



**THE LAST**  
**PARSEC**  
**THE ENIGMA EQUATION**



# THE LAST PARSEC

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**PINNACLE**  
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# PRIME

*The Last Parsec* is a story of exploration in a limitless universe of mystery and adventure. Unlike most *Savage Worlds* settings, the background is very light—a “sandbox” of stars, planets, and stranger celestial bodies, all waiting to be explored by intrepid beings from across the galaxies.

Information on making characters of various races, weapons, ships, vehicles, and other technology can be found in the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion*. With few exceptions, Ultratech does not exist.

The only Arcane Background available to characters in *The Last Parsec* is Psionics, which works exactly as described in *Savage Worlds*. How psionic characters are viewed varies from world to world. Some revere them, some view them with suspicion, and some hold them in contempt as unwelcome thought stealers.

Setting books for *The Last Parsec* focus on places of interest the player characters might go. Some might zero in on a system and the internal politics going on between its warring worlds. Others might detail a single large city, a bustling space station, or a lonely mining colony.

The background common to all these locations is spelled out on the following pages and will be explored in further detail as *The Last Parsec* line continues to expand—like the swirling cosmos itself.

## THE KNOWN WORLDS

The volume of space most thoroughly explored by the various races spans the width of the Milky Way galaxy’s Orion Arm. The thousands of inhabited worlds are scattered among the billions of star systems within, most of which have never been explored. Billions of other galaxies and millions more inhabited planets, races, flora, fauna, and other phenomena lay beyond.

## GOVERNMENT

There is no central government in the Known Worlds. Most interactions between civilizations are conducted through local diplomacy, trade agreements, and treaties. Most inhabited worlds maintain at least a small navy to enforce their laws. It is possible to be a wanted criminal in several systems while utterly free in others, which has led to the existence of the lucrative, though oft-scorned profession of bounty hunter.

A number of system-spanning empires exist, such as the United Confederation in the Milky Way or the rakashan Tazanian Empire, but even these are tiny compared to the vastness of the Known Worlds, and certainly to the last parsecs of space far, far beyond. Between the stars, what law exists is usually enforced at the end of a blaster.

## CURRENCY

Most individual systems maintain their own system of currency. Occasionally, a closely aligned group of worlds shares a single type of currency for trade purposes. A

few of the large corporations also issue scrip backed by their own resources. JumpCorp scrip in particular has become a sort of de facto interstellar currency and is often referred to as simply 'credits,' denoted C\$.

## SPACE TRAVEL

Travel within a system is generally done under conventional power. More distant points must be reached by "jumping" into hyperspace. Jump- or hyperdrives are readily available on the consumer market throughout the civilized worlds. Although the large conglomerates control the majority of bulk trade contracts, there's plenty of cargo, passengers, and even contraband to support vast numbers of independent merchant, travel, and exploration vessels.

Jumps are usually conducted between registered astronavigational beacons. Beacons can only guide ships to systems—the trip to the individual planet or other destination must be travelled conventionally (see the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion*).

Heavily populated worlds grant codes to their astronav beacons with trusted trade partners, allies, and travelers willing to pay their fee. Codes to more isolated beacons—such as those in systems with valuable mining colonies or other exploitable resources—are extremely valuable and closely guarded by those who own them. Of course, astronav beacons can also be destroyed, held hostage, or hacked as well.

Ships can fly "blind" to observable locations without nav beacons, but this requires its astrogation system to perform trillions of calculations on the fly, based on ever-shifting echoes, pings, and other data relayed from every open source it can find. More than one ship has gone missing in hyperspace this way. See the **Jumping Blind** sidebar on page 5 for more information.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Transmissions can be beamed through hyperspace via relays and astronav beacons, allowing near instantaneous communication as long as the network is available.



Without astronavigation beacons, communications are relatively instant within a system, delayed for 2d6 weeks between systems, or 2d6 years between galaxies.

## LANGUAGE

Millions of languages are spoken across the universe, but within the Known Worlds, *Lingua Universalis* is the standard. Most traders, travelers, and explorers are fluent in it, and most ship consoles and other electronics are labeled in “uni.”

## JUMPCORP

In *The Last Parsec*, the player characters work for the galaxy-spanning corporation called JumpCorp.

JumpCorp operates across the cosmos, dealing in everything from trade to mining, security, and exploration.

## COMPENSATION

JumpCorp exploration team and other “all hours” members live and work aboard their vessel or station. Salary starts at C\$5,000 for 30 standard days service, plus room and board. Average employees receive a 3% bonus every year after their first three. Some missions command bonuses or hazard pay as well.

## ASSETS AND AID

JumpCorp has regional offices in many star systems and sectors throughout the Known Worlds, as well as research stations, trade and travel offices, and independent operatives in many far-flung corners. While these can sometimes offer some material assistance, clarification of instructions and advice, they are seldom in a position to lend direct aid to their team members, who they consider to be independent and self-reliant contractors.

## JUMPING BLIND

Jumping between systems with astronavigation beacons works exactly as described in the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion*.

“Jumping blind” to systems without a beacon requires the same Knowledge (Astronavigation) roll with the same modifiers, but time spent in hyperspace is much longer.

Jumping to a different system in the same galaxy takes 2d6 months. Jumping to a different galaxy takes 2d6 years. Reduce time by one month (or year) for each raise on the Knowledge (Astronavigation) roll, to a minimum of 1—this cannot be reduced by burning extra energy.

Note that one can only jump to a location that can be observed and scanned in significant detail, which is why the Known Worlds are a relatively tight cluster in the Milky Way. So far.

On arrival to the system, the crew must still travel 2d6 additional days to their specific desired location as usual.

Ships can communicate in hyperspace normally, and crew can go “extravehicular” to make repairs and the like along the way if needed. Should a crewman become detached from his vessel, however, he is lost somewhere in the boundless reaches of space, never to be seen again.

## DANGERS

A vessel locked in hyperspace for such a long period is subject to many strange events outside its control. Each month spent jumping blind after the first, draw a card from the Action Deck. If the result is a Joker, the ship drops out of hyperspace into a random location.

What the crew finds there is entirely up to the Game Master, but astronavigational systems can take years to determine the current location and compute a new and viable route.

Jumping blind is a very hazardous endeavor.

# PRIMARY RACES

There is a near endless variety of sentient life in the universe, but a few are relatively common in the world of *The Last Parsec*. The profiles on the following pages contains more detailed information about some of these species, their origins, and how they are most often seen by others. These are iconic stereotypes but every individual is different, of course. There's no reason a yeti can't be a gentle scholar or a Serran a crude barbarian.

To create a character based on these races, refer to the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion*.



## AURAX

Aurax look something like a cross between a humanoid and a terrestrial elephant seal or hippo. Iconically, the burly, six-limbed, four-eyed beings are both ferocious warriors and tender poets. They are renowned for their great feasts where they recite epic tales of wars, comradeship, and love.

Aurax bodyguards prefer powered melee weapons, particularly maces and mauls. Fighting and violence are commonplace among them, but killing is considered a last resort.

Aurax evolved on a massive world of rolling hills and great, golden plains called Auran. They are nomads and not a technological people, having been uplifted to space travel by other races, but a rare few are curious and gregarious enough to travel to the stars—something most aurax shun vehemently.



## CONSTRUCT

There are millions of constructs throughout the Known Worlds, from battle droids to pleasure bots to miners designed to work in conditions organic beings couldn't hope to survive.

The vast majority of constructs have no self-will and are true robots. They follow instructions from their sentient owners and masters, or conduct themselves according to artificial intelligence programmed with a specific purpose in mind.

Some constructs have free will and even emotional simulators. Most struggle with these advanced concepts, though some show it more than others.

Constructs designed to look like humans are generally called androids. Those that are obviously machines are robots. Throughout the Known Worlds, it is expected that constructs are property that must be licensed and registered with the authorities, and their owners are legally responsible for their actions. It is illegal to build a robot without protective 'Asimov' programming against harming sentient beings.



## DEADER (PARASTEEN)

Parasteen, more commonly called 'deaders' by other races, are six-inch long parasites that occupy and animate organic corpses. They do this by connecting with the nervous system and reactivating the electrical systems to the various organs and muscles. The host's form is then sealed inside an air-tight suit and constantly pumped with chemicals to preserve it.

