the door wouldn't work. The bay was open to space, you see. I was stuck here. I thought you were him, come back to kill me. I'm sorry I attacked you. I'm sorry for everything!'

From this and the missing shuttle, the players can probably deduce that the captain fled the ship (remember, though, that they must wait at minimum an hour before they can get this information out of her). Whether he took the alien artefact along is something Helen does not know. She also does not realise that he is under its control, because she did not see he was wearing it. Everything went too fast, and the corridor was shadowy, so she did not notice the wires entering his skin or the black object fastened to his back. Even if she allows a telepath to do a deep scan, they will notice this detail only on a Spot check (DC 20), and even

then it just looks like a strange hump on his back—nothing more.

Dr. Taylor can give the players all the information they want about the creatures brought back from Ulata II, because she was busy studying them during most of the voyage. She knows they also found an alien wreck and were called home shortly thereafter, but nothing more about that. See the sidebar for further details.

Area 2: Forward Rotating Section

You pass through the bulkhead separating the hangar bay from the remainder of the freighter, and see a wide-open area beyond. The cargo bay looks very much like the interior of Babylon 5, only in a much smaller scale. Cabins, staterooms and labs line the slightly curved floor, arching away from you in both directions. Far above, you see the tops of other structures hanging over your head. The whole interior is rotating, slowly but noticeably, probably in order to provide artificial gravity for anyone walking around inside. Except for the barely audible hum of power flowing through conduits in the walls, all is quiet. Then, in the distance, you see a flutter of wings, and something flits by from one side of the bay to the other. You're not sure what it was, but you know it was not a bird.

This section of the ship contains mostly living quarters for the crew and scientists, as well as a couple of little-used labs. Several of the alien dragonflies flit about and will fly around above the players' heads. None of the other escaped creatures made their way into this section of the ship.

There are twelve staterooms, two labs, and four crew quarters, one of which is the captain's. The players can search these at their leisure, but find only personal effects of little value in the cabins. There are various journals and the like, but studies of these only yield dry and boring reports of geological or xenobiological data. If the players have not yet met Helen Taylor, they can learn the same information about the creatures that she can give them, except for any mention of their escape.

The crew quarters are unremarkable. There appears to be one captain, one engineer, and two others who performed multiple duties (navigation, copilot, etc.) and overlapped jobs on various shifts. While the three standard crew quarters appear normal, the captain's chamber appears to have been ransacked. Noticeably, a large carrying case has been broken into and its contents taken. Whatever was inside was held in place by straps - actually, it was the captain's archaeology collection, which included a serrated ceremonial knife.

The Creatures

Dr. Taylor was working very closely with the captured alien specimens. Information she has learned is shown below. Data in parenthesis is information she is not yet aware of.

General

All the fauna the scientists captured were the same sort of creature - a kind of half-insect, half-mammal combination, with hair growing out of a chitin-like external armour. This made them very hardy and able to stand up to the heavier and hotter atmosphere of Ulata II. As on most other worlds, some were herbivores and others predators. All seemed unused to light and tended to avoid it when they could. They captured several of the creatures simply by herding them into cages with flashlights.

Mouse

These little rodents were quite abundant on the planet's surface, mostly hiding under rocks. They are harmless omnivores. About half of the two dozen brought aboard were recaptured before the killing started, mostly because they seemed paralysed in the brightly lit corridors.

Dog

Three of these were captured, and one was recovered. They are short, boxy creatures with a stubby neck and earless head. One of the scientists thought they looked like hairless Scottish terriers, so he referred to them as 'dogs.' They are vicious and did not hesitate to bite any hand that got too close to their heads. The four sharp teeth, ideally suited for penetrating armour, could go right through flesh all the way to the bone. (One of the escaped dogs is still alive, the other having become a spider meal. It will attack the players during their exploration of the forward half of the ship.)

Turtle

This squat beast has four legs that jut out from underneath a tortoise-shell type dome of heavy armour. Each leg ends in a cluster of sharp claws that can easily bury themselves in the rocky ground. As long as the creature holds on, it is immune to predators, as not even the sharpest tooth can get through the thick shell. If turned over, however, the softer underbelly is an easy target. The turtle is otherwise a harmless herbivore. The scientists captured one by waiting until it moved across sandy soil, whereupon they simply picked it up.

Dragonfly

These smaller creatures fly using wings fully three times as wide as their body is long. Their bodies are only lightly armoured, but are very shaggy. They performed the same duties on Ulata II that bees do on Earth, moving between flowers and helping to ensure pollination. They are harmless creatures, and dozens of them now flit about inside the ship, looking for something to eat.

Spider

This six-legged creature originally had a body about a quarter of a metre long, though it has by now noticeably grown. It has long claws on each foot and can jump prodigiously, whereupon it will seize its prey with its feet and drill through the armour with its single spike of a tooth. It shed its external armour once while they had it aboard, and after this process was complete, the creature was about ten percent larger than before. Despite its size and fearsome look, it seemed frightened of humans and tried to avoid them whenever possible. (This monstrosity has now grown to about twice its original size, its rapid expansion brought on by the lighter gravity and atmosphere as well as the abundant food supplies it has found aboard. It now makes its home in the aft engineering section, where it has cocooned several bodies and produced an egg sac, which it will defend to the death.)

The two labs in this area are filled with geological samples and the like. Rocks of just about any type imaginable have been collected, sealed, and catalogued. Some are on tables, broken or cracked by various instruments. Unless one of the players happens to be a geologist, none of this will be of any interest whatsoever. A geologist can tell these rocks came from different planets, and can identify several types (volcanic, slate, sandstone, etc) but nothing of any real value.

One of the two labs stinks of death, and anyone entering must make a Constitution check (DC 10) to avoid vomiting. Under a table near the entrance lie two bodies, both with multiple stab wounds. They appear to be where they fell, in a pool of dried blood. A Medical check (DC 12) reveals they died about three days before. If the players leave the door to the lab open, one of the dragonfly creatures swoops

inside and lands on one of the bodies, where it wastes no time beginning to chew on the decaying flesh.

Area 3: Bridge

This compartment lies off the travel tube between the two cargo sections. As the players leave the first cargo bay, they can visit the bridge or simply continue on to the next bay. Remember that this section is in zero-G (see p64 in the main rulebook). A painted label along the wall indicates that the bridge lies at the end of the side corridor and is for authorised personnel only. The bulkhead doors at each end are closed, so nothing has been through here since the captain departed.

Anyone making a Spot check (DC 14) as they approach the bridge door will notice a few flecks of dried blood along the walls nearby. This is blood that floated through the entrance when the captain left after slaying the crew. If the players proceed into the bridge, read the following, and make them perform a Constitution check (DC 10) or lose their lunch. Vomiting in zero gravity is not a pretty sight...

You open the door and look upon a charnel house. Three bodies hang motionless in the still air, two still strapped to their chairs while the other drifts aimlessly along. The stench of decaying flesh assaults your nostrils, and globes of dried blood drift before you like so many blackened marbles. The corpse in front of you appears to have had its throat cut. You can't remember ever seeing a scene that looked quite so horrific in all your lives.

The usual Medical check (DC 11) will show these people have been dead for about three days, but the players cannot determine the precise timing (in comparison with the other bodies) without access to more sophisticated equipment. These were, however, the first to die. Captain Travis came here shortly after the alien device affixed itself to his back and took his crew by surprise. Two of them died before they could get out of their chairs, and the third simply wasn't prepared to do battle in zero-G. If the players look for holsters or any evidence that the men were armed, they find none. They can, however, learn their identities by checking their ID cards: Leonard Thompson, Ken Dupree, and Mark Juarez. These match up with the information found in the crew quarters back in Area 2, leaving the captain's body strangely absent. If at this point the players have not figured out the captain is to blame, this will be a pretty huge clue.

The players can examine the controls and determine, on a Pilot check (DC 12), that the ship was sent on this course by deliberate command. From this, players can easily deduce that someone must have been on the bridge after the ship

exited the Djinn jump gate in order to direct the vessel into orbit over Orema. Furthermore, since the bodies have been here longer than that, whoever it was must have stepped right over them to enter the commands. Surely by this time all fingers are pointing at Captain Travis!

One final thing the players might try is to check the log reports. If they do, they discover the civilian crew was not all that good about keeping records. There are only a couple of recent log entries.

After some fiddling, you pull up the second-to-last report, which is dated almost two weeks ago. The image shows a bearded face, unlike the smoothly shaven features of the dead crewmen. The captain's expression is one of boredom. 'Well, we're here,' he says, obviously stifling a yawn. 'The first place the scientists wanted to go was the second planet, naturally. I've got us in a comfy orbit while they scour the surface for samples. You'd think they were in heaven when they all climbed onto the shuttles. I'm all by myself on the ship now, so I thought I'd take a moment to actually enter something in the log.' He sighs and sits there for a moment, as if trying to decide what to say. 'Well, nothing really comes to mind. We flew the ship here, and now we're here. Nothing much else going on. Sheesh, and they wonder why I hardly ever update these damn things!' With that, he reaches up and switches off the recording.

The next, and final, log is only four days ago. The same bearded face appears again on the screen. 'Me again,' he says, sounding a bit more agitated this time. He actually looks upset instead of bored. 'Guess what? We just got a call from the big boys back at IPX ordering us back home right away! We're only halfway through the system survey, too. I think it has something to do with that wreck we found on Seven Epsilon. Those damn scientists must've found something really valuable and not told me about it. Now it's gonna cost me my extended duty pay!' He seems to hesitate for a moment, running his fingers through his beard and controlling his anger. 'Well, there's not much I can do about it, I guess. I'll fly the blasted ship back to Earth if they want me to, but next time they want me to come back out this far I'm gonna demand full payment in advance!' With that, he angrily switches off the recording, and that's the end of that.

The players can also investigate the previous logs if they wish. The preceding one discusses the conversion of the *Eagle Eye* into the survey role, while the six earlier reports discuss routine shipping runs between Earth and various colonies. All reports are made by the same man,

Captain William R. Travis. If the players watch carefully and make a Listen check (DC 14), they will hear the 'IPX' name mentioned on two other occasions. If confronted with the corporation's name, Helen Taylor will grudgingly admit that the research team works directly for IPX, and that the ship is one of that company's assets. This should suggest to the players that either Anderson is with IPX or his mysterious clients are, but allow them to draw their own conclusions—for now.

Area 4: Aft Rotating Section

The bulkhead door opens up to reveal another rotating area like the previous one you saw. This one contains more of the flying dragonfly creatures, though, as well as something down the hall that looks like a large tortoise creeping slowly along on clawed feet. A foul smell fills the air, but it is not nearly as bad as what you experienced in the bridge or the lab earlier. As you watch the floor rotating past, you spot dried blood smeared all over the deck. However, there are no bodies in sight, and no sign of any trail or footprints leading away from the scene.

Actually, there are eight blood pools on the floor, scattered liberally across the interior of the cargo bay. These are spots where Captain Travis murdered someone and left the body, whereupon it was later taken away by the alien spider. By the time the creature got there, the blood was too dry to leave a trail as the creature dragged them away. If Helen Taylor is present, she can identify the spot where Travis killed her fellow scientist, but she has no idea where the corpse might have gone.

The Dog

Small Alien Creature

Character Level: 2 (10 hp)

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40 ft.

DV: 16 (+6 Reflex, +1 size)

Attacks: +1 melee

Damage: Bite 1d6-1

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 2 (chitinous armour)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +0

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 6, Cha 4

Skills: Climb +2, Hide +6, Jump +3, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Spot +8

Feats: Improved Initiative

As the players explore this area, the alien dog-creature will be hunting them. It is starving, having been without food

for over a day now, and will be desperate enough to attack even a group of players. However, the Games Master can make the encounter more challenging by waiting for the players to split up or disperse throughout the deck.

The dog is, like the rest of the creatures from the planet, hairy and covered with a thick natural chitin shell that makes it difficult to hurt. It can deliver a painful bite with its sharp teeth, even through a layer of body armour.

This area has four very large laboratories and little else of interest, except one large clump of discarded hairy armour. Helen Taylor will announce that this is from the spider, so it must have shed its shell once again. This piece looks noticeably larger than the shell she remembers from before, as well.

Lab #1: This lab contains nothing but alien plants gathered from Ulata II, all neatly arranged in containers and maintained under ultraviolet lights. Helen will explain that the planet was covered with clouds, but these plants seemed quite capable of surviving entirely on UV radiation. There are no bodies here and no evidence of anything unusual.

Lab #2: This was where the vast majority of the live alien creatures were originally kept. After the mad captain set them loose, a few were recaptured, but most were not. Those that were put back in their cages are now dead from lack of care. These include several dragonflies, a few mice, and one of the dogs. There are also three dead scientists on the floor, all killed by stab wounds three days before. One corpse lies next to a broken glass cage, as if he knocked it aside during a fight, or possibly tried to use it against his assailant.

Lab #3: The furniture in this room has all been pushed to the back to accommodate the massive chunks of decayed black metal that lie in a pile near the centre. Pieces of this material have been broken free and sit on tables, near various instruments and chemicals. The remnants of handwritten notes lay shredded all around the place, and the two computers along the back wall are smashed wrecks. Two more bodies can be found here, one stabbed through the heart. The other is pushed up against the wall in a seated position. The arms and legs have been tied, and the throat was cut. A Medical check (DC 11) reveals that, according to the rope marks on the wrists, this particular scientist (Dr. Philip Graser) was bound in this position before he was killed.

Anyone investigating the corroded black metal can tell, on a Knowledge or Profession check (DC 13) related to metallurgy, that this is nothing like any kind of metal known to science. It is also oxidising quickly, crumbling into a powder. A few samples are stored in airtight jars on a shelf, but the lumps on the floor are useless to anyone except

as curiosities. The black material matches the clumps the players might have found during their own check of the crash site on Ulata VII Epsilon, if they noticed and recovered a sample during their trip there.

If Helen Taylor is here, she immediately notes an empty case in the back corner. 'It's gone!' she exclaims, looking inside the open container. 'We found something down there—I don't know how to describe it, really. Some kind of box with wires coming out of it. We thought it was part of the dead pilot's spacesuit, but when we told our people back home about it, they got really excited. That was when they ordered the captain to bring us back. They told us to package it up and not touch it, so that's what we did. Someone must've taken it!'

If pressed after this, she reveals all she knows about the dead Yolu in the ship, but she keeps her mouth shut if asked who her employers were. If a telepath scans her, they can learn she worked for IPX, but otherwise she will not voluntarily reveal this information, unless confronted with the truth directly (see the 'Bridge' section, p74, for more information).

Lab #4: This lab was used for closer examinations of the various samples and life forms recovered by the survey teams. A variety of scientific instruments, computers, microscopes, and chemicals are stored here. Slides that were in use during the return trip contain water and soil samples, and one of the alien mice has been dissected over on one of the tables. The refrigerator also contains several more dead creatures. There are no scientists here, however.

Along the wall are several airtight containers. Two are empty, while a third contains the body of one of the dog-like aliens. The fourth contains the mummified remains of the Yolu pilot found on Ulata VII Epsilon. Anyone looking at this body can tell it's very old, and is that of an alien of some kind. Only a Medical check (DC 17) will identify the age at well over several centuries, and an equally difficult Knowledge (alien life) check (DC 17) is required to determine the race. Helen will confirm it is Yolu, however, and explain where it was found.

If a character examines the body very carefully for at least ten minutes, he can discover, on a Medical check (DC 13), that there are several small holes in the corpse's back. These holes are all about a centimetre across, and show signs of having recently been made. If asked, Helen will claim she does not know where they came from. She says she did not know the wires were actually inside the corpse's skin (a lie—at this point she has realised her mistake giving out too much information about the artefact). She will, however, assure the players that none of their instruments would have made such marks.

Area 5: Engine Section

As the players head towards the back side of the after cargo bay, read out the following:

You notice as you move towards the rear of the ship that, unlike the other bulkheads you've seen, this one is open. The lighting beyond appears to have been deactivated or broken, because the corridor there is completely dark. You also pick out one other detail as you get closer, too. There are blood marks on the floor nearby, where the rotating section ends and the rest of the ship begins...and this time you can see a trail leading into the corridor!

The blood is dried, but a trail of spots clearly heads off down the corridor, gradually dispersing until a clear direction cannot be determined. This is the evidence left behind by the spider after it killed the last surviving scientist as he tried to make his way to the shuttle bay. The man was hauled up into the engine room and cocooned near the ceiling, in the back corner.

As with the bridge, the passageway from the cargo bay to the aft hangar splits off, the side passage clearly marked 'Engineering – Authorised Personnel Only.' The bulkhead at the end of this corridor is open, but all the lights are off. This is not because the spider was smart enough to switch off the lights - the crew simply had no reason to be in there, so they left the lights out. Anyone who looks will find the switch easily and can turn them on but do not suggest something so obvious to the players. You might be surprised - they could quite easily assume they are broken and just leave the place dark. The text here assumes the players do reactivate the lights, but if not, adjust to make the room seem extra spooky.

The engine room is surprisingly similar to what you saw aboard the Veil of Tears, only smaller. There are consoles, pipes, and machines everywhere, although nothing you see makes sense to anyone without engineering experience. All is quiet except a steady hum from the power plant along the far wall, and it doesn't take an expert to recognise that the engines were shut off once the ship entered orbit. Nothing seems out of place, though, and you don't see any further evidence of foul play.

If the players explore the room further, anyone moving up towards the ceiling will notice something white inside the shadows behind one of the machines along the right-hand wall. If they investigate, let them get close before the spider attacks (see sidebar). It will try to snag them in its claws while clinging to its perch with its two back legs. If it

makes the catch, it can pull the player into the darkness and use its bite attack.

The Spider

Medium-size Alien Creature

Character Level: 8 (24 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 50 ft.

DV: 20 (+10 Reflex)

Attacks: +8 melee

Damage: Bite 1d6+1 plus venom

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 2 (chitinous armour)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +4

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 4

Skills: Climb +16, Hide +12, Jump +12, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Spot +5

Feats: Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Toughness

Spider Venom: Any living creature bitten by the alien spider will suffer the effects of its poison - Injury DC 18, Initial Damage 1d6 Constitution, Secondary Damage 1d6 Constitution.

The alien spider is a cunning predator and can eat just about anything. It has stayed alive by consuming the bodies left behind on the station, as well as the last surviving scientist and one of the dog-beasts. If approached by a group of humans, it will try to stay hidden, but if it gets a shot at one of them by themselves, it attacks. After all, it is hungry again, and now it has its brood to think about.

Should the players avoid the engine room and not encounter the spider, its eggs will hatch in approximately 24 hours. The young will immediately begin to feed on the bodies stored within the cocoons. If the players show up while this is happening, the spider will attack anyone who approaches, and the young will join the fun. The young spiders have the same statistics as above except Strength, Dexterity and Constitution are halved, and they have only two hit points each. The young score only 1-2 damage on a hit and have no poison. There are 45 of them.

Two days after the hatching, the bodies will be completely consumed and the spiders will head out into the rest of the ship, scattering throughout Area #4. By this point they have all grown slightly and possess two more hit points, but are otherwise still fairly weak enemies. They have the advantage now of attacking from hiding, jumping on their

target's back to deliver their bites. Worse still, the larger spider will lurk in the shadows as well.

After two more days with no food, the young spiders will begin to feed on each other, as will the mother. Reduce the number of spiders by half, but add two more hit points to all the survivors except the parent. After another day, there are only six young left, each with another two hit points and an additional point of damage (1-3 points) scored by their bite attacks. The following day leaves no young, the mother having eaten them all. After this, the mother will attack anything that moves. Three days after that, it will die of starvation.

If the players remain wary (as they should, considering all the clues dropped in the module so far), the spider hides in the darkness behind its cluster of cocoons. It will only attack if a player tries to move close enough to the edge to get inside and investigate the furry white blobs. The beast does not like the light, after all. If the players chase it out somehow, it is quite capable of jumping across the room, and can attack just fine this way in zero gravity. After all, it has had several days to practice and adapt.

In the back of the shadowy area, the players will find an egg sac containing a clutch of forty-plus spider eggs. These will hatch in one more day and the young will feed on the preserved bodies. Should the players try to keep any of the eggs, the creatures will attempt to eat the first thing they find after hatching, people included. If the players bypass the spider encounter entirely and try to ignore it (or lock it up), anyone returning to the ship after several days will find themselves beset by a horde of small, hungry spiders!

If the players wish to fly the ship, they must restart the engines. This requires a difficult Technical (engineering) check (DC 20, one hour per attempt) as well as a Computer Use check (DC 26) to break through the authorisation lock on the restart sequence. If the players find the captain on Orema and ask him for the combination before he dies, he will give it to them, but only if they ask. Since it is unlikely they can successfully pass both checks without significant help, or a lot of time working on the Technical (engineering) check, they might have to leave the ship in orbit at the conclusion of the module. This is fine, so long as they log the ship as salvaged to prevent anyone else making off with their claim.

Area 6: Aft Hangar

The bulkhead entrance to this hangar is closed and the bay is pressurised. Inside, the players will find two shuttles, both empty. There is little of interest in this area—no blood, no bodies, and no sign of any of the alien beasts. If the players check out the shuttles, they will find a

few scattered chunks of the black material from Lab #3 scattered around inside, clear evidence that this was how the wreck was ferried up to the *Eagle Eye*.

Concluding the Tour of the Ship

By the time the players have completely explored the ship, they should have learned, or at least deduced, that Captain Travis went mad, killed everyone, and fled on the one missing shuttle. Although the players found no specific evidence showing he took the alien artefact with him, it should not be too much of a leap of logic to figure out that he did. After all, the various logs clearly show something was found, and now there is no sign of it aboard the ship.

The players may wish to conclude the module after exploring the ship. If they do, Dave McCullough should gently remind them that their mission was to locate not only the vessel and its crew, but also the missing artefact that was of such great importance. The logical place to look for it now would be the planet below. Hopefully, they will be smart enough to figure this out on their own.

It is also possible the players may 'jump the gun' and head to the planet straightaway, without exploring the rest of the ship. If that happens, virtually everything will be the same when they return, except that Helen Taylor will die within a few hours if not rescued from the shuttle in Area #1. Additionally, if they spend more than a day on the surface, the spider-creature's brood will hatch, giving the players a great deal of trouble when they return.

Encounter Four: The Planet

Travis on Orema

Orema is a blue-and-brown planet that contains approximately 30% water, much of that in the polar icecaps. Areas away from the coast tend to be rocky and arid. Around the equator, there are only deserts. The best opportunity for life appears at the narrow temperate zones midway between the equator and the poles, and in fact, scans from orbit show those regions possess a fairly comfortable climate. It was there that the mad Captain Travis headed when the voices in his mind urged him to flee the *Eagle Eye*.

In the northern hemisphere, a civilisation has arisen within the temperate zone. The people there are at the Bronze Age level, although they are still tribal. The appearance of a shuttle or other ship in the sky fills them with superstitious fears. Captain Travis landed near one settlement and was attacked, but he slew many warriors with his PPG. It was the ceremonial knife he brought

along that awed the natives more than anything, however. To them, it is a symbol of godhood - a silver metal that cannot be dented or damaged, with a blade sharper than anything they have ever seen.

When the players begin checking out the planet, read out the following.

The world below is mostly brown, save for the occasional blue of ocean and white of clouds. It seems to be an arid, dry place with far less water than Earth. There is no sign of any sort of electronic signal coming from anywhere on the surface.

When you call up information on Orema in the Eagle Eye's computers, you are told it is a restricted world with an indigenous population still in the early stages of development. Travel there is forbidden, except in certain circumstances, such as a dire emergency or a rescue mission. Considering what happened here on the ship, you suspect you could easily convince any tribunal that visiting Orema fell under at least one of those two categories, if not both.

Investigating the *Eagle Eye*'s records more carefully, the players can discover all the information about the planet shown in the sidebar on p78. The ship's records include some articles and references to the earlier surveys, suggesting that the language spoken by the Oremans is relatively simplistic. However, no automatic translation programs are available.

The players might try to scan for the shuttle, but unless it is broadcasting, they cannot find it. The sensors on the ship are just not that sophisticated. Dave will suggest a closer look, and Rasheed will agree that a flyover could better detect the missing shuttle. After all, no one on the planet should have anything like it, so as soon as he gets the *Liberty's Fortune* close enough, he should be able to detect it by metal content alone.

