Starfall

Starfinder
COMPATIBLE

Legendary Games

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STARFALL

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The following superscript notations are used to denote references to official Starfinder Roleplaying Game rulebooks and other content:

SCR = *Starfinder Core Rule Book*   SA = *Starfinder Armory*

WELCOME TO STARFINDER ADVENTURES

This product is a part of our line of adventures and accessories for use with Paizo Inc.'s *Starfinder Roleplaying Game*. The all-star team of designers here at Legendary Games is committed to bringing you — the busy GM or player — the absolute best third party support for your Starfinder campaign. To deliver on that commitment, we've assembled the best of the best of current gaming authors, designers and layout experts so that you can feel comfortable that Legendary Games products will be the most creative and well-designed content you can find. Though our adventures often share a theme with a specific Adventure Path campaign, they are designed to be easily incorporated into your home game regardless of where in the galaxy your adventures take you!

SPECIAL ELECTRONIC FEATURES

We've hyperlinked this product internally from the Table of Contents and externally with links to online resources like starjammersrd.com where applicable. If it is in the core rulebook, we generally didn't link to it unless the rule is an obscure one. The point is not to supersede the game books, but rather to help support you, the player, in accessing the rules, especially those from newer books or that you may not have memorized.

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WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE
STARFALL

What begins as a simple effort to claim and retrieve a derelict alien starship quickly turns perilous when the PCs survive an attack by space pirates only to find themselves trapped aboard the very ship they tried to salvage. Aboard the alien vessel, the PCs encounter an enigmatic race of humanlike star-farers, trapped in a small section of their own ship and in dire need of assistance. Tasked with hunting down the starfarers' recently escaped monstrous alien enemies, the PCs must make their way through steel-clad hallways, an artificial jungle stocked with dangerous creatures, and finally into the long-abandoned bowels of the ancient ship, where they come face-to-face with a threat of unimaginable cosmic horror … an alien threat that has just initiated the ship's self-destruct sequence!

Starfall is a high-level, high-stakes *Starfinder Roleplaying Game* adventure designed for 13th-level characters, providing enough experience to gain a level and more should they survive and destroy the aliens among them! Like every product from Legendary Games, ***Starfall*** brings together the talents of the top authors and artists in the business to bring you a fantastic play experience at the table and a product that is as pleasurable to read as it is to use. When you combine innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none, that is when you ***Make Your Game Legendary!*** We hope you enjoy using ***Starfall*** as much as we enjoyed making it! Game on!
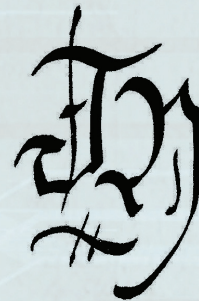
ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Long ago, in a distant galaxy, the home world of the humanlike Dzjaeri (pronounced *DIZ-jeer-REE*) was destroyed by the Empire of the Void, an ever-expanding consortium of malevolent aberrations, nightmare creatures, and powerful alien entities who dwell in the light-less gulfs between the stars. A few forward-thinking Dzjaeri foresaw their homeworld's annihilation and attempted to flee the disaster in massive starships each designed to carry thousands of passengers in cryogenic hibernation. However, due to the imminent threat of global obliteration, the Dzjaeri engineers had to cut corners in order to build the hundreds of ships necessary to evacuate even a tiny percentage of their world's population. Instead of constructing an entire starship from scratch, the Dzjaeri designed each of their starships around a central hull made from asteroids harvested from a metal-rich asteroid field located near their home world. Though this greatly accelerated the construction time, the starships ultimately proved slow and graceless. When the Empire of the Void's invasion force penetrated the Dzjaeri home system and the Dzjaeri attempted their desperate diaspora, the faster, more maneuverable space-faring vessels of the Enemy swiftly hunted down and destroyed most of the asteroid-hulled starships before they could escape.

One of the more fortunate of the Dzjaeri starships was the *Ardent Hope*. Battered by missiles, scorched by energy weapons, and its crew decimated by horrific, insanity-inducing psychic attacks, the *Ardent Hope* endured an incredible amount of damage while scores of her sister ships were utterly consumed by fire and madness around her. Miraculously, the crew of the *Ardent Hope* heroically weaved their way through the carnage and managed to engage the ship's stardrive to escape complete destruction. Unfortunately, one of the Empire of the Void ships struck the *Ardent Hope* with a missile that delivered a strange biological payload. Instead of exploding or damaging the Dzjaeri ship, the missile infected the *Ardent Hope* with a psychic magic-infused fungus that attached itself to the ship's asteroid hull and went completely unnoticed.

An instant after engaging its stardrive, the battered *Ardent Hope* found itself thousands of light years from Dzjaera, and at least temporarily beyond the reach of the Empire of the Void. Alone and lost among the stars, the Dzjaeri crew were only able to repair a few of the smaller hull breaches and a fraction of the ship's damaged systems. After a decade of jumping aimlessly from star system to star system and exploring many strange and savage worlds, the Dzjaeri were eventually forced to take drastic measures to preserve their slowly dying starship and dwindling crew. The entire crew decided to voluntarily join the thousands of other Dzjaeri passengers in cryogenic sleep, leaving their wounded ship in the hands of "Father," the *Ardent Hope*'s near-sentient Artificial Intelligence.

Father powered down the ship's nonessential systems and piloted the *Ardent Hope* through the vast emptiness of deep space for the next 5,000 years, fruitlessly searching for a suitable world for the Dzjaeri to colonize. It was during this time that the *Ardent Hope* blundered into the path of an ancient and horrific monstrosity, a hibernating alien entity known as a qomok. Soaring aimlessly through the vastness of deep space for untold eons, the qomok's frozen, inert body slammed into the *Ardent Hope* and became embedded in one of the many fissures in the ship's asteroid hull. And there it remained sleeping and undisturbed for millennia.

Eventually, with the *Ardent Hope*'s engine and systems on the verge of total failure, the ship limped into the PCs' home system and became ensnared within an asteroid field at the system's outermost edge. Father then woke the *Ardent Hope*'s command crew from cryogenic stasis for the last time before the venerable AI itself failed permanently. After assessing the situation, the Dzjaeri command crew woke to find the *Ardent Hope* in a terrible state. The ship's stardrive and once-powerful dark matter fusion engine both lay dormant and the ship's dark matter collector-processors had disintegrated to uselessness, leaving the *Ardent Hope* without a way to collect fuel. The ship's navigation systems, sensors, and communications array had also deteriorated to uselessness and only two sections of the ship — the Command Decks and the nominally self-sufficient Terrestrial Enclosure — retained enough power to run life-support systems.

Effectively blind and trapped inside their enormous tomb-ship, the Dzjaeri leadership were forced to make some difficult decisions. After a long and contentious debate, the Dzjaeri agreed to keep their passengers (numbering in the thousands) in frozen hibernation with the ship's delicate remaining systems managed by a small team of specialists and support personnel that would return to hibernation after serving a five-year shift. This team was then replaced by another team that served another five-year shift, and so on. This cycle has persisted since the *Ardent Hope* became ensnared in the asteroid field 300 years ago.

Ten days ago, a band of neh-thalggus — fanatical alien soldiers of the Empire of the Void — used advanced alien technology and powerful psychic magic to finally hone in on the psychic magic-infused fungus attached to the *Ardent Hope*'s hull. Upon locating the *Ardent Hope*, the hostile aliens used their advanced alien techno-magic to create a temporary one-way wormhole linking to the derelict Dzjaeri ship. Emerging from the wormhole's gate-like rift, the neh-thalggu soldiers floated the short distance to the *Ardent Hope* and initiated a boarding action. After hours of intense fighting — which saw the death of the *Ardent Hope*'s captain and several other important Dzjaeri — the neh-thalggu invaders were defeated. Though most of the aliens were killed, one of the neh-thalggus was captured and seven others escaped into the ship's massive Terrestrial Enclosure. The escapees then sabotaged the Terrestrial Enclosure's atmospheric processors, rendering the air inside the enclosure toxic to the Dzjaeri. Since the defeat of the neh-thalggus, the Dzjaeri and the neh-thalggus have been locked in a desperate stalemate. The neh-thalggus do not have

the numbers or the weaponry to kill off the Dzjaeri, and the Dzjaeri can no longer enter the Terrestrial Enclosure due to the tainted atmosphere.