Deaders call their body donors 'celebrants,' organic beings who sold the rights to their corpse before death for lucrative fees. Some see this as taking advantage of those in need—most see it as a perfectly viable business transaction.

Parasteen can occupy most any organic being, but humanoids are most common due to their particular nervous system and body chemistry. Even then, a deader's movement is always slow and clumsy.

Parasteen are intelligent, sentient beings, and become even more so once they tap into their host's brain for additional storage and processing power. They are emotionally remote, however. They don't understand the pleasure and pain of most other beings, though many strive constantly to do so. Because of their intelligence and emotional detachment, they are highly prized as science officers.

## FLORAN

The Known Worlds' sentient plant-based life forms are called florans, though those from particular worlds prefer those monikers instead. Florans encompass a variety of separately evolved species, ranging from sentient succulents to moss-like swamp dwellers.

All free-moving plant creatures like florans still rely upon the three primary components of photosynthesis to survive: sunlight, water, and soil nutrients. Civilized florans enjoy ample fresh water and consume their nutrients in pill form. For sunlight, each floran requires regular exposure to the spectrum of its native star, which can vary widely from the infrared to ultraviolet and beyond. While they prefer natural sunlight, suitable lamps are common and effective.

Most florans reproduce through seed creation, germination, and growth; some sprouts emerge with instinctive intelligence, while others must be nurtured to maturity.

Many florans view agriculture practiced by other intelligent races suspiciously, even disapprovingly, preferring worlds where the native flora grows lush and wild.

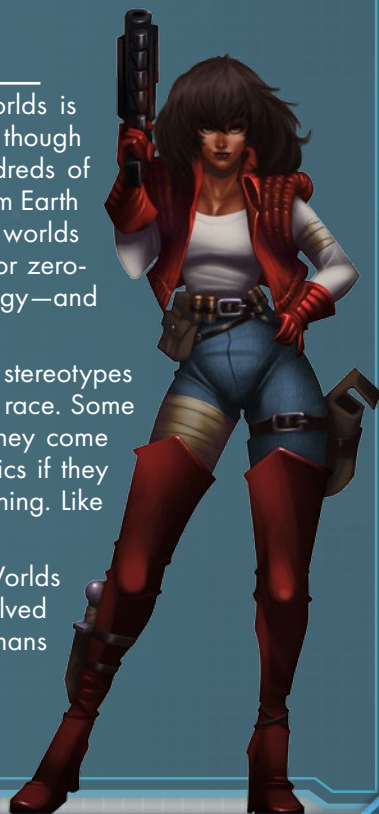


## HUMAN

By far the most ubiquitous race among the Known Worlds is humanity. All humans trace their genetic origins to Earth, though many consider their home world to be one of the hundreds of colony planets seeded by slower-than-light spacecraft from Earth many millennia ago. Those humans born on heavy gravity worlds may be stronger and more stout, while those from low- or zero-gravity environments are slight and thin, but their physiology—and foibles, it seems—are otherwise universal.

Humans are an adaptable and varied species, with stereotypes based more on specific planetary or national origin than race. Some humans are considered barbaric and warlike because they come from war-torn worlds, while others are seen as academics if they come from some well-known bastions of peace and learning. Like all stereotypes, individuals vary, of course.

Humanoid is an all-encompassing term in the Known Worlds that includes humans and many other independently evolved bipedal beings of similar size and basic physiology. All humans are humanoids, but not all humanoids are humans.

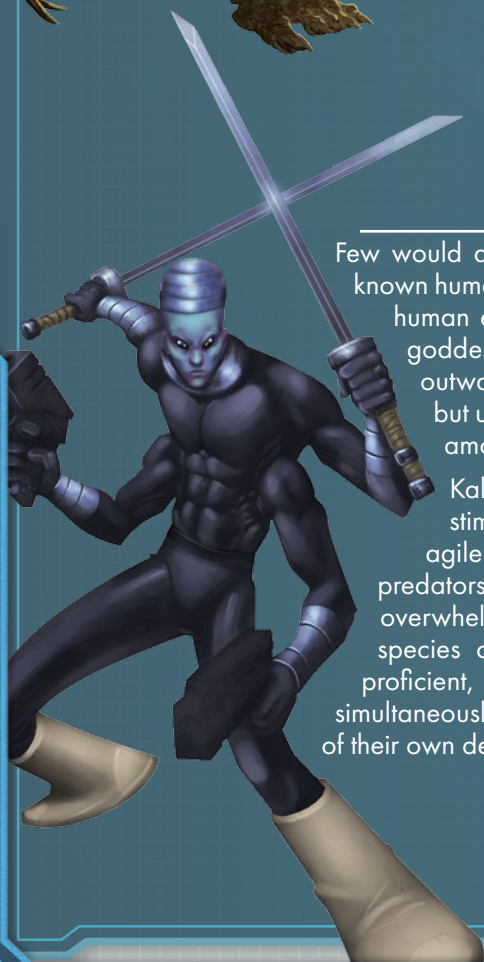




## INSECTOID

One of the most varied and widespread racial groups in the Known Worlds are collectively called the insectoids. In fact, insectoids are many different races that evolved on different worlds who share two primary defining characteristics: exoskeletons and self-aware intelligence. When categorized by humans, they are often compared in appearance to terrestrial insects, from mantises to beetles to ants, though they have no genetic connection or shared behavior with any of these. Some insectoids are very large, strong, and well-armored, some are frail, and some seem to have psychic links to others of their kind.

Other races often find insectoids strange or off-putting. Sometimes it's because of their diets—some consume other, non-sentient insects, sometimes alive, while others consume only carrion. Some also lack typical vocal cords and can only communicate via arcane clicks or hand motions.



## KALIAN

Few would deny that Kalians are the most hot-headed of the known humanoid races. They originate from a single planet that human explorers named Kali, after the four-armed Hindu goddess of destruction. Kalians grudgingly accept this outwardly imposed name when dealing with other races, but use a variety of other planetary and national names among themselves.

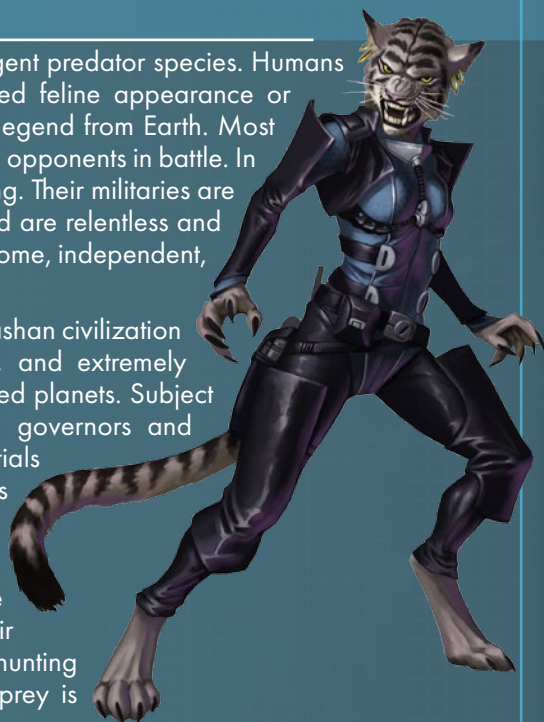
Kalian brains think very quickly, an adaptation stimulated on their primitive home world by their four agile limbs and the need to fend off numerous speedy predators. They make excellent swordsmen and marksmen, overwhelming foes with a flurry of attacks that few other species can hope to match. Kalians are technologically proficient, having mastered hyperspace travel almost simultaneously with humans; they prefer weapons and equipment of their own design and manufacture.

## RAKASHAN

A number of worlds have given rise to intelligent predator species. Humans call them rakashans, because of their shared feline appearance or mannerisms, after the cat-like humanoids of legend from Earth. Most live up to their heritage, being fierce and cruel opponents in battle. In their prime, they are strong, agile, and cunning. Their militaries are usually ruled by the strongest of the pride and are relentless and terrible in warfare. Their armies consist of fearsome, independent, self-reliant, and highly motivated warriors.