After the *Liberty* begins flying over the temperate zones, the pilot will detect the shuttle quite readily. It is sitting in a small valley about four kilometres away from a native village. The ground there is reasonably open and provides an excellent place to land. If the players wish to be cautious and land a short distance away, there are plenty of open areas available. However, it is impossible to set down without being spotted by the natives. This section is not terribly rough or mountainous, so there is nothing to hide their arrival from observers on the surface. If they have to walk any distance to reach the shuttle, you might need to modify the following text slightly.

The atmosphere analysers show the air outside is perfectly safe to breathe, so you open the hatch and step outside. Orema's air is warm and dry, and you find yourself smiling as you suck in real, unrecycled oxygen for the first time in weeks. The terrain outside is rocky, with scattered trees here and there, sometimes in clusters.

In the distance to the right, you see more vegetation along what you recall from the air was a small creek or stream. A small ridge creates an artificial horizon to your left, and at the base of this formation the shuttle you came for is clearly visible. It does not appear to be damaged and seems to have made a controlled landing.

The shuttle is closed and the lock engaged. A player will need to make a simple Technical (electronics) check (DC 11) to get inside. Unfortunately, there is nothing of any importance within. The captain made no logs during his flight, so all the players find will be a shuttle in perfect working order. They could easily fly it back to the *Eagle Eye* if they wish—Captain Travis made no attempt to sabotage it.

If the players search the surrounding area, they can easily tell that the rocky ground has been recently disturbed by the passage of many feet. A Spot check (DC 10) shows a small army approached the shuttle from over the ridge, the direction of the village. These people were wearing some kind of shoes without heels (the Oremans equivalent of moccasins, actually). A second Spot check (DC 12) reveals the presence of drag marks in addition to footsteps, leading away from the area. This is the result of a second visit by natives who carried their dead back to the village. Only a difficult Spot check (DC 19) can pick out the occasional heeled footprint, moving towards the settlement. A bonus Spot check (DC 15) will pick out barely noticeable spatters of blood amidst the rocks, and if any Spot check exceeds DC 20, the player will discover a bronze dagger half-covered by dirt and stones.

At some point while the players are searching either the shuttle or the surrounding area, a group of warriors will come charging over the ridge. The players will be taken by surprise, giving the natives a round of free actions, unless a lookout has been stationed to watch out for just such a thing. If this has been done, give the player three Spot rolls in turn, the first of DC 20, the second DC 16, and the third DC 12. This represents his chances to see the Oremans as they sneak their way closer through the trees and from behind rocks. Success in the first check allows him to notice 'something moving in the trees,' and provides automatic success on the second check, where he can tell the motion is coming from a group of natives making their way towards the shuttle. Success in the third check or any

earlier one allows him to identify at least a dozen natives, armed with spears, and they do not appear to be friendly! Depending on the player's reactions to the approach, the group will have either six, three, or one rounds to take action before the aliens arrive.

Native War Party (15)

First Level Oremans Soldier; hp 8; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 11; +3 melee, +2 ranged; Fort +3, Ref +3, Wis -2; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Hide +2, Listen +0, Move Silently +2, Spot +0; Lightning Reflexes, Run, Weapon Focus (club)

Standard Equipment: Club, knife, primitive armour (DR 1 against unarmed attacks only)

As a race, Oremans are strong (+2 Strength) but are not very bright or forward thinking (-2 Intelligence and Wisdom). They are primitive and superstitious, and will never allow themselves to use items of technology, believing it either demon's work or an artefact of the gods. Oremans have good hearing and receive a +2 racial bonus to Listen checks. In all other respects, they may be treated as human though they do not receive bonus feats or skill points.

The natives charge fearlessly over the ridge, screaming loud battle-cries as they attack anyone they see. Each carries two flint spears and throws the first, holding the second for a melee attack (treat as a club). Should they lose this weapon for some reason, they attempt to grapple and go for the throat with their knife. They fight to the death, because they have been ordered by their god to kill anyone they find near the shuttle.

The natives attack fearlessly, but stupidly. If the players think about it, they can simply retreat into the shuttle, or the *Liberty*, and blow their opponents away as they try to reach the door. Or, they can shut themselves inside, leaving the villagers to smash their spears against the metal walls uselessly. If they do this, the warriors shout battle cries for a while, milling around, until finally pulling back and departing after convincing themselves they were victorious.

After the battle, the players can search the bodies if they wish, but all they find is some simple bronze armour and the weapons mentioned in the sidebar. A Spot or Medical check (DC 17) will detect something odd, however—a letter 'T' carved into the skin of each warrior's chest. A Medical check (DC 14) can tell that these wounds are about three days old and were made with a serrated blade, not one of these crude bronze knives.

If the players find any of the natives still alive, they can question him if they wish, although understanding his primitive speech will be difficult even if trying to interpret their sign language. Let the interrogators make up to three Intelligence checks as follows. Succeeding in the first allows them to attempt the second, and if they make that one, they can try the third.

DC 12: ‘You come from sky. Not gods like Trav-ess. You are demons! We kill! God Trav-ess will save us from you!’ At this he spits and goes into a rage, so questioning him further has to wait a couple of minutes. If the players ask about Travis, continue with another Language check.

DC 15: ‘Trav-ess come three *iska* ago! He mighty god, with power to slay from afar! He has silver knife of Heaven and black *ulak* of might!’ Again he becomes agitated and struggles to escape. If the players press on by attempting to convince the prisoner they are gods, too, let them try the last Language roll.

DC 17: ‘You are powerful, but not like Trav-ess-god! We cut him, but his blood return to him! We bow to him—his will is our will! He stronger than you! He stronger than all!’ At that he begins to scream for Travis, forcing the players to shut him up.

Further questioning gets the players nowhere. The prisoner simply begins to chant the name of Travis over and over again (this word, at least, can be understood without benefit of an Intelligence check), as if their new god will be of any help now. He won’t, though. The captain does not care about his subjects at all.

Getting Into the Village

From the clues on the bodies and from their prisoner, the players should be able to gather that Travis is in the Oremman village. He is actually inside the chief’s palace (which, while palatial to the native, is really just a flimsy adobe building), having slain the former ruler with a single slash of his blade. The challenge for the players is getting to him. Obviously, the natives will attack on sight, so the only chance is to sneak inside the village somehow and approach him from hiding. The players might consider putting on the bronze armour and disguising themselves as Oremans, but considering the obvious physical differences, that will be highly difficult. Even a quick observation of the villagers from a distance will reveal that they never wear hoods or clothes heavier than a simple tunic, so walking around like monks is not a solution, either.

The Village

More aptly described as a small town, this Bronze Age settlement contains approximately a thousand inhabitants. It consists of a low wooden palisade surrounding dozens of wood or adobe buildings, most of these set partially or completely into the ground. In the centre, a much larger, tall palace dominates the scene. It is constructed entirely of adobe and is guarded at both entrances by four warriors. Patrols move throughout the town constantly, and cover not only the city gate but also the towers at each corner and watchposts along the walls themselves. The gates normally stand open, with hunters and farmers moving in and out freely, but everyone going inside is questioned and checked closely. Even the low wagons that occasionally pass are investigated and prodded thoroughly.

Essentially, the Games Master should let the players take however long they wish to develop a creative plan for reaching the central building. Waiting until nightfall is a good idea, but there will be plenty of patrols in the town and on its walls. Any fighting will quickly bring help from additional nearby warriors, unless the players manage to deal with the guards in complete stealth. Otherwise, to get past the natives, the players will need to come up with some decent idea that makes sense (say, making a diversion by setting off explosions in one direction while they attack the guards and scale the wall somewhere else). Trying to fast-talk a native who cannot understand their language will not work. Also, if they attempt a frontal assault, there are at least a hundred warriors who will attack en masse. Even a well-armed group will have little chance to avoid being overrun.

If the players make an attempt to enter the village and are discovered, use unlimited numbers of guards (with stats equal to those on the sidebar on p79) to drive them away. Getting to the palace should be extremely difficult without help. There exists a significant chance that a lone scout, or that some or all of the group, will be discovered and captured. If this occurs, the priests (see below) will visit them and make their pitch, then help them to escape and inform anyone who got away.

The Priests

After the players are driven back, a group of four Oremans exits the village and heads towards the ship. These men are noticeably older than most of the warriors the players have seen, and instead of weapons, they carry simple staves. Their tunics are all of a uniform grey colour, and they wear their hair bound up on their heads—something no other native seems to do. At closer range, the players can also see that the aliens’ eyebrows have been removed (ritually, but the players will not know this detail yet).

The Oremen priests stride purposefully directly towards the place where they saw the *Liberty's Fortune* land, looking for the players. If the shuttle is along the path, they stop there first, then press on if they do not meet the group. When they do find the players, they halt and make no attempt to attack or fight, even if fired upon. They merely wait until the 'sky-dwellers' approach, without any concern for their own safety.

The Oremans show no fear of you at all. In fact, they seem quite calm. Finally, one of them walks forward two steps, making no attempt to attack. He looks directly at you and says in halting English, 'Hello, sky-dweller. I am called Goren.' Then he waits calmly for your reply.

Priests (3)

Fourth Level Oremen Diplomat; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; DV 11; +3 melee, +2 ranged; Fort +1, Ref +1, Wis +8; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 15
Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local area) +9, Listen +11, Sense Motive +10; Iron Will, Resist Scan
Standard Equipment: Knife, primitive armour (DR 1 against unarmed attacks only)

Goren

Fourth Level Oremen Diplomat, 2nd Level Telepath (P6)

Hit Points: 14

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+3 Reflex)

Attacks: +4 melee or +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Improved Diplomacy

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +11

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +10, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local area) +9, Knowledge (telepathy) +7, Listen +11, Sense Motive +10, Spot +4, Telepathy +6.

Feats: Iron Will, Meditation, Resist Scan

Abilities: Accidental scan, mind shield, sense telepathy, surface scan, warning

Standard Equipment: Knife, primitive armour (DR 1 against unarmed attacks only)

These are normally the elders and decision-makers of the village, but the arrival of Captain Travis has upset the natural order of things. Now Travis rules with an iron fist, and destroys those who disagree with him. The four surviving priests (Goren, Ladal, Tyrie, and Neshka)

survived by caving in to his demands and pretending to follow him, but Goren has discovered the man's true nature by surreptitiously scanning him. He knows Travis's true identity, and also that he is insane. Something else calls to him from within his mind, ordering him to do things. Goren knows now that there is nothing godlike about Travis, and believes the man to be possessed. He and his three fellow priests know there is nothing they can do to get rid of the captain, but the other aliens from the sky surely could!

Goren is the chief elder and priest for his village. He has what his people refer to as the 'inner eye,' which marks him as touched by the Gods. In other words, he is a telepath. He learned English by scanning the surface thoughts of Captain Travis during conversation, thereby learning to associate certain words with the human's meaning. His vocabulary is extremely limited, though, and he simply cannot understand higher-level concepts like science or technology. Instead, things he sees the players using are referred to in simple terms. A PPG is a 'fire-thrower,' metal is 'sky-silver,' and any aliens among the group are 'demons.' Goren will not speak to any non-humanlike alien (i.e., he would speak to a Centauri or Minbari but not a Narn or Drazi). If the party leader happens to be an alien, he asks the nearest human or humanlike player to please ask their servant to remain silent. He fears that addressing a demon as an equal will cost him dearly in the afterlife.

If the players ask him questions, here are his likely answers. Remember that Goren speaks only haltingly, in short words (one or two syllables at most), and none of his fellows know English at all. Goren's goal is to convince the players to help him rid his people of the possessed Captain Travis, and he will do or say just about anything to gain their trust and cooperation. He figures the players cannot possibly be any worse than Travis!

'Who are you?' 'I am Goren. Who are you?'

'How do you speak our language?' 'I have the inner eye. I looked upon the sky-man's mind and saw his speech made true. This I speak to you now.'

'You mean you're a telepath? Are you reading us right now?' 'I do not know that word. I must touch to see within your minds. I will if you wish.' He takes a step forward. If the players allow it, he will touch and scan them, although this seems unlikely. A player telepath can resist, and if a block is established, Goren ceases scanning at once. 'You bear the inner eye,' he realises, 'I am sorry, my lord. I did not know.' He treats that player as the elder and leader thereafter. This is a superb way to reveal a telepath among the players if one of them is a rogue who has successfully kept his talent secret up to now.

‘Where is Captain Travis?’ ‘He is in the palace. He rules our people now. I have come to ask your help. We would have him return to the sky.’

‘Why? Don’t you think he’s a god?’ ‘Once, yes. Now, I know the truth. The inner eye shows me he is no god. He is mortal. From a place far above. I do not know where he comes from, but want him to go back. He will destroy us all.’

‘How did he wind up in power?’ ‘He came from the sky. We thought him cast out and sent warriors to kill him. He killed many. We struck him with weapons, but he did not die. He came to our village and killed many more, until we bowed before him. Now he rules, and kills those who do not do what he tells them to do.’

‘What does he tell them to do?’ ‘He sends forth our people to search the hills. For what I do not know. He orders them out each day, and they return with nothing. He kills some of them to make the others search harder. None know why.’

‘How can we get to him?’ ‘Our people still listen to me. I will lead you there and tell them you are more gods from the sky. This will let us pass to the palace. There, I cannot help you. You must face him alone.’

‘You’ve been in his mind. What’s it like in there?’

Goren does not know the words possessed or insane. ‘He is not normal. He is not like you. He is - I wish I had more of your words! A thing commands him. A voice within. I stayed too long once, and I heard it cry to me. I fled, but he cannot flee from the voice. I think he could be as you, were he not its prisoner.’

‘What else can you tell us about him? Anything else different?’ ‘He has sky-metal on his back. There are vines on it, vines of black. They enter his skin. He is never without them. He never sleeps, and his wounds heal quickly. If you want to kill him, you must be swift, for he is strong and capable of much destruction.’

Captured

If the players wind up captured, they are bound and held in an adobe building near the edge of the city walls. Goren will visit them as above, following almost the exact same script. The players may wish to know why Travis did not come visit them himself, but their explanation is that he did not want to talk to them. He said they were ‘cast out’ and should be killed, so Goren came to perform the execution. Instead, he attempts to enlist their aid in getting rid of Travis, pretty much as described earlier on in this section.

Showdown with Captain Travis

After Goren has answered all the questions the players see fit to throw at him, he suggests they accompany him back to the village. They are advised to put their weapons away and look as friendly as possible. At the town gate, he mutters some firm instructions in his own language to the guards. An Intelligence check (DC 10) suggests he said something like, ‘More sky-gods honour us. Fear them not. I go take them to the first sky-god, as he has commanded.’ The players are then led through the streets, with warriors watching warily on all sides, until they reach the ‘palace.’

Ahead you see the building Goren described as the palace. Compared to the other structures around, it is quite impressive, standing about two stories tall and bearing a somewhat intricate design around the double front doors. However, as far as you’re concerned, the palace is pathetic. The brickwork does not appear all that sturdy, and you expect you could just about kick the place down if you had half an hour to work on it. The other inhabitants of the town seem to want to avoid the place, and four guards wait at the doorway with spears at the ready. Again Goren mutters something to the warriors, something the linguists among you say sounds innocuous enough. The guards part and let you pass, keeping their distance as you move along. Their eyes seem fixed on your weapons, but they do not move to attack you.

Inside, torches and a few open windows light the building. A tall throne sits in the centre of the chamber, flanked by two more natives. Goren and his fellows continue walking forward, and the man on the throne comes to his feet. This could only be Captain Travis, but his uniform is in tatters. Something metal hangs on his back, but he doesn’t seem to notice the load. As you look closely, you notice there are large black wires jutting out from the case, but you cannot see where they go.

Travis is paying no attention whatsoever to the four priests. Instead, his eyes are fixed on you, and you see nothing but anger on his face. ‘You dare bring their kind here?’ he screams. ‘I will have your heads!’ Then he turns to the two guards and points in your direction. ‘Slay them! Slay them all!’

There is no way to avoid a fight. Travis does not sleep and cannot be surprised. The best they can hope for in this final encounter is to surprise his guards and take them down before they can be a problem in the battle.

Captain William R. Travis

Fourth Level Human Officer (Enhanced by Alien Device)

Hit Points: 24

Initiative: +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 45 ft.

DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)

Attacks: +10/+5 melee or +8/+3 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (fleet), Rallying Call

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +7

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 24

Skills: Bluff +7, Computer Use +7, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (archaeology) +8, Listen +6, Pilot +12, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6, Technical (space travel) +8.

Feats: Data Access, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Hobby (knowledge - archaeology), Resist Scan, Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Focus (PPG)

Standard Equipment: Knife, Auricon EF-7 PPG (no cap)

Even though Travis' career was as ship's captain, his hobby was archaeology. He liked researching and collecting ancient artefacts, and in fact one reason he agreed to let his ship be converted to the survey design was in the hopes that they might visit a new place for him to explore. He was dismayed at the beginning of the mission to not find anything except rocks and alien creatures, but then the scouts discovered the wreck on Ulata VII Epsilon. He wanted to help with the excavation, but the crew had orders not to let anyone else get close to the alien discovery. Their secrecy induced Travis to sneak into the lab and investigate the find. What he saw was a black metal object that seemed at first featureless, but as he looked it over, he discovered something like a harness extending from its sides. Curious, he put it on, and the tendrils emerged and penetrated his back. In moments, the alien machine established a connection with his brain and spinal cord. Captain Travis ceased to be who he was, and became something else.

The voices drive him now. He is quite insane, but the artefact attached to his back makes him act rationally on the outside. He might speak and appear normal one moment, and cut someone's throat the next. His first act as a puppet of the alien device was to go back to his quarters, fetch the serrated ceremonial blade from his collection, and brutally murder his crew. Then he released

the Ulata II life forms and used the resulting chaos to cover his actions against the rest of the scientists.

Once the scientists were dead, the voices ordered Travis to set a course for Orema, then set out on a shuttle for a particular location on Orema. Travis does not entirely know why he is there, but he knows he is looking for something. Actually, he is searching for the precise spot where a buried alien vessel of immense size might be found. The artefact on his back wishes to make Travis the pilot of this craft, with or without his cooperation. Once the ship is located, the natives are to dig it out and place him inside. If the players do nothing to prevent this, Travis will succeed in this goal within one week (i.e., before they can get help back to Orema if they leave the system without stopping the captain).

At the start of the fight, the two guards flanking Travis and the four in the doorway charge at the players while Travis attacks the nearest priest with his serrated knife. His PPG was drained of power during his battles upon arriving on Orema. He does nothing to help his guards, nor does he pay any attention to his own safety. After stabbing one of the priests, he moves on to the next while the other two flee. As soon as Travis finishes killing the priests, he starts with the nearest player. The alien artefact on his back gives him phenomenal strength and endurance, even the ability to stand up to multiple PPG blasts. He will continue battling until his body is literally torn to pieces. Then, when he finally dies, the tendrils on his back will retract into the artefact, which falls free and becomes quiescent once again.

Finally, the tattered remains of William R. Travis collapse onto the ground. What is left of him twitches and his head falls back, mouth gasping for breath. His eyes open one last time and stare up at you, but they look already dead. He starts to speak, but his words come only with great difficulty. 'T-thank you,' he hisses as blood bubbles out from his throat. 'It ends - ends here. You - saved me - from a fate w-worse t-than - than death.'

The players have just enough time to ask him one or two questions before he finally expires. If they ask what it was that claimed him, he knows only that it was ancient and evil. A better question might be to give up the unlock codes for the *Eagle Eye's* control panel, and if so, he will spit out a random-sounding series of numbers and letters before finally giving up the ghost. These will, however, serve to free the ship so it can be safely flown back to Babylon 5.

After the battle, Goren emerges from hiding and thanks the players for their aid. He has nothing to give them save his thanks, and wishes they would just go so his people can return to a normal life. He gives his word that none of his kind will attack them as they depart. Then he tells the rest of the Oremans that the players were the equivalent of avenging angels come down from Heaven to put to death a fallen god.

Aftermath

If the players learned anything about Travis's search around the countryside, they might be curious about what he was looking for. A search yields nothing, however. Even the sensors on the *Liberty's Fortune* show nothing, and besides (as any handy non-player character will point out), interfering further on Orema would be a violation of interstellar law. Now that the players have what they were looking for, and have taken care of Travis, they should depart at once.

While on Orema, some of the players may wish to collect a few items for their own interest or for later sale. They can take whatever they like (the inhabitants will not stop them), but anything large and bulky will be confiscated upon the return to Babylon 5. The Oremans do not have much of value, and bronze spearheads and daggers just aren't worth all that much on the station. At best, the players might collect enough trinkets to sell for 50 credits or so, perhaps up to 100 if they have connections with collectors.

Once back in space, the players can unlock the controls if they thought to ask Travis for the codes. Otherwise, they have to leave the *Eagle Eye* where it is and fly home in the *Liberty's Fortune*. If they have not cleared out the spiders from the freighter, they will all be dead by the time anyone returns to salvage the ship.

As soon as the players return to Babylon 5, Roland Anderson greets them excitedly. He wants to know if they recovered the artefact, and if they did, he pays



them their fee and expenses as if they were all but meaningless. If Helen Taylor was rescued, he gives them an extra 500 each credits for saving her. He lingers long enough to get the complete story (let the players tell it to them in their own words). Then, he takes Dr. Taylor, the artefact, and the *Liberty* and hurries off the station. If anyone tries to trace him, let them know he simply goes directly back to Earth. If the players left the *Eagle Eye* at Orema, a salvage vessel arrives in the Djinn system about two weeks later to pick up the ship, and that would seem to be that.

Suggested Experience for This Module

Clearing out the *Eagle Eye*: 600 plus 300 if the spider is defeated

Killing Travis and recovering the artefact: 1,000

Flying back to Babylon 5 in the *Eagle Eye*: 300

Returning Helen Taylor safely to Roland Anderson: 350

Telling Anderson that Travis was searching for something on Orema: 300

Possible Post-Module Events

If, during their tale, the players mention that Captain Travis seemed to be searching for something on Orema, Anderson gets more details from Dave McCullough later and arranges for a secret expedition to the planet. When he discovers the alien ship buried under the nearby ridge (almost exactly where the shuttle originally landed), he begins putting together a follow-up mission to excavate the craft. This could lead to side scenarios for the players. For example, EarthForce could send them back to Orema to investigate what their former employer is up to. Or, more likely, Anderson might hire them on to talk the natives into cooperating. After all, they do know the leader of the nearby village personally!

Shortly after the players return, a security team shows up at the Nova Nine (or wherever else the group meets regularly) and hustles them off to a hearing before Ombudsman Wellington, Babylon 5's judicial authority. No one else is present. The purpose of the hearing is to determine whether or not the players violated interstellar law by visiting a restricted planet. The inquisition is actually very short and to the point. The Ombudsman asks the players for their version of the events that occurred in the Djinn system, and listens carefully as they recite their story for the record. Then he releases them, explaining that the letter of the law (breaking quarantine to apprehend a dangerous fugitive who posed a clear and present danger to the indigenous population) was upheld.

The players very likely learned (either on the bridge or by talking to Helen Taylor) that the *Eagle Eye* and its scientist passengers were in the employ of IPX Corporation. If they attempt to confirm this independently, they can learn either through their own connections or by hacking into records using a Computer Use check (DC 19) that the ship is actually registered as an independent freighter. A similar check will show that Helen Taylor is the employee of an unrelated company called Xenotech Research, actually a front for IPX activities. Now the question becomes whether or not Helen lied and the logs were deliberately falsified - a remarkable coincidence for two supposedly unrelated parts of the mission.

It is also possible that the players will directly confront Roland Anderson, or his agents, about the connection with IPX. Anderson will scoff at such an idea but a telepath who makes a surface scan as the question is asked will pick up the barest fleeting hint of deception, although if pressed, he will admit he has occasional dealings with them. The other non-player characters will be similarly quiet about it - all except Alison. If the players helped her out when she went to Earth in the side scenario earlier, or if one of the players is her lover, she will hang her head and admit IPX is their true employer. She begs them not to tell Anderson they know, however. He does intend to tell them in due time, she insists - but for now, it's best that their connection with the corporation remain a secret. The players can then decide what to do with this information and it's quite possible that, if she told this to a lover in confidence, that he might keep it to himself. If they keep quiet, they have a trustworthy ally in Alison, but if they betray her, she will leave the station shortly thereafter and not return for the final mission. Whether she did so of her own choice, or because Anderson had her reassigned or fired (or worse), is a question left for another day.