Though unable to eradicate their hated foes, the neh-thalggus have been anything but idle. Several days before the PCs arrive, three of the creatures ventured into the *Ardent Hope*'s long-abandoned lower decks to scrounge for weapons and useful technology. Unfortunately, the curious neh-thalggus discovered the long dormant qomok embedded in the ship's hull and inadvertently roused the creature from its hibernation. Now, the Dzjaeri — and perhaps the inhabitants of the PCs' entire star system — face a threat of unspeakable horror.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs are aboard their starship, traveling near the edge of their home system, when their comms detect an SOS signal emanating from the edge of an uncharted asteroid field. Investigating further, the PCs discover an enormous alien spacecraft, its hull composed of a single asteroid, around which floats the debris of a much smaller pirate ship. After surviving a space battle with several pirate ships, the PCs investigate the enormous derelict alien vessel.

Once aboard the *Ardent Hope*, the PCs encounter the Dzjaeri, who share their history and their current situation with the PCs. Whether the Dzjaeri trust the PCs or not, they request a favor of them: they want the PCs to hunt down the seven neh-thalggus that fled from a recent failed boarding action and now reside in the ship's Terrestrial Enclosure. The Dzjaeri explain that they cannot enter the enclosure because the enclosure's atmosphere is now tainted due to the aliens' sabotage. The Dzjaeri promise that once the enclosure is secure, they will reward the PCs with gifts of technology and valuable ores. The PCs then explore the alien jungle inside the Terrestrial Enclosure. After defeating the escaped neh-thalggus, the PCs discover clues that suggest that a few of the neh-thalggus split from the main group and made their way to the long-abandoned lower decks. A short time later, the *Ardent Hope* shudders violently and the PCs hear a series of distant explosions from far below in the bowels of the ship. The Dzjaeri explain that an unknown entity has somehow revived the ship's engines and initiated the *Ardent Hope*'s self-destruct sequence. If the sequence is not shut down, a spike in power will temporarily engage the ship's stardrive causing the ship to crash into a nearby world inhabited by sentient creatures. This

will destroy the *Ardent Hope* and cause a great deal of damage to the planet's surface.

On the lower decks, the PCs battle several alien qomoks and must race to disable the self-destruct sequence. After rescuing the *Ardent Hope*, the PCs scour the ship for any remaining qomoks before they are eventually summoned by the Dzjaeri to the Command Deck. There, the PCs find the place in shambles and only a few of the Dzjaeri left alive. The survivors explain that an unknown alien (identical to the one the PCs just fought) attacked them. Unknown to the PCs, one or more of the survivors is a shape-shifting qomok in disguise. The PCs must unmask the qomoks and rid the *Ardent Hope* of an insidious cosmic evil.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

- The PCs should begin Starfall as 13th-level characters.
- By the beginning of Part Three, the PCs should reach 14th level.
- The PCs should be at least half-way through 14th-level by the end of the adventure.

TIMELINE

Here is a timeline of important background events.	
5,300 years ago	Dzjaera, homeworld of the Dzjaeri people, is destroyed by the Empire of the Void. Though severely damaged, the *Ardent Hope* escapes into interstellar space. However, as the ship flees it is struck by a projectile containing a strange form of psychically sensitive fungus, which remains secretly attached to the ship's hull.
5,290 years ago	The crew of the *Ardent Hope* end a decade of aimless wandering and decide to enter cryogenic hibernation alongside their Dzjaeri passengers. The ship resumes searching for a home for the Dzjaeri, piloted by the ship's AI.
(exact date unknown)	At some point during the *Ardent Hope*'s 5,000-year odyssey, a hibernating alien qomok crashes into the ship and becomes embedded in its hull.
300 years ago	With its engines and systems decaying, the *Ardent Hope* settles into orbit inside an asteroid field at the far edge of the PCs' home system.
Ten days ago	A team of alien neh-thalggus boards the *Ardent Hope*. Though the Dzjaeri kill or drive off most of the alien invaders, seven neh-thalggus flee into the ship's Terrestrial Enclosure. At some point during the attack, the neh-thalggus accidentally release the toadhemoth from stasis. The ravenous creature flees settles in the Terrestrial Enclosure (see area **TE3**).
Nine days ago	The crew of the *Scarlet Smile* discovers the *Ardent Hope*. It takes them six days to tow the massive ship to the edge of the asteroid field.
Eight days ago	Three of the escaped neh-thalggus break away from the main group of escapees to explore the ship's lower decks. On the Engineering Deck, the curious neh-thalggus discover the body of the hibernating qomok embedded in the ship's hull and retrieve it. The qomok wakes few hours later. It kills and assimilates one of the neh-thalggus and infects another, spawning a new qomok.
Seven days ago	The parent qomok makes its way to the Passenger Deck and absorbs several of the sleeping Dzjaeri engineering officers. With its new knowledge, the parent qomok immediately begins constructing a makeshift interplanetary escape pod in area **E5**.
Three days ago	After towing the *Ardent Hope* to the edge of the asteroid field, the *Scarlet Smile* docks with the Dzjaeri ship and sends a boarding party through the large hull breach in area **E1**. A few hours later, the pirates are ambushed and slaughtered by the qomoks. (See area **E3** for the fate of the *Scarlet Smile*'s captain.)
Two days ago	An infected member of the pirate boarding party escapes the slaughter and returns to the *Scarlet Smile.* The infected pirate soon transforms into a qomok after succumbing to her wounds. As the qomok slaughters the remaining crew aboard the *Scarlet Smile*, one of the pirates manages to send an SOS message to their pirate allies before the *Scarlet Smile* crashes into the *Ardent Hope*'s asteroid hull. The *Scarlet Smile* is obliterated, with all hands lost (including the recently risen qomok).

PART ONE

The PCs are aboard their starship traveling near the outer edge of their home system. The PCs can be returning home from a recent mission or perhaps they are patrolling the outer edge of the solar system searching for pirates or other fugitives.

THE SIGNAL

The adventure begins when the PCs' starship's communications system intercepts a distress message from the *Scarlet Smile*. Though intended for the *Smile*'s pirate allies, the PCs' ship is much closer and receives the communication first. The distress signal identifies the distressed ship's current location, though the signal does not identify the ship's name or provide any other identifying information — which is highly unusual for law-abiding starship captains.

A PC playing the role of Science Officer who succeeds at a DC 18 Computers check, detects a coded transmission hidden within the distress signal. If the PC succeeds at this check by 10 or more, they determine that the distress signal was intended to be broadcast to two other unidentified starships in the vicinity.

If the PCs try to decipher the coded transmission, a successful DC 25 Computers check does so and identifies the ship that broadcast the signal as the *Scarlet Smile*, a UIE Hiveguard captained by Alishiera Qathiir. If the PCs use their computer to search for Captain Qathiir or the *Scarlet Smile*, they automatically uncover the following information:

- Captain Qathiir belongs to an alliance of a dozen pirate captains that call themselves the Crimson Star-Kings — or more commonly, the Crimson Kings.
- The Crimson Kings usually prey on lightly protected vessels at the edge of civilized star systems and have been blamed for the sacking of 13 merchant freighters over the past three years. In lean times the pirates mine asteroids for precious metals and conduct salvage operations of derelict ships.
- There is a 5,000-credit reward for the capture or verifiable termination of each of the 12 pirate captains affiliated with the Crimson Kings.
- The Crimson Kings are fanatics. They routinely rig their ships to self-destruct to avoid being captured and brought to justice.
- According to the distress signal, the *Scarlet Smile* is located eight hours (at top speed) from the PCs' current position, at the edge of a nearby uncharted asteroid field.

THE FATE OF THE SCARLET SMILE

Into the bizarre tableau outlined in the Adventure Background recently blundered into the pirate crew of the *Scarlet Smile*. While patrolling the region with two other pirate ships—the *Shadow Cat* and the *Zealous Fury* — the *Scarlet Smile* went off on its own to prospect for metal-rich asteroids near the outer-edge of a remote, uncharted asteroid field. While collecting samples from some of the outlying asteroids, the *Scarlet Smile*'s sensors detected a series of strange power spikes emanating from deeper inside the field. The captain of the *Scarlet Smile* assumed (correctly) that the strange energy readings originated from a star-faring vessel, so she ordered her crew to investigate.

After weaving around asteroids and huge chunks of ice for several hours, the *Scarlet Smile* located the *Ardent Hope* and immediately made arrangements to tow the massive prize to the edge of the asteroid field so they could safely board and search her. Though the crew of the *Smile* had no way of knowing at the time, the power spikes that drew them to the enormous alien starship were the result of the Empire of the Void's temporary wormhole opening adjacent to the Dzjaeri vessel. So, as the pirates towed their prize toward the edge of the asteroid field, unbeknownst to them, a precarious stalemate existed between the Dzjaeri and the neh-thalggus deep inside the vessel.