In the Known Worlds, the most prominent rakashan civilization is the Tazanian Empire, a large, powerful, and extremely efficient dominion with thousands of conquered planets. Subject populations toil beneath the lash of local governors and warlords, surrendering vast wealth and materials that keep the Empire vital and its space fleets strong. Rebellions are common but most often brutally suppressed.

While most space-faring rakashans are omnivores, at heart they embrace their carnivorous roots; they have numerous hunting planets, and on some the sentience of the prey is simply not a consideration.



## SERRAN

The so-called 'elves' come from a lush, green world they call Serra, originally colonized by a slower-than-light ship launched from Earth. The unique civilization that spawned there flourished there independently until re-connected to the wider human community by hyperspace-capable explorers just three centuries ago. Serrans are humans, genetically identical to their terrestrial brethren, and any physiological differences are due only to more than 200 generations on an alien world.

All Serrans have at least some latent psychic ability. Most have developed much stronger abilities, such as precognition, telepathy, or even pyrokinesis. Their psychic talents are rooted in meditative mysticism, and accepted practices dictate that such powers be used altruistically rather than selfishly. Dishonesty is a difficult concept for most Serrans, since telepathy has rendered it ineffective in their own civilization for many centuries; those exposed to dishonesty find it useless and baffling.



## SAURIAN



Reptilian-looking creatures are referred to as saurians. They come in many shapes, sizes, and colors—from camouflaged brown or grey to brilliant orange and violet—though each species is separately evolved from a variety of worlds. Some even have the chameleon-like ability to change skin color. Most have spines and tails of some sort, and a few can regenerate and grow new limbs should misfortune deprive them of one. All are cold-blooded, reliant upon external heat sources to maintain optimum body temperature, and become much more lethargic on cold planets or the typically frigid halls of space stations and ships.

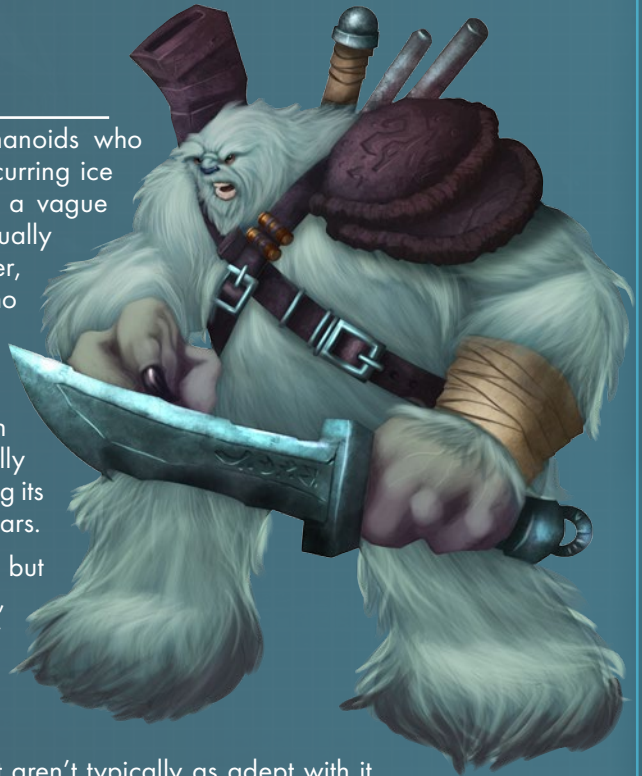
Saurians are not slow witted, as one might expect; when properly stimulated and warmed they can be as intellectually adept as any humanoid. Most reproduce by laying eggs, often in clutches, which they vigorously hide and protect.

## YETI

Yetis are enormous, fur-covered humanoids who evolved on a world of perpetually recurring ice ages. The yetis themselves have only a vague idea what the Earth term 'yeti' actually means, and they bristle at that moniker, preferring their own racial name K'ho (which many humans think sounds more like a cough than a word). Regardless, yetis joyously embrace the interstellar community of the Known Worlds, so much so that they have virtually depopulated their home world, shunning its harsh rigors to spread out among the stars.

Yetis are often seen as gruff warriors, but just like any other race breed scholars, academicians, and other sophists. They tend to be eager and enthusiastic, willing students of new experiences and pleasures.

Yetis are fascinated by technology but aren't typically as adept with it as most others. Their digits aren't well-suited to keyboards or touch screens (which they break with alarming frequency).



# THE ENIGMA EQUATION

This adventure is intended for a group of up to six characters of Novice or Seasoned Rank. A JumpCorp team is sent on a rescue mission to find a missing scientist, a mission that takes on a whole new urgency when it's discovered a rival group of fanatical cultists seek the same goal. The missing scientist's research focuses on the transformation of a star via the deciphering of an ancient equation found within an alien artifact. Depending on the equation's answer—and the travelers' actions—the star will transform into a force of devouring entropy—or something amazing and never before seen in the universe!

## OVERVIEW

In Act 1, the team members are contacted by JumpCorp and sent to the planet Tomb in the Omicron cluster. Tomb is the home of a JumpCorp research station, but it has come under attack by a group of strange insectoids and the head researcher is missing. The explorers have to fight off the insectoids and rescue the head researcher's assistant to discover his whereabouts.

In Act 2, the JumpCorp team travels to the Shadow Star, a stellar body known as Umbra, and encounter the mysterious Collector Ship. On board this alien vessel are many strange denizens, the missing scientist, and the insectoid Shadow Star Cult.

The result of the heroes' encounter with the cult determines which interpretation of the Enigma Equation is beamed into the heart of the Shadow Star.

## MISSION DATA

Below is a list of beings, places, and items the JumpCorp team will encounter during the course of this adventure.

### THE COLLECTOR

The Collector is an ancient alien who travels across the universe gathering unique treasures—living or otherwise. He houses these finds in a massive ship where they are catalogued, studied, and eventually released, their essence and experiences stored for all eternity.

The Collector has sensed something of great import is due to occur at the so-called Shadow Star, and it is his destiny to witness it.

### DR. EMIL ZARIN

This brilliant human researcher works for JumpCorp but has a wildly independent streak. He has recently discovered what he believes is the key to understanding the Enigma Equation. He's left the research station at Tomb for the Umbra System, taking the Umbra Matrix with him in hopes of solving the its mysterious secret.

### UMBRA (THE SHADOW STAR)

Umbra is a flickering red dwarf star, a stellar body at the end of its existence. Also called the Shadow Star, it is revered as a god by the Shadow Star Cultists, but its final fate is to transform into something completely new.

## THE UMBRA MATRIX

This alien artifact was found upon Tomb and contains an ancient computer somehow tied to a distant star called Umbra. It contains a complex mathematical formula that has been dubbed the “Enigma Equation.” The purpose of the equation is, as yet, a mystery.

## CULT OF THE SHADOW STAR

One of the few inhabited planets in the Umbra System is Tak-Tak, home to a race of insectoids called the makkik. The makkik have long been split by a terrible civil war, and the losing side has spawned an extremist group that is unpronounceable in the universal tongue, but called the Cult of the Shadow Star by the few who have encountered it. The cult believes that an ancient artifact, stolen and taken into the stars generations ago, can wake their dark deity, who will then cleanse the planet of their enemies. The cult calls the device the God Talker, but Dr. Zarin has dubbed it the “Umbra Matrix.”

The makkik did not invent space travel on their own, but in the last few centuries adapted it from traders to their world. Soon after, the chosen of the death cult captured a freighter from one of these unfortunate visitors and took to the stars to find the sacred God Talker. Rumors of the device found on Tomb drew the cult’s attention, but they arrived

just after Dr. Zarin left with the Umbra Matrix for their own home system.

This cult is formed entirely of makkik. The chosen have painted their carapaces jet black and decorated them with a red star emblem upon their chests and over their right eyes. They cannot speak *Lingua Standard*, but their leader carries a universal translator to interrogate those they come across.

## SKYE WEEDO

Skye is Dr. Zarin’s assistant. He left her behind to watch over the station, unaware it was in danger of attack by the Shadow Star Cult. Skye held out for a while after her capture, but eventually revealed that Dr. Zarin had gone to Umbra with the Umbra Matrix.