Module Four:

Spy in Our Midst

And so it comes. The attack we all knew and expected has come to pass. The mysterious ones we fear so much are on the move. Today their target was a Narn colony, but next time it could be us. What can we do? Knowledge is our only weapon. So far, we have sought this knowledge slowly and carefully, but now time grows short. We must act boldly. We must act directly. And we must act now.

Background

Give the players Handout Four. Just yesterday, the Narn colony in Quadrant 37 was destroyed in an attack by alien ships that, according to reports, matched the capabilities of the powerful ancient vessels IPX has already encountered

on more than one occasion. So far, all attempts to get any further information have failed, except for a few scattered artefacts of little use.

IPX has been aware for some time of Narn investigations into an alien ruin in Quadrant 37. After the fiasco with Matthew Hendrix in Drazi space, the corporation has been unwilling to try to directly infiltrate the Narn colony. However, they do know a large cache of information and artefacts was being stored in a hardened bunker underneath the planetary defence base. IPX has long wanted to get their hands on that information, but with 10,000 Narn citizens present, there simply was no way to get inside. Now, the destruction of the colony gives them a narrow window in which to operate. If they can reach the planet, get into the base, and retrieve the information before the Narns can get it, then IPX will take one more step towards understanding the mysterious aliens and their powerful technology.

On the surface, this mission seems foolish, but the people at IPX do have one thing going for them, as it turns out. The Narns were keeping the alien ruins so secret that not even

Module Summary

Anderson asks the players to sneak into a devastated Narn colony and steal secret data.
The players board a Narn police ship and speed off towards the colony.
A Narn police vessel challenges the players in a transfer system.
The players arrive at the Narn colony and must find a way to safely land without incident.
The group must make its way through a blizzard to a cave and then into the Narn base.
The players explore the base and find the data they need.
A spy in the group's midst betrays and kills Roland Anderson.
A Narn commando team battles the players for control of the secret data.
The players escape the base and are met by an Earth ship.
An alien craft appears, destroys the Earth ship, and engages the Narns while the players flee.
The players must decide what to do with the secret data they stole.

Names and Places of Interest

P'Lask: Planet where the colony was located before its mysterious destruction.
Lt. William Tucker: Security man who has a dangerous telepathic ability (side scenario).
Benjamin Elders: Wealthy man who tries to heal his wife with an alien device (side scenario).
Na'Reek: Narn associate of Anderson's who joins the party for this module.
G'Rash'kan: Narn police vessel the players use to reach P'Lask.
T'lavarath: Narn ship the G'Rash'kan is modified to resemble.
Th'rallandir: Narn police ship that challenges the players in a transfer system.
T'Gon: Captain of the Th'rallandir.
G'Shon: Var'Loth class ship on its way to P'Lask.
Renthas: Narn heavy cruiser that challenges the players at P'Lask.
G'Varta: Captain of the Renthas.
Snow Snakes and Cave Bears: Native creatures on P'Lask that attack the players.
N'Rel: Narn technician who is keeping the base's power system operational.

their own military forces know of them, so they do not yet know to look for the cache of information. The Narns are instead sending one of their own elite commando teams to retrieve the files and anything else that survived the attack. The players will be racing against this team, and against other forces they know nothing about, to get this data out of Quadrant 37 and back to Babylon 5.

Between Modules

Nearly six months has passed since the previous module. A great deal has happened at Babylon 5, and probably to the players as well. A number of side scenarios are suggested here to keep the players busy, and hopefully to help them reach at least third level by the time this module arrives.

Eyes

In this episode (see p234 of the main rulebook), an EarthForce colonel named Ari Ben Zayn arrives on Babylon 5 with orders to scan the entire command staff to test their loyalty. However, when Sinclair pulls out a legal loophole that delays the scan, Zayn seizes control of the station and tries to order the telepath, Harriman Gray, to go forward with the operation. Gray, however, scans Zayn instead and discovers the truth – the colonel has a secret vendetta against Commander Sinclair.

What was not revealed in that episode was that the orders to scan the staff were actually legitimate - Zayn simply abused the opportunity to go after Sinclair. The orders remain, so after Zayn departs, Gray stays, intending to make his scans. Sinclair protests and starts calling people in an attempt to stop the outrage, but Gray begins his tests, starting with the lower echelons. Ivanova sweats it out in her quarters, hoping Sinclair can put a stop to this in time.

When Gray scans Lt. William Tucker, an EarthForce security man, the telepath suddenly cries out in pain, winces, and collapses to the floor. Tucker's eyes open wide, and he puts his hands to his head, shouting, 'I didn't mean it! I didn't mean it!' Then he flees at high speed, ducking into a lift and quickly escaping. Any players present who are telepaths feel intense pain and are totally stunned while this is going on, until Tucker finally leaves the area.

Gray is incapacitated, and Talia Winters explains that some extremely rare telepaths are known as grenades - the equivalent of bombs waiting to go off. A scan activates this hidden corner of the grenade's mind, causing a debilitating mental feedback to whoever was connected to them at that moment. After that, they are extremely dangerous, and can't control their powers - a telepath could easily be driven insane by the presence of one. Talia felt that pain, as did any player telepaths, but fortunately Tucker hurried off before he could affect them too badly.

Talia explains that the only way to deal with a grenade is to get 'normals' to subdue one, then implant a device in the wild telepath's cerebellum that cuts off his mental powers. They can't be trained or taught to deal with their abilities, and besides, they pose a severe danger to telepaths with their wild abilities. Actually, what she does not know is that such people actually receive lobotomies. One of Psi Corps' worst fears is that someone will discover a grenade before he goes off, and use him as a weapon.

Hearing all of this, Sinclair directs his people to find Tucker at all costs, before he wanders in amongst some alien diplomat with telepathic powers and damages their mind. The players are asked to help out if they can. Dr. Franklin gives them a tranquilliser to use to subdue Tucker, and they are instructed to keep him alive. He's still an EarthForce officer, after all.

Following Tucker's trail proves to be no trouble. Everywhere he went, people were afflicted with sudden headaches, and in some cases simply fell unconscious. Tucker is himself is close to tears. Everyone he speaks to screams in pain and keels over! He can feel their thoughts and sense their pain, but can't stop it from happening. Then, strange people he doesn't know order him to give up and surrender! Why won't they just go away?

Lt. William Tucker

Second Level Human Soldier

Hit Points: 12

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+3 Reflex)

Attacks: +2 melee or +3 ranged

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 9

Skills: Balance +2, Hide +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Spot +2, Technical (Space Travel) +2

Feats: Latent Telepath (Special - see below), Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (PPG)

Tucker thought he was just a normal guy until a high-level telepath scanned him and touched a part of his mind he never knew existed. Now he is making telepathic assaults on anyone he sees. He will not use any physical abilities against any telepath who approaches, but instead will attack mentally as a free action. Roll 1d20 on the table below to see what happens, adding the victim's Charisma modifier.

3 or less: Drops unconscious for 1d6 hours

4-8: Intelligence drops to 1, but returns at the rate of 1 point every 1d6 minutes

9-12: Confused (taking random actions each round) for 2d6 rounds

13-16: Dazed (stunned) for 2d6 rounds

17-20: Partial actions only for 1d6 rounds

21 or above: No effect

Tucker's goal will be to incapacitate everyone in the party so that he can escape. He doesn't want any violence. The players should be trying only to inject him with the tranquilliser Dr. Franklin gave them. To do this, they must make a successful melee attack but because Tucker's mind is acting to protect him, it will try to stop the player with a reflexive mental jolt. This gives Tucker an additional Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to avoid the tranq. If he makes the save, the drug is not wasted. Of course, the moment he sees a player coming at him with something like this, he concentrates his efforts on avoiding that person in the future.

If Tucker escapes, the players can search for him some more, but he seems to have disappeared. If they think about it, though, they can find him—in his quarters. He is quietly sobbing in the corner of his room. The players can attack him again if they like, and since he has nowhere to go, they will probably win. However, if they stay away, he begs for release. 'Help me,' he complains. 'I just want this to stop! Don't come any closer! Throw me the tranquilliser and I'll use it on myself! Please! Just make this all go away!' If they toss it to him, he injects himself with trembling fingers, and that's that.

Once the players capture Tucker, Sinclair turns him over to the authorities, and no one ever sees him again. If the players ask later, Talia explains that he's probably just being examined to make sure his abilities have been completely curtailed. Further investigations, however, show no sign of him. He was taken away and simply disappeared.

Suggested experience for this side scenario: 300

Legacies

If any of the players have connections with security, or are known as the sort who help with security on occasion, they will be asked by Garibaldi to help search for Branmer's corpse. If they seem at all reluctant to get involved, he explains that the Minbari are contemplating war over this matter. That body must be found, and found now!

The players can check any connections they might have, but will find that no one knows a thing about it. Interviews with the Minbari guards will reveal they saw nothing (or, if other players were involved in the theft, they will tell what they know). It is possible that one or more players actually stole the body without the knowledge of other players, in which case the guards should put forth just enough of a description that permits identification. This could lead to an amusing scene where the security group confronts the Minbari group, and might even have to make an arrest! After all, the Minbari player will want to do everything in his power to avoid revealing Delenn's role in the incident.

If the players cannot quickly locate the truth of what went on, Garibaldi eventually gets the idea that the body might have fallen into the hands of the Pak'ma'ra. These aliens are carrion eaters, so lacking any other clues, Garibaldi orders them to submit to a stomach evaluation. Though they are upset, the Pak'ma'ra agree to the test—all but one, El'tor'ka, who flees deeper into the station. The other Pak'ma'ra offer no explanation as to why he must have run, so Garibaldi directs the players to find him and bring him back quickly, before he can digest whatever he ate.

The players head into Downbelow, where they discover the rogue Pak'ma'ra purchased a forged ticket on a shuttle going to Drazi space. They hurry to the docking bay and board the ship before it departs, where they find the alien hiding in the luggage compartment. He surrenders without fighting. A stomach analysis shows the creature recently consumed a human body, but nothing Minbari. This does nothing to further the search for Branmer, but eventually the players learn the partially digested corpse was that of a petty criminal who tried to rob El'tor'ka at knifepoint. Dr. Franklin can determine this through DNA testing. El'tor'ka is exonerated of murder charges, but convicted of body-snatching and illegal consumption. He winds up expelled from Babylon 5, and the other Pak'ma'ra receive a stern warning that eating the body of a sentient will result in the same fate for any of them.

If the players discover that Delenn was the one who took Branmer and reveal this to Security, this can short-circuit some of the events in the actual episode. The best bet is for the Games Master to allow Alisa Beldon to bump into Delenn while the players are in the process of making their discovery, thus reducing them to simply providing confirmation of what Garibaldi already learned. Alternately, present the players with the option of confronting Delenn personally, before making their report to Security. If they do this, she will ask them to keep this knowledge to themselves, after agreeing to confess to the crime in person. In this way Minbari honour will be upheld. If the players allow this, she will be en route to make her confession when Beldon discovers the truth about what happened. The episode's integrity will remain, but Delenn will owe the players a favour.

Suggested experience for these mini-scenarios: 250 each.

The Quality of Mercy

In this episode, psychopathic killer Karl Mueller tries to force Dr. Laura Rosen to heal him using the alien medical device she is using in Downbelow. In response, she transfers her own fatal disease into Mueller's body, killing him. See the 'Universe Today' report for a more detailed description.

A couple of days after the events of the episode (after plenty of information about the machine is published in the news), Dr. Franklin discovers the healing device is missing, along with Janice Rosen, Laura's daughter. Garibaldi suspects she stole the machine for her own purposes and issues a warrant for her arrest. However, that isn't the case at all. She was taken by Benjamin Elders, a wealthy businessman whose wife, Esther, is dying of an inoperable brain tumour. Desperate for a cure, Elders hired a couple of men to kidnap Janice and steal the device. Now, he has her locked up in his quarters until she shows him how to operate the alien machine. All too aware of what it can do, Janice has so far refused, despite the pathetic plight of Elders' wife. Benjamin is not evil and will not harm Janice—he's simply desperate to save Esther. The longer Janice goes without telling him what he wants to know, the more upset and frustrated he becomes.

Garibaldi asks the players' help in locating Janice. Interviewing people they know, they learn that two men were seen dragging a struggling woman into an elevator in Brown Sector. From here, they can ask around and learn that two lurkers, Lenny Grier and Eric Thomlinson, were recently bragging about earning 'easy money' by 'introducing some rich old guy to some young doctor chick.' The players track Lenny and Eric to a hangout in Brown Eight, where they find the two men fairly drunk. It shouldn't take too much in the way of interrogation to get them to reveal where they took Janice and the machine.

When they arrive, they find Benjamin Elders sitting in the alien device, with Esther on the other side. Janice begs the players to help: 'He doesn't know how to use it! Stop him!' Unless the players act instantly (give them a couple of real-time seconds to state their actions), Benjamin throws the switch and begins to scream. Anyone wishing to disconnect him needs two full rounds to do so, unless they make a Technical (mechanical) check (DC 11) to figure out how to do it in short order. The players could also shoot the machine or attack it with other weapons. If their attack deals 4 or more points of damage, they strike some vital part of the device and disable it. The machine has a Damage Reduction score of 8.

If a full round passes with Benjamin in the machine, his screams fade and he collapses, but is still alive. If the players get him out at this point, he will be weak for a while, but will recover. Esther opens her eyes and thanks him for trying, but she is content to accept her fate. Still, Benjamin's actions earned her another few days of life, if nothing else.

If Benjamin endures a second round in the machine, he weakly mutters, 'I give my life for her,' and dies. Esther then awakens, cured of her condition, and begins to weep over her dead husband. Janice says, 'He told me he'd gladly give his life to save hers, and I guess he did.'

Dr. Franklin takes the device back, but now insists that it be locked and guarded at all times. It's just too dangerous. If the machine took any damage at the end, he works on repairing it, and succeeds after a few months of study.

Suggested experience for this mini-scenario: 250 to 400 depending on how much roleplaying was involved to discover the Elders residence.

Encounter One: The Briefing

It's the end of yet another day at Babylon 5. You're all sitting in your usual seats at the Nova Nine, chatting about various things - the upcoming New Year's parties, the destroyed Narn colony, the seemingly endless series of fake bomb threats - when suddenly Roland Anderson enters the establishment. He seems to be in quite a hurry, and his eyes light up when he spots you. 'I was hoping to find you here!' he says breathlessly. 'I need you all for - well, let's just call it a special opportunity. We - excuse me, my clients - have a narrow window to get our hands on something very important. I'm sure you've all heard about the destruction of the Narn colony in Quadrant 37?'

If they players say they haven't, he tosses a copy of Universe Today on the table, lets them read it and then continues.

'The Narns had a hardened bunker under that colony,' Anderson explains. 'It contains records and data that my clients urgently need. The Narns - well, they stole it from us, you see, and hid it in their secret base. I don't know who destroyed the colony, and I don't care. I just want those records! I have a transport standing by that will get you to Quadrant 37 quickly, and get you onto the planet's surface. You won't have much time - the Narns are surely sending their own people to retrieve this information. If you can help me get what my clients need, I'll pay each of you 3,000 credits - but we have to go now!'

As usual, the players will have plenty of questions. Here are some likely ones, and the answers Anderson will give:

'What's so important about these records?' 'Sorry, I can't tell you that. My clients require absolute secrecy on this—that's why I'm going with you.'

'You're going with us?' 'Yes, I have to come. I'm the only one who knows exactly what you need to recover. It's kind

of exciting, actually. I've always wanted to get a true field assignment!

'You mean to say you don't trust us, after everything we've done for you?' 'It's not that I don't trust you, my friends. I do—I trust you implicitly. You've earned it. It's just that my clients request—actually, they *demand*—absolute secrecy on this. I'm the only one who can know the nature of the information they seek.'

'Why not use someone else?' 'There is no one else. You're the only ones available in the time frame we have. That's why I'm willing to pay so highly for your services.' Actually, he will go much higher if the players insist on negotiating. He's willing to agree to just about any amount of money, considering that he considers the value of the Narn data to be priceless.

'What really happened in Quadrant 37?' 'I don't honestly know. We've been trying to get people in there for a while, hoping for a chance to get what we need, but until now there's been no chance of success.'

'Aren't the Narns going to get annoyed if we fly into their space?' 'Oh, yes, I'm certain that they will. In fact, we'll have to avoid their patrols if we want to keep from getting shot. As it turns out, though, I have some plans in that regard, and once we leave the station, I'm sure you'll understand what I mean.'

'Is there anything special we should bring?' 'We'll be underground quite a bit, so we need lights, and perhaps some rock-cutting or digging equipment. The surface of P'Lask—the planet where the colony was located—is also quite cold, so I suggest you bring appropriate winter gear.'

'Where should we go now?' 'We're leaving in an hour from Bay Fifteen. Be there on time—I can't wait for you. That should give you enough time to get your supplies and reach the ship. Don't be late!'

After the players finish asking questions, Anderson hurries off. The players have plenty of time to get to their quarters, pick up any gear they need, and get to the ship. They can also make up to two other stops along the way, perhaps to report to their superiors or employers that they'll be gone for a while, and to visit vendors to buy cold weather gear and other equipment.

This assignment, if reported to a patron, will take on special significance for the players. Here are some likely scenarios.

Earth Alliance: The player will be taken to see Commander Sinclair. 'We've been expecting this move from somewhere,' he says. 'I've had some warning from Earthdome about this. There is definitely something special

hidden underneath the colony on P'Lask. I'm authorising your trip there and giving you complete autonomy to do whatever it takes to recover the records Anderson wants—but you need to bring them to me when you return. Is that understood?' After the player agrees, Sinclair gives him a medallion to present to any Earth personnel he meets along the way. This will be proof the player is involved in an official operation.

Minbari: Delenn quickly rushes to speak to the player. 'I do not care about the records this 'Roland Anderson' wants,' she says hurriedly. 'However, we desperately need to know the truth of what happened in Quadrant 37. Go, and do what you can to bring back this information!'

Centaury: Ambassador Mollari pulls the player into his quarters in secret. 'What I must tell you now should be kept completely confidential,' he says mysteriously. 'I believe an associate of mine was involved in the events in Quadrant 37. Find out what truly happened there and how the colony was destroyed, then return. I don't care about Mr. Anderson's mission. And one other thing—don't tell anyone else I asked you to do this! This is not something you do for the Centaury Republic—it is something you do as a favour to me, Londo Mollari.'

Narn: Ambassador G'Kar pulls the player into his audience chamber. 'I cannot help you in this,' he says gravely. 'You are on your own. I will not prohibit or endorse your trip to P'Lask. If there is something secret going on there, I know nothing of it. All I ask is that you come back with an explanation of what really happened. Of course, if there truly are records hidden in some secret bunker' He chuckles, as if to punctuate that he doesn't really believe this story before continuing. 'I expect you to bring them to me upon your return. Is that understood?'

If the player is of another race or represents some other faction, they will be told the most important things are to a) find out what happened in Quadrant 37 and b) figure out what is in those records and why Anderson wants them so badly. Secondary objectives are to capture the records for themselves (or, if they appear dangerous, see them destroyed before they fall into the hands of another power), and to figure out who Roland Anderson is and who his mysterious clients are.

Encounter Two: The Transfer

After making all your preparations and collecting your equipment, you hurry along to Slip Fifteen and discover that old familiar friend waiting for you—the Liberty's Fortune. Perhaps not surprisingly, as soon as you board, you see Dave McCullough and Alison Fernandez waiting for you. From the bridge, Rasheed Isanda waves and smiles in your direction. There is also one other person here, someone new – a Narn female. She is talking quietly with Dave and Alison and does not look in your direction when you climb aboard.

As you stow your gear, Roland Anderson shows up, almost exactly one hour after he told you to be here. As soon as he walks in the hatch, the door shuts and Rasheed fires up the engines. Before you can ask any questions, he motions you to be seated while the ship takes off. Within moments you're in space, and after a minute or so you find yourself entering the familiar flare of the jump vortex.

As soon as you're safely in hyperspace, Anderson gets to his feet and motions to the Narn woman, who approaches the rest of your team. 'This is Na'Reek,' he announces with a smile. 'She's one of my other associates, and she's here to help out later on. You'll see what I mean later. In the meantime, let's all get settled in, shall we? I'm going to go make some preparations, and then I can answer any more questions you might have. Oh, by the way, don't unpack. We'll be transferring to another vessel shortly.' Then he heads off into his cabin and shuts the door.

Na'Reek (detailed on p127) is here for three reasons, only the first of which is to carry out the aforementioned subterfuge. She is also additional firepower for later on in the module, and can be used as cannon fodder if the fighting gets truly rough. Also, since one of the non-player characters will eventually betray the party and murder Roland Anderson, she is there to draw off suspicion from the true killer. Be sure to have her say plenty of unusual things and act suspiciously as much as possible.

The ship will be in transit for about six hours, allowing the players plenty of time to question Anderson and the other non-player characters as much as they want. Anderson will give out all the information mentioned in Encounter One, as well as a complete description of P'Lask (see sidebar, p94). He won't tell any more about his clients or the mission, though. McCullough and Fernandez will say they know

nothing more about what's been happening—they were on the station for other reasons and got the call completely by surprise. Rasheed will tell the players Anderson was on his way to Babylon 5 for a completely different reason, but as soon as they found out about Quadrant 37, that was apparently forgotten. Rasheed doesn't know what that mission was, and if asked, Anderson will simply say it's no longer of any importance.

After the players settle in, read the following:

The Liberty flies for about six hours, the engines operating at full power, until it arrives in the Sh'lassan system. This is a neutral world between Earth, Narn, and Centauri space and is well-known as a jumping-off point between each of the three nations. The jump gate here orbits a small moon, one which contains a small base manned by Narn, Centauri, and Earth personnel. Rasheed ignores this, though, and flies the ship towards a small vessel parked in orbit a short distance away. As you approach, you can tell it's a Narn craft of some sort, probably a patrol ship.

A few minutes later, Rasheed expertly docks the Liberty's Fortune to the Narn ship, and without hesitation Na'Reek enters the airlock. There, she greets a Narn crewman on the other side, then motions to you all. 'Get your things,' says Roland Anderson. 'We'll be travelling on the G'Rash'kan for the rest of the trip!'

Narn Sho'Kos Police Cutter

One of the smallest Narn ships in service, this craft is designed strictly for anti-piracy missions. While it operates a single medium pulse cannon for direct firepower, it also possesses two electro-burst beams, a weapon intended to neutralise an opposing vessel without destroying it. Two light pulse cannons also serve as fighter defence, and are particularly effective at knocking raider Delta-V fighters out of the sky.

The Sho'Kos is extremely fast and nimble, and unlike most Narn ships, it is atmospheric-capable. It is shaped something like an ellipse, with two stubby wings on the side and a pair of fins extending out the front (the bridge is located between these protrusions). It is painted with the usual Narn red-and-black stripe pattern. The Sho'Kos normally contains a crew of thirty, and includes an extensive brig for the transport of captured prisoners. Note that the Narns do not possess artificial gravity technology,

so anyone on board will be in zero-G conditions at all times.

Gargantuan Spacecraft; hp 75; DV 15 (-4 size, +9 agility); DR 7; Spd -; Acc 8; Dec 4; Han +5; Sensor +2; Stealth 18; SQ Atmospheric Capable; Cargo 8,000 lb.; 2 Pilots, 1 Sensor Operator, 5 Crewmen

Weapons:

Medium Pulse Cannon; 1 Boresight, Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10; Critical 19-20; Range 4; Rapid Fire

Two Light Pulse Cannon; 1 Boresight, 1 Left and Front, 1 Right and Front; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d6; Critical 20; Range 3; Rapid Fire
Two Burst Beam; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage Special (automatically deactivates one random weapon system for 1d6 rounds); Critical 20 (deactivates random two weapons); Range 1

Craft:

1 Shuttle

The *G'Rash'kan* (*Vicious Sentinel*) is operated by a skeleton crew of six Narns, all of whom are employees of IPX. In fact, the ship itself is owned by IPX, having been acquired from a raider band after its capture by the *Veil of Tears* several months ago. Great pains have been taken to modify the ship's electronic signature so it looks like a completely different vessel, the *T'lavarath* (*Wild Card*), which is actually on patrol several systems away. Anderson plans to have Na'Reek give a wild story about pursuing a raider ship across the Narn border and, for the most part, this plan will be successful.