After finally pulling the ship to the edge of the asteroid field, the pirates boarded the *Ardent Hope*, opting to enter through the hull breach connecting to area **C1** so they could study the ship's unique dark matter-powered engines first. Unfortunately, the neh-thalggu explorers had already retrieved and roused the hibernating qomok. The qomok ambushed the pirates as they explored the Engineering Deck. The resulting melee was brief and horrific. Only one pirate survived the encounter, though she was mortally wounded and carried the qomok's terrible alien infection back to the *Scarlet Smile.*

When the infected pirate succumbed to her wounds, she transformed into a qomok and began slaughtering her remaining crewmates. During the chaos, the pilot of the *Scarlet Smile* sealed himself in the ship's cockpit and managed to disengage the vessel from the *Ardent Hope.* He then tried to kill the newly spawned qomok by venting the ship's atmosphere, though this tactic only succeeded in killing his few remaining comrades. With few options left, the pilot sent a coded distress signal to the *Scarlet Smile*'s nearby sister ships, hoping they would be able to rescue him before the monster

battered its way into the cockpit. Unfortunately, the pilot underestimated the qomok's tenacity and strength. Moments after sending the distress signal, the qomok shredded the cockpit's steel door. The terrified pilot immediately lost control of the *Scarlet Smile*, which then crashed into the *Ardent Hope*, killing all onboard the *Smile*. All that remains of the *Scarlet Smile* now is a halo of scorched debris encircling the *Ardent Hope*.

THE ASTEROID FIELD

One of many uncharted asteroid fields at the edge of the PCs' home system, this field was created tens of millions of years ago when a small planetoid in orbit here was struck by a large comet. The resulting field of debris extends for thousands of miles and is roughly sphere-shaped. The asteroid field contains a hundred or so large asteroids (the largest of which has a diameter of 11 miles) and countless smaller rocks; however, most of the field is composed of chunks of ice and vast clouds of icy vapor. A few of the larger rocks are rich in valuable metals, including gold, tungsten, and adamantium, though most of these bigger asteroids are near the center of the asteroid field.

APPROACHING THE ARDENT HOPE

When the PCs' ship arrives, they find the *Ardent Hope* sitting at the edge of the asteroid field, having been towed there by the *Scarlet Smile*. The ship is Colossal-sized, with an asteroid hull that is just under three miles in diameter.

The Wreckage: A debris field created by the destruction of the *Scarlet Smile* encircles the *Ardent Hope* in concentric rings, which makes approaching the *Ardent Hope* challenging. When any starship moves within 6 hexes of the *Ardent Hope* (and for each starship turn they remain within 6 hexes of the ship), the ship's Pilot must succeed at a DC 30 Piloting check to steer the ship safely through the scorched wreckage and avoid being struck by any debris. If the Piloting check fails, 1d3 of the ship's quadrants each take 8d6 points of damage, though the ship's shields provide their normal protection. The debris encircling the *Ardent Hope* obviously belongs to a starship. A quick sensor scan and a successful DC 15 Physical Science check confirms that the debris is the remains of the *Scarlet Smile* and that the ship was destroyed when it collided with the larger vessel and exploded.

Scanning the *Ardent Hope*: If the PCs scan the *Ardent Hope*, they find that their sensors cannot penetrate the alien ship's thick asteroid hull. However, even a cursory examination of the ship reveals a set of tow cables attached to the ship's hull, indicating that the enormous alien ship was likely towed here. A successful DC 12 Perception check locates the ship's primary airlock (area **C13**), while a DC 39 Perception check locates the hull breach on the Engineering Deck (area **C1**). However, the PCs' ship's sensors warn that the hull breach is emitting a constant jet of Severe-level radiation and intermittent bursts of lethal plasma energy. See the **Boarding the *Ardent Hope*** section for additional details. A computer search using an image of the *Ardent Hope* reveals that the ship is a unique vessel that likely originated outside of the PCs' system. A successful DC 20 Physical Sciences check confirms that the ship is at least 5,000 years old. The ship is battered and scorched and has obviously survived at least one brutal space battle. Nearly all its external components — weapons, sensor dishes, and communications arrays — are damaged beyond repair. The ship's massive engine is obviously of alien design, and a PC that succeeds at a DC 20 Physical Sciences or Profession (engineer, or similar profession) check can deduce that the ship probably used some form of energy collection-and-processing technology to extract and create its own fuel. A PC that succeeds at this check by 10 or more can confirm the ship collected and processed dark matter for fuel. The PC that succeeded at this check quickly realizes that the advanced alien engine could be extremely valuable if the PCs devised some method of towing the ship to an orbital shipyard.

THE CRIMSON KINGS ATTACK (CR 8)

As soon as the PCs' starship approaches within five hexes of the *Ardent Hope*, the PCs' sensors pick up two UIE Hiveguards — the *Shadow Cat* and the *Zealous Fury* — that suddenly appear at the edge of their sensor range on an intercept course for the huge alien vessel. Strangely, the ships' transponders do not seem to be working. None of the ships broadcast any identification codes, and they do not respond to any hails. The ships' names, however, are clearly stenciled on their hulls.

The two ships spend a few minutes surveying the scene as they glide steadily toward the PCs' ship and the *Ardent Hope*. During this time, if the PCs use their ship's computer to search for information on any of the mysterious ships' names, they easily confirm that

both Hiveguards are known members of the Crimson Star-Kings and are captained and crewed by wanted criminals.

After five tense minutes (unless the PCs initiate combat first), an alarm suddenly sounds in the cockpit of the PCs' ship — the mystery ships are targeting lasers and torpedo launchers on them! Enraged at the loss of the *Scarlet Smile*, the pirates have concluded that the PCs are to blame.

Starship Combat: This encounter uses the starship combat rules in the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. You'll need a map with 1-inch hexes and some sort of miniatures or tokens to represent the three ships. First, assume that one edge of the gaming matt is the Colossal-sized *Ardent Hope*. Then, place the PCs' ship eight hexes away from the *Ardent Hope*. Finally, place the two pirate ships 5d6+5 hexes away from the PCs' ship (and 1d4+1 hexes apart from each other). Remember that the *Ardent Hope* is surrounded by a debris field that extends to 6 hexes. See the "Wreckage" description in the **Approaching the *Ardent Hope*** section for additional details.

Tactics: The pirates seek to surround, confuse, and overwhelm the PCs' ship. The *Shadow Cat* attacks head-on, while the *Zealous Fury* tries to flank the PCs' ship. The Crimson Star-Kings fight to the death and neither give nor expect quarter. Additionally, the fanatical pirates go to extreme lengths to avoid being captured. Both ships have rigged their engines to immediately self-destruct even if the vessels are merely disabled in combat.

SHADOW CAT AND *ZEALOUS FURY*
TIER 6

UIE Hiveguard
Large destroyer
Speed 8; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2); **Drift** 1
AC 19; **TL** 19
HP 170; **DT** —; **CT** 34
Shields light 60 (forward 15, port 15, starboard 15, aft 15)
Attack (Forward) heavy laser net (5d6), twin laser (5d8)
Attack (Port) flak thrower (3d4)
Attack (Starboard) flak thrower (3d4)
Attack (Turret) light torpedo launcher (2d8)
Power Core Arcus Maximum (200 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** basic long-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 4 armor, mk 4 defenses, mk 1 trinode computer; **Expansion Bays** cargo bay, escape pods (3)
Modifiers +1 any three checks per round, +2 Computers; **Complement** 13

CREW

Captain Bluff +13 (6 ranks), Computers +15 (6 ranks), Diplomacy +13 (6 ranks), Engineering

6

+13 (6 ranks), gunnery +13, Intimidate +13 (6 ranks), Piloting +13 (6 ranks)

Engineer (1 officer, 3 crew) Engineering +18 (6 ranks)

Gunners (2 officers, 2 crew each) gunnery +13

Pilot Piloting +13 (6 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +15 (6 ranks)

Development: If the PCs win the starship battle, they can continue with their investigation of the *Ardent Hope* (continue with the *Reaching the* Ardent Hope section). If the PCs' ship is reduced to 0 or fewer Hull Points, the PCs lose the battle, but their ship is only disabled. If this occurs, the surviving pirate ships are content to leave the PCs to their fates and soon leave the area. The surviving ships return in three weeks with four more Hiveguards to claim the *Ardent Hope*. (What happens at that point is beyond the scope of this adventure.) Even if the PCs' ship is destroyed, the PCs can use their lifeboats to escape the wreck and reach the *Ardent Hope.*

Story Award: If the PCs defeat the Crimson Star-Kings, award them 4,800 XP for the encounter.