## TOMB

This rocky, barren world is where the Umbra Matrix was discovered, far away from the star system it seems linked to. Tomb is now the site of a JumpCorp research station and the target of the Shadow Star Cultists.

The planet is called Tomb because a number of ancient burial chambers were found beneath its surface. The inhabitants are not native to the world, but seem to have landed there only to entomb themselves for some strange purpose. Those explorations and their strange revelations are another story of *The Last Parsec* yet to be told.

## WHAT SHIP?

If the travelers don’t already have a ship of their own, they’re assigned a beat-up rust bucket—a small freighter named the Scow. It’s not pretty, but it’s reliable, has a hyperdrive, and most important, has the ability to operate in space and atmosphere.

## THE SCOW

**Medium Starship:** Size 8, Acc/TS 55/700, Climb 2, Toughness 25 (6), Crew 5, Remaining Mods 4

**Notes:** AI, AMCM, Atmospheric, Deflector Screens, FTL Drive, Planetary Sensor Suite, Shields, 2 \* Speed

### Weapons:

- Dual Linked Heavy Lasers



## SYSTEM DATA: OMICRON

The Omicron System contains a white star called Omicron and five planetary bodies: Tomb (see below) and four gas giants of various sizes. The gas giants are marked for eventual evaluation and exploration by the JumpCorp Mining Division.

## PLANETARY DATA: TOMB

Tomb is a barren world roughly half the size of Earth. Tomb has three satellites, a trio of tiny nameless moonlets that swing in unusually symmetrical orbits roughly around its equatorial plane.

The planet possesses a breathable atmosphere, but trace elements in the air mean it has a very unpleasant smell and leaves a slightly sticky taste in the mouth. Tomb is a cold world, with temperatures around 30 degrees Fahrenheit around the equator on a regular basis. The survival zones for humanoid life forms are thus located in the central areas. Temperatures at the poles are substantially lower. The planet has an abnormally strong magnetic field, rendering most sensor scans from orbit unreliable.

There are no signs of any significant flora or fauna, only acre upon acre of crater-scarred rock, thick powder, and blowing silt.

Tomb gets its name from a series of burial vaults found beneath its surface. JumpCorp has only begun to excavate these finds, but what is known at this time is that the interred species does not seem native to Tomb.

## THE UMBRA ARTIFACT

One of the artifacts found within Tomb's burial chambers has been dubbed the "Umbra Matrix." Initial evaluations proved fruitless, but the work of Dr. Emil Zarin, Senior Researcher of the Omicron Excavation Department, has provided new data. Dr. Zarin believes the device is a sort of ancient computer with an as-yet indecipherable mathematical formula dubbed the "Enigma Equation."

JumpCorp is highly interested in securing the information contained in the artifact as quickly as possible.

## RESEARCH STATION STAFF

The following staff are authorized and currently expected to be on-site at Tomb Research Station #17:

**Dr. Zarin:** A gifted researcher and particularly driven scientist, Doctor Zarin has been assigned to Tomb by JumpCorp for over a year. The safe recovery of Dr. Zarin is the team's top priority. If Dr. Zarin has met misfortune, the team is instructed to recover any data or notes he may have left behind and the device known as the "Umbra Matrix."

**Assistant Skye Weedo:** Ms. Weedo is Dr. Zarin's assistant. She is skilled at interpersonal relations, organization, and data reporting. She has an excellent record with JumpCorp and has been marked for promotion in the next solar cycle. JumpCorp highly values her safe return and recovery.

**Security Staff:** The research station has a staff of four full-time security personnel armed with blaster rifles and wearing the latest in JumpCorp body armor. The station has security doors and alarms but no automated weaponry or other defenses. JumpCorp highly values their safe return and recovery.

# ACT 1: A VANISHING AT OMICRON

The JumpCorp team's introduction to Tomb begins with a holographic communication from JumpCorp routed directly to their ship.

*The ship's systems alert you to an incoming communication from JumpCorp. Interstellar transmissions of this nature are ruinously expensive, a fact reinforced by the notation that this message is considered both urgent and highly confidential. A holographic projection appears before you, illuminating a dour-looking human male wearing a JumpCorp jumpsuit. A readout on the display shows his name and title are listed as Procurator Bek.*

*"Greetings, team," he begins. "We have a problem in the Omicron star system and you are the closest asset. We've lost communication with our research team on a planet called Tomb and need immediate eyes dirt-side. There were no known threats in the system. With luck, it's just failed equipment.*

*But we value our...personnel. Get to Tomb, find the lead researcher, Dr. Emil Zarin, and secure him and his research. If Dr. Zarin is either deceased or cannot be found, it is most crucial that you recover his data and any artifacts he may be studying at all costs. Once secured, reply with a standard secure communique and all relevant information.*

*Mission data follows."*

The transmission concludes with the handout presented on page 15. The team should engage their hyperdrive and head to Omicron immediately.

## ARRIVAL

Tomb lies in the Omicron star system, a different galaxy from the team's current location. They'll need to engage their hyperdrive to make the journey (see **Hyperspace** in the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion*). When the explorers' ship eventually arrives at Tomb, paraphrase or read aloud the following text:

*A swift and relatively uneventful trip later, your ship arrives in high orbit around the planet Tomb. The world below is a dark, non-reflective gray obscured by what sensors say are thick clouds of blowing dust. Sensors also indicate low levels of background radiation—within tolerable levels—and no detectable, significant flora, fauna, or indigent settlements. A lonely navigation beacon flashes from what must be the JumpCorp Research Station. A distress signal was issued about eight standard days ago but is accompanied by no details.*

The explorers may make whatever preparations they like before landing at the research station. Scanners indicate no movement on the surface. Visuals reveal three buildings, their doors open or blasted off.

Hailing the station receives no reply.

When the shuttle hatch hisses open at the station's landing pad, the team instantly notices the rank, unpleasant smell of Tomb's atmosphere. The air is breathable, but there's a distinct smell (and faint taste) reminiscent of dry rot. It's cold and arid, enough to make

## RESEARCH BASE

5	5	1	1	6	2
4	4	4	1	4	3

## BARRACKS

1. WASHROOM
2. KITCHEN
3. LOUNGE
4. BUNKROOM
5. EXECUTIVE BEDROOM
6. STORAGE
7. LABORATORY
8. CONTROL ROOM
9. HOLE

## LAB

7	9
8	7
1	1

## LANDING PAD

## HANGAR

most beings mildly uncomfortable without an environmental suit. However, the sight beyond the landing platform is likely of more interest to the explorers, and it is equally alarming.

*The research station is made up of three buildings—what looks like a lab, a barracks, and a hangar. The doors to all of the buildings are open or hanging off their hinges, as if blown open by small explosives.*

## EXPLORING THE RUINS

The explorers can check each of the buildings in turn—the barracks, hangar, and lab. Signs of a fire are clear. A Notice roll detects blaster marks in and around the buildings. Yellow splotches of insectoid blood are found here and there, as well as bits of broken carapace. A Common Knowledge roll recognizes that much, but even an experienced xenologist cannot identify the particular species.

## BARRACKS

This prefabricated shell is familiar to JumpCorp employees. It has a lounge,

washroom, kitchen, four bedrooms with bunks, and two private “executive” bedrooms. A quick search of sparse personal effects reveals that four of the bunks and both exec quarters were occupied—clearly by the staff noted on the data sheet.

If someone specifically asks, the type of personal effects indicate a relatively short stay was planned by whoever occupied the bunk beds (the security team, who rotated in and out), and a longer stay was planned by whoever lived in the exec rooms (Dr. Zarin and Skye Weedo).

## HANGAR

A small vessel, likely capable of carrying no more than a dozen, was stored here. A buggy (about the size of a golf cart) remains but has been damaged in the fire.

Some tools and repair gear can be found here should the team be in need of supplies for their own vessel.

## THE LAB

The lab consists of three main rooms—a central control room and two large bays.

One of the bays is empty, the other contains numerous stacked supply crates, food wrappers, water bottles, spent blaster magazines, the bodies of the two security personnel, and a large hole in the floor leading into the earth. It's clear what happened here—some of the staff made a barricade and held out for a while, but something tunneled beneath and took them by surprise. The guards both show multiple blaster wounds—some older, some newer. Their rifles still lie nearby but are nearly spent.