You enter the Narn police ship with some trepidation. The interior is somewhat dark, but your eyes adjust fairly easily. There is little in the way of decoration, and the ship looks to have been maintained shoddily at best. The corridors seem completely empty as you make your way along, and Na'Reek finally points out your quarters to you. There seem to be plenty of open staterooms, so you each get one to yourself. The interior is very small, with only a sleeping-compartment and a single desk set into the wall. The zero-G bed has no padding, so if you prefer a softer sleeping arrangement, you will have to fetch something from the Liberty.

The players have fifteen minutes to get whatever they want off the pinnace and onto the *G'Rash'kan*, because Anderson is in a rush. In fact, he's in such a hurry that he paces around, fretting at every delay. In the end, he forces the

players to shove their gear inside the docking port and move it where it belongs later.

As soon as everyone and everything is aboard, the *G'Rash'kan* heads to the jump gate and leaves the system. There is no challenge from the base. The *Liberty's Fortune* is left behind to await the players' return after the conclusion of the mission. Anderson will explain that he's already arranged to have it stay there, and the officials on the base will keep an eye on it.

The players can explore the police ship as they will, but if they try to enter the engine room (where one or two crewmen are usually present, monitoring the machinery) or bridge, they are impatiently asked to leave. The crew doesn't seem to be in the mood to talk, and demand the players leave them alone so they can do their job. They are actually mercenaries in the service of IPX, and don't want their faces or names known to anyone who can report them to the authorities.

Encounter Three: The Challenge

The trip to Quadrant 37 requires three more jumps. The first is a day away, ending at Quadrant 14, a Narn system containing some asteroid mining facilities. The jump route there is a restricted one, and shortly along the players find out why—frequent eddies and gravity waves rock the ship constantly, producing the 23rd Century equivalent of in-flight turbulence. Sleeping under such conditions is difficult, so the players find themselves somewhat fatigued when they finally reach Quadrant 14.

In Quadrant 14, the police vessel drops out of the jump gate and immediately spots a G'Quan-class heavy cruiser parked directly ahead. Na'Reek wastes no time contacting them. 'This is Captain Na'Reek of the *T'lavarath*,' she announces, assuming any of the players are on the bridge to hear. 'We are in pursuit of a Raider vessel. Has anything suspicious passed through this system?' After she gets a surprised negative answer, she tersely adds, 'Thank you for your assistance. We shall look elsewhere.' With that, the ship re-enters the jump gate and proceeds on without any further interference.

The next stop, however, is more difficult. This is Quadrant 24, a relatively useless system with only a few scattered rocks. When the *G'Rash'kan* drops out of hyperspace, they are immediately challenged by another patrol ship just like their own.

As before, you come out of the jump gate to see a ship waiting ahead, only this time it's just another Sho'Kos-class police vessel. Within seconds you are challenged. 'This is Captain T'Gon of the police cutter Th'rallandir,' says the gruff-looking Narn on the screen. 'You are early, are you not? Wait! You are not the—oh, never mind that! Explain your purpose here!'

Quickly, Na'Reek falls into the prepared story once again. 'I am Captain Na'Reek of the T'lavarath. I am hunting a raider ship that attacked a convoy on the Earth border. Have you seen any such craft pass this way?'

'If I had, I would not have let him pass,' snorts T'Gon. 'My duty here is to check all traffic, regardless of its nature, Narn or otherwise. Stand to while we dock and inspect your vessel!'

With that, he cuts off the signal, and his ship begins to move closer. One of the other Narns on the bridge looks over at Na'Reek, concern clearly visible on his face. 'Captain, he's got his weapons charged! What do we do?'

Na'Reek looks over at Roland Anderson, who's clearly in distress. 'If we let him dock, how do we explain all these people aboard?' he asks, as if talking to himself. 'But do we dare shoot at him, especially at this range?' With that he turns to you, as if waiting for a decision, and you have only a few seconds to give your answer!

If the Ship Opens Fire

Na'Reek orders her people, or any players who know how to operate a ship's weapons, to the gun stations. The instant they arrive, she orders the lasers and pulse cannon to open fire at once. The players can roll a standard ranged attack but must hit DV 24. The shot is extremely difficult because the ship has no fire control active. Regardless of the effect, the enemy police vessel opens fire an instant later, and the *G'Rash'kan* rocks with the impact of a single hit from the pulse cannon. Additionally, one of the medium lasers (preferably one not occupied by a player) is knocked out by electrical discharges from a burst beam.

Na'Reek immediately orders communications jamming and sends the ship in pursuit of the enemy, which is now fleeing as fast as it can. Because it got a head start, it is outdistancing the *G'Rash'kan*. Allow the two surviving main guns to fire three more times against DV 24. If at least two hits are scored, counting any initial hits made by a player gunner, the target vessel's engines fail and it begins to drift. Otherwise, it gets out of range and escapes.

If the enemy is disabled, Na'Reek wastes no time in ordering the ship destroyed. 'We don't have time for prisoners and can't afford to leave witnesses,' she explains, and Roland Anderson agrees. However, if the players take the time to argue that there *are* extensive brig facilities available, and plenty of supplies, Anderson will reluctantly order the crew captured, as long as the players agree to guard them. The two ships dock, and the surviving 20 or so Narns are herded into the brig. A couple of them are wounded, but a Medical check (DC 10) will stop the bleeding and stabilise the injured crewmen.

If the players don't step up to argue against the attack, Na'Reek's crew (and any players operating the ship's guns) blasts the target into scrap, leaving no trace or any survivors. Even if the crew is saved, the other Sho'Kos will still be destroyed in order to avoid leaving evidence behind of the *G'Rash'kan*'s passage.

If the Ship is Boarded

Once the opposing Sho'Kos moves close enough to dock, it's too late to fire any weapons. Most of the guns won't track, and even if they did, the feedback from the guns and explosions would cause as much damage to the players' weakly armoured craft as they did to the enemy. They could attempt to flee, of course, in order to prevent docking, but that only convinces the opposing ship to follow and attack as soon as the range opens. The players could fire (and if so, see above) or try to escape. The other police ship chases them into the jump gate, but doesn't enter, since their orders are to wait for a Var'Loth.

If docking is allowed to proceed, keep in mind that Captain T'Gon has no reason (as yet) to suspect anything strange is going on. He merely wants to inspect the players' ship to ensure they are who they say they are. A boarding party of six Narns will enter, walk through the ship attentively, and finally stop at the bridge to ask Na'Reek some questions.

Narn Boarding Party (6)

First Level Narn Soldier; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 11; +3 melee, +2 ranged; SQ Low-Light Vision; Fort +3, Ref +1, Wis -1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Balance +5, Hide +3, Spot +1; Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (PPG)

Standard Equipment: Narn battle suit (DR 3), W&G Model 10 PPG, shock stick

The boarding party has weapons but are not expecting trouble, so they can be easily taken by surprise if the players so wish. If the group enters the opposing Sho'Kos in an attempt to capture the ship, use the stats here for the remaining 21 crewmen.

The Narn patrol leader wanders through the ship without saying much. He eyes the non-Narn passengers warily, but makes no comment. Finally he reaches the bridge. 'Captain Na'Reek,' he says evenly. 'Your ship is adequate, but where is the rest of your crew? And why are there so many aliens aboard?'

Na'Reek gives a smile. 'Perhaps your captain did not explain this to you,' she says icily. 'As I said, we are pursuing a raider vessel that attacked a human ship travelling peacefully in our space. These are some of the refugees from that attack. The rest of our people remained behind to ensure the damaged ship reached our base safely. Is there anything else, Lieutenant?'

The Narn police officer inclines his head in the human equivalent of a shrug. 'No, everything appears to be in order. Happy hunting, Captain.' With that he turns on his heels and quickly departs. You wait until he is out of sight before breathing a sigh of relief.'

Unless the players did something really foolish during the boarding process, or left something truly unusual laying around to be spotted by the Narns, this encounter will be over quickly. The Sho'Kos will depart without any further trouble and the players can go on their way. This is perhaps the very best result for the players, as it allows them to proceed to P'Lask without arousing suspicion from anyone. However, they also have no chance to learn more details about the Narn commando team en route to P'Lask.

After the Encounter

After this bit of fun, the ship heads off to the jump gate again and moves on towards its ultimate destination, Quadrant 37. The players are enlisted to help make repairs to the ship if it suffered any damage at all. After a couple of hours and a Technical (engineering) check (DC 14), they get any weapons working again. There is also some damage to the superstructure, but there is no way to fix that without some sort of base to dock to.

If the players listened carefully to the initial exchange with T'Gon, they might pick up on a clue that he was waiting at the jump gate for someone else. In the event the Narn crew was successfully rescued, he can be interrogated to find out exactly what he was waiting for. None of the rest of the survivors will know anything. This requires an Intimidate check or a successful scan by a telepath while asking questions about the situation.

If the players are successful, they learn that T'Gon was sent here to await and escort the *G'Shon*, a Var'Loth class long-range troop transport that carries a team of commandos bound for P'Lask. T'Gon does not know what it is they

are needed for on that planet—all he knows is he needs to make the rendezvous and accompany them on their way. Although he knows the commando team is highly skilled, he knows no further details about them.

Encounter Four: Arrival at P'Lask

After another six-hour jaunt, the *G'Rash'kan* drops out of hyperspace in Quadrant 37. The jump gate here is orbiting P'Lask and is accompanied by a small contingent of Narn vessels. Anyone who cares to identify them can pick out a G'Quan-class cruiser, a Thentus frigate, and a Rongoth destroyer. Two flights of Frazi fighters are also in motion in the region, and sensors pick up several other ships in the system, probably keeping an eye out for intruders.

After a moment of staring at this impressive display of military power, the chime of an incoming transmission interrupts your worries about just how easily the Narn vessels could blast you out of space. 'This is Captain G'Varta of the Renthas,' says the Narn whose face appears on the screen, and you note that his uniform is speckled with decorations. 'Identify yourself and your reasons for being in this restricted zone!'

P'Lask (Quadrant 37 VI)

After the Narns won their freedom from the Centauri, they became very active in building a stellar empire large enough to one day compete with the Republic. To this end, they took over 'management' of many former Centauri colonies and outposts, and also launched assaults on several lesser races (such as the Tachunq, Gaim, Balosians, and Descari). They also established colonies of their own on just about any planet they could find that would support their people, even those that were only marginally habitable.

P'Lask is one such world. It is an extremely cold, rocky place that only meets the minimum requirements for survival at certain locations along the equator. Considering Quadrant 37's strategic location along the coreward border of Centauri space, the Narns felt it advisable to occupy the world, and placed a colony there. Later discoveries of certain resources, as well as strange alien ruins, encouraged them to build up their presence, and over the course of time have become something of a thorn in the Republic's side.

The air on P'Lask is breathable near the equator, although further north it can actually turn to liquid during winter and during certain fierce storms. Blizzards are common occurrences, and visitors are well advised to come prepared for foul conditions. The Narn colony is almost entirely covered with thick domes hardened to resist orbital bombardment, but these were cut apart like tissue paper under the guns of the mysterious, black alien ships. What

few survivors remained quickly died of exposure to the harsh winter of P'Lask.

If the players have heard about the *G'Shon's* pending arrival, they can easily lie about having the commando team aboard, which they must now deliver to the planet. G'Varta, who knows about that particular mission, will nod and agree immediately: 'I was expecting a Var'Loth,' he explains, 'but I suppose that ship might be needed elsewhere. All you have is a single team, so that makes sense. Go ahead and proceed with your mission, and be aware that we stand at the ready should you need us.' After this, the players can safely fly right through the assembled fleet and land wherever they like without interference. However, this also means that as soon as the Var'Nic actually arrives, the Narns will know something fishy is going on, and will challenge the *G'Rash'kan* as soon as it lifts off.

On the other hand, the players could repeat the story about the Raiders, but that gets them nowhere. 'There's no way any Raider ship came through here,' says G'Varta, 'unless it was one of our own with the proper transfer codes, and I doubt that very much. It seems your search is over, Captain. I hereby relieve you of that duty and assign you to patrol duty here until the Kha'Ri orders the emergency at an

end.' G'Varta brooks no argument, and considering his rank and the firepower behind him, Na'Reek has no alternative but to accept. She is then sent on a wide patrol route that takes them on a course some distance from P'Lask. However, after two hours, the *G'Rash'kan* passes behind the planet and can turn and head towards it without much risk of detection. Anderson will be incensed at the delay, but after a brief argument, she convinces him it is the only safe solution.

The players might also try some other explanation, but G'Varta will be dubious and suspicious of anything unusual. Unless the players really do some fine roleplaying, he will assume control of their mission and order them on the wide patrol mentioned above, costing the players two hours of time. Should they come up with some other explanation (e.g., they were sent here on specific orders to search the planet for survivors, or something like that), G'Varta might permit them to move closer to the planet, but the players will need to at least go through the motions of looking. Na'Reek will spend an hour circling around over the ruined city before finally pretending to notice something. After reporting this to G'Varta, she takes the ship down to land at the pre-arranged spot.

Time Management

Once the players reach P'Lask, keeping track of time becomes crucial. The Games Master should keep careful track of any time spent by the group. The Narns will arrive in the system approximately three hours before the Narn commando team shows up, unless they were excessively delayed earlier in their journey. For example, if they wasted too much time chasing the police ship in Quadrant 24, even after it was clear the ship was going to get away, the Games Master should count this against the clock. Fifteen minutes after arriving, the commandos land on the planet in a location close to, but not directly next to, the *G'Rash'kan*.

When the commandos arrive in their Var'Loth (a troop-carrying variant of the Var'Nic long-range destroyer), they report in to G'Varta and explain that their expected Sho'Kos escort did not show up. If the players let the other Sho'Kos escape, that ship will be present as well, and the report will be somewhat different. If the players told G'Varta they had the commando team on board, he immediately knows something is wrong and warns the commandos to expect infiltrators. If instead the players simply went on patrol, he does not suspect them at once, but does tell the commandos another Sho'Kos came into the system. Both sides dismiss the error as a simple scheduling mistake and go about their business, but eventually G'Varta notices the Sho'Kos is not on its assigned patrol route and starts looking for it. A few hours later he realises it's on the planet, and while that at least alerts him to the trouble, it's too late by then to tell the commando team.

Once the commandos are on the planet (they come down in a shuttle, not the Var'Loth itself), they immediately move towards the underground bunker through the tunnel system. Since they know the way, they can go directly there without difficulty. Sooner or later, one of three things will happen: the players will get the data and elude pursuit (unlikely), the players will encounter the commandos, or the commandos will get the data first. The players might also choose to set up an ambush or some traps, but keep in mind these are well-trained troops, not the typical mindless guard drones. They might be surprised for a moment by some sort of subterfuge, but recover and respond quickly.

Narn Commandos (6)

Fourth Level Narn Officers/Second Level Agents

Hit Points: 18

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+4 Reflex)

Attacks: +7/+2 melee or +7/+2 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (ground forces), Low-Light Vision, Rallying Cry, Security Systems

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 12

Skills: 49 Balance +4, Bluff +5, Climb +8, Concentration +5, Disguise +3, Gather Information +4, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Jump +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Variable +9*, Spot +6.

Variable Skill: Each of the individual team members has a different skill in this slot, representing his specialty and position on the team. These are: Computer Use, Diplomacy, Medical, Pilot, Technical (electronics), and Technical (mechanical).

Feats: Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Skill Focus (specialty skill), Weapon Proficiency (heavy weapons and rifles)

Standard Equipment: Breather mask, first aid kit, hand communicator, 4 hand grenades, knife, Narn battle suit (DR 3), PPG rifle with scope

This team is made up of some of the best the Narns have to offer. Fearless and highly skilled, they can easily adapt to any situation or environment. Their mission here is to move to the secret underground bunker, retrieve the information and records they were sent to find, and then destroy the facility with a powerful demolitions charge. This is designed to be an extremely tough challenge for the players. They will have to act intelligently, perhaps setting up an ambush or improvising one or more traps, in order to survive. Alternately, if they act fast, there is a chance they might outrun the pursuing commandos, but they will not have much time to waste.

If the players gave themselves away, the Narns will be expecting trouble and will be reasonably prepared for any ambush or traps. If not, they are still on their guard, owing to the fact that forces unknown destroyed the colony, and that their escort ship didn't show up on schedule. All they know is something strange is going on, and that makes them nervous. Note, however, that the commando team is not actually interested in taking out anyone they find on the planet's surface. That is not their mission. All they want is to recover the data and get away. If they do that, they will leave the players behind and depart.

One has an electronic key that permits access into the transport shuttle but only a Technical (electronics) check (DC 20) will enable the players to determine its purpose.

Encounter Five: The Landing

Your ship descends swiftly towards the swirling yellow planet ahead. You know from your research that the P'Lask appears this colour because of the composition of the atmosphere and the constant storms that envelop the world. The Narns were heavily involved in terraforming efforts that would've taken a century to complete. Those are destroyed now, along with the colony itself.

The ship passes through the cloud layer and emerges into a grey blankness. All you see around you are whirling tufts of snow, but that does not deter the crew from continuing to take the vessel down. After a few more seconds you feel a bump, and then the steady whine of the engines begins to fade. 'We're here,' says Na'Reek. Outside you see only mounds of white.

The landing spot of choice is a small plateau near the edge of the devastated colony. The terrain surrounding this island of flatness is a sea of mountains and crevasses. All the players have to do is navigate about a quarter mile through this treacherous wasteland, in the midst of a driving blizzard, and dig their way into a buried entrance shaft. This leads into a series of caverns underneath the ruined colony, and eventually to the underground tunnels that provide access to the Narn storage bunkers.

Roland Anderson knows where the shaft is that leads to the caverns. His network of spies and informants have given him this information, along with the exact terrain features to scan for to ensure he gets inside. The only reason no one tried this sooner was the fact that the place was extremely well guarded, and anyone who did manage to get the data records would never make it off the planet alive. Anderson explains all this while he gets into his cold-weather gear, muttering something about blizzards and poor timing.

Travelling to the Caves

To get to the caves, the players will need to keep their group together, stay warm, and follow Anderson's lead. After all, he is the only one who knows where the caves are. Let the players discuss the initial journey for a bit, making sure you emphasize the wind, cold, and rocky terrain so they know what they are getting themselves into. Hopefully, someone in the party will know something about travelling in such conditions, or will have taken the time to research it during the trip to P'Lask. If so, a simple Knowledge (any subcategory that deals with planetary environments) or Survival check (DC 10) is enough to give them the basics - bundle up well and in layers, keep the eyes covered with goggles to prevent snow-blindness, wear special flat, cleated

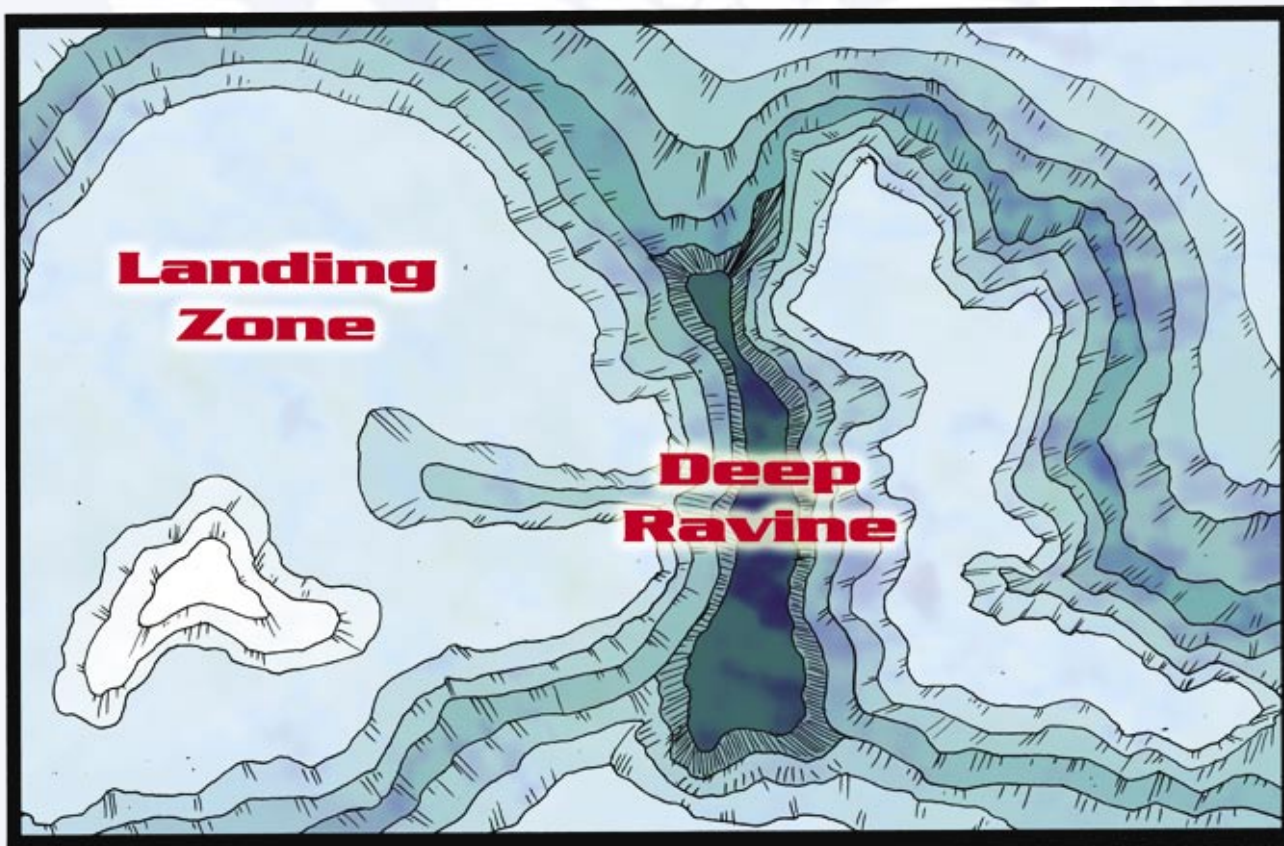
shoes for motion over soft fields and purchase in rough or icy areas, keep pitons and spikes on hand to ascend rocky walls, and above all, rope everyone together so no one gets lost or falls into a crevasse.

The group should include Anderson, Fernandez, McCullough, Isanda, Na'Reek, and all the players. The remaining Narns stay behind to man the ship and keep it running so it does not freeze over. Rasheed Isanda offers to come along, since he feels useless without a ship to fly, and besides, he says he's quite used to cold conditions, having twice attempted to climb Mount Everest on Earth. Anderson initially refuses, saying he's not really cut out for field work, and besides, they need to keep him alive so he can fly the *Liberty* back to Babylon 5 when this is all over. Rasheed argues that he's probably much more valuable in the field, and finally Anderson relents. Try to have Rasheed prove his worth during the journey by chipping in advice on various occasions, and providing some information on hypothermia if the opportunity presents itself. He actually did try to climb Everest twice, although not very seriously.

Fortunately, the group does not need to travel particularly far, so they do not need to concern themselves with overnight survival or anything like that. Anderson thinks

the trip will take no more than half an hour, but what he does not know is that a small ravine blocks the party's way. Going around it will require at least another half hour, by which time they will be so tired and cold they can barely move. Remember to keep a close eye on elapsed time. When the commandos arrive, they set out at once, being already prepared for the environment. They take only half an hour to get to the entrance. If the players are sufficiently slow, the Narns might actually pass them (since they go around the ravine by a different route).

In the event the players do not set out from the ship immediately (presumably waiting for better weather despite Anderson's demands to press forward at once), the Narns arrive in a transport shuttle and set out immediately, ignoring the Sho'Kos and anyone still aboard. The players will then need to defeat the commandos in order to get the data, and they will be much more difficult to beat since they will already be prepared for the players upon their return. (Note: If the players knew what the Narns were here for, they could just wait for them to come out with the records. They don't, though. For all they know, they've come for something totally unrelated. Make sure Anderson and the other non-player characters point this out.)



Once the players are more than a dozen metres from the ship, communications will be disrupted by the wild storm outside. Obviously, there is some sort of atmospheric interference going on, so they are on their own.

The door of the ship slides open and you find yourselves immediately assaulted by a wind colder than anything you can remember. Snow flies into the airlock, coating you in a thin white sheet. All you see ahead is a swirling white typhoon. Somehow, you force yourself to follow Anderson out into the howling maelstrom.