BOARDING THE ARDENT HOPE

After the PCs deal with the Crimson Star-Kings, they can continue their approach to the *Ardent Hope* and attempt to board her. By this time, the Dzjaeri are aware of the PCs as they anxiously watched their space battle with the pirate ships through the ship's many viewport windows. However, because the ship's communications systems no longer function, the Dzjaeri have no way to communicate with the PCs.

When the PCs finally reach the *Ardent Hope*, they must figure out how to board the alien ship. Listed below are three options the PCs might pursue.

Primary Airlock: Located on the Science Labs Deck, the *Ardent Hope*'s primary airlock connects to area **C13**. A quick sensor scan of the *Ardent Hope* locates a ship-to-ship docking mechanism positioned on the exterior of the ship, adjacent to the airlock. In fact, this is the only such docking mechanism on the entire ship. Docking here requires a successful DC 8 Piloting check and takes 5 minutes to complete. If the ship's Pilot fails this check, the PCs' ship scrapes hard against the *Ardent Hope*'s hull and takes 6d6 points of damage to the quadrant containing the ship's airlock door. Once the ship finishes docking, the PCs' shipboard computer confirms that the atmosphere aboard the

Ardent Hope is breathable and the environment is perfectly tolerable.

The external airlock door is 6 inches thick and made of reinforced steel (hardness 35, 180 hit points, break DC 40). It is electronically locked, though the computer-lock was damaged and weakened when the neh-thalggus bypassed the door 10 days ago during their boarding action. As a result, the PCs can bypass the airlock door with a successful DC 14 Computer or Engineering check. The lock can also be destroyed if the PCs target it with a weapon (hardness 10, 30 hit points). Once the PCs bypass the external airlock, they enter a small square elevator chamber. The Primary Airlock Elevator is fully functional, though it only provides access to area **C13**. The airlock elevator is not linked to the *Ardent Hope*'s main Lift. Proceed to the **Arrival** event.

Hull Breach: If the PCs managed to detect the small hull breach connecting to area **E1** (requiring a successful DC 39 Perception check as described in the Approaching the *Ardent Hope* section), a scan of the breach reveals a steady stream of Severe-level radiation[SCR] and intermittent bursts of dangerous plasma energy emanating from the hole. The radiation leak and plasma bursts are coming from a ruptured plasma conduit. Any PC attempting to enter the ship through the hull breached is automatically exposed to Severe-level radiation. Additionally, each PC that tries to pass through the hull breach risks being struck by a blast of plasma energy. Roll 1d6 for each PC that passes through the breach. On a roll of 1 or 2, a blue-white jet of plasma energy erupts from the hull breach. The PC automatically takes 14d12 points of damage (half of this is fire damage and half is force damage). A successful DC 21 Reflex save reduces this damage by half. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points by this damage are instantly reduced to a fine gray dust (as *disintegrate*). If the PCs manage to safely enter the *Ardent Hope* through the hull breach, they are free to explore the ship, beginning with the Engineering Deck. The Dzjaeri are aware of the hull breach in area **E1** (having already "patched" it with a force field effect), so when the PCs fail to enter the ship through the primary air lock, they quickly assume the PCs entered their ship through the hull breach. Proceed to the Arrival event.

Magic: The hull of the *Ardent Hope* contains rare elements that creates an effect identical to the *planar barrier* spell. If the PCs attempt to breach the hull of the *Ardent Hope* using teleportation spells, plane shifting, astral travel, or ethereal travel, the spells automatically fail. This barrier does not hinder summoning spells.

PART TWO

In Part Two, the PCs board the *Ardent Hope* and, after defeating an escaped neh-thalggu, meet the Dzjaeri. The Dzjaeri leader asks the PCs to perform a mission for his people. In the second half of Part Two, the PCs explore the *Ardent Hope*'s Terrestrial Enclosure, as they seek to complete their mission.

EVENT: ARRIVAL (CR 8)

Regardless of whether the PCs entered the *Ardent Hope* through the primary airlock or the hull breach in area **E1**, the Dzjaeri prepare a welcoming party for them. If the PCs enter through the main airlock, they must use the primary airlock elevator to ascend 10 meters to area **C13**.

If the PCs entered the ship through the hull breach (area **E1**), Sub-Commander Orem sends a small robotic drone (as the spy drone in Chapter 7 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*) to greet them. Though unable to speak through the drone, Orem tries to get the PCs to follow the drone. The drone leads the PCs from area **E1** to area **E2**, and then up the lift shaft

to area **C13**. When the PCs arrive in area **C13**, they are greeted by the Dzjaeri. The Dzjaeri welcoming party includes Sub-Commander Orem, the security guards Arum and Tes, and the scientists Taela and Essira. Though armed, Sub-Commander Orem and the security guards the Dzjaeri keep their weapons holstered and put on a calm, friendly demeanor. However, before any proper introductions can be made, a recently captured neh-thalggu escapes from a nearby lab (area **C14**) where Dzjaeri scientists had been studying the creature in the hopes of discovering something that would give them the upper hand against its fellows. The enraged neh-thalggu bursts into area **C13**, seeking vengeance for its capture.

Creatures: The Dzjaeri welcoming party waits for the PCs in area **C13**, wary after their fight with the neh-thalggu, but not aggressive. The Dzjaeri look like olive-skinned humans with platinum-white hair. Sub-Commander Jathis asks the PCs in Dzjaeri where they've come from, but it becomes immediately obvious none of the PCs (presumably) speak that language. One round after the PCs arrive, likely too soon for the PCs and the Dzjaeri can coordinate some means of communication, the neh-thalggu arrives.

Recognizing the Dzjaeri as its original targets, it focuses its attacks on them. The Dzjaeri fight back, the security officers moving to protect the sub-commander and science officers. Sub-Commander Orem calls out in Dzjaeri for the PCs to assist them.

NEH-THALGGU   CR 8

XP 4,800
CE Large aberration
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE   HP 125

EAC 22; **KAC** 24
Fort +7; **Ref** +7; **Will** +18
DR 10/magic; **Immunities** confusion effects;
  SR 19

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)
Melee bite +19 (3d4+12 P plus poison)
Spells Known (CL 8th)
3rd (3/day)—*arcing surge* (DC 20), *mind probe*
  (DC 20), *mind thrust* (DC 20)
2nd (4/day)—*hold person* (DC 19), *inflict pain*
  (DC 19), *invisibility*, *mystic cure*, *polymorph*
  (humanoid forms only)
1st (at will)—*comprehend languages*, *life bubble*
0 (at will)—*energy ray* (acid only), *detect magic*,
  psychokinetic hand

STATISTICS

Str +4; **Dex** +1; **Con** +2; **Int** +6; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +1
Feats Combat Casting, Mystic Strike
Skills Life Sciences +23, Mysticism +21, Sense
  Motive +16, Stealth +16
Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic;
  telepathy (100 feet)
Other Abilities brain collection

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Brain Collection (Ex) A neh-thalggu can store up to seven humanoid brains and use them to enhance its knowledge and power. Each stored brain grants a neh-thalggu a cumulative +1 insight bonus to EAC, KAC, concentration checks, Will saves, and Intelligence-based skill checks. A neh-thalggu can extract a brain from a helpless opponent with a *coup de grace* attack, or as a standard action from a body that has been dead for no more than 1 minute. A neh-thalggu that has fewer than seven brains gains one negative level for each missing brain. These negative levels can never become permanent, but they can only be removed by replacing one of its collected brains. The stats presented here assume a monster with a full collection.

Poison (Ex) A neh-thalggu's bite is venomous. *Type* poison (injury); *Save* Fortitude DC 16; *Track* Strength; *Frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *Cure* 2 consecutive saves.

Spells (Sp) A neh-thalggu casts spells as an 8th-level spellcaster. For each negative level it takes from missing brains, its caster level is reduced by 1. A neh-thalggu with no collected brains cannot cast any of its spells.

THE DZJAERI

The Dzjaeri are a race of near-humans, and follow the Starfinder rules for human characters. All Dzjaeri have smooth pale olive skin, crystal blue, gray, or silver eyes, and silvery or platinum-colored hair, which is always straight and very thin in texture. They are tall (males and females both average just over 6 feet tall) and thin (males average 140 pounds, while females average 100 pounds), with long narrow faces, and small noses and ears. Dzjaeri are serious and rarely smile; they are typically quiet and contemplative and exceptionally curious. These traits stem from their harsh home environment, for through much of its history Dzjaera was a dangerous world populated with a wide variety of predatory animals and plants as well as several savage humanoid races that considered the Dzjaeri food.