## THE HOLE

A blood trail, no more than 48 standard hours old if someone makes a Notice roll at -2, leads down a few meters into the ground then to the west.

At a T-junction nearby, the Shadow Star cultists wait in ambush. They've dug out a chamber to wait for the return of the other chosen and guard against further intervention. They have a supply of food and water they scavenged from the research station and the exhausted hostage—Skye Weedo.

The cultists were left behind to hold Weedo for safekeeping in case the insectoids needed leverage over Dr. Zarin. She's got food and water and isn't tied up, but she is under constant watch.

The cultists attempt to ambush and kill anyone who comes in after them. They cannot speak universal, but the team can use a translator to communicate with them if desired.

The cultists are zealots who fight to the death unless somehow rendered unable to do so. If confronted, they threaten to kill Weedo if the "infidels" don't leave, but they won't—they're under strict orders to keep her alive.

Regardless of how the team proceeds, Skye should survive.

- **Shadow Star Cultists (3):** See the profile on page 31. They are likely alert and ready unless the party was incredibly quiet exploring the lab above.

## THE RESCUED ASSISTANT

In the aftermath of the confrontation, Skye is grateful for the rescue but angry

### THE HOLE



with JumpCorp for waiting so long to send a response team—and she was expecting more than just a small group of explorers to come to her rescue.

The cultists, she adds, were stark raving mad. Their leader kept talking about getting even and vengeance, and the ones he left behind couldn't speak universal.

Once she's calmed down, Skye tells the group the following:

*"Several months ago a JumpCorp team found some kind of artifact on this star-forsaken planet, but they couldn't figure out what it was. So JumpCorp sent Dr. Zarin to take a look.*

*I'm his assistant so I had to come too. I'm not scientist—I manage data storage and organization—that kind of thing.*

*Anyway, the doc arrived and decided it was some kinda ancient computer and that it held a mathematical formula. Something no one had ever seen before. He called it the Enigma Equation.*

*Then he had another breakthrough. He figured out it had something to do with a star called Umbra—not the star here, somewhere else, I think. Then about two weeks ago he took half the security team and went to take a look. A week later these bugs show up. The guards Zarin left with me held out for days but we were eventually overwhelmed. They didn't...they didn't make it.*

*I didn't tell the bugs where Zarin went for two whole days but eventually they got it out of me. Most took off after the doc but some stayed behind to keep an eye on me for some reason. So...do you guys know where the doc is? Is he okay?"*

Obviously, Skye doesn't want to be left behind here on Tomb. The team must take her with them.

## THE CULTISTS

If any of the cultists survive, they are all too happy to preach the word of the Shadow Star and their strange death cult. Mostly they scream about the cruelty of the masses on their homeworld, and how their sect will bring about their destruction.

The insectoids say they were told to wait here with Skye in case the "blasphemer"



(Zarin) did not cooperate with the team sent to chase him. They believe the Umbra Matrix is the "voice of the Shadow Star," which they see as a living god.

The cultists claim the holy artifact was stolen from their people many generations ago. They have scoured the galaxy for it for hundreds of years. If deciphered, it will awaken the Shadow Star and bring the living god of vengeance to life.

The insectoids are from a planet in the Umbra system so they know how to get back to it, but they have no ship now and no idea where exactly Dr. Zarin would have gone—space is immense, after all.

## NEXT STOP: THE UMBRA SYSTEM

Dr. Zarin left his destination in the research station system. Skye can help the group jury-rig enough temporary power to pull the coordinates so they can follow it. The next step is to travel to the Shadow Star and find him. Proceed to **Act 2: The Collector Ship**, when the team is ready to launch.

# ACT 2: THE COLLECTOR SHIP

The Umbra System lies within the same galaxy as Omicron, so the trip in and out of hyperspace should be relatively short. Paraphrase or read aloud the following text as the rescuers arrive and do a system scan:

*The Umbra System is sparse, consisting of only a few planets and backlit by a distant, green and purple nebula from the party's approach vector. Umbra itself is a pale red dwarf, flickering in the dark void like a dying ember.*

*But the most unusual resident of the system is a massive starship parked near Umbra. The vessel is truly enormous, nearly the size of a large moon, and pale gray in color.*

The explorers can locate the Collector's ship optically (seeing its silhouette against the stellar radiance) or by studying the gravimetrics of the region using their ship's sensors. Scans reveal it gives off low energy typical for normal cruising and life-support.

Two other ships are docked with it. Skye says one of them is Dr. Zarin's (a small, unarmed research vessel named *Frontier*), while the other appears to be an older freighter with no markings other than a single red star—the same sigil the cultists on Tomb had painted on their carapace.

None of the ships respond to communication, but as the explorers approach, a docking bay emits a guidance beacon and opens its airlock.

Assuming they dock, they find themselves in a large hangar where the other two ships

are docked. It doesn't take much work to hack the freighter's security and get inside, and Skye Weedo knows the code to get into *Frontier* if the group decides to do so. All three vessels are described on the following pages.

## THE CULTIST SHIP

The Shadow Star cultists captured this vessel from traders to their planet long ago. It was once a freighter but has long been repurposed as the cult's mobile base.

Scraps of clothing, batteries, bits of technology, and what must be loot from the unfortunate travelers they've come across lies in dirty piles around the ship. Crimson symbols of a star and what must be holy script are painted in luminescent paint on the walls and corridors. Some rooms are more like shrines, bones, writing, and discarded carapace surrounding lamps likely designed to represent the star the cult worships at their center.

The ship is eerily empty of habitation. All of the chosen are aboard the Collector ship searching for the Umbra Matrix.

## THE FRONTIER

It's clear JumpCorp spared little expense to outfit Dr. Zarin with a top-quality research vessel. The *Frontier* is clean and sleek and possesses an upgraded sensor suite. No one's on board, but if the explorers search the ship, they discover (with a successful Notice test at -4) a hidden compartment containing a number of holoslugs of Dr.

Zarin's research. A quick skim of the slugs reveals the following:

- Dr. Zarin is firmly convinced that solving the Enigma Equation creates a code of some sort.
- Dr. Zarin believes that the device can transmit an energy type he has never encountered. The code, he postulates, determines the energy's "frequency."
- When the *Frontier* arrived, Dr. Zarin discovered a massive ship of unknown origin. He hailed the ship and received no answer, but a navigation beacon lit up and seemed to welcome him in. The last recording shows Dr. Zarin and his two security personnel getting ready to board.

*"Skye, there's a strange ship here. I must get aboard and take the Umbra Matrix with me. It's hard to explain, but time is very short and I've got to get to work. I'll transmit further instructions as soon as I can. I think we've discovered something no one has ever seen before. Something...wonderful."*

## THE COLLECTOR SHIP

Read the following as the crew makes its way inside:

*The interior of the alien ship is as unique as its outer shell. Vaulted ceilings arch overhead and the corridor before you is more than 20 feet wide. Every surface is made from a dully reflective red metal, and the ship's lighting is muted yet oddly very bright. Strange red and blue shifts blur the edges of your vision, and you can feel a weight upon your shoulders from a slightly higher than normal artificial gravity at work. The air is crisp and oxygen rich.*

*Along both sides of the corridor are open chambers—a slight shimmer revealing an energy field across each opening. A bizarre variety of items and creatures are sealed behind the barriers. Beside each chamber is a grayish viewscreen attached at roughly head height.*

If the JumpCorp team checks out the display screens next to each chamber, they can access a superficial layer of the ship's



## DISPLAY CHAMBER BREACH

A high-powered attack *might* breach a display chamber. If so, you'll need to figure out what's inside. Roll or choose from the list presented on page 23, or make up something of your own. If you want an additional combatant, randomly choosing a creature from the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion* should fit the bill.

Remember that the chambers reseal in a random number of seconds. When they do so, anything caught in the field is severed with near-unstoppable force!

computer system. The display can be programmed to Lingua Universal or most any other known language so most everyone can read it.

Some basic information becomes quickly available once the viewscreen is accessed.