Slogging your way through the snow proves difficult and very tiring. The showshoes you wear must be lifted straight up in an unnatural manner, and every gust of wind threatens to bowl you over. More than once you or someone else steps into a gully and falls in, forcing the rest of you to hang on while he climbs out. After fifteen minutes, you feel like you're in the middle of running a marathon. If nothing else, though, the exertion is keeping you warm. If you stopped, the intense cold would probably penetrate right to your bones.

As you move on, the terrain gradually becomes rocky and even harder to navigate, although at least the crevasses seem to go away. After another quarter of an hour, your group comes to a halt. Ahead, through the blinding snow, you can clearly see a rocky ravine descending sharply downwards. 'Are we here?' Dave McCullough shouts, his voice barely audible. 'No,' Anderson replies. 'We have to get to the other side of this! The cave entrance is on the side of that mountain!'

Going down into the ravine looks difficult, if not impossible. To your left, the way leads through a sharp series of spiky, dangerous-looking rocks. To the right, the going seems easier, but the path ends at the steep mountainside, meaning you'd have to climb almost straight up for perhaps twenty metres before you could reach the ledge that leads to the cave. What is your choice?

The players cannot see the bottom of the ravine, and Anderson advises against trying it. If the players insist, they can waste half an hour trying to descend into it, only to find that they can't possibly get across the gap safely with the equipment they have.

If the players go left, the rest of the trip to the cave takes another half hour of fighting their way through sharp rocks, but the going is so tough they all suffer two points of subdual damage upon arrival. In addition, as they approach, a passing snow snake will likely choose that moment to

attack (see sidebar). The snow snake can also be used as an encounter during the initial approach to the ravine, or at the end of the scenario if the players have had things too easy.

Going right is less stressful, resulting in only one fatigue level, but they must scale the wall in difficult conditions. Each player is required to make a Climb check (DC 13). Failure will result in 1 point of damage being sustained as they are knocked against the wall before their ropes arrest their fall. If two people in a row fail, then both fall a greater distance, taking 1d3 damage each. If three in a row fail, then their combined weight pulls the entire group off the wall face, taking 1d6 damage each and adding an extra 15 minutes of travel time while they reorganise.

P'Lask Snow Snake

Huge Alien Creature

Character Level: 5 (15 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 45 ft., 15 ft. burrow

DV: 14 (+6 Reflex, -2 size)

Attacks: +6 melee

Damage: Special

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 2 (scales), Constriction

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +0

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 6, Cha 4

Skills: Climb +8, Hide +14, Listen +12, Move Silently +16, Spot +4

Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative

Constriction: If a character is successfully hit by the snow snake, it will immediately coil round him and begin to squeeze, automatically dealing 1d6+5 points of damage in every subsequent round. The victim must succeed in an opposed Strength check in order to break free.

These creatures survive in the frozen environment of P'Lask by burrowing along far underneath the fields of snow that cover the planet. When they sense motion on the surface, they push themselves upwards, burst through, and try to envelop the victim with their sinuous coils. Once the victim is crushed to death, the snake swallows him whole and returns underground.

The snow snake's head is little more than a huge mouth with no teeth or fangs that can expand to surround virtually any life form on P'Lask, even those as large as a human. Snow snakes are furry and possess a layer of insulating fat under their tough, leathery skin. Much like polar bears on Earth, they have little trouble staying warm, as long as they stay just a few metres under the snow, where they can move relatively easily. They are solitary, meeting only to mate.

The Ice Caves

After what seems like the longest hour of your life, you finally make it to a small cavity in the cliff face. You pause for a couple of minutes to catch your breath, glad to be out of the biting wind. Anderson doesn't rest, however, moving along the rocky wall, looking for something. After a moment he seems to find what he's after, and withdraws a folding snow shovel from his pack. 'Here,' he tells you with a loud yell. 'The entrance is right here, under this snowdrift.'

Wearily you rise and begin digging, but the work seems easy compared to what you had to go through to get here. The snow is loosely packed and moves without any trouble. After a few minutes you discover the drift covers a thin crack in the cliff wall. Working together, you get enough snow out of the way that you can slip inside.

You can still hear the wind howling outside, but within the cave, it feels like a different world. The temperature is still below freezing, as evidenced by the ice stalactites hanging from the roof of the open cavern. You want to rest some more, but Anderson urges you on. 'Shouldn't be long now,' he says, pulling back the hood of his parka. 'According to the information I had, these caves were the back door into the bunker. I don't know exactly where they lead, though, so we'll need to explore.'

The caves consist of several interlocking tunnels as shown on the map. Most of the tunnels lead to dead ends, but there is one path that leads to a door, representing the side entrance to the underground complex. Throughout their explorations of the caverns, players will notice several pieces of discarded Narn equipment and clothing, but nothing useful. A Spot check (DC 15) will reveal that booted feet passed through the area, but the prints are too scattered to show a clearly visible path. There is also one other kind of print, one made by an animal of some sort. Players making a Spot check (DC 14) will discover hairs from the fur of some unknown beast (not the same sort of hairs as the snow snake, if anyone makes a comparison).

Area #1: This is the entrance chamber. If anyone makes a Spot check (DC 15), they will discover a badly worn Narn glove partially buried under some chunks of fallen ice. The glove appears to have been here a while, though the players cannot tell exactly how long.

There are three potential passages the players might take, although the one on the right is about five metres up on the wall. Going through that passage will require a Climb check (DC 13), although if someone goes up and affixes ropes and pitons to the tunnel, everyone else can make the trip without too much trouble.

Area #2: This small chamber is the home of a cave bear (see sidebar). There is also a large collection of skeletal remains, dung, and other trash left behind by the creature.

Picking your way along the winding, rocky corridor, you notice the room ahead opens up into a wider cave. The usual ice stalactites dot the ceiling, and the floor is filled with rocks and chunks of ice. As you get closer, though, you notice one of the boulders on the ground is white, and unless you miss your guess, it's also covered with thick, bristly fur.

P'Lask Cave Bear

Large Alien Creature

Character Level: 6 (16 hp)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 40 ft.

DV: 13 (+4 Reflex, -1 size))

Attacks: +6/+6 melee

Damage: Claws 1d6+2 each

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 4 hide)

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +3

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 4, Wis 8, Cha 4

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +8, Jump +5, Listen +12, Move Silently +4, Spot +9

Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude

These creatures look big and impressive, but are actually surprisingly frail underneath their thick hide, protective layers of fat, and shaggy hair. Their four legs are long, double-jointed, and tipped with sharp claws capable of rending their typical prey (the snow snake) even while being constricted. Their round mouths are lined with rings of teeth that can deliver a painful bite. The bear's usual attack is to grab someone and hold them down while gradually biting them to death. If the prey struggles, the claws can rend it at will.

Unless the players are being unusually noisy, they will not awaken the sleeping creature when they enter. The bear is hibernating, so if they wish to sneak past it, they can do so. All this requires is a Move Silently check (DC 10), but everyone must succeed or the creature will begin to stir. The players could also go around as this cave is not one they must pass through to get to their destination. However, if the players leave the bear undisturbed, it will wake up and investigate if they make loud noises later on - in particular if they wind up fighting the Narn commandos in the cave network. In such a case, it will arrive at the battle in a round or two and attack the nearest combatant. A really intelligent party might even do this on purpose to gain an edge in an ambush.

Area #3: This cave has a hot spring, but is otherwise uninteresting. The players might waste some time here, but that is all.

As you continue along, you begin to notice the air ahead feels warmer. In fact, you soon realise the air ahead contains wisps of steam rising up from something around the corner, and you can hear a distant, steady whistling. You move ahead warily, and discover the room opens up into a kind of underground grotto. Steam is rising out of a pool in a depression at the far side. The walls and floor are covered with slick, moist ice. Above, the steam rises steadily, only to be sucked through a dark crack in the ceiling. There are no other exits you can see.

The steam is being pulled out of the caves into the snowstorm outside, but there is no way the players could possibly get out that way. The spring contains natural, fresh water of little interest, and the pool has slick, icy sides. Anyone trying to get a sample would need to take great care to tie themselves off before descending, or else they will lose their balance and fall into the spring. This causes no

damage in and of itself but could present a serious risk of hypothermia unless the player puts on dry clothing at once.

Area #4: This jumbled cavern has something interesting - a dead body.

As you meander through the winding cavern, dodging chunks of fallen ice, you notice an unusual odour in the air. After a moment, you recognise it as the acrid smell left behind by departed smoke. Looking around, you see no evidence of anything unusual, although the passage ahead seems to be opening up slightly. You make your way forward, wary of any surprises, listening carefully for any sounds of motion ahead. After you take a few more steps, however, you notice a dark shape amidst the ice and rocks. There's definitely someone there - although they don't seem to be moving.

The body is that of a Narn, dressed in a soldier's armoured uniform, but otherwise not very well protected from the cold. A fire lies dead at the corpse's feet, the obvious source of the smoky odour. The Narn is frozen, which explains why he has not started to decay. A Medical check



(DC 14) shows that he perished of exposure at least several days ago, although the exact moment of death cannot be determined. The body also has a broken leg, although it is unsplinted (the stick he used was exhausted for fuel in the fire in his last-ditch effort to survive).

The dead Narn has a copy of the Book of G'Quan tucked away inside his uniform. Even though it meant his death, he did not burn this sacred object for warmth. If the players examine it, they find something scrawled inside the cover. Na'Reek, and any players who know anything about the Narns, will realise that this is very unusual—such books are almost always left in their pristine, unmodified form, because they must be precise copies of the original, down to the crinkles on the pages. Anyone who can read Narn (if not a player, then Na'Reek) can translate the written script:

You listen carefully at the translation, realising that you are experiencing the final thoughts of the dead Narn's life. 'I am trapped,' the words say plainly. 'My companions cannot carry me through the storm. They left me here yesterday, but I fear they will not return. The colony must be completely destroyed, which means they are probably already dead. I cannot get inside the door—the defences will kill me before I crawl halfway to it. Death surrounds me in all directions, it seems. I could drown myself in the pool, or let the bear have me—but no. There is always a chance someone will come. Besides, it is easier this way. The fire dies, and this book is all I have left to burn. I will not destroy it, though. I leave it to whoever finds me. Keep it well, and remember me. I go to join the others now. Farewell.' It is signed 'Sergeant G'Narveth.'

The Narn has little else of value except an identification card and a pouch containing a dozen credits' worth of Narn coins. He has a pistol, but it is completely frozen and useless. If the players feel the need to take the uniform and body armour for some purpose or other, they will need to spend at least ten minutes warming it up in order to get it off the dead body. Na'Reek will protest this treatment as sacrilegious, but if the players give a good enough reason, she will not stand in their way.

Area #5: This cavern ends at the door the players seek.

You make your way along, travelling steadily upward now, and now you begin to notice signs of habitation. The floor of the tunnel appears smoother and you can see occasional boot prints in the crushed ice. A cave opens up ahead, and in the distance, you notice a large door set into the wall. Just ahead, a flat, square piece of metal lies in the middle of the floor. Something is written

on it in Narn script, but you cannot read it unless you get closer.

The writing on the sign (which fell from the adjacent wall during the attack on the colony) says, 'Warning – automatic defences ahead. State pass code before approaching.' Of course, the players will have no idea what the code is, and a search of the dead Narn (if they encountered his body) gives no clue. G'Narveth died without bothering to write it down. Na'Reek can try to guess, but has no idea what the codes were for this particular door. The Narn commando team knows the code, and will give it upon approaching, leaving the defences active should the players try to pass. A really clever group might plant some sort of listening device or hide in the shadows to overhear this: 'Access code R-596-213-X,' spoken in Narn.

If anyone approaches within 10 metres of the door, a gun emplacement set just above the frame will begin to open fire. This weapon has a +8 attack bonus, deals 2d6 points of damage and is fully automated, with an Initiative score of 20. It fires every round as long as someone is close enough. It is smart enough not to fire at small targets or anything that does not pose a threat to the facility. It has DV18 30 due to its tiny size and heavy armour, possessing Damage Reduction 4. It has 10 hit points. Because the port closes up when it is not firing, damaging it is impossible unless it is engaging an enemy target. Anyone approaching will notice the motion of the port opening up if they make a Spot check (DC 12), and they will hear it on a Listen check (DC 12). This will avoid them being surprised.

Getting past this obstacle is not terribly difficult. If the players have something to hide behind as they approach (such as a shield capable of absorbing energy blasts – possibly a large rock rolled to this point, or several suits of armour laid over each other), they can simply creep up to the wall under the gun's tracking angle. The system cannot fire at anyone within a metre of the door or the facing wall. Another possibility is to fill the room with smoke, granting concealment as normal. Locating the sensor itself requires a difficult Spot check (DC 20) from a distance, but if this is accomplished, the players can pick it off by shooting it (DV 25, and any damage at all destroys it). If this happens, the gun starts randomly shooting as above. Stealth efforts made by someone sneaking in amongst the rocks along the wall's edge can also meet with success, as long as the player can make three consecutive Move Silently checks (DC 16). Failure gives the gun one free shot before the player can take cover behind the nearest boulder. Finally, anyone

who gets up a good head of steam can simply charge across the gap, giving the weapon one standard attack and one attack of opportunity on the way. About the only plan that has no chance of success is waiting for the gun to run out of power, because it draws from the underground complex's fusion reactor. The defences could operate for weeks without interruption.

Once a player reaches the door, disabling the gun is a simple matter. They could simply cover the sensor, now easily visible but mounted four metres up the wall requiring a Climb check (DC 13), which causes the gun to deactivate. They could also 'spike' the gun by inserting some solid object, like a piton, into the firing slot—the weapon then blows itself apart the next time it shoots. A demolitions charge will also disable the gun, but that sound will attract the attention of the cave bear in Area #2, and also alert the commandos if they are anywhere in the caves or tunnels.

Once the players reach the door, they find it is locked. However, opening it is not difficult - a Technical (electronics) check (DC 15) or Computer Use check (DC 15) will take care of it. Just be sure to keep track of any time expended so you know where the commando team is in relation to the group. A particularly exciting moment of arrival would be just as the group is trying to get this door open...

Encounter Six: In the Tunnels

The massive door slides open at last. To your relief, a gust of warm, comfortable air greets you. Almost without hesitation you hurry into the brightly lit corridor, glad to be out of the frosty ice caves. You are standing at the end of a rocky hallway that looks to have been carved out of an existing cave passageway and reinforced with beams and bracings. Obviously, you're inside the installation Roland Anderson was certain could be found here. Fortunately, the power is still on, although whether or not anyone is still alive in here is a mystery.

The players can safely take off their cold weather gear now if they wish, and if anyone is suffering from hypothermia, this is an excellent spot to rest and recover from the effects. However, if they leave any supplies or gear in the hall, it will alert the commandos to their presence.

The Betrayal

At some point during the players' journey through the Narn outpost, Rasheed Isanda will betray the party by killing Roland Anderson and attempting to retrieve the records on his own. Isanda has changed since the players initially encountered him in Module One. In fact, the mysterious Mr. Morden visited him during the lull between Modules One and Two and asked that cryptic question, 'What do you want?' Rasheed's answer was 'To be part of something important.' Morden agreed, and a few weeks later, he turned the mercenary pilot to his cause.

Isanda has since been spying on Anderson and his corporation's activities, trying to determine how much they have learned about the ancient aliens and their pending return. He has slowly become corrupted by their whispered promises, and now, he knows the moment to prove himself has come. If he can get these records to Morden, he is certain he will be rewarded with the power and influence he has always dreamed of. He knows, however, that if he lets Anderson get his hands on the documents first, and the group returns to the ship intact, he will have no opportunity to steal what he needs. His only chance is to take action while the party is still exploring the underground tunnels.

The first step in his plan is to kill Anderson, but he can't just step up to him and fire a PPG into his chest. Instead, he has to be subtler. His plan is to wait until the rest of the group is distracted, then stab Anderson with a Narn knife he took from the Sho'Kos for just this purpose. He hopes they will believe it is Na'Reek's work, since among the other non-player characters, only she would normally use a weapon of that type. After this, if the players despair of getting the information they need, he 'reluctantly' reveals that he might have overheard a few things about the data during the trip. If nothing else, the players might let him take a crack at it. Make sure he doesn't just volunteer this, though, unless they are about to turn back in failure. For dramatic reasons, it is important that the group does not suspect Isanda until the end.

To pull off his assassination of Anderson, Rasheed will wait for any appropriate time. One possibility is if the group enters combat with the Narn commandos, or during negotiations or fighting with the other survivors elsewhere in the tunnels. If that doesn't work out, he might try something as simple as shutting off the lights in a room the group is exploring, then carrying out the deed while they try to activate their handlamps. Roll some dice in this situation, as though making an attack, but the actual result doesn't matter—for plot purposes, Rasheed is automatically successful and drops back into the group before the lights come on.

The following should be read out loud when the players' discovery that Anderson has been stabbed. It might need to be modified depending on the situation.

After those events have concluded, you look around, wondering what to do next. Then you hear a weak cry of pain. To your surprise, you see Roland Anderson is now lying on his back in a growing pool of blood. The hilt of a dagger protrudes directly from the centre of his chest!

Quickly you move to help, but find he is already beyond saving. With his last gasps of breath, he sputters, 'G-go on, my f-friends! Y-you must – it - get the data b-back to - to I...' Then his head falls backwards and he says no more.

Investigation of the knife shows it is of a common Narn design. When the players look at Na'Reek, she professes innocence and shows that her own blade is still safely within its sheath (as are those of any other player Narns). There is no other evidence to show who might have done this, not even fingerprints—Rasheed was careful to make sure of that! Let the players roleplay their discussions and worries for a while as they try to figure out what happened and potentially deal with Na'Reek, the most obvious suspect. Any telepaths in the group will be unable to scan any evidence of her guilt, although they will sense her fear and concern that the others think she did it. If the telepath should also surface scan Rasheed, he picks up only the belief that Na'Reek is guilty, because that is what Isanda will be concentrating on thinking at the time.

The underground complex was hollowed out from natural caverns. In most places, the ceilings and walls were then reinforced, braced, and sealed to keep out any underground runoff. Damage to the colony has produced cracks in the ceilings in many places, producing plenty of areas where water has leaked through and is now standing in pools and puddles. In several spots, the disturbance caused small rockfalls and collapsed roofs, and partway through the complex, a major landslide has cut off access to the remainder of the facility. Fortunately for the players and their mission, the room they seek was not affected, but there is no access to any upper levels or the surface from within.

When the attack destroyed the colony, a contingent of Narns was trapped in this section of the base. Some of them tried to get away by leaving through the outer door, but never returned. The dozen who remained are now starving and desperate. Some have gone insane and hunt the others. A couple will welcome the players, but most will attack them, either out of fear or mad hunger. Use the statistics shown in the sidebar for the pitiful specimens but keep an eye on the descriptions in the appropriate areas for how they react to player incursions.

Narn Survivors (12)

Third Level Narn Soldier; hp 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 12; +5 melee, +4 ranged; SQ Covering Fire, Low-Light Vision; Fort +4, Ref +2, Wis +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9

Skills and Feats: Balance +5, Climb +3, Hide +3, Move Silently +2, Spot +1; Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (knife), Weapon Focus (PPG)

Standard Equipment: Knife, Narn battle suit

These are the survivors of the base. Some of them remain lucid, and will be desperate for help from anyone they see. Others are so maddened by hunger that they attack on sight. A few are insane, believing everyone is their enemy. About half wield knives, while the others attack using unarmed combat.

Area #1: The first place the players come to after walking down the entrance tunnel is this small room, which was once a security station.

The passage winds a bit before ending at a sliding door. All seems silent on the base, but you remain cautious as you trigger the portal. It slips open quietly, revealing what was once a security station. A long defence barrier extends across the centre, flanked on either side by deactivated consoles you figure were once used to verify a visitor's identity. Perhaps fortunately, no one is inside.

The two machines appear functional, but whatever central computer they once plugged into is no longer on line. Anyone who makes a Computer Use check (DC 10) will realise this at once. The consoles have little in the way of functionality without access to the central core, and cannot be used to bring up a base schematic or anything else of use.

Anyone who makes a Spot check (DC 15) will notice a few drops of dried blood near the right-hand console, but these do not seem to make a path anywhere. A Medical check (DC 18) identifies this as Narn blood, although that fact was probably obvious.

Perhaps the best use for this room, if the players think about it, is to ambush the arriving commando squad from this fortified position. Here, they command the only viable entrance to the underground complex, and assaulting them from their cover behind the blast shield will be difficult at best. The Narn attackers will not give up, however, and eventually will rush the room en masse, possibly bringing the fight to a hand-to-hand situation. If at least half their number are slain, the Narns will attempt a fighting retreat

down the corridor to their left, which leads to their eventual destination. The players can then, if they wish, simply wait for the commandos to return with the data (assuming they believe that's what the Narns are here for), or begin a hurried pursuit.

Area #2: This is the power station for this section of the complex.

When this door slides open, you see immediately how the lights and climate control system are still working in the base. This appears to be a functioning reactor room, with immense machines and wires dominating the huge chamber. An audible, steady hum seems to announce that the power plant is working perfectly, although if you've ever seen a reactor before, you can tell there are several jury-rigged repairs in place. Then, as you stand there wondering about that, a bright flash cuts across the room and takes a chunk out of the wall next to you. An instant later, a Narn voice shouts, 'Get out, you madmen! If I can't keep this place working, we all die!'

The voice comes from N'Rel, the technician who has managed to keep the machines functioning for the past several days, despite damage from falling rocks, quakes, and the occasional stray shot by one of the insane Narns. She has a pistol, and just the day before used it to kill one of the cannibals, only to have that body dragged off by another and eaten. She is presently busy trying to do the work of three technicians, and if she does not get help, the reactor will fail within the space of another hour. While the players talk to her would be a great time to have Rasheed take care of Anderson. He can shut off the power in the entire base with a simple pull of a master switch, out of view of everyone else.

Unless the players have a Narn among them who speaks up quickly, N'Rel begins to take potshots at the group from behind one of the larger machines. If the players fire at her, keep track of damage they cause to the machinery. Each time a miss would have hit her but for the +7 cover bonus, it hits part of the power plant instead. Every point of damage requires five minutes of repair work later on, or ten minutes if N'Rel isn't able to help out.

If the players stop N'Rel by either talking to or subduing her, she finally realises there is a chance at rescue and ceases any attempt to resist.

She looks up at you hopefully, seeming not to notice that you're made up of people other than Narns. 'I've been praying you would come,' she explains. 'I'm the last surviving technician, and I'm the only one keeping the machines working, but that doesn't stop the madmen from coming after me. They're so crazy, they don't seem to care that if I die, the whole base will freeze over in the matter of hours. That doesn't matter now, though, now that you're here. You need to find the other survivors and get out of here - I don't know how long I can keep these things running. Oh - and do you have anything to eat? I haven't had anything in days!'

N'Rel doesn't care that aliens are in the group unless they start trying to ask her where the records room is (which Anderson will do right away, if he's still alive). At that point she becomes suspicious. 'You're not here to rescue us, are you?' she hisses. 'You'll just leave us here to die? How can you be so heartless? Well, fine, then, I'll make a deal with you. I'll tell you where the records are if you promise to get me out of here when you leave. I'll stay here and keep the machines running until you come back, all right? If you don't come, though, I'll see to it there's no power in the outer doors when you leave. That way you have to take me.'

This is a bluff - N'Rel cannot deactivate power in any specific area of the station, and anyone who makes a Technical (engineering or mechanical) check (DC 16), or a Sense Motive check (DC 13), will know she's lying. They can choose to challenge her if they wish, or simply let it go and inform the others later. Let them roleplay this one out as best they can.

Of course, the players could simply immobilise her now, to prevent this threat from holding any water, but that puts a one-hour time limit on the rest of the scenario, after which the power simply goes out. After that, things get cold again very quickly, and opening the sliding doors requires a difficult Strength check (DC 23). Getting through the final outer door requires demolitions at this point, as it is hardened against weapons fire and is too heavy to move. If the power does go out, N'Rel can restart it in ten minutes, or anyone else can get it working temporarily on a Technical (mechanical) check (DC 12), but it will only last fifteen minutes before failing permanently.

If the players drag N'Rel along, or force her to lead them to the records room, she agrees but drags her feet as much as possible. She also eats any food they give her, then asks for more. She also provides an excellent 'murderer' if Rasheed gets his chance later to bump off Anderson. If she sees the Narn commando team, she immediately abandons the group and rushes towards them, shrieking for help. If she escapes in this manner, she tells the commandos everything she

knows about the players, giving them a chance to operate with full knowledge of what the group is really up to.