Throughout 35,000 years of recorded history, the sport of hunting has remained an important cultural identifier for the Dzjaeri and Dzjaeri speech and philosophy are inundated with hunting metaphors and imagery. Though the Dzjaeri ate meat in prehistoric times, modern Dzjaeri no longer eat meat; they receive all the nutrition their bodies need with a purely vegetarian diet. Most modern Dzjaeri now find the hunting of live prey unsettling, so Dzjaeri scientists developed ways to bioengineer plant- and fungus-versions of animals. Some of these specially engineered animals still roam the Terrestrial Enclosure.

Magic is unknown to the Dzjaeri, though they excel in the fields of science and engineering. At the time of Dzjaera's destruction, the Dzjaeri had only recently discovered interstellar travel and had established a dozen colonies in nearby star systems. What became of these colonies in the wake of Dzjaera's destruction is left to individual GMs to decide.

Sub-Commander Orem   CR 6

XP 2,400
HP 80 (see *Appendix 1: NPC Gallery*)

Essira and Taela (Science Officers)   CR 3

XP 800
HP 35 (see *Appendix 1: NPC Gallery*)

Jathis and Tes (Security Officers)   CR 4

XP 1,200
HP 50 (see *Appendix 1: NPC Gallery*)

Development: The Dzjaeri are content to attack the neh-thalggu from range and allow the PCs to do most of the fighting. Assuming they survive the encounter, the Dzjaeri are grateful for the PCs' assistance. If all of the Dzjaeri survive, Essira gives them a *mk 3 serum of healing* from the Dzjaeri's remaining medical supplies, and Jathis gives them two frag grenades IVs. Orem immediately goes about setting up a means of communication between himself and the PCs. Orem approaches the PCs and motions for them to speak into his Dzjaeri comm unit. After about two minutes, the comm unit successfully analyzes the PCs' language and translates it in real time (as comprehend languages). Orem can do the same with the PCs' comm units, allowing them to easily communicate with one another. Sub-Commander Orem then introduces himself and his companions and thanks the PCs for defeating the neh-thalggu, he then requests their assistance in dealing with the rest of the neh-thalggus, further elaborated on in The Deal.

If for some reason If the PCs attack the Dzjaeri, Orem draws his photon pistol (see Appendix 3) and he and the security officers defend themselves with their photon pistols set to stun. Taela and Essira flee into the Lift tube (marked "L" on the map) and make their way to the Bridge (area **C1**) to warn the rest of the Dzjaeri crew. If the PCs kill Orem, the survivors lower their weapons and surrender.

THE DEAL

The following assumes Orem survives his initial encounter with the PCs. However, if the PCs killed Orem, the next-in-command, a senior security officer named Jathis, takes command. As soon as a means of communication has been established, Orem explains the Dzjaeri's plight. He tells the PCs that the *Ardent Hope* has been fleeing the Empire of the Void for thousands of years, during which most of the crew and passengers have remained in cryogenic stasis. Most of the ship's systems have decayed to the point of being nonfunctional, and most of the available power must go to keeping the slumbering crew and passengers alive, meaning that there's little to no hope of getting the ship moving under its own power once more. The Dzjaeri had long since though that at the very least, they'd escaped the Empire's notice, but ten days ago a team of neh-thalggus somehow discovered the ship and attacked. The resulting combat had casualties on both sides, but Orem is sure that at least seven of the creatures are still alive somewhere on the ship. He believes they might be in the Terrestrial Enclosure, which also houses a variety of dangerous fauna. He fears what the neh-thalggu are plotting and is loath to leave them to their own devices, but doesn't think his remaining crew could survive another fight with them.

The neh-thalggus are a serious threat to the Dzjaeri and must be destroyed, especially since their recent attack has coincided with two critical system failures. One of the reactors in the Terrestrial Enclosure's Environmental Control Center (area **TE8**) suddenly went offline three days ago. This reactor controlled the lighting in the Terrestrial Enclosure, regulated the temperature, and controlled the simulation of the enclosure's day/night cycle. With the reactor offline, the entire dome is receiving only emergency ambient lighting, which bathes the entire Terrestrial Enclosure in a dim violet light. Additionally, one day after the reactor went offline, all four of the air and nutrient processors (areas **TE4**) also went offline and no longer collect the vital nutrients from the enclosure that the Ardent Hope's systems use to sustain the thousands of Dzjaeri kept in cryogenic hibernation as well as create nutrient paste, the crew's only form of food.

After the deaths of the two engineering officers during the neh-thalggus' escape, Sub-Commander Orem has taken on all of the ship's engineering duties. Though not a trained engineer, Orem has a decent understanding of engineering and ship's systems. He tells the PCs that because both of the system

DZJAERA

Dzjaera was a small moonless world (roughly 60% the size of Earth) that orbited a massive blue-white star in a galaxy far removed from the PCs' home system. The planet was dominated by shallow, emerald-colored seas. Its only landmass was a sprawling, twisting continent located along the planet's equator that was covered by vast jungles, trackless swamps, and a few small deserts.

failures were almost certainly triggered manually, he believes the neh-thalggus are to blame. One of the three Dzjaeri crew members killed when the neh-thalggus escaped was a science officer named Arvinen. Orem and the science officers all believe one of the neh-thalggus must have gained enough engineering knowledge from Arvinen's extracted brain to perpetrate the system failures.

Orem then offers the PCs a deal. If they eliminate the neh-thalggus and reactivate the failed systems, he promises that the PCs can have any supplies or equipment they discover during the mission, to revive several of the Ardent Hope's engineering officers and have them repair any damage the PCs' ship sustained during the pirate attack.

IF THE PCS REFUSE

If the PCs refuse to eliminate the neh-thalggus, Orem seems visibly agitated, but he quickly realizes he holds none of the cards in this situation. He's willing to beg for the sake of his people and reminds the PCs that more than 8,000 lives are in their hands. If that doesn't work, he offers them up to 75,000 credits worth of currency and objects of cultural significance from the Dzjaeri homeworld, items that Orem is initially reluctant to part with due to their importance to his peoples' history. If even that fails, Orem is willing to offer up the Ardent Hope itself as salvage, including its *stardrive*, provided the PCs are capable of towing it to a location habitable to the Dzjaeri so that they may disembark. This final offer represents everything Orem has to bargain with.

If the PCs threaten Orem or his crew with violence, Orem tries to reason with them again, and he remains calm and responds peaceably even if the PCs continue to threaten him. However, if the PCs attack him or any of his crew, he orders his crew to defend themselves and kill the "dishonorable barbarians." At this point, unless the PCs decide to explore the Terrestrial Enclosure on their own, GMs can skip **Part Two** and proceed directly to the first event in **Part Three**.

THE MISSION

If the PCs agree to help the Dzjaeri, they must accomplish the following:

Eliminate the neh-thalggu threat: The PCs must track down and kill the remaining neh-thalggus. Essira, one of the surviving science officers, also requests that the PCs retrieve any humanoid brains the neh-thalggus possess so that she can continue her research into the strange creatures in the hopes that she can discover something her people can use to defend themselves from the Empire of the Void.

Reactivate the offline systems: The PCs must travel to all four of the air and nutrient processors (area **TE4**) and reactivate them. They must also reactivate the reactor in the Environmental Control Center (area **TE8**).

PREPARATIONS

The next day, Orem provides the PCs with several technological items to help them accomplish their mission, and the Dzjaeri allow the PCs to borrow the following two pieces of technological gear:

Chemical Storage Pack: This storage container resembles a backpack made of a silvery canvas-like material. Sealed with a strong metal zipper, the container contains foul-smelling (but harmless) alchemical goo and is designed to safely store and carry up to 15 humanoid brains extracted from the neh-thalggus. The pack weighs 5 pounds, plus another 3 pounds for each brain stored inside it.

Sonic wrench: This slim, heavy, wand-like device weighs 1 pound. It is made of black steel and features a clear crystal tip that flashes red when activated. Because of the way Dzjaeri technology is constructed, this tool is vital for working on it. After 5 minutes of instruction from Sub-Commander Orem, a PC can use the sonic wrench in conjunction with an Engineering skill check to reactivate the reactor and the air and nutrient processors. Using the sonic wrench in conjunction with Orem's instructions allows PCs to make Engineering checks untrained if none of them have the skill. See areas **TE4** and **TE8** for information on how to reactivate the specific systems, including the DCs and time required to reactivate them.