- The vessel they are on is unnamed, but commanded by a being known as a "Collector," thus it is referred to as the "Collector ship." It is very old—there is some evidence to suggest its records go back *thousands of years*.
- Visitors are welcome aboard the Collector ship as long as they don't attempt to open the display chambers or commit a violent act that could result in a chamber breach.

If the explorers search the system for information on the Enigma Equation, Umbra, Tomb, Dr. Zarin, or the Shadow Star Cultists, they discover some additional data:

- The Umbra Matrix and Dr. Zarin are on board in another section of the ship.
- The Collector ship currently waits near Umbra in anticipation of solving the Enigma Equation and observing the "final answer." No further details are provided.
- One of the chambers currently on display not far from the explorer's current location is listed as 'Shadow Star Cultist.'

## THE COLLECTION

The vessel's sole purpose is to travel from world to world, gathering samples of the unusual and unique for study and documentation (shared with the Libraries presented in *The Last Parsec* book *Scientorium*) and possible suppression or elimination if deemed by them to be galactically dangerous.

Millions of objects, creatures, and beings can be found on board the ship, from ancient (allegedly) magical relics to infamously dangerous beasts. According to the system, the "displays" are studied, recorded in some sort of media beyond any of the crew's understanding, and eventually returned.

The Collector doesn't seem to have any qualms about capturing sentient beings. Their thoughts and memories are captured and downloaded, and then the subject is generally released—though often years later.

The chambers are sealed with an unknown force field that allows one to see inside. Oxygen or other gas is pumped in via ceiling filters for living subjects. Beings are generally held in stasis where their minds and memories are read, studied, and stored by unknown technology. Subjects may be revived and spoken to via viewscreens on the exterior wall outside each pen. Waking takes a minute or so for sentient species—or seconds for those with animal intelligence or lower.

The field blocks 30 points of damage and is treated like an object (damage rolls don't Ace). If 31 points of damage or greater are caused, the field drops, then restores itself 2d20+10 seconds later.

Finally, while the viewscreen does allow the associated cell to be opened, it requires a "print" of a type no one in the party possesses—or has ever seen before (actually the touch of a stringer tendril—something only the Collector can do).

## THE CAPTURED CULTIST

If the explorers go to the chamber of the Shadow Star Cultist, they find one of the

insectile creatures they encountered on the planet Tomb. The cultist is huddled in the corner of his chamber, seemingly in the throes of despair. The characters can use the communication system's universal translator to talk to her with a simple Knowledge (Communication).

The cultist's name, it turns out, is J'fell, and although she is one of the faithful of the Shadow Star Cult, she is willing to talk to the newcomers to take her mind off her hopeless captivity. J'fell's reaction starts out as Uncooperative. If the heroes can get her to Friendly or Helpful through successful Persuasion tests or excellent roleplaying, she provides them with the following information:

*"You want to know of the Umbra Matrix? We call it the God Talker. If one knows the ancient language, it allows you to talk directly with the holy one—the Shadow Star.*

*The God Talker was taken from us long ago by people from the stars. Now we can travel to the stars and we have been tracking it for many life-cycles. When we heard that it was on the planet you call Tomb, we raced to strike down the unholy blasphemers who had taken it.*

*Though there is no hope for this one, our leader will carry on and use the God Talker to awaken the Great One...and bring about the destruction of our hated foes!"*

The insectoid doesn't know exactly what kind of destruction the Shadow Star will be—it's holy prophecy handed down from generations long gone. If there were ever specifics, they are lost to the vagaries of her ancient religion.

## OTHER EXHIBITS

As the group continues along the ship toward the Umbra Matrix, they pass by other interesting exhibits as well. A few are listed here—the Game Master should, of course, add any others she thinks may be of particular interest.

**Omariss Death Worms:** Inside this chamber are one or more snake or worm-like creatures—it's hard to tell as they're coiled. Greenish gas fills the chamber—the death worms don't breathe oxygen, but a

mix of chlorine and hydrogen fatal to most humans and near-humans. The display reads "Omariss Death Worms."

**Crystal Sword:** A clear sword rests in a case inside this small chamber. Its blade is made from what looks like a single shard of crystal or possibly even diamond. The display screen has little information, citing only: "The crystal blade of Tarth."

**Empty Chamber:** This chamber appears to be completely empty, but the display screen lists the inhabitant as "Chameleon stalker of Koza IX."

**Golden Ark:** This chamber contains a mysterious box made of golden metal, adorned with winged beasts of unknown origin on the lid. The sides depict a relatively plain scene of oceans and the blazing sun. The side is fitted with metal loops for carrying poles, though they seem to have long since rotted away. The display screen lists it as "Container of unknown origin. Highly dangerous. Do not open."

## GUARDIANS

Should anyone attempt to break open a display, the ship responds with overwhelming force. Two security bots for every member in the offending party arrive within 1d4+1 rounds, transported via elevators hidden in certain display chambers (but always emerging from around corners so the exit points remain hidden).

The robots attempt to subdue anyone openly attacking a display. If the field is already down, the robots encircle the offenders and attempt to stun them and any beings released from the cell, then return the captive to its original location.

Roughly 2000 security bots are available in total, and they will keep coming until all captives are returned to their cells and offenders are ready to comply with the ship's rules. Assume any Incapacitated robot draws two more replacements after 1d6+1 rounds.

**Traveler:** Strangely, this chamber holds what appears to be a very average looking human in slacks, shirt, and a cloth or towel draped around his neck. The view screen lists him simply as "Hitchhiker."

**Djinn:** On the floor of this chamber is what looks like a very crude iron robot bound in black-iron chains. The being shudders every few moments, flexing the chains as if trying to break free. The display screen reads "Djinn."

## THE UMBRA MATRIX

After passing by the other exhibits, the team eventually reaches the chamber holding the Umbra Matrix. The room is sealed, but inside is Dr. Zarin, busily studying the device and recording notes in his personal data recorder.

*Standing inside the artifact's chamber is Dr. Zarin, the scientist you've been chasing across the galaxy. The researcher looks disheveled but very excited, dashing from instrument to instrument he's attached to what is obviously the Umbra Matrix.*

*The artifact looks like a large crate about 4' tall, 6' wide, and 3' deep. Luminescent piping runs along the surface, leading to metal tubes on the top that project rotating, holographic symbols.*

*As you gaze in wonder at the device, Dr. Zarin sees you and smiles grandly. "This is wonderful!" he cries. "It works. I have deciphered the Enigma Equation! It was a location cypher! It could only be solved at this exact location! This ship was parked directly on the spot...what are the odds? But the host seems most accommodating... and it's almost time. Almost time! Yes indeed! Very soon now!"*

Dr. Zarin chatters away to the explorers excitedly, pointing to a large monitor focused on the glimmering red dwarf outside. He doesn't seem to care that he's a prisoner in the display chamber, and only gives a momentary wave to Skye Weedo if she accompanies the team. If anyone makes a relevant Knowledge (Science) roll, she can tell that it's tracking a strange energy type she's never seen before, and it seems to be originating from the Umbra Matrix.



## SUDDEN DANGER

Give the explorers a few moments to talk to Dr. Zarin. They can't talk him out of proceeding—any hint that transforming the Shadow Star might result in their demise is met with "Poppycock. This is something far beyond what we know now. This is a near-Godlike transformation. This is...something wonderful."

About this time, the Star Cultists find the Umbra Matrix's chamber as well. They turn a distant corner and open fire on the "infidels" the moment they see them. The cultists are pure fanatics with the device they've sought for so long within their grasp. They cannot be reasoned with, want no interference from others, and fight to the death. The cult decides to eliminate those outside the chamber first, then they'll figure out how to get inside and recover their God Talker.

- **Shadow Star Cultists:** A dozen fanatics remain, intent on the player characters' destruction and the recovery of the Umbra Matrix. Their leader, Kthx, is a Wild Card.