Area #3: This was once a barracks area, but has undergone some modifications.

The door slides open to reveal a fairly large chamber. Cracks in the ceiling show the results of damage from the attack on the colony, and one corner seems filled with water from leaks dribbling down from above. The furniture this place once held - what look like desks, bunks, and the like - has all been dragged up against the far wall, forming a huge, jumbled pile that occupies fully a third of the room. The only sound from inside is the steady drip-drip-drip of water falling into the pool.

As you enter cautiously, you notice several streaks of dark crimson staining the floor in various places. Although it could be anything, you somehow know it's really blood. As you study the marks, you realise something: they all point in one direction - towards the pile of furniture. Just as that revelation sinks in, you hear a loud growling coming from within, and three dark shapes burst forth and attack!

These three Narn survivors are cannibals maddened by the lack of food and the hopelessness of their situation. Behind their crudely built fort, several bodies can be found, all of them gnawed right down to the bone. The presence of fresh meat in their room drives them crazy, and they attack without fear, gibbering and drooling as they try to stab the nearest player. If they manage to kill or incapacitate someone, they abandon any further attacks, grab that body, and drag it quickly into their fort to feast.

If immobilised, these pathetic creatures can eventually be brought back to sanity after many months of psychiatric care, but that effort is beyond the scope of this module. They certainly will be of no help to the players during their efforts to retrieve the database they need.

Area #4: This room was used for storage and contains a variety of potentially useful items, all of them strewn about haphazardly.

This appears to have once been a storage room, but now it looks more like a trash pile. All the racks and cabinets have been turned over and smashed. You can see that most of the equipment inside is cold weather gear, such as parkas, heavy gloves and boots, face masks, goggles, rope, mountain climbing equipment, and the like. All of it is of Narn design, of course. Quite a bit of the supplies have been vandalised, but you see no sign of anyone who

might have done this. It doesn't look like a fight, more like someone just tore the place apart in anger.

Actually, it was torn apart by starving Narns looking for food. The players can find enough cold weather equipment to protect up to five more people when they depart the base later on (if they want to take any Narn survivors along, for example). Otherwise, the room contains little of value.

Area #5: These were offices used by some of the Narn personnel assigned to this level of the base.

This appears to be some sort of office area. The room is mostly open, and several desks line the far wall. The place seems to have been ransacked, however. Drawers and files are strewn about the floor, but this does not seem to be the result of any fight. Someone did this deliberately. As you study the place, however, you do notice several streaks of dark red along the floor, in the far right corner.

Two frightened, hungry Narns are huddled under one of the desks along the north wall. If the players do not perform a thorough search, they remain hidden here until the group moves to depart, then they pop up and attack from behind. If anyone steps around to investigate their desk, the two Narns leap out and attack him directly, then turn on the rest of the party. The players can only detect them without being attacked if someone moves near the desk and makes a Listen check (DC 13). In that case, they detect a barely audible, repeated hissing coming from somewhere nearby.

These two Narns are maddened from hunger and believe the players are the same aliens who attacked the base. The presence of Narns in their group does not penetrate their addled brains as meaningful, considering that they've been repeatedly hunted and attacked by the cannibals in Area #3. Only if they are subdued somehow can the players finally get them to stop struggling, but even then they refuse to believe they are being rescued. They instead think they have been captured, and respond as prisoners of war—stating only their name and rank (Corporal N'Til and Private T'Harn), and giving up no information whatsoever about the base.

Area #6: This is the records room the players are looking for.

When the door slides open on this room, you see several large computer consoles in place on the far wall, as well as several terminals and monitors overturned in the centre of the floor. All the machines seem to be deactivated, and some appear to be smashed. The lights are still on in the room, but whether the computers are off because of damage or simply because they're turned off is something you can't tell from where you stand.

Just about anyone can easily discover that the larger machines on the back wall have simply been switched off. Also, one of the terminals on the floor appears serviceable, but a Computer Use check (DC 12) is required to get it installed and working. Once it is functional and running (ten minute delay), a further Computer Use check (DC 25) is required to access the databases. Should the players fail to make this roll, even taking 20 and with assistance, Rasheed will surprise everyone by sitting down and deciphering the code. 'I just remembered something I heard Roland say, that's all,' he mutters. The players will probably think this is the Games Master stepping in to keep the plot moving, but of course, that's not the case at all.

If Rasheed has not yet taken out Anderson, you will need to arrange this while the players are working on the computer. Either use the lighting trick to pull it off, or if the players have not yet encountered the crazy Narns from Area #6, have them attack at this point. Of course, if the timing is right, the commandos will show up now, hell bent on getting the databases, and if Rasheed can take out Anderson during the battle, so much the better. Preferably, though, Anderson will be dead long before this point.

Eventually, Rasheed will insist on getting a chance to look for the data the players need. He studies the material for several minutes while the players watch, but all anyone sees is screenfuls of meaningless numbers and apparently random words. Rasheed finally says he's just going to copy everything to make sure, and starts filling up data crystals. Eventually, he finishes copying five of them, but he secretly palms one (the one with the important stuff) and replaces it with a blank crystal. Unless the players are specifically looking for this, they have no chance of noticing his slick move, and even if they are watching, they only catch it on an impossibly difficult Spot check (DC 27).

Rasheed's Flight

As soon as Rasheed has the data crystal, he no longer has any use for the players. He will attempt to separate from the group at the earliest possible moment and race them back to the ship. Depending on what has happened up to this point, a number of potential scenarios develop.

If the players are distracted in any way after leaving the computer room, Rasheed breaks off and tries to take

an alternate route back to the caves (he knows N'Rel is bluffing about being able to turn off the power to the exit door, but has kept that information to himself). This assumes the players have explored enough of the base that he knows of another safe path, of course. If need be, he will create a distraction (possibly by setting off a grenade in one direction to attract their attention, then dashing off while they are looking for nonexistent attackers). Unless someone is actively watching him, he escapes notice for at least a minute. Even if someone was carefully watching Rasheed, he gets away if they don't beat a Spot check (DC 15).

If Rasheed knows the group is stopping to talk to N'Rel in Area #2, and no one is actively suspicious of him, he simply hangs at the back of the group until they proceed to that room, but doesn't enter with the rest of the party. Then he hurries off to the exit as soon as the door shuts. The players will not notice his absence until after they finish talking to N'Rel. Note that by the time they reach this point, Rasheed will be well aware of any suspicious eyes watching him, so he'll revert to the distraction plan—probably by quietly kicking a grenade in such a way that it looks like it came from N'Rel (and of course the blast makes her reflexively draw her weapon, further convincing the players that she was the cause).

If the players try to go out by looking over an unexplored section of the base, he sneaks away and goes out the way he knows. In this case, he waits in the back of the group until something distracts them (say, a couple of crazy Narns) and then simply disappears from the party. The players will not notice Rasheed's absence until the fight is over, unless someone is actively keeping an eye on him, and even then they must make a Spot check (DC 17) to avoid being distracted.

If he has enough time (i.e., he is not running with the players right on his heels), he takes the time to fire a few blasts into their cold weather gear while grabbing his own. He pulls his clothing on as he exits the ice caves through the shortest possible route and goes back towards the ship as fast as he can, using the mountain-climbing path since it's quickest. Once he gets out into the blizzard, catching him will be all but impossible. When he reaches the Sho'Kos, he tells the crew the others were killed, and begs them to hurry and depart immediately. With no reason to suspect him, they comply, with Rasheed sitting down at the pilot's station and quickly deactivating communications so the players have no chance of getting a message through to the ship. The only way the players can get off the planet now is to use the Narn shuttle, and they might have to fight for that!

Narn Transport Shuttle

This shuttle is manned by four standard Narn troops (use the same stats as the other Narn guards in this encounter). Since they are fully aware of the presence of the Sho’Kos, they will be wary of any tricks by the players. The players can get inside by simply opening the door using the electronic key found on the commando team’s leader (in which case they find themselves immediately in a firefight), by contacting the shuttle personally and arranging a truce (this will only work if they tell the Narns the item they came for is escaping on the Sho’Kos), or by blowing their way through the door using a satchel charge of some kind. If they do this, of course, they then must effect repairs before they can take off, and that will take a Technical (space travel) check (DC 12) plus about five minutes while they locate a proper patch. Use the stats for the Earth Alliance shuttle on p96 of the main rulebook if required.

In the unlikely event the commando team has not yet come upon the players, it’s even money that Rasheed will run into them on his way out of either the base or the ice caves. Depending on the Games Master’s sense of irony, he can either let Rasheed get away, or roll randomly to see what happens. If Rasheed meets the commandos, he immediately reverses course and runs right back to the players, screaming all the while. Unless they shoot or tackle him, he plows right on through with the commandos on his heels. Of course, they open fire at once, setting up an interesting battle as the players try to deal with a powerful team of assailants while holding onto their struggling prisoner—and, of course, if Rasheed gets away, he simply makes for the exit via another route. This is the one and only way that the players and commandos will ever work together—if the players immediately tell the Narns that Rasheed has what they came here for, the battle ends and everyone can chase the fleeing traitor back to the Sho’Kos. He still lifts off and the ship makes for the jump gate, but now the players and the Narns get onto the transport shuttle together.

There are other potential scenarios as well, depending on what actions occurred during the explorations of the base. Just remember, the main objective is to have Rasheed make his attempt to get away with the data crystal. Also, keep in mind the players are probably not going to know exactly why he’s in such a rush. All they know is he’s no longer in the group - the players might not even realise what he’s actually up to until they get back to the ship and find it in the process of taking off.

It is not vitally important for Rasheed to escape. In fact, it might be even better to let him lead the players on a merry

chase through the outpost, especially if the commandos are lurking about somewhere. Do what you must to keep the event as dramatic as possible. It is, however, important that the Narns not get away with the data crystal, unless the players happened to have a second copy, or prevented the destruction of the files in some way. They are set for a five minute delay, and a player will need to make a Technical (engineering) check (DC 10) to turn off the fuse without blowing himself up.

Encounter Seven: Back in Space

Depending on what happens, the players might find themselves on either the Sho’Kos or the Narn transport shuttle. The text below assumes the players are on the Narn vessel and in control of it. If not, simply adjust the events that come to pass to cover their present situation. For example, if the players have the Sho’Kos, the Var’Loth will simply be in pursuit, so jump beyond the first attack scene.

The shuttle rises quickly out of the atmosphere. Ahead, you see the slim form of the G’Rash’kan darting and dodging incoming fire from the dagger-like shape of the Var’Loth troop ship. You imagine that if that vessel were a typical Narn destroyer and not the troop-carrying version, the Sho’Kos would’ve been blown out of space by now.

Still, all the ducking and weaving can’t make a ship invulnerable. Eventually, one of the ion torpedoes hits home, blowing an aft thruster off the police cutter. After that, the little ship no longer manoeuvres quite as well, and plasma cannon blasts begin to hit. Several blasts later, the cutter’s engines quit entirely and it begins to drift, smoke and debris trailing from wounds that scar its hull.

Without hesitation, your pilot angles the shuttle towards the Sho’Kos, bringing it into a docking position. You ignore the protests from the Var’Loth that swings into position directly above you, demanding both your surrender and that of the G’Rash’kan. After a moment you hear the docking clamps catch hold, and you wait while air pressure equalises on both sides of the forward port.

When the door opens, you behold a ruined vessel. Sparks fly everywhere and the corridor is a complete wreck. No one is in sight to repel you, so you can board at your leisure.

Narn Var'Loth

Assault Destroyer

These ships are variants of the asymmetrical, dagger-shaped Var'Nic long-range attack ships. The Var'Loth uses the extended range of its parent vessel to support troop transport and assault missions on distant worlds. It sacrifices significant amounts of firepower to indulge in this role, yet still remains heavily armed compared to most troop transports.

The Var'Loth possesses one heavy and two medium plasma cannons, weapons that function well only at close ranges. There are also four light pulse cannons for local defence and anti-fighter work, and a single ion torpedo in the extended wing for long-range sniping.

Colossal III Spacecraft; hp 625; DV 8 (-12 size, +10 agility); DR 18; Spd -; Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +4; Stealth 15; SQ Jump Point; Cargo 20,000 lb.; 12 Officers, 24 Pilots, 8 Sensor Operators, 24; 250 Troops

Weapons:

Heavy Plasma Cannon; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 75+8d10; Critical 19-20; Range 3
Two Medium Plasma Cannon; Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 30+6d10; Critical 19-20; Range 2; SQ Disguised as missile racks to external scans
Four Light Pulse Cannon; 1 Front, 1 Rear, 1 Left, 1 Right; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d6; Critical 20; Range 3; Rapid Fire
Ion Torpedo; Boresight; Guidnace 10; Damage 80+4d10; Critical 20; Speed 15; Fuel 4; Reloads 0

Craft:

7 Shuttles

At this point the players can retrieve what they need from the Sho'Kos, because it's painfully obvious the ship will never fly again. If they hurry to the bridge, they find the chamber has been completely demolished. The entire crew is dead, but Rasheed is alive in a crash couch, only unconscious. They can collect him if they wish and return to the shuttle.

While this is going on, the Var'Loth slowly slides into a close position above the shuttle and insists on their surrender. If they don't answer, the ship eventually (when it's dramatically convenient) launches a second shuttle to dock opposite the players. They will need to hurry back aboard, although how they can possibly expect to escape this is still a mystery. Then, just as they return to the shuttle, read this:

You rush back into the shuttle and find, to your horror, that the dark shadow of the Var'Loth dominates the viewports. A second transport craft has launched and is now on its way directly towards the Sho'Kos, obviously intending to dock opposite you. The Narns are still insisting that you surrender and prepare to be boarded, and announce that if you try to undock, you will be blasted out of space.

Then, something totally unexpected happens. A jump point forms in the distance, just barely in view beyond the Var'Loth's bulk. Out of this you see the blocky form of a grey ship appear, its trim lines enhanced with the royal blue stripes of the Earth Alliance. Instantly a face appears on the viewscreen, a human face sporting a thin blond beard. 'This is Captain Leonard Kraczynski of the Earth Alliance cruiser Dione,' says the grim-faced man. 'Narn ships, hear me! We have come to recover Earth citizens being held against their will. Stand aside or we have orders to open fire.'

Give the players a couple of seconds to think about that, then announce that the Narn shuttle has turned around and is heading back towards its carrier. In addition, anyone who can see the sensor panel will notice that in the distance, the Narn cruiser and its escorts are now rapidly approaching. Any member of EarthForce will realise that the lone Hyperion is seriously outgunned by the Narn patrol group. While the players discuss what to do, the Var'Loth collects its shuttle and begins to pick up speed, momentarily ignoring the players while it moves to flank the Hyperion.

The players can safely undock now, but remind them that the jump gate is still some distance away, opposite the Var'Loth and to one side of the Hyperion. The players should probably instead try to get to the heavy cruiser, though the Games Master should not need to suggest that unless the players are completely clueless. They should probably send a message, too, letting Captain Kraczynski know where they are. He will seem excited to see them. 'Glad to see you!' he replies. 'I wasn't sure about these orders, but there you are after all! Quick, get aboard as fast as you can while we keep the Narns at bay.' If the players are in the Sho'Kos, they will need to use the ship's lone shuttlecraft as the Sho'Kos is not small enough to fit in an Hyperion's hangar. Kraczynski will tell them there isn't enough time to dock before the G'Quan and its escorts show up.

Now, the time has come to really pull the rug out from under the players. Read out the following:

The Var'Loth moves along the flank of the Hyperion and, perhaps foolishly, opens fire. Considering what you've heard about the firepower of an EA cruiser, this battle can have only one result. Sure enough, the Hyperion pivots gracefully in space, targets the Var'Loth, and opens up with a pair of heavy laser cannons. These trace long gashes in the assault ship's hull. Secondary explosions light up space as the Narn ship careens off into the distance, clearly crippled. It makes no attempt to turn back and re-engage the Hyperion, so the way is clear for your landing. The only question now is whether or not the remaining Narn vessels will return in time to stop you.

Then...something else begins to appear behind your saviours. At first you think it might be thrust exhaust or possibly a distant stellar display, but then you realise it's something else. The huge, black thing just seems to shimmer into view, as if appearing from another universe entirely. It looks like nothing you've ever seen. Spines just out in all directions from a central body, making it seem more like a living creature than a ship.

As you watch, open-mouthed, the centre begins to glow, and suddenly a purple beam slashes out

just behind the Hyperion. For an instant you think perhaps this shot has missed, but then the swath of alien energy cuts straight down the body of the Earth ship. As if this were some magic trick gone horribly awry, the cruiser simply comes apart at the seams, its two divided sections separating gracefully in opposite directions. Then the reactor core blows and, for an instant, a new sun lights up the surrounding space.

Give the players a couple of minutes to digest this new development. If properly done, this dramatic moment should just leave them stunned - coming after their miraculous rescue, it should be a total and utter shock. Then, after an appropriate amount of time passes, announce that another purple beam stabs out and smites the drifting Var'Loth, reducing it to broken pieces. That should be enough to spur them into action.

The only real choice now is to race for the jump gate. If they don't do this immediately, one of the surviving non-player characters should suggest it - forcefully, if necessary. 'Go for the gate!' Alison or Dave yells. 'It's our only chance!'

Alien Craft

The black, dangerous-looking vessel looks very much like a spiky sea urchin that's been partially flattened. Spines or tendrils jut out from either side. There are no visible gun barrels, windows, external structures or anything else one might expect to see on a spacecraft. The surface seems to shimmer and shift, reflecting starlight off shiny spots one moment and absorbing all light into blackness the next.

The alien vessel does not seem especially large or difficult to hit (Colossal II, hp 500, DV 10), but it possesses a highly advanced skin that can absorb up to 250 points of damage per round, harmlessly bleeding this into space. Until these 'energy diffusers' are overloaded, no damage will penetrate to the hull itself, allowing these ships to withstand tremendous amounts of punishment before succumbing to any attack. Should any damage actually hit the hull, the ship emits a high-pitched scream over any open communications channel.

Although no weapons are visible, the ship possesses a single beam weapon that never misses and can slice just about anything apart (damage 500+15d10). This gun fires every other round.

Its weapon is not ready to fire until the round after arrival in either dimension. The ship cannot transfer to or from hyperspace more than once in any one minute period.

Behind you, the massive alien ship seems to hesitate, as if deciding whether or not to pursue your tiny craft in the face of the approaching Narns. Then, from the distance, the G'Quan fires. Two bursts of energy cross the distance and explode just in front of the spiky black vessel. An instant later, a pair of red lasers light up the night, playing across the surface of their target. Since these are the same calibre of weapons employed by the Hyperion, you expect to see huge chunks torn out of the spidery alien, but instead the beams seem to do nothing at all. Perhaps their energy was absorbed, or simply refracted into space - you aren't sure. All you know is the ship seems totally uninjured.

As if angered by the shots, however, the vessel turns and glides forward towards the Narns. It moves with no sort of propulsion you can see or detect, and yet it travels quickly and purposefully. Perhaps out of sudden fear, the Narns rapidly begin to turn. A jump point starts to form in space before the G'Quan, but too late! Another purple beam lances out, and in seconds the majestic cruiser is an exploding tangle of wreckage. The beam plays across its hull, back and forth, cutting it into smaller and smaller chunks.

The surviving Narn vessels begin to scatter; all thoughts of engaging the terrifying alien craft thrown by the wayside, but you do not see their fate. Ahead, almost forgotten in your efforts to watch the battle, the jump gate opens and you slip safely into hyperspace.

Actually, the alien craft proceeds to dice up the two Narn vessels, then tries to pursue the players, but by this point they are far enough away that the enemy cannot locate them (fortunately—otherwise they would be nothing more than scattered atoms drifting through the Universe).

Aftermath

If the players are in the Narn shuttle and are cooperating with the crew, the Narns insist on going immediately to the nearest outpost. The players should agree only if they can keep the shuttle long enough to fly back to Sh'lassan, where the *Liberty's Fortune* awaits. After all, since they just invaded a Narn outpost and probably killed a number of citizens of the Regime, they will have to be aware that they face incarceration if they fall into the hands of the Narns. The crew will agree (since they have little choice). The outpost in Quadrant 24 is the perfect spot, and the players can get away without a hitch.

Otherwise, the flight back to the *Liberty* is a simple matter. If the players captured Rasheed, they might try to interrogate him. In that case, read the following:

Rasheed stays silent for quite some time, seeming to ignore your questions. Finally, he looks up at you with eyes filled with hate. 'They are coming,' he says in a low voice. 'They will come, and you will be destroyed. If you release me, perhaps they will spare your lives. That is all I have to say.' Then he returns his gaze to the floor and does not look at you again.

Nothing the players do will get him to talk. If, however, one of the players is a telepath and tries to scan him, read the following:

You start to penetrate his mind with little trouble. He does not try to block you and, in fact, seems to encourage your attempt. At first you see normal things - pain from his bindings, thoughts of escape, fear of what might happen next. Then you start to probe deeper. You see his hand holding the knife that stabbed Roland Anderson, and feel the hate directed at you and your group. Then something dark approaches, like a shadow in his soul. It envelops your mind, blacking out all your own thoughts. 'Join us,' a voice hisses in your head. 'We will free you...'

An instant later - or is it an eternity - you realise you're no longer in Rasheed's mind. Your friends have pulled you away from him, breaking your contact. You also notice two other things. One is the smile on your captive's face, and the other is the fact that you're still screaming.

After this, the telepath takes several days to recover from that horrifying vision. That same dark, whispering shadow haunts their dreams. For a month, any Telepathy check he attempts will suffer a -4 circumstance penalty, until finally the dreams fade away.

Back on Babylon 5

When the players finally return to Babylon 5, they can let Rasheed go as he asked, or turn him in to the authorities. Either way, his dead body is discovered a day later. A look of intense horror is carved into his face, and his throat was cut by some sort of blade unlike anything Dr. Franklin has ever seen.

The players will almost certainly return to the station with the missing data crystal in hand, easily recovered

from Rasheed if the players think to search him before handing him over. All attempts to decipher the information on it will fail - it's in a Narn code none of the players can break, no matter how much effort they expend. What happens to the crystal then depends on what they do with it when they get back.

If Dave McCullough or Alison Fernandez survived the final scenario, they will insist on keeping the crystal so they can return it to Anderson's people back on Earth. This request occurs immediately upon the players' return to the station, before anyone has a chance to investigate it further. If they refuse, Dave (if present) gets irate and insists, while Alison (if present) resorts to begging and pleading, even going so far as to play up any emotional connection with a player as far as necessary. If the players demand anything in exchange, Dave and/or Alison will agree to just about anything that's within their power to grant. They will even yield the secret that they are working for IPX (or confirm it if the players already knew or suspected this fact). Should the players still refuse to hand over the crystal, and present a united front against the non-player characters, they will depart in anger or disappointment without resorting to violence.

If the players then give the crystal to Sinclair or someone else in the Earth Alliance, he thanks them for their efforts and gives the players 1,000 credits each from Babylon 5's operating cash account. Sinclair calls the group in and asks to hear their story. If they tell him everything, including the tale of Anderson's death, he explains that he's been aware of Anderson's presence on the station for a while, but not his true purpose. What he wanted so desperately to learn is obviously locked up on this crystal, and Earth Alliance teams will be going over it soon. However, shortly after the crystal is sent off to Earth, it disappears in transit. Sinclair tries to find out what happened to it, but no trace of it is ever found.

If the players give it to Delenn or the Minbari Federation, she sends the crystal off to Minbari to be analysed. The players get nothing for their efforts except Delenn's thanks. The Minbari shuttle that takes the crystal will wind up destroyed en route, presumably by raiders.

If the players give it to G'Kar or the Narns, he seems amazed that the players pulled off such an amazing feat. Far from being angry, he's actually pleased that they rescued the data and pays them 2,000 credits (that's all five crystals, not just the important one). He then sends the records off to Homeworld and does not ask about it again. Only if the players inquire do they learn that the

data reached Narn, only to be stolen on its way to be analysed.

If the players give it to Mollari or the Centauri, he seems dubious until he takes a look at the crystal. Then he says, 'I was told to expect this crystal, and was given this to give you in exchange for it.' He hands the players 2,500 credits in Centauri Ducats, takes the data, and ushers them all out of his office. Actually, his associate, Mr Morden, told him to make this exchange but Mollari won't mention this to the players. However, a couple of days later someone breaks in and steals the crystal. Mollari reports the theft, but no trace of the culprit is ever found.