Sub-Commander Orem also makes sure to sync his comm unit with those of the PCs, so that he can offer advice and support from a safe location. He uploads the data he initially collected on the PCs' language to the ship's systems, allowing the PCs to interface with those systems in a language they're familiar with.
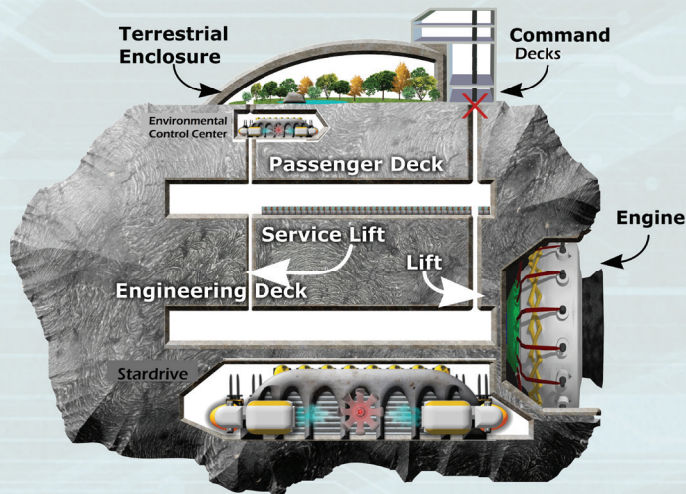
REST AND RECUPERATION

If the PCs agree to Orem's deal, he escorts them to one of the Crew Apartments (area **C7**), where the Dzjaeri set up temporary accommodations for them. The PCs can rest, share nutrient paste meals with the crew in the Galley (area **C6**), and recuperate for the next 24 hours. The PCs are given full access to all of the areas on the Command Decks (areas **C1** through **C17**), though they are escorted at all times by one of the science officers. The PCs are otherwise free to explore the Command Decks and mingle with the Dzjaeri crew. The Dzjaeri are a curious people and are very interested in sharing stories about themselves and the PCs' homeworld and cultures. This is especially true of the Dzjaeri scientists, who hover about the PCs and inundate them with a constant barrage of questions.
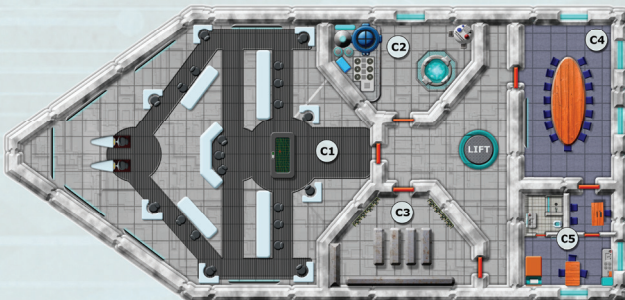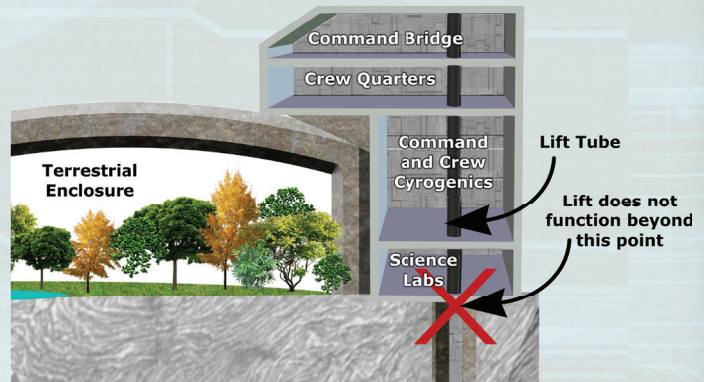
PLAYER CHARACTER QUESTIONS

Any of the Dzjaeri can provide the information detailed in the "Dzjaera" and "The Dzjaeri" sidebars, which provide an overview of the Dzjaeri homeworld and the Dzjaeri race. They can also provide all of the information presented in the *Adventure Background* section, with the exception of the qomok. Here are answers to a few additional questions the PCs might have for the Dzjaeri:

What dangers might we encounter in the Terrestrial Enclosure? "Aside from the exceptionally dangerous neh-thalggus, the Terrestrial Enclosure is home to several other dangerous flora and fauna that we collected over the centuries after visiting numerous worlds, trying to find a planet we could make a new home on. The most dangerous of these is the enormous creature we call the toadhemoth, a huge gluttonous creature. There are also might be savage, six-legged mammalian predators (aurumvoraxes) from a planet we passed by long ago. We believe they've managed to thrive in the enclosure and may pose a problem if you encounter them. Other dangers include smaller predators, a few species of dangerous plant-life, and some bio-engineered plant-creatures we used to hunt for sport. Unfortunately, we haven't kept a very good record of the Terrestrial Enclosure's surviving occupants, and we have no idea what the neh-thalggus may have done in the time they've been in there."
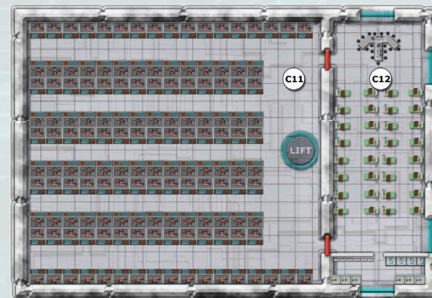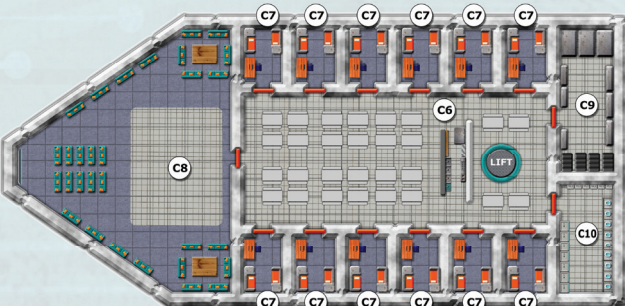
Terrestrial Enclosure

Command Decks

Environmental Control Center

Passenger Deck

Service Lift

Lift

Engineering Deck

Stardrive

Engine

COMMAND DECKS CROSS-SECTION VIEW

Command Bridge

Crew Quarters

Command and Crew Cyrogenics

Terrestrial Enclosure

Science Labs

Lift Tube

Lift does not function beyond this point

COMMAND DECK 1 Square = 5 Feet

C2 · C4 · C1 · C3 · C5

CREW CYROGENICS 1 Square = 5 Feet

C11 · C12

CREW QUARTERS 1 Square = 5 Feet

C7 · C8 · C6 · C9 · C10
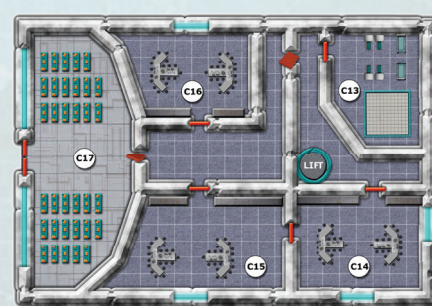
SCIENCE LABS 1 Square = 5 Feet

C16 · C13 · C17 · C15 · C14

Where will we likely find the neh-thalggus? "Neh-thalggus are very intelligent, so they are likely lairing somewhere very defensible, and out of the reach of the toadhemoth. They're most likely holding up inside the Environmental Control Center underneath the island in the middle of the central lake."

Environmental Control Center? "The Environmental Control Center was designed to monitor and maintain the Terrestrial Enclosure's environment and act as an observatory to study the alien animals and plants we collected. However, we stripped it of most of its resources and abandoned it a few decades after we fled Dzjaera. There are two reactors under the Environmental Control Center. Reactor-1 regulates the air and water quality and processes the vital nutrients collected by the air and nutrient processors to create our nutrient paste and sustain our passengers and crew in cryogenic hibernation. Reactor-2 regulates the heat, the weather, and the day/night cycle inside the Terrestrial Enclosure."

Can we have a photon pistol? "Absolutely not. We only have five functioning pistols left and they're assigned to the sub-commander and our security officers. Your weapons seem to be quite effective, anyway."