A round after the firefight breaks out, a white glow appears between the two groups and the Collector speaks. The Shadow Star Cultists pause their attack long enough for the Collector to deliver its message:

*Greetings, visitors. I am a Collector. I am the caretaker of this ship and the wondrous treasures it carries. We are on the verge of something truly extraordinary. All protocols are hereby abandoned. This one's journey will now come to an end. But the nature of that end is up to you.*

*The Cult of the Shadow Star wishes to awaken Umbra, their dark god. If their data is entered into the final stage of the Enigma Equation, the red dwarf will collapse into a black hole. Everything in this system—including this ship—will be consumed.*

*But fate has brought you here and it is possible for you to create different data for the Enigma Equation. If you can reach your ship and begin the leap to hyperspace before the cult's data is transmitted, it will trigger a different solution. Then you will survive, and something truly amazing will occur—something never before witnessed by living eyes. The countdown begins now...*

## DR. EMIL ZARIN

Dr. Emil Zarin is the head of JumpCorp's Research Division for Omicron System. It's unlikely he ever comes out of his display chamber. His role in the adventure is purely to fire off the Enigma Equation at Umbra and cause the event that triggers its transformation. He can be interacted with but won't deviate from broadcasting the signal under any circumstances.

**Race:** Human

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d12+1, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

**Skills:** Driving d6, Fighting d4, Healing d6, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Astrogation) d12, Knowledge (Astrophysics) d12, Knowledge (Electronics) d10, Knowledge (Mathematics) d10, Knowledge (Xenology) d8, Notice d10, Piloting d8, Repair d8, Shooting d4, Swimming d6

**Cha:** —; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

**Hindrances:** Elderly, Stubborn

**Edges:** Professional (Smarts), Scholar (Astrophysics, Mathematics)

**Gear:** Personal data device.

## SKYE WEEDO

Skye is a stylish, heavy-set woman in her early twenties. She's great at organization, very perceptive, and understands more about Dr. Zarin's research than she lets on. Like most JumpCorp employees, Skye has received certifications in Personal Defense and Basic Combat Shooting, mandatory courses along the frontier.

**Race:** Human

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Driving d6, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Administration) d6, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Knowledge (Science) d6, Notice d8, Piloting d6, Shooting d4

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Bad Eyes (Minor), Loyal

**Edges:** Alertness, Jack-of-All-Trades

**Gear:** Personal data device.

## THE GAUNTLET

The characters have two minutes (20 rounds) to get to their ship. Miraculously, the Collector has rearranged the vessel to give them a clear path to the hangar—but he also begins opening the display chambers to give all his captives a last moment of freedom before the end.

Strange creatures, surprised captives, and terrible beasts emerge—and valuable artifacts lie unprotected for the taking. But there is so little time and the cultists are between the heroes and their salvation.

Each round, one of the display chambers along the path back to the ships opens. Choose an opponent or treasure of your choice, or roll on the Gauntlet Encounters Table below to determine what is released into the explorer's path.

Any creatures freed from the display chambers attack the nearest foe, believing them to be their captors. Intelligent creatures

might be reasoned with or even offered a chance at escape if they help out. The cultists take no allies though—they believe Umbra will protect them.

The Shadow Star Cultists sought the awakening of their dark god and retribution upon their people for generations. As they realize the true consequence of the Collector's words, they become desperate and even more fanatical than before. Every cultist gains the Combat Reflexes Edge and is immune to fear and Intimidation. They walk steadily down the hall, firing as they go, and believing the blessing of the Shadow Star will protect them. They focus their attacks on the player characters, sparing shots for other creatures or opponents only if directly threatened.

## ESCAPE VELOCITY

Whether walking in with ease or dragging their wounded teammates behind them, the JumpCorp team should eventually make it

## GAUNTLET ENCOUNTERS

### D6 Encounter

- 1 **Razor Drones:** A flock of hundreds of flying, robotic drones with razor-sharp wings rushes from this chamber. The drones are a swarm (see *Savage Worlds*), but their wings give them AP 2. They split when Incapacitated into two small swarms.
- 2 **Nepaxi Warrior:** A massive ivory-furred being staggers out of a display chamber. Though dazed for his first action, he quickly recovers, draws a power axe from his back, and storms toward the biggest or most intimidating foe he sees.
- 3 **Omariss Death Worm:** A mated pair of 10' long sand worms crawl out of this chamber and begin to screech—oxygen is not their native gas. The dying creatures perish 10 rounds after they emerge, convulsing violently about the floor of the ship with wracking pain as they do. Until that time, their primitive brains seek to kill anything they encounter, believing them the cause of this terrible torment. See page 29 for statistics.
- 4 **Crystal Sword:** The crystal sword found on page 23 is there for the taking. It causes Str+2d6 damage, AP 4. The sword "sings" when swung, adding +2 to Intimidation rolls made when wielding it. It is considered an energy weapon, but is powered by no source currently understood in the Known Worlds, making it essentially limitless. If the user ever rolls a critical failure on a Fighting roll (and doesn't spend a Benny to change it), the sword shatters and is destroyed.
- 5 **Hunter:** See the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion*.
- 6 **Djinn:** The malevolent cyborg described on page 24 breaks free of its bonds. It steps forth from its chamber, dragging its chains behind it, and attacks anyone and everyone it sees. See page 30 for the being's profile.

## THE COLLECTOR SHIP

HANGAR  
BAYSHANGAR  
BAYS

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UMBRA  
MATRIX

back to their ship. The moment they do, the Collector speaks to them telepathically one last time.

*The Enigma Equation is solved. This One bids you farewell. May all your memories be preserved.*

Sensor readings are already blaring as the crew races into the ship. A quick read shows that the nearby red dwarf is about to implode, transforming it into a black hole. Let the crew worry that they've somehow failed, but remind them that they need to blast off and engage hyperspace as fast as possible. Assuming they do, let them make their Knowledge (Astrogation) roll (see **Hyperspace** in the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion*), then read the following.

*The monitors show Umbra glowing, pulsing, and somehow shrinking all at the same time. "Warning! Warning!" your ship screams, sensors working overtime to detect the cataclysmic event happening at Umbra. If the star truly implodes, it's likely you won't make it into hyperspace before it draws you in!*

*Then something amazing happens. The star suddenly expands again in a brilliant flash of light. Your sensors flash and scream but can't seem to make sense of what's happening. The ship's engines groan as it pushes away, desperately trying to engage hyperspace.*

*It's too late. The energy from the star races at you at the speed of light—maybe more. It pushes the ship forward, accelerating it*

*at impossible speed. The craft shutters and shakes—it feels like it's about to come apart. You can barely hear over the screaming alarms and the overwhelming roar of the Umbra.*

*Suddenly...your hyperdrive engages.*

Give the group a moment to let their near-escape sink in. When you're ready, conclude the adventure with the following:

*The alarms are quiet now. The ship no longer rattles and shakes. Your heart begins to steady. You know you have witnessed the creation of something never recorded before—a **white** hole. Systems predict it will be years before the energy will disperse enough to return safely, but something makes you want to. For if a black hole consumes everything within, what might a white hole do?*

## THE WHITE HOLE

The transformation of the Shadow Star into a white hole is the climactic moment of the adventure, and it should be a moment of sheer wonder on the part of the explorers. The explorers can't return now—the energy wave will last for several years and results in instant death should the ship return. Even if they want to, the ship's hyperspace computers simply cannot register the coordinates and won't function.

So what's actually there? That's a mystery we'll explore in a future setting book for *The Last Parsec*. And it will be something amazing...



# TRAVELERS & XENOS

## ★ COLLECTOR SECURITY BOT

These robots patrol the Collector Ship enforcing the Collector's will.

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d8, Shooting d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Gear:** Built-in laser rifle (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, AP 2, 3RB), stun lash (Str+d4 non-lethal damage with stun charge).

### Special Abilities:

- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken, ignore one level of wound penalties, don't breathe, and are immune to disease and poison.
- **Fearless:** Robots are immune to fear and intimidation, but may be smart enough to react to fear-causing situations appropriately.