If the players try to keep the crystal, perhaps hoping to analyse it themselves, someone will eventually steal it, either out of their quarters, from the safety deposit box they keep it in, or right off their person if necessary. The Games Master can feel free to invent whatever side scenario he needs to arrange this, depending on who keeps the crystal and where they put it. Possibilities include a bar brawl intended to knock out the player in question long enough for a thief to steal the crystal, or a team of agents rifling through the players' cabins. Whatever fits the bill, really.

Should the players try to analyse the data before turning it over to someone else, all they will see is reams and reams of coded Narn information. Nothing within their power can crack this encryption, even if the players happen to be members of the Narn military. The players might also consider making duplicates of the data crystals, but if they do, those will also disappear along with any other originals.

What actually happens to the data is irrelevant for purposes of this scenario, but will be a big mystery for the players. Did Roland Anderson's nonexistent secret clients (or their employers at IPX) come looking for it? Or did the same people who turned Rasheed into a traitor track it down? The Games Master can make the search for it part of another entirely new story arc if he wishes, or simply leave the players knowing they were part of something big - but not knowing exactly what that something was. As the campaign continues through 2259, however, there will be plenty of opportunities for players to discover the truth behind IPX and the mysterious alien race.

Suggested Experience for This Module

Returning to Babylon 5 with the data crystal: 2,500 points.

Rescuing some of the Narns from the base: 150 points each.

Using the cave bear to help ambush the Narn commandos: 300 points.

Possible Post-Module Events

At this point the players have essentially survived the first season of Babylon 5 (the Earth year 2258), and are probably fourth or fifth level. The Games Master can launch directly into scenarios based on the second season, either as standalone modules or as part of an ongoing arc based on the seeds planted throughout this book. Some examples of these are listed below.

- ⑤ If the players did not return the data to G'Kar, the Narn could be rather annoyed at the players' theft. However, instead of seeking revenge, they require a service from the players to atone for their illicit activities. The commando team was going to be needed for another mission, so now G'Kar calls upon the group to take their place in that effort. This scenario could take the players literally anywhere in known space.
- ⑤ Depending on what happened in Module Two, the players might still owe Captain Torgrimson a favour. He might easily show up at Babylon 5 to call in that marker, as you never know when the raiders might have need of a highly skilled

team for some covert mission or other.

Alternately, if Torgrimson still owes the players, then perhaps they will have some need for a raider ship at some point in the future...

- ⑤ When the season began, the players were just another low-level team of operatives, but now, they have a reputation. Certain highly placed members of IPX are now aware of the players and their role in the successful recovery of the Narn data. The fact that they also ferreted out a potential mole in their organisation represents proof of their abilities and loyalty. IPX will likely send a new 'mentor' to Babylon 5 to take charge of the players' operations and send them on further missions. Their stated goals will now be to seek not only information about the mysterious aliens, but also to fight them directly. But will IPX become allies of the opposition, or a third party bent on achieving their own secret ends? Will the players use their growing abilities and influence to fight the alien threat, or to support it? Only time will tell...



Universe Today

**Babylon
5 Edition
January
19, 2258**

Narn Aggression at Ragesh III Defused

An agreement has been reached regarding the disputed Ragesh system, announced Commander Jeffrey Sinclair today. 'All parties involved have agreed to a diplomatic settlement,' the Commander told the Council in an open session. 'The Narns will relinquish their claim to Ragesh and return all Centauri personnel and property to the Republic, as well as make a written apology to the Emperor for their actions. In response, the Centauri will forfeit any claim to reparations from the Narn people and sign a treaty recognising the right of Narn passage through the system.'

Later, Ambassadors G'Kar and Mollari, of the Narn Regime and Centauri Republic respectively, were seen shaking hands and signing the agreement in front of the cameras. 'On behalf of my government, the Narn Regime apologises to the Emperor,' G'Kar said with sincerity. 'And the Emperor accepts your apology,' Mollari replied. The two then grinned and shook hands again, perhaps ushering in a new era of peace between the Narn and Centauri people.

Although this appears to be a diplomatic victory for the Centauri, not everyone is certain. Analysts have attempted to explain the Narn move, a military attack on a strategically useless system far from their homeworld, as a test of Centauri resolve and will to fight. '[The Narns] basically don't care about what the rest of the Galaxy thinks,' said one source, who declined to be named. 'They wanted to see if the Centauri would fight to get them out, and they didn't. Instead, they used diplomacy, and therefore showed weakness. Mark my words, one day the Narns *will* attack the Centauri. War between the two is imminent, I say.'

Further analysis: Page A3

Timeline of the incident: Page A8

Dockworker Stress on the Rise

An argument between dockworkers and a security patrol nearly came to blows today. 'They were pushing us around again,' one unidentified hangar employee stated angrily before disappearing into the crowd. 'One of these days, I tell you! There's gonna be a riot!'



Stress has been high on the docks for months now, with no end in sight. 'We're overworked and underpaid!' complained dock foreman Eduardo Delvientos. 'My brother and I came here looking for a good job and a fresh start, and instead we're treated like slaves! This equipment we have to work with needs repairs badly, and the men are overworked to the point of collapse. Something has to be done, or there's going to be an accident!'

These claims have been brought to the attention of the union, but with no visible results as yet. 'The problem is there's just too much cargo coming through here,' said one representative. 'We have limits on how many men we can hire for these positions, but no one bothers to put controls on shipping traffic. Perhaps tariffs should be increased, in order to generate additional funds for maintenance and personnel. Lacking that, I don't see what we can do.'

Other dock incidents: Page A11

New Entertainment Facility Opens

After numerous delays, the long-awaited Nova Nine public house has finally opened on Blue Four. 'If you've ever been to England, you know what a pub is,' said owner Miles Rutherford, who has been trying to open the gathering place for the past year and a half. 'If you haven't, you're in for a treat, mate. We serve not only a variety of fine European beers, imported straight from their breweries back home, but also the finest fish and chips this side of London. Not only that, but we have darts, billiards, and electronic games as well. Stop on by!'

Food review: Page D4

Funeral for Slain Security Officer Today

The funeral for Officer Leonard Travis, one of the most well-known and best-liked men on Babylon 5, will be held today at 1700 hours in the First Baptist Chapel of Babylon 5. All friends and family members are invited to attend.

'Lenny will be missed,' said Officer Jack Rowley sadly. 'He was someone you could always count on to watch your back. I'll be looking over my shoulder a lot more now that he's gone.'

Officer Travis was shot in the back of the head last Thursday by an unknown assailant while off duty. No witnesses have come forward, but a reward has been posted for any information leading to the conviction of his killer. Those wishing to show their respects are urged to donate to the Station Security Relief Fund, which benefits the families of officers like Leonard Travis who are killed in the line of duty.

More details of the murder:
Page A8

Advertising Proposal Shot Down

A proposal to sell advertising space in the hangar entry tubes was rejected today in a unanimous vote by the Babylon 5 Oversight Committee. The bill would have allowed the electronic equivalent of billboards to be placed throughout the docking port area, forcing new arrivals on station to view flashing advertisements as they brought their ships in to land.

'This is a sad day, really,' said Julia Childress, a businesswoman who championed the idea on behalf of all the companies aboard station. 'The amount of money that could have been brought in could have offset a considerable chunk of Babylon 5's budget, leading to higher wages and better operating conditions for everyone. Particularly those poor dockworkers.'

'That may be true,' Commander Sinclair pointed out, 'but this is first and foremost a diplomatic station. What does it say to arriving representatives of alien races when the first thing they see as they enter the bay is a gaudy, flashing sign? It says we've sold out, that's what. The Committee made the right decision.'

Full text of the proposal: Page B3
Estimated annual revenues had the proposal been accepted: Page B4



Universe Today

**Babylon
5 Edition
February
27, 2258**



Alien Cyber-Assassin Stopped in its Tracks by Commander Sinclair

The crazed alien killer that left a trail of destruction through Babylon 5 has been dealt with quickly and decisively by the direct actions of none other than Commander Sinclair.

‘Please, I only did what any of my men would’ve done,’ Sinclair explained humbly. ‘I wasn’t alone in this. This wasn’t a lone crusade, me versus a monster. I was part of an entire team. I was just lucky it listened to me when I confronted it with the truth.’

The cybernetic creation was actually an alien bio-technology device that took over the body of assistant scientist Nelson Drake, after he was unwittingly exposed to organisms from a recently surveyed planet. The location and name of this world were withheld for security reasons. Drake and his employer, Dr. Vance Hendricks, have been formally charged with illegally bringing an alien technology aboard the station in violation of quarantine law.

Drake returned to normal following the defeat of the cybernetic weapon, which for a while seemed indestructible as it rampaged through the station. Standard weapons seemed unable to harm it, even at close range, and the creature had the power to literally vaporise anything it chose to destroy. Exactly how Commander Sinclair managed to defeat it remains a closely shrouded mystery.

More photos of the cyber-assassin: Page A2

Speculation about the alien technology: Page A9

More on the scientists: Page A9

Narn and Centauri Agree on Euphrates Sector Claim

After several weeks of tense negotiations, the Narn and Centauri have finally signed an agreement on the occupation of the Euphrates Sector.

‘Well, as you humans would say, this has been ‘in the bag’ for several days,’ explained Londo Mollari after the signing. ‘We have spent the last seventy-two hours doing nothing but argue over semantics and a few scattered asteroids. Those Narns can be so thick-headed sometimes, and I mean that in more ways than one.’

In the end, the Euphrates region, which consists mostly of icy asteroids orbiting the dead remnants of a small star cluster, was divided almost down the middle between the two races. Experts have been predicting this result since the start of the debates, but nothing is ever certain between the Narn and Centauri. At one point, both ambassadors actually refused to attend, sending their aides in their place and threatening the fragile peace between the two star nations. That situation calmed down on its own, however, and after that the resolution came quickly.

‘Now we can move on to bigger and better things,’ suggested Ambassador G’Kar.

Details of the treaty: Page A6

Food Poisoning No Longer Just an Accident

Five more food poisoning cases were reported yesterday, each in a different area of the station. 'We don't know what's causing it,' said Dr. Franklin, who treated each of the patients. 'All I know for sure is this isn't an accident or coincidence. None of the victims ate the same kinds of foods, or at the same locations. What's more, we've checked and double-checked all the food stores and found nothing that would cause the symptoms we've seen.'

The symptoms are typical of food poisoning cases: pain in the abdomen, vomiting, diarrhoea, and loss of appetite. 'In each case we discovered toxins similar to those produced by salmonella bacteria,' said Dr. Franklin, 'but there were no salmonella present, or anything else for that matter. I believe someone is adding the toxin to food samples on purpose, either during or immediately before its preparation.'

'We're conducting an investigation now,' said Mr. Garibaldi, Babylon 5's Chief of Security. 'We have very little to go on at the moment, so please, if anyone has any tips for us, let us know. We've set up an anonymous call channel that cannot be tracked or traced. Simply log into any com and send a message to the Food Reporting Centre.'

More details on poisoning cases: Page A5

Dodgers Pitcher Chavez to Visit Babylon 5

Future Hall of Famer Jack Chavez will visit the station the week of March 17th for an autograph signing and goodwill tour during the World Baseball League's spring break. 'I'm looking forward to touring the station,' said an enthusiastic Chavez. 'I know there are a lot of Dodgers fans on Babylon 5, and I'd love to meet them.'

Highlights of Chavez's visit will include several pitching demonstrations as well as a walk on the station's exterior, where he will attempt to throw a ball to a catcher located at the far end of the superstructure. 'The longest pitch ever,' he quipped as he discussed the planned event. 'I just hope I can keep my form intact in a spacesuit!'

Chavez is best known for his string of sixteen straight victories during the autumn season of 2256. He has two perfect games to his credit and is one of the highest paid athletes in professional sports, earning an undisclosed amount that likely exceeds 100 million credits per year.

Chavez's complete itinerary: Page C2

Religious Festival Arrives Next Week

In the interests of promoting peace and understanding throughout the Galaxy, Babylon 5 will host a station-wide religious festival beginning Monday. Hundreds of different aliens, representing an amazing variety of factions and religions, are expected to start arriving as early as tomorrow.

'What will be most interesting will be the diversity of beliefs represented,' said Ambassador

DeLenn, 'but almost as intriguing is the common ground between nearly all of them. All races, it seems, have some form of belief in a unifying force that created or manages the cosmos. I look forward to sharing our views with theirs, for this will help us find the common ground that joins us all.'

Station personnel are urged to show tolerance and respect during this weeklong festival. 'Keep an open mind,' explained Security Chief Garibaldi. 'They may seem strange to you, but you look just as weird to them. Trust me on this. And don't worry about anyone trying to sacrifice you to their gods or anything like that. They will adhere to our laws at all times on the station, or I'll arrest them myself!'

Detailed event schedule: Page D3

More Disappearances Reported in Brown Sector

Two more residents of this sector have vanished mysteriously since yesterday. Adrian Bisell, a twenty-five year old Japanese man, and Lakisha Malloy of South Africa, simply disappeared from the station without a trace. There are no witnesses and no explanations. This brings the total number of known missing humans and aliens in the sector to fifteen.

'We don't know if these are serial killings,' said Michael Garibaldi, head of Babylon 5's security. 'They could just be off for a walk for all we know. There's no evidence of foul play. No blood, no PPG marks, nothing. We're still continuing our investigation, and when we find something, I'll let you know.'

Garibaldi did go on to add that none of the missing individuals had anything in common. They did not know each other, and came from different areas of the station. Some are humans and some aliens, and the split of male and female is almost 50-50. Security has been stepped up in Brown Sector by over fifty percent, but whoever is causing the disappearances seems to be well hidden. Residents are advised to stay in their quarters, and do not travel through the station unaccompanied.

Early profile of the perpetrator: Page A4

Universe Today

**Babylon
5 Edition
May 3,
2258**

Dockworker Strike Averted

Despite the invocation of the Rush Act by Senate representative Orin Zento, or perhaps because of it, the dockworker strike ended abruptly yesterday. All dockhands are busy unloading cargo now, apparently very satisfied with the increase in pay and medical benefits given to them unilaterally by Commander Sinclair.

‘When he invoked the Rush Act, he [Zento] gave me the power to do whatever was necessary to resolve the strike,’ explained Commander Sinclair. ‘Not everyone was happy with the fiscal results of my solution, but the loading area is a much happier place now, as you can plainly see.’

‘I don’t know what I expected,’ said Neeoma Connolly, representative of the Dockworkers Union, ‘but it wasn’t that. I thought the Commander would side with the Senate on this, but clearly he didn’t. I suspect he earned some enemies on Earth, but he certainly made some friends here on Babylon 5.’

Strike timeline: Page A6

Details of the concessions: Page B3

Two More Terrorists Arrested

Two more terrorists involved in the plot to detonate bombs on Babylon 5 have been implicated and arrested, said Michael Garibaldi, Chief of Station Security. ‘We have proof they were working with Cutter and Nolan to plant bombs intended to kill President Santiago during the dedication,’ he stated, adding that formal proof would be made available in a published document later today.

As you might recall, the President’s trip went off without a hitch once the terrorists were removed from the scene. Garibaldi, who himself was

implicated in the plot but later exonerated, explained that the two men in custody now were driven into hiding by heightened security during and after the President’s visit. They were picked up trying to leave the station on a shuttle for Mars. Although Garibaldi believes the terrorist cell has been broken up completely, he will not know for sure for several weeks. Garibaldi declined to comment on what organisation the accused terrorists supposedly work for.

More on the terrorist plot:
Page A3

Mutai Demonstrations Scheduled in Brown Six

Public demonstrations of the fierce Mutai personal combat sport will be held all next week in Brown Six, in preparation for a full range of events throughout the month. Citizens of all races are invited to observe these practice bouts, and aliens who believe themselves worthy of challenging a combatant to battle can do so. Those who prove themselves might even be accepted into the Mutai, although this is not for the faint of heart. The sport can be quite deadly, and is likened to a cage match back on Earth.

‘The Mutai is not about death,’ explained the Mutai-Do, the Yolu who oversees the festivities. ‘It is about strength of both the body and the spirit. Only the strongest prove victorious here. The Sho-Rin is our current



champion. You can learn much simply by watching him. Observe his mastery of his physical form, in union with his mind. We shall see if any can best him in the coming bouts.'

Humans who think they can stand up to aliens in a one-on-one match should be advised to stay away. The Mutai is only for members of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds, so humans may not participate.

Mutai champions past and present: Page C6

European Football All-Star Game to be Played on Babylon

5

This year's all-star game will be held on Babylon 5, the International Football Council announced today. 'As you know, we've been trying to get the game on the

station since last summer,' said Ryan Delgado of the IFC. 'The logistical problems have always been the main concern, especially after the difficulties encountered in taking the game to Proxima in 2253. However, all of that's behind us now.'

Among the unique features of football on Babylon 5 is the fact that the playing field is slightly curved due to the rounded interior of the station. Delgado, however, felt this would be an advantage for the purpose of attracting viewers. 'The all-star game doesn't get the kind of ratings we feel it should,' he explained. 'Having it on a curving field will draw more viewers, simply for the novelty of it. However, play shouldn't be affected all that much. As long as no one kicks the ball high enough to send it to the opposite side of the station, that is!'

Ratings for the all-star game have steadily declined since the Proxima game, where the slightly lower gravity produced a high-scoring affair.

Complete schedule of related events: Page C7
Roster of players: Page C10

Alien Fungus Threatens Crops in Hydroponics Bays

The fungus known as the 'Blue Blight' continues its rampage through the station's crops, destroying fully one-third of the fruits and vegetables currently growing in the hydroponics bays. All attempts to eradicate the blight without damaging the growing plants have so far proven, well, fruitless.

'We don't know where it came from yet,' said Dr. Melissa Cho, one of the scientists investigating the alien growth. 'It seems like a fairly straightforward fungus. There's no way its spores could've made their way through the filters, unless someone brought them in and applied them directly to the air supply. We have the whole area under quarantine now, because if any of this stuff got to Earth, we'd be in trouble.'

Dr. Cho went on to say that if they only knew what planet the blight comes from, they could more easily discover ways to defeat it. 'Perhaps a natural predator of some kind,' she said hopefully. 'I've provided a complete description of the fungus. Hopefully an explorer out there reading his will have seen what I'm referring to.'

Dr. Cho's technical description: Page A12

Universe Today

**Babylon 5
Edition —
December
29, 2258**

Quadrant 37 Devastated in Mysterious Attack

A sudden and devastating attack by forces unknown has laid waste to the Narn military base in Quadrant 37, Ambassador G'Kar announced at a press conference today.

'As yet we do not know who was behind this malicious and unprovoked assault on a peaceful outpost that housed over 10,000 citizens of the Narn Regime,' G'Kar said. 'We have our suspicions, but can prove nothing at this time. Although our rescue ships arrived within hours of the disaster, they found no survivors. I promise you, I will not rest until those who have performed this despicable attack are brought to justice.'

G'Kar then announced that he was departing the station in an attempt to learn what he could about the perpetrators, who left no clues to their identity. His position as Ambassador will be left temporarily vacant, with administrative duties falling to his aide Na'Toth.

Although Commander Sinclair of Babylon 5 offered aid to the Narn Regime in Quadrant 37 and elsewhere, the Narns have so far refused to accept, citing the system is now considered a quarantine zone. 'No ships of any kind will be allowed to approach,' G'Kar stated forcefully, 'until our investigation is complete.'

G'Kar then left quickly, offering no further information or commentary. Although he did not name the Centauri as the likely suspects, many among Babylon 5's circles seem to believe they are tops on the list. 'We had nothing to do with it,' stated Ambassador Mollari as soon as G'Kar departed the conference chamber. 'I know that is what you all think, but it is not true. We of the Centauri Republic are horrified at this loss. Moreover, we are horrified that another race might be out there that is capable of such wanton destruction on a grand scale. We, too, will do what we can to discover the truth.'

Although Mollari's offer seemed genuine, most ambassadors shrugged it off as pure diplomatic posturing. Additional discussions continued, but yielded no further information. It seems this will remain a mystery for some time to come.

More about Quadrant 37: Page A6

Speculation on forces required to make such an attack: Page A8

Editorial comments: Page A12



Alien Healing Machine Secrets Revealed

The alien healing machine discovered in Downbelow two weeks ago is now less of a mystery, according to sources here in the Medical Centre. 'It's a fascinating device,' said Dr. Stephen Franklin, Chief Medical Officer of Babylon 5. 'We're still studying how it works, but basically, it can cure injuries by transferring a healthy person's life energy to the sick. The problem is, each time you use it, you give up a little bit of your own life. Some may feel it's worth the exchange, but I don't. We're going to continue examining the machine, on the off chance there's a way to circumvent this limitation, but if nothing pans out, we're putting it in storage.'

Readers may recall that two weeks ago, Dr. Laura Rosen was put on trial for the murder of Karl Mueller with this device. 'Yes, she used it in reverse,' said Dr. Franklin. 'She was suffering from Lake's Syndrome, so she shunted the disease directly into his already wounded body. Mueller would've killed her, so it was self-defence. As far as I'm concerned, the ability to transfer diseases to an unwilling recipient is just another reason to keep this machine locked up.'

Where did this device come from? Speculation, page C3

Bomb Threats Continue in Downbelow

Another bomb threat was sounded last night in this remote sector of the station, marking the ninth such threat in the past four weeks. 'What makes these particularly dangerous is the 'Boy Cried Wolf'

syndrome,' said Security Chief Michael Garibaldi. 'People tend to start ignoring them after a while, and that's when a real bomb could cause the most havoc.'

When asked if that meant there really was a mad bomber on the station, Garibaldi replied, 'So far none of the threats have been carried out. I don't rule out the possibility that a bomber might be at work, but we have no evidence of that. In the meantime, as always, we treat every call like a real one. We aren't letting down our guard, no matter what, but even so, this guy—or girl—is not making our jobs any easier.'

If anyone has any information on the supposed bomber, they can dial the usual anonymous tip channel. As always, no attempt will be made to trace the call.

Locations of the false bomb reports: Page A11

New Year's Day Festivities Planned Across the Station

As always, New Year's parties are planned throughout Babylon 5. For those new to the station, the tradition is to divide the station into multiple sections in order to celebrate the holiday with relatives back on Earth in the appropriate time zone. Positions located nearest the bridge observe the changeover earliest, all the way back to the reactor section, which celebrates last.

'Just remember, security will be tight on New Year's Eve,' warned Security Chief Garibaldi. 'You can go to as many parties as you want, but stay sober! Damages and injuries are greatest this time of year, and we'll lock up anyone we find—regardless of rank or status. You know who you are!'

Scheduled celebrations across the station: Page C1
Special advertising section: Page E1

Appendix B:

Want Ads

To respond to an ad, contact the BabCom channel listed in the advertisement text. Remember, your communication will be monitored by your potential employer, so be ready to give a good impression!

Needed: Waiters, waitresses, hosts and hostesses for new Nova Nine public house on Blue Four. Standard wages plus tips. Humans only, please. Contact channel 14166.

Custodians of all ages and races required for duties throughout the station. Minimum wage only. All shifts needed. Will train. Channel 11365.

Are you fit, honest, and willing to make a difference? Then YOU might have the right stuff to be a part of Station Security! Come join the team that makes Babylon 5 safe every day! We want to hear from you at channel 10999! Applicants must pass a background and physical check as well as a four-week training course at minimum wage. Pay increases with each promotion. Virtually unlimited upward mobility—it's not just a job, it's a career!

Agricultural experts needed for night shift work in the hydroponics section. Apply in person. One year experience in hydroponics farming required. Pays minimum plus 25%, higher for the right candidate. Channel 20395 during daytime hours only.

Like to work with plants? Learn to be a landscaper in the gardens of Babylon 5! Minimum wage to start, promotions commensurate with skills. Interviews from 1300-1700 daily via channel 09655.

Know anything about cooking? We don't need gourmets, but cooks of all skill levels are needed for cafeteria work. Pay level depends on skill and shift. Contact Babcom 13355 and be ready to demonstrate your abilities!

Enthusiastic, charismatic people are needed to run private and public tours of various sections of Babylon 5. Intimate knowledge of one or more areas of the station is an absolute requirement. Must be a good public speaker, able to manage and monitor groups of individuals, and willing to spend long periods among a variety of life-forms. All applicants must speak English; other languages are preferred but not required. Pays well. Dress formally and contact channel 16898 from 0900-1700 hours to arrange a formal interview.