Why do you remain on the Command Decks? This ship is very large, what's wrong with the rest of the ship? "The Command Decks are the only areas with full power and reliable life support systems. We diverted power from the Passenger Deck and the Engineering Deck long ago, so they now only

have minimal power and are unsafe for permanent habitation. The Passenger Deck is mainly a storage facility for the hundreds of colonists we keep in hibernation. In fact, the Engineering Deck was heavily damaged when we fled Dzjaera. We were only able to repair some of the damage. The Engineering Deck might have entire chambers that have collapsed and even areas with hull breaches. Though the *Ardent Hope's stardrive* failed long ago along with Father, the central artificial intelligence that ran most of the ship's systems, the ship's primary reactor core remains intact and provides just enough energy to keep us alive and the ship in orbit around your world. Besides, there's no easy way to access the lower decks. The Lift no longer functions below the Science Labs subdeck, so it's essentially a 1,500-foot shaft that drops down to the belly of the *Ardent Hope*."

Where are the other crew and passengers? "The *Ardent Hope* has 300 officers and crew and 8,722 passengers. However, in order to conserve our resources, we only keep 12 crew members active at any time. Several years after we fled the destruction of our homeworld and with no end to our journey in sight, all of the passengers and crew were placed in cryogenic hibernation, leaving piloting and maintaining the ship to Father. However, Father finally failed about 300 years ago, but not before fulfilling its final duty and waking the crew. Ever since, a 12-member skeleton crew remained awake to man the ship. Every five years, the skeleton crew returns to cryogenic hibernation and is replaced by another 12-member skeleton crew. Since we have enough crew members to support 25 separate skeleton crews, each skeleton crew has served a 5-year shift every 250 years. So, this is currently the second 5-year shift I've served since Father failed."

Who destroyed your homeworld? What is the Empire of the Void? "After our scientists developed the *stardrive*, we began to colonize nearby star systems. Unfortunately, our rapid expansion was noticed by the Empire of the Void, a consortium of malevolent creatures and powerful alien entities that dwell in the dark spaces between the stars, where madness and oblivion reigns. The neh-thalggu are but one of the alien members of this terrible consortium. The Empire of the Void fell upon one of our far-flung colonies and consumed it. Soon after that they ascertained the location of Dzjaera and an all-out war began. It lasted barely two years. In the end, our lush, beautiful world was literally devoured by a star-sized entity of unspeakable power. The *Ardent Hope* may be the only ship that escaped the carnage."

ARDENT HOPE ROOM DESCRIPTIONS

Though the *Ardent Hope* is severely damaged, its basic systems (gravity, life support, food processing, waste management, and internal power) remain functional. The Command Deck, Passenger Deck, and Engineering Deck all share similar features.

Air Quality: The air aboard the *Ardent Hope* is well-circulated but smells faintly metallic.
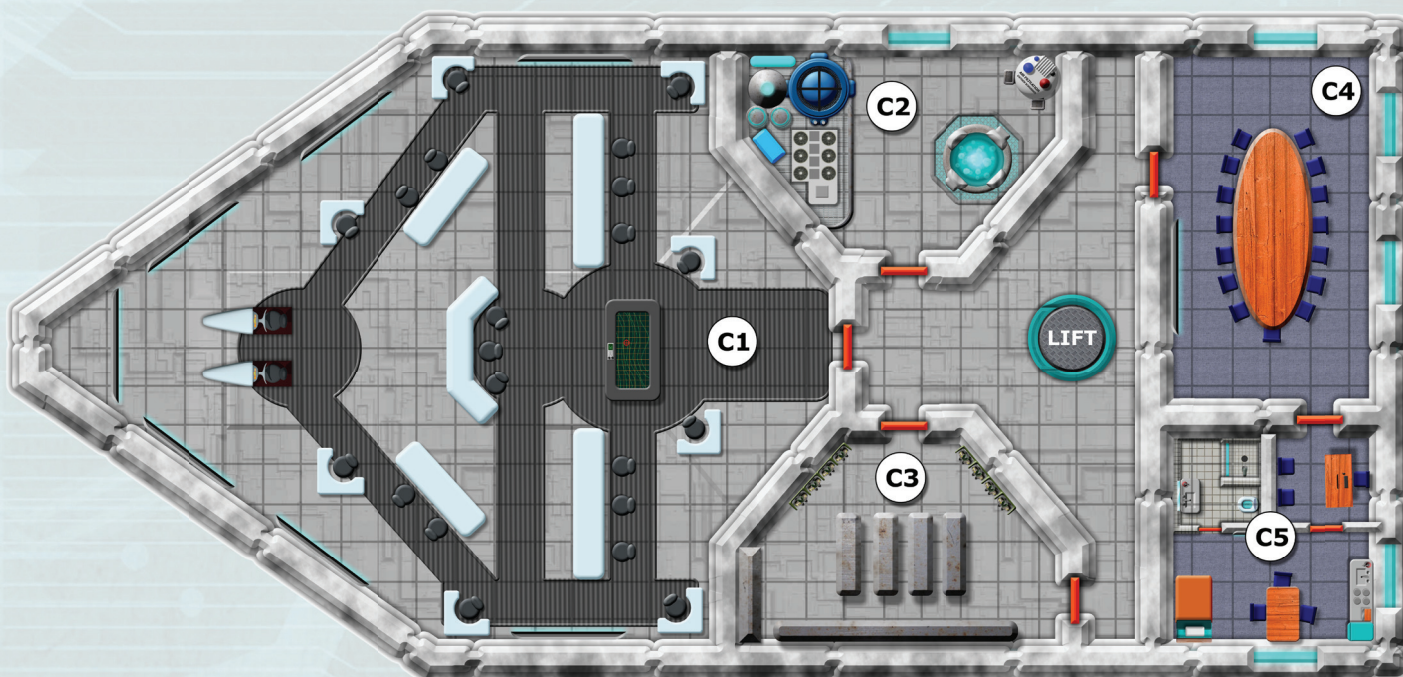
Computer Workstations: These computer workstations feature a monitor screen embedded in a nearby wall or affixed to a desk and a complicated keyboard with a variety of tactile keys, rubber knobs, and sensor pads. The keys, knobs, and sensor pads are labeled with hundreds of letters and numbers in the Dzjaeri tongue. Knowledge of the Dzjaeri tongue (or a successful DC 28 Culture check) and a successful DC 28 Computers check enables a user to perform one of the functions listed below. All of the Dzjaeri can automatically use the computer consoles.

Access library: The *Ardent Hope's* computer library contains a massive amount of information on the history, culture, and technology of the Dzjaeri people. Answering a single specific question takes 1d6 minutes.

Communication: The computer workstations can be used to communicate visually and verbally with a being sitting at another functioning computer workstation or possessing a comm unit authorized by Sub-Commander Orem to interface with the ship's systems. It is a standard action to initially establish or terminate communications.

Control Robot: The computer workstations can be used to take control of a single robot aboard the *Ardent Hope*, as if the computer operator cast *dominate person* (CL 20th) on the robot, affecting the robot regardless of the type restriction of the spell. In order to do this, the computer user must know the robot's serial number. Robots aboard the *Ardent Hope* have their serial numbers imprinted on the back of their heads. The serial numbers are very small and require a successful DC 40 Perception check to spot if the robot is attacking, moving, or otherwise being evasive. A successful check to answer a question using the computer library (see the Access Library action above) can also locate a specific robot's serial number, though the DC for the Access Library check increases by 10. It is a full-round action to enter a robot's serial number and another full-round action to attempt to assert control the robot. Once control is established, the

COMMAND DECK

1 Square = 5 Feet

computer operator can issue the robot's verbal commands from anywhere aboard the *Ardent Hope*.

Control Systems: Computer workstations in specific rooms can control specific systems. For instance, a computer in the Life Support room (area **C2**) can adjust or disable the ship's life support systems. See the Technology notes in the individual room descriptions for additional information.

Dimensional Travel: Due to the strange metals infused within the *Ardent Hope's* asteroid hull, as well as interference and reality-distortion from the ship's semi-dormant *stardrive*, the entire ship radiates an aura that blocks dimensional travel as if the spell *planar barrier* (CL 20th) is constantly in effect.

Doors: Doors are rectangular in shape, slightly curved at the top, and are typically five feet high and three feet wide. They are one-inch thick and made of the same adamantine-steel as the internal floors, walls, and ceilings (hardness 20, hp 30, break DC 28). Due to the *Ardent Hope's* current condition, the doors are no longer powered and must be opened or closed manually by turning and then pulling an L-shaped lever located near the door's right edge. This requires a full-round action and a successful DC 10 Strength check. A PC can take 10 on this check, but not during combat. Doors open to the left and slide seamlessly into the wall, where only the edge of the door containing its L-shaped handle remains visible. Since the doors are no longer powered, they cannot be locked.

Floors/Walls/Ceilings: Internal walls are generally composed of three-inch thick panels made of an alloy of adamantine and steel (hardness 20, hp 200, break DC 45). External hulls are either made of the same adamantine-steel alloy or are composed of the solid rock of an asteroid. The adamantine-steel surfaces are three feet thick (hardness 20, hp 800, break DC 100), whereas the asteroid walls are generally dozens of feet thick (per five feet of thickness: hardness 8, hp 900, break DC 65, Athletics DC 15 to climb).

Gravity: The *Ardent Hope's* internal gravity remains functional, so that "down" is always toward the floor.

Illumination: Unless otherwise noted, most of the *Ardent Hope's* chambers are unlit. This is especially true of the Passenger and Engineering Decks, since the Dzjaeri powered down these decks and diverted most of the remaining power to the Command Deck centuries ago. Only the Command Deck has lighting. Command Deck chambers are well-lit by bright lighting set into panels high on the walls of each room and along a0ll corridors. A control panel next to each door allows the lighting to be reduced to dim light or darkness as a swift action.

Viewports: These circular windows are typically three feet in diameter and offer stunning views of deep space and the planet far below. The viewports are crystal clear and made of a special material similar to high-density plastic (hardness 10, hp 100, break DC 40).

COMMAND DECK ROOM DESCRIPTIONS

The Command Deck is comprised of four subdecks: The Command Bridge, Crew Quarters, Command and Crew Cryogenics, and the Science Labs. Though the *Ardent Hope* is crippled, its basic systems (life support, food processing, waste management, and some of its internal power) on the Command Deck remain functional. Having powered down or diverted resources from the Passenger and Engineering Decks far below, the Dzjaeri crew have spent the last 300 years literally trapped on these four small decks. Thus, these areas feel more lived-in than the rest of the *Ardent Hope*. Walls and floors are slightly dingy and the air bears the faint odor of unwashed bodies. The temperature is a constant 75° F.

COMMAND BRIDGE

C1: Bridge

The Bridge is comprised of twenty-three seated computer workstations set atop a slightly raised platform coated with a rubber-like non-slip coating. A pair of command chairs sits in the center of the chamber, each with a smaller computer workstation attached to them. A massive 5-panel set of viewing screens cover the two forward sloped walls and stretch from the floor to the ceiling 20 feet above. Each screen is 15 feet tall and 10 feet long. The vast asteroid field, dotted with the floating wreckage of the Crimson Kings' vessels, can be seen on the view screens.

Creatures: A security officer is always stationed on the Bridge due to the sensitive nature of the systems here. Sub-Commander Orem also spends most of his duty time here, so there is a 70% chance of finding him here.

Sub-Commander Orem   CR 6

XP 2,400
HP 80 (see *Appendix 1: NPC Gallery*)

Security Officer   CR 4

XP 1,200
HP 50 (see *Appendix 1: NPC Gallery*)

Technology: Of the original 25 computer workstations installed here, only five still function, including one of the command chair workstations. Most of the other computers either deteriorated to uselessness long ago or had their components scavenged to keep the other computers functioning. One of the command chairs also contains a shipboard communications panel.

C2: Life Support

This room serves as a monitoring station for the *Ardent Hope's* life support systems, which include climate control and oxygen processing and renewal.

Technology: There are two computer workstations here, a primary workstation that takes up the entire western half of the room and a smaller secondary station in the northeast corner. Only the primary computer workstation is functional. In addition to the functions available at all computer workstations (as noted in the ***Ardent Hope* Room Descriptions** section), the following life support functions are available here. Knowledge of the Dzjaeri tongue (or a successful DC 28 Culture check) and a successful DC 28 Computers check enables a user to perform one of the functions listed below. Sub-Commander Orem and the Science Officers can perform these functions automatically.

- **Activate/Deactivate Life Support:** A computer operator can terminate the entire life support system, affecting the Command Decks, Passenger Deck, and Engineering Deck. If this is attempted, an audible message warns the computer user (in the Dzjaeri tongue) and a loud alarm sounds across the entire ship. A second DC 40 Computers check allows the computer user to override the message and turn off life support. However, this does not cancel the ship-wide alarm, which continues for 30 minutes. Once life support systems are terminated, those aboard the *Ardent Hope's* Command Decks, Passenger Deck, or Engineering Deck lose access to oxygen in 30 minutes. One hour after that, the environment of the affected decks become equivalent to the vacuum of outer space. A successful DC 30 Computers check is needed to reactivate the life support systems, which restore completely in 2 minutes.
- **Climate Control:** A computer operator can modify the temperature on the Command Decks, Passenger Deck, or Engineering Deck with a successful DC 33 Computers check. If the increase or decrease in temperature proves harmful to humans, an audible message warns the computer user (in the Dzjaeri tongue). A second DC 33 Computers check allows the computer user to override the message and alter the temperature to as low as 20° F or as high as 120° F (see rules for Cold Dangers and Heat Dangers in Chapter 11 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*). Any attempt to alter the temperature any lower or higher causes the system to override and lock down the controls and return them to normal (75° F).

C3: Armory

Once used to store the ship's arms, the armory now only provides recharging for the remaining five functioning photon pistols. All of the storage lockers here are either empty or contain disassembled photon pistols, their parts scavenged long ago to keep the currently deployed pistols viable.

Technology: A recharging station is built into one of the walls here. The recharging station is a simple waist-high metal platform, with a one-foot square surface. Batteries placed on top of the charging station, whether or not they are inside a technological item, automatically recharge at a rate of 1 capacity per minute. Only one battery can recharge at a time.

C4: Meeting Room

This seldom-used conference room is dominated by a large table of polished wood harvested from the Dzjaeri homeworld. A blank 5-foot high, 12-foot long view screen viewscreen is set into the west wall.

Technology: The seat at the head of the conference table has a functioning computer workstation embedded in the table in front of it as well as an embedded shipboard communications device. The viewscreen on the west wall is functional but powered down. A computer user seated at the conference table can transfer images and other content to the screen.

C5: Commander's Quarters

The commander's quarters include three adjoined rooms: a small office, living quarters, and the commander's personal bathroom. Sub-Commander Orem can be found here 80% of the time when off duty.

Technology: The commander's living quarters contains a functioning computer workstation and a wall-mounted shipboard communications device.

CREW QUARTERS

C6: Galley

This cavernous, brightly lit mess hall has seating for 300 people. Metal tables and benches line the length of the hall. There is a Lift access in the eastern section of the galley.

Technology: In the middle of the room, against the center wall is a beverage and recycling station. The beverage station dispenses clean, cold water. The recycling station is a barrel-sized apparatus used to chemically break down uneaten foot and biodegradable refuse.

C7: Crew Apartments

These 12 identical chambers each contain two sets of triple bunk beds and are designed to provide sleeping quarters for up to six crew members. When the *Ardent Hope* was at full crew capacity, crew members slept in these rooms in shifts. Now, many of the rooms remain vacant for years at a time.

Creatures: At any given time, 1d3 crew members can be found here resting.

Technology: Each room also has a small desk with a non-functioning computer workstation.

C8: Lounge and Recreation Hall

This large room resembles an auditorium, with plenty of comfortable, padded seating, plush carpeting, and a 10-foot high, 12-foot long viewscreen dominating the west wall. A 25-foot by 35-foot section of the floor here is actually a crystal-clear material identical to the material used to create the ship's external viewports (hardness 10, hp 100, break DC 40). This viewing area provides a stunning view of the exotic Terrestrial Enclosure 300 feet below.

Creatures: The Dzjaeri enjoy spending their off-duty hours here, losing themselves in recreational virtual reality videos or immersing themselves in their strange, moody ambient music. At any given time, 1d4 crew members can be found here.

Technology: Only one of the room's eight computer workstations still functions. The viewscreen has a separate operating system set into the wall next to it. Knowledge of the Dzjaeri tongue (or a successful DC 30 Culture check) and a successful DC 30 Computers check enables a user to access recreational audio-visual programming and display it on the viewscreen. Aside from its library of bizarre, somewhat morose Dzjaeri music, the system contains many historical and scientific documentaries as well as recreational videos centered on hunting. Though the Dzjaeri are an advanced technological race, hunting has remained a cultural identifier for them and many Dzjaeri have a passion for the sport.

The viewscreen operating system also contains an embedded shipboard communications device. Like all of the communication devices aboard the *Ardent Hope*, the communicator automatically translates any language (as *tongues*).

C11   C12

LIFT