## DEATH WORM

The death worm is longer than a human is tall, covered in flexible sand-yellow scales, lives beneath the soft sand of its desert home, and has the ability to kill a grown man at a distance. This chamber houses two of the beasts.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6

- **Burrow:** Death worms can move through sand and soft soil at full Pace. When the death worm senses prey, it bursts through to the surface and makes an opposed Stealth roll versus the target's Notice. If the worm wins, it gains +2 to attack and damage that



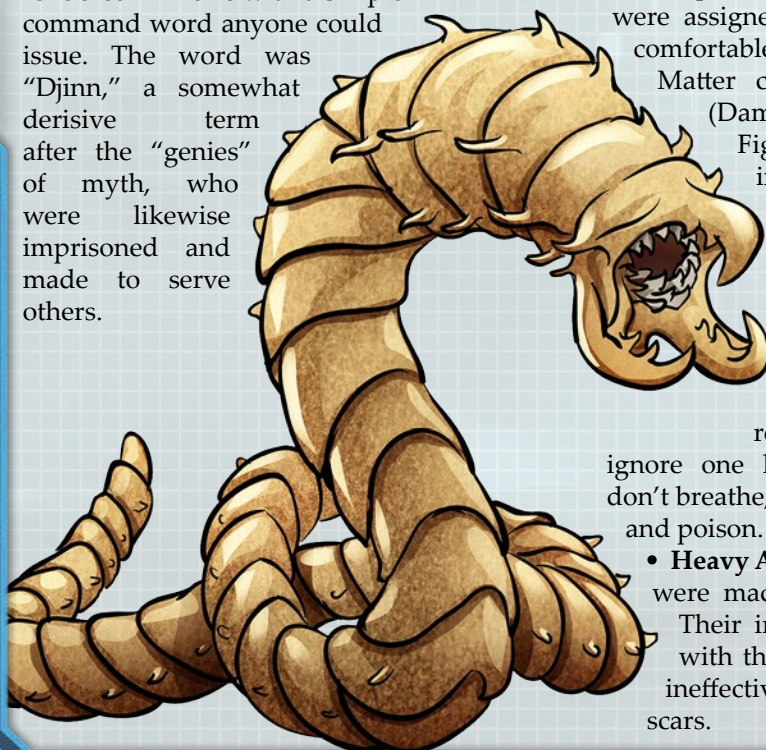
round, or +4 if it gets a raise. If the victim wins and was on Hold, he may try to interrupt the attack as usual.

- **Death Power:** The death worm can focus an internally-generated electrical charge strong enough to stop a man's heart or fry electrical systems in a vehicle. Range 3/6/12, ROF 1, Damage 2d6+2. The attack ignores armor and counts as a Heavy Weapon. Vehicular Critical Hits automatically affect electrical systems.
- **Desert Dweller:** +2 to Vigor rolls to resist the effects of heat.
- **Size +2:** Death worms measure 10' in length and are 1' in diameter.

## ★ DJINN

This crude iron robot is a strange entity from a now-lost prison world. The society that produced them did not believe in true capital punishment, but realized they could never control some of their most violent offenders. Instead, they transferred their consciousness into crude but durable iron bodies and tasked them with the most difficult labor—deep space mining, construction, and other tasks.

While many pointed out the danger of equipping such demented minds with near-indestructible bodies, the “cyborgs” could be rendered immune with a simple command word anyone could issue. The word was “Djinn,” a somewhat derisive term after the “genies” of myth, who were likewise imprisoned and made to serve others.



Of course, as predicted, the inmates found a way to break free of their bonds and disable the kill switch. After a very bloody escape, most were hunted down and destroyed, but a few hundred still remain, traveling the cosmos in their near-invulnerable forms and taking out their violence and hatred on any unfortunate traveler who crosses their path.

The djinn look like blocky androids made of dull iron. Their face is a bulletproof glass viewscreen that shows the face of the condemned being within. The simulation responds to the inmate's emotions, so most reveal a constant state of hatred and ill-intent.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12+2

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Trade) d10, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8

**Cha:** -8; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 13 (4)

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Enemy (Major—most Galactic law enforcement in the Known Worlds), Mean, Outsider, Vengeful (Minor)

**Edges:** Ambidextrous, Atmospheric Acclimation, Block, Improvisational Fighter

**Gear:** None, but djinn have been trained to use power tools for the tasks they were assigned and many seem to feel comfortable using them as weapons.

Matter cutters are quite common (Damage 3d6, AP 10, -1 to Fighting and Parry as an improvised weapon and accounting for the djinn's Improvisational Fighter Edge). Their heavy iron fists also cause Str+d8 damage all on their own.

### Special Abilities:

- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken, ignore one level of wound penalties, don't breathe, and are immune to disease and poison.

• **Heavy Armor +4:** The djinn's bodies were made to work in deep space. Their iron forms are pockmarked with the impact of microasteroids, ineffective blaster fire, and other scars.

## ★ NEPAXI WARRIOR

A massive ivory-furred being staggers out of a display chamber, dazed. He picks the biggest or most intimidating being on either side, draws his power axe, and races to battle to attack those he believed imprisoned him.

The warrior doesn't speak uni, but if someone tries speaking with him, he proves to be quite rational—a champion of his people abducted one dark and rainy night by strangers. How he wound up in the Collector's Ship he has no idea. The warrior might join the party and help them fight if properly approached.

**Race:** Yeti

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Tracking d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 9

**Hindrances:** Heroic, Low Tech

**Gear:** Power Axe (Str+d8+d6).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Environmental Resistance, Cold:** Yetis add +4 to resist the effects of cold and have +4 versus cold and cold-based attacks.
- **Environmental Weakness, Heat:** Yetis subtract 4 from Fatigue checks made to resist the effects of heat, and take 4 additional points of damage from heat and fire-based attacks.
- **Size +2:** The yeti is nearly 7' tall, broad, and muscular.

## SHADOW STAR CULTISTS

The cult of the Shadow Star originated on the insectoid planet of Tak-Tak (the closest spelling in the universal tongue). The native makkik are a paranoid and xenophobic race, a trait that has kept an eons-old civil war raging since their recorded history. The oppressed side sees salvation in the Shadow Star, or Umbra, their sun. They believe that with an ancient device called the God Talker, the Shadow Star will hear their prayers and visit vengeance upon those who have oppressed them these long millenia.

### SHADOW STAR CULTIST

Shadow Star Cultists are makkik insectoids who have dedicated themselves to worshipping Umbra and overthrowing

## MORE XENOS

The *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion* contains many more creatures you might spring on the explorers as they attempt to return to their ship. Most any sort of unique xeno—or even a unique specimen of its kind—might be of interest to the Collector.

You might also look through your other *Savage Settings* for unusual creatures. The Collector visits many distant worlds, any one of which might generate something as strange as a chupacabra (*East Texas University*), a tumble-bleed (*Deadlands*), or even a flock of razor wings (*50 Fathoms*).

These creatures can be used as-is, or altered to fit the science fiction theme a bit more. Razor wings, for example, might be a flock of rogue drones originally designed to shred enemy troops or hostile species. A tumble-bleed might be a perfectly natural creature from some alien prairie.

Because *The Last Parsec* is a science fiction setting, we recommend you stay away from supernatural creatures—unless the thing's abilities might be explained by some sort of semi-plausible pseudo science.

their oppressors. The average cultist isn't particularly bright and has something of a hive mentality. This makes them fairly rigid in their thinking, and fatally loyal.

Makkiks don't have the heavy carapace of more beetle-like insectoids, but their exoskeleton is still much tougher than standard humanoids. Neither do they have natural weaponry—they rely on weapons. This group favors blaster rifles.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Clueless, Low Tech, Outsider, Vow (Major—Awake the Shadow Star)



**Edges:** Atmospheric Acclimation

**Gear:** Blaster rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8+2, AP 2).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +1:** The cultist's chitonous skin gives them +1 Armor.

★ **CULT LEADER (GIT-IK)**

The fanatical leader of the cult is Git-Ik. She is somewhat mad, incredibly devious, and totally driven in her hatred of her world's upper caste. She actually suspects that wrath of the God Talker might destroy her entire planet—and is perfectly fine with that.

Git-Ik doesn't have true psychic ability, but she has attuned herself to the beings under her command. This acts something like a very minor hive mind and grants her the Leadership Edges listed below.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6 (7)

**Hindrances:** Clueless, Low Tech, Outsider, Vow (Major—Awaken the Shadow Star)

**Edges:** Atmospheric Acclimation, Command, Command Presence, Inspire, Tactician

**Gear:** Energy blaster (Range 6/12/24; Damage d8), chitin sword (Str+d6), language translator.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +1:** The cultist's chitonous skin gives her +1 Armor.