Stockers Needed: Strong individuals needed to lift and move cargo between and into various shops on the station. This is a highly physical and demanding job. All applicants must be capable of lifting at least 100 kilograms on a regular basis and must be willing to work long hours. Physical exam and drug test required. Channel 23260.

Geology expert needed to study core samples from various worlds. This is a contract position with a six to eight month timeframe. Some travel may be required. Must have a college degree or equivalent in related subjects. Field experience a plus. Pays 500cr per week, more for the right applicant. Contact channel 30116 and be prepared to present certification documents.

Messenger needed to rapidly move documents and materials from point to point within the station. The candidate must be fast, ready to move on a moment's notice, and possess detailed knowledge of station layout. Hours vary and some on-call time is required. Interested applicants should connect with channel 29551.

Delivery person sought for new food delivery business to service quarters area throughout the station. Applicants must possess good people skills and knowledge of Red and/or Brown sectors. Delivery to lurker sites will not be required. Channel 16550.

Part-time dockworkers needed for late shifts. No full time positions available, but those who perform well could earn advancement later on. Applicants must be a part of the union to be considered. Contact Channel 30012.

Civilian security guards needed to patrol private holdings. Only honest citizens with integrity need apply. All applicants must pass drug and background checks. All races welcome! Channel 06540.

Engineers needed as part of structural integrity project. Four years experience in space station or starship construction required. 600cr per week for the right applicant. Contact channel 23226 during regular business hours.

On-call plumber needed. Two years experience or appropriate training required. Channel 07119.

Qualified Mixologists: Are you a cheerful, outgoing person who knows how to mix a drink? Then consider a career as a bartender at the Zocalo! This is the sort of job where you'll meet all sorts of interesting people from a wide variety of planets. Good pay, excellent benefits, training provided. Have your background information ready and contact channel 17790! All applicants must submit to a drug analysis and background check. Absolutely no drinking on the job is permitted.

Can you operate remote control robot drones? Then we need you! Contact channel 09669 for details.

Entertainers needed for Zocalo work. Applicants must be possess musical instrument, dancing, or singing skills. Part-time only. Good pay, good tips. Connect to 25699 and show us what you've got!

Games Master's Notes

This section gives more details about the jobs mentioned in the ads above, and how they might fit into the campaign. The Games Master can create others as needed. All pay rates listed are per week.

When the player applies, they should contact the appropriate Babcom channel listed in the ad. The employer will ask them various questions about their background (this is an excellent opportunity to introduce a character's history to the rest of the group, if the players do not already know each other at the start of the campaign). Depending on the skill level of the job, a more detailed interview might be necessary. The initial contact should be roleplayed directly, and if everything checks out, the player can be hired straightaway.

Once a job is secured, the player should make a simple Profession check (DC 10) or, if they do not have the skills needed, a Wisdom check (DC 12) to retain the job after the first week. Failure indicates they made some catastrophic mistake that results in termination, and they will have to try to locate additional employment elsewhere. A similar check should be made in each subsequent month, with a cumulative +2 circumstance bonus for each month of successful employment.

The various modules in this campaign will require the player to take time off from these jobs to pursue the mission goals. If the player does not have influence with someone in high places, they will need to make another check as above to successfully arrange for a leave of absence. If this check fails, they will be told no time off will be permitted, forcing the player to decide if his job is more important than the possibility of adventure. Of course, most of Roland Anderson's tasks involve a high level of pay, so a typical wage earner won't mind the loss.

Waiter/Waitress

The Nova Nine Pub is hiring a variety of workers to support the opening of their new establishment. The Nova Nine is styled after a classic British pub, as mentioned in the Universe Today article, although the owner, Miles Rutherford, is actually from Australia. Any character with good social skills should be able to land a job here, although the 'Host' position is only open to exceptional candidates. However, such positions completely lack any kind of future, and most of the player's income will come from tips, which will be weak at best.

Base pay is 300 credits (400 credits for Host/Hostess) plus tips. To determine weekly tip income, make a Profession (waiter) check (DC 10) and add 10 credits (5 for Host/Hostess) for each point the check succeeds. If the roll fails, the player simply receives the base pay.

Custodian

Like many jobs, this one pays only enough to get by, and is good enough only for a lurker or someone willing to split low-class quarters with at least one other person. It's basically menial cleaning tasks like buffing floors, maintaining bathrooms, and the like. Pay is 200 credits per week, and the player has a +2 circumstance bonus on his checks to retain the job as it's so simple. This position should have little effect on the campaign.

Security Officer

Security positions begin at the lowest level, with a two-week training course followed by a two-week apprenticeship program wherein the player is accompanied by an established officer as he makes the rounds. Anyone who applies and meets the basic criteria will be accepted into the training, but avoiding a washout is difficult. If the player does not have Profession (security) as a skill, they suffer a -2 circumstance penalty on the default Wisdom check to retain the job. The position pays 500 credits at the start, with 10% pay increases every 3 months. Players in security positions will have good inside connections with some of the side scenarios later on, but will also have a responsibility to report law violations from non-player characters (and other players).

Hydroponics

This position is nominally open only to those with hydroponics experience, but since no qualified applicants have applied in the last couple of weeks, just about anyone will be considered. Any player with any sort of agricultural or farming background can apply. The job entails planting, watering, and caring for the various local crops used in part to feed Babylon 5's huge population. Boring and uninteresting work, really, but one that requires a responsible, reliable personality. Pay is 400 credits, but there is a -4 circumstance penalty on any check to request a leave of absence.

Landscaping

This job involves management of the gardens and decorations of the parks that line Babylon 5's hollow interior. In addition to planting flowers and the like, the player will also keep the fountains and simulated pond clean and free of pollutants. Pay is low (350 credits), but the work is steady and simple. Also, since diplomats and the like often congregate in the beautiful, idyllic surroundings, the player might have a chance to overhear certain conversations or make contact with important non-player characters.

Cook

Regardless of what is in the ad, the only position open is that of short order cook. The player will basically slave over a stove all day preparing a variety of dishes ranging from the simple to the exotic. There is a one-week training

session at the start (unpaid, but meals are provided) while the applicant learns how to cook everything on the cafeteria menu. After that, earnings are 350 per week, and the player also gets two standard meals per day at no cost. Cooks are always needed, so even if the player loses this job because of a denied leave of absence, they can easily recover it upon their return (if they ask).

Tour Guide

This job requires a minimum of two ranks of Knowledge relating to at least one sector of Babylon 5. If the player does not have this skill, they will not pass the rudimentary application quiz and are automatically rejected. To be hired, do not use the standard Profession or Wisdom check, but instead check against either Perform (DC 10) or Charisma (DC 12). Use these same rolls for retention and leave requests later on. Pay is 450 credits per week, plus 50 credits more if the player has knowledge of at least one additional sector of the station, enabling them to run longer and more complex tours. A player taking this job will be in a position to see many different things and meet a wide variety of people, both indigenous to the station and just visiting it. This job could be an excellent lead-in to a wide variety of intriguing side scenarios.

Stocker

A simple position, this one involves little more than carrying around supplies from one place to another (typically from the docks to one of the businesses located deep within the station's interior). Pay is only 300 credits per week. A player must have Strength 12 or greater to apply, and anyone with a 14 or greater can earn a bonus of 50 credits weekly if they make a Strength check (DC 11) or 100 credits if they beat a DC 15. However, if they attempt this optional roll and fail, they suffer from extreme fatigue from all their hard work during the week, and are treated as having one point of subdual damage until the weekend passes. This cannot be healed by anything other than a good, long rest.

Geologist

This is a short-term contract position as described in the ad. If the player does not have Profession (geologist) as a skill, they suffer a -2 circumstance penalty on all default Wisdom checks to get or retain this job. While classifying rock samples will not be all that terribly interesting, they might occasionally find something interesting (precious minerals, for example, or possibly a new or unique fossil). A side scenario could involve the discovery of some kind of artefact inside a rock, or a living organism that threatens the station. As the ad explained, pay is 500 credits per week. Travel to a mining site might also be required, if the Games Master sees fit; this would earn a bonus 100 credits in extra pay for the duration of the trip.

Messenger

The 23rd Century equivalent of a bike messenger! Anyone taking this job will basically have to run through the station delivering documents, small objects, and other items of importance. A person must be physically fit (Constitution 12+) to even be considered, and the default ability score for employment checks is Constitution instead of Wisdom. Pay is 300 credits, with the same chance for bonuses (and for fatigue) as with the Stocker position, except that Constitution is used instead of Strength.

Delivery Person

This business (Roger's Meal Delivery) is basically a restaurant without a dining area. Instead, orders are taken by Babcom and delivered while still hot, directly to the customer's quarters. There are two outlets, one in Brown Sector and one in Red Sector. Both have the same base pay (300 credits) and offer tip opportunities, but since Red Sector is more affluent, tips are higher there (but also more difficult to achieve and hold, with a -2 circumstance penalty to employment and retention checks). Make a Profession or Wisdom check each week against DC 10, with 10 extra credits earned for each point the DC is beaten (15 credits in Red Sector). Sadly, this business is destined to fail—when the players return from Module One, it will be shut down for health violations.

Dockworker

As noted in the Universe Today excerpt, these people are working long hours with obsolete equipment and poor conditions. Reference the episode By Any Means Necessary on p216 of the main rulebook. Despite the ad, they are not presently hiring full-time employees, as they can only barely afford to pay the workers they have. Part-timers can earn up to 200 credits per week (10 credits per hour), but earn no other benefits whatsoever. This job could lead to a side scenario later on; details appear in the appropriate module text.

Security Guard

This is a civilian (non-military) job without any connection to Station Security. Basically, the player would be a rental cop or bodyguard, the actual nature of the position changing on an almost daily basis. The Trancer Security Agency provides guards for a variety of clients across the station, including businesses, personnel, and visitors. Pay is 500 credits per week, but the player must have an attack bonus of +2 (base attack plus Strength) for consideration, or they will not pass the entrance tests. This position could result in a number of side scenarios involving foiled robberies and kidnappings and similar incidents. Note that this position requires a high level of integrity, so if the player earns any sort of questionable reputation, they will be quickly terminated.

Engineer

Babylon 5 is a large station and needs constant maintenance. Some portions of the interior are starting to show signs of destabilisation, so a team of engineers is working on potential ways to strengthen it. As a side effect, their efforts will also hopefully protect Babylon 5 from the effects of large explosions, such as terrorist bombs, which are always a worry. All employment checks are made against Profession (engineer); a player without this skill cannot get this job. Pay is 700 credits per week, with a promotion at the three-month point bringing pay up to 750 credits.

Plumber

Perhaps the most complex system aboard the station is not the computers, wiring, defences, or other technological marvels, but the simple plumbing system. Water is delivered to just about every part of Babylon 5 from a series of reservoirs placed at centralised locations. Just as with pipe systems throughout the ages, they are subject to clogs, cracks, leaks, and anything else you can think of involving water. Plumbers are all employed by the station and are part of a union that fixes wages at 600 credits per week. However, a player must have Profession (plumber) for consideration - this position does not include training. All checks to retain the job after a leave of absence are at a -2 circumstance penalty, however. A player with this job might occasionally overhear conversations through the walls, but otherwise will have little effect on a scenario.

Bartender

This is the ideal position for anyone who knows anything about mixing drinks, but the player must also be able to carry on a good conversation, and be a shoulder to cry on when necessary. All default rolls for this job made against Charisma, not Wisdom. The job pays 375 credits per week plus 5 credits in tips per point the employment check is beaten. This is also an ideal position for overhearing all sorts of wonderful tidbits of information, or for meeting unsavoury characters.

If none of the players seek a job at the Nova Nine, you might wish to relocate this position from the Zocalo to the pub. That way, the Nova Nine can act as the standard meeting place as described in the modules.

Drone Operator

This job basically requires the player to operate long-range robot activities from a control room within Babylon 5 itself. Extreme patience and diligence are required, as is an extremely high manual dexterity. All default checks for this job use Dexterity, not Wisdom. This job is highly sought after as the pay is good and working conditions excellent (600 credits per week, with 1d10-1 overtime hours available per week at a rate of 25 credits per extra hour), so all employment checks suffer a -4 circumstance

penalty. The player can eliminate this penalty at hiring time or after a leave of absence by telling a particularly good story - let them roleplay it and give them a chance to beat a DC 14 Bluff, Intimidation, or other applicable check. Success erases the penalty, but failure results in immediate disqualification.

Entertainer

Class Act, a hot spot in the Zocalo, is famous for its high-class dinner shows and quality entertainment. Anyone who can play an instrument, dance, or sing has a shot at earning a part-time gig at the club. The player must make a Perform check (DC 12) to be hired or retained. Success earns the player 2d6 performances per week plus their Charisma modifier, each paying 50 credits. The minimum number of gigs per week begins at 2, but goes up by 2 for every month of employment until the player is earning 750 credits, at which point they are considered 'in demand.' Once this level is reached, the Class Act will allow leaves of absence without any chance of termination. Players with this job can expect to meet all sorts of interesting people, and any number of side scenarios suggest themselves - a singer might be picked up as a backup for a famous band, or a dancer might be invited to perform in a Broadway show.

Others

The Games Master should feel free to create any other job entries as needed. Most of those listed above are open to players of all races, but some might exist that are available only to a select few. In addition, some players might choose exotic professions not listed above - a scientist would not be terribly motivated to take a position as a short-order cook! On the other hand, if that was all they could find and were literally starving, they would do it - and would constantly be on the lookout for something better.

Also, note that some players might already have jobs simply by virtue of their class - an officer, for example, might already be part of Commander Sinclair's staff, while a diplomat could very easily be an attaché for one of the racial embassies. Such players would not be interested in a different job, unless they had some pressing reason to moonlight.

Appendix C: Character Information

Ivan Torkovski

First Level Human Lurker

Hit Points: 6

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 12 (+2 Reflex)

Attacks: +1 melee or +2 ranged

Special Qualities: None

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -2

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 7, Cha 9

Skills: Appraise +3, Balance +5, Escape Artist +5, Gather Information +1, Hide +6, Listen +0, Move Silently +6, Pick Pocket +4, Profession (gambler) -1 (he's not very good at it, hence his troubles finding a way off the station), Search +3, Spot +2, and Technical (electronics) +4.

Feats: Lightning Reflexes, Alertness, Great Fortitude.

Standard Equipment: Bedroll, knife.

Ivan is a young Russian gambler who came to Babylon 5 with three friends. He lost his ticket home in a wild night of poker in Brown Seven, and has been stuck here ever since. His supposed friends went home without him, promising to send money, but have not yet done so. Privately, he claims he likes it here now and wouldn't leave if given the chance, but that could just be a 'sour grapes' story.

To roleplay Ivan, use a thick Russian accent (all V's pronounced with W sounds, for example). Think of Chekov, only not so over the top - unless you want to use him as comic relief or a foil for the players.

If Ivan remains with the group, he will rise in levels along with the other players. He will not multi-class. Skills will be updated depending on use (he will tend to improve those that he utilised during play). His next feat will be Combat Reflexes, and if he sticks around long enough to improve an attribute, it will be Dexterity. Note that Ivan is terrible with money, and will usually find some way to squander any funds he comes by, leaving him poor and destitute once again.

David 'Dave' McCullough

Fourth Level Human Soldier/First Level Agent

Hit Points: 18

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)

Attacks: +7 melee or +6 ranged

Special Qualities: Covering Fire.

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +0

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills: Balance +6, Climb +4, Drive +4, Jump +5, Move Silently +4, Survival +2, Pilot +4, Technical (mechanical) +1, Escape Artist +3, Spot +0, Computer Use +1.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (vehicle weapons)

Standard Equipment: PPG, flak jacket, hand communicator.

Dave is one of IPX's 'muscle' types. On this assignment, he has two duties: act as Roland Anderson's bodyguard, and undertake any activities that might require physical force. He normally dresses crudely and lets his beard and moustache grow for four or five days before making a meagre attempt to shave. He is muscular, but in a wiry sort of way, so at first glance he may not appear particularly powerful. However, he has excellent personal defence skills and can endure a lot of punishment in a fight. He would be a serious Mutai candidate if he cared about such things.

Unlike some more altruistic sorts, Dave is in this entirely for the money. IPX pays him well, and he enjoys spending it on expensive things and high-priced entertainment. He is outgoing and friendly once he gets to know you. More than likely, he'll befriend a similar personality and spend time bar-hopping and clubbing with them on their off time. He might also undertake the occasional illicit operation, if the risk is low and rewards high. He gambles, but never when the odds are poor.

Dave speaks with a very slight Scottish accent and will admit he hails from Edinburgh, but other than that, will never discuss his past with anyone.

After Module Two, Dave will gain a further agent level, adding the Lightning Reflexes feat and improving his Spot, Move Silently, and Balance skills by +2 each. This level also adds +1 to Dave's attack bonus, +2 hit points, and +1 to his Reflex save.

Alison Fernandez

Fourth Level Human Diplomat

Hit Points: 10

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 11 (+1 Reflex)

Attacks: +1 melee or +2 ranged

Special Qualities: Contact (Roland Anderson), Contact (Ian McLeary), Improved Diplomacy.

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +8

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +7, Computer Use +6, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (law) +3, Knowledge (star systems) +5, Listen +6, Sense Motive +8, Speak Language (Centauri)

Feats: Iron Will, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Weapon Proficiency (melee)

Standard Equipment: PPG, hand communicator

Alison has held many jobs in her life, but the one she is most fond of is her stint as an aide to Ambassador Sullivan of the Earth Alliance during the post-Minbari War reparation discussions. She discovered then that she had a real flair for diplomacy, but unfortunately, in her early days she was not quite as good at it as she is now. In her attempts to please everyone, she made a few enemies, and one of these (she is not quite sure which) arranged to have her accused of taking bribes. IPX, however, saw her potential value and gave her a job on Babylon 5.

Alison is quite comely and may well attract the eye of one or more male human characters in the group. She will wait first to see if any of them make a move, but if not, she will approach one (the most attractive one who has no other attachments) and arrange a date. This could lead to a couple of side scenarios later in the story arc, including one in which she could learn who set up the false accusations that ruined her original career—and why they did it.

Alison is from Buenos Aires, but speaks English like someone from the American Midwest. She also speaks Spanish fluently, though she considers it her second language. When she becomes highly emotional (or in the heat of passion), she will interject Spanish words or phrases into her speech patterns (e.g., *Madre de Dios!*).

After Module Two, Alison advances to be a 5th Level diplomat, earning a new Contact (irrelevant for purposes of the scenarios herein but one which could be tailored to mesh with other events in the campaign). This increase brings with it +1 hit point, +1 to her Computer Use skill, and +2 to each of the following skills: Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Sense Motive.

Roland Anderson

Eighth Level Human Agent

Hit Points: 20.

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 17 (+7 Reflex)

Attacks: +6/+1 melee or +7/+2 ranged

Special Qualities: Security Systems, Skill Mastery (Bluff, Disguise, Move Silently, Gather Information, Sense Motive), Sneak Attack +1d6

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +7

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills: Balance +3, Bluff +16, Climb +2, Computer Use +8, Concentration +3, Disguise +10, Gather Information +16, Hide +9, Intimidate +10, Jump +2, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Search +8, Sense Motive +13, Spot +5, Swim +4.

Feats: Iron Will, Latent Telepath, Point Blank Shot, Resist Scan

Standard Equipment: PPG, hand communicator.

Anderson's real name is Lewis Zemisky, although there is little chance the players will learn that particular bit of information about him. He was recruited by IPX several years ago and trained as one of their secret operatives. No evidence exists in any Earth-based files to identify him as anything other than the independent businessman named Roland Anderson.

Anderson appears as a well-dressed businessman wearing a moderately expensive suit. He is slightly balding and wears a short black beard and moustache, all of which are impeccably groomed. He smiles frequently, and speaks with an indeterminate accent, as if he could be from nearly anywhere on Earth. Actually, he was born in Geneva and grew up travelling throughout Europe, so he is familiar with most of the continent's cultures. If the players are European, chances are he's been to their home town. He will not hesitate to use this knowledge to begin the process of bonding with his new friends, either. If a player says he is from Paris, for example, Anderson will say something like, 'Oh? I always enjoyed touring the Louvre. Is the Mona Lisa still hanging in the west wing?' - something that demonstrates his knowledge while creating some common ground between himself and the player.

Anderson tries to smile and be pleasant at all times, but when he needs to make an exception, he does so with gusto. To suggest urgency, he raises his voice and over-emphasises his words. If he becomes angry, he clenches his fists and speaks in short, halting phrases. He does this so noticeably that players may wonder if he is making an extra effort to get his point across.

Anderson will not gain any levels over the course of the campaign.

Rasheed Isanda

Third Level Human Agent

Hit Points: 11

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)

Attacks: +2 melee or +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Security Systems, Sneak Attack +1d6.

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +3

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Balance +4, Climb +7, Computer Use +4, Disguise +3, Drive +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +3, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Pilot +13, Spot +6, Survival +6, Technical (electronic) +4.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency (spacecraft weapons), Skill Focus (pilot), Fire Control.

Standard Equipment: PPG, hand communicator.

Rasheed is from Delhi, although he received an Oxford education and speaks with a slight British accent as a result. He is an introvert and prefers to keep to himself. He is a Hindu, and has several strange statues in his quarters, plus a smaller elephant-headed one sitting atop his control console. Unless one of the other players is also Hindu, he will not discuss religion with them under any circumstances. He believes Christians, Moslems, and other religions are perfectly valid and there is plenty of room in the universe for more than one faith, so he sees no reason to discuss the issue. He does not, however, appreciate attempts to 'convert' him should any player happen to be a preacher of some sort.

Rasheed knows nothing of Anderson's true goals or what he is really up to. He's an independent pilot who is paid a small salary plus a bonus for each round trip he successfully completes, regardless of what cargo or passengers he carries. Although he defers to Alison where the mission and passengers are concerned, he considers the ship his, and has the very last word on what is to be done with it. Unruly passengers can be locked in their chambers at his order, and he also has sole command of the vessel's controls. A sophisticated anti-hijack system locks out the computers from anyone but himself, so he feels safe leaving the bridge while the ship is on autopilot. Even so, he sees little reason to make friends with any of the passengers, for he expects he will never see them again. Under no circumstances will Rasheed leave the ship once it reaches its destination.

At some point prior to Module Four, Rasheed will be 'turned' by an unknown agency and given a new purpose in life. This conversion is the equivalent of two multi-class levels in a prestige class to be fully detailed in a future product. For now, simply apply the following additional abilities to Rasheed during the final module: +2 attack bonus, +1 to each saving throw, +1 Strength, +2 Balance,

+2 Climb, +2 Escape Artist, +2 Hide, +2 Jump, +4 Move Silently, and the feats Iron Will and Resist Scan.

Na'Reek

Fourth Level Narn Officer (naval)

Hit Points: 16

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 11 (+1 Reflex)

Attacks: +6/+1 melee or +4/-1 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (fleet), Rallying Call, Low-Light Vision, +1 damage vs. Centauri.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +6

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Computer Use +4, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +4, Pilot +4, Spot +4, Technical (space travel) +3.

Feats: Data Access, Iron Will, Skill Focus (computer use), Spacecraft Proficiency, Veteran Spacehand.

Standard Equipment: PPG, Narn battle suit.

Na'Reek is someone any player with Narn diplomatic connections might recognise. She is a minor functionary of Ambassador G'Kar's staff, and is also secretly in the employ of Roland Anderson. He needs her now in order to get the team safely into Narn space and, if necessary, to bluff their way on to P'Lask. She knows certain codes that will permit passage through the border.

If one of the players knows her, or knows of her, they might strike up a conversation and ask about what brings her on this particular mission. She will explain that she has been sent along for reasons she doesn't need to reveal. If the players press her (perhaps by pointing out that one of the players himself saw G'Kar just before leaving and he never mentioned Na'Reek), she caves in and admits she's been working for Anderson on the side, just as the other players have done. There's nothing wrong with that, she insists. If the players ask what kind of missions she's been on, she improvises a weak story about investigating a secret Raider base in the Kotok system, but it turned out to be nothing. Let the players figure out she's lying, but she won't admit the truth—she's secretly taking money to help someone violate Narn sovereign territory, a clear violation of several laws. Of course, the players are along for the ride, so they're as much in the wrong as she is, something she'll be sure to point out if they continue to harass her.

Na'Reek will not gain a level over the course of the module.

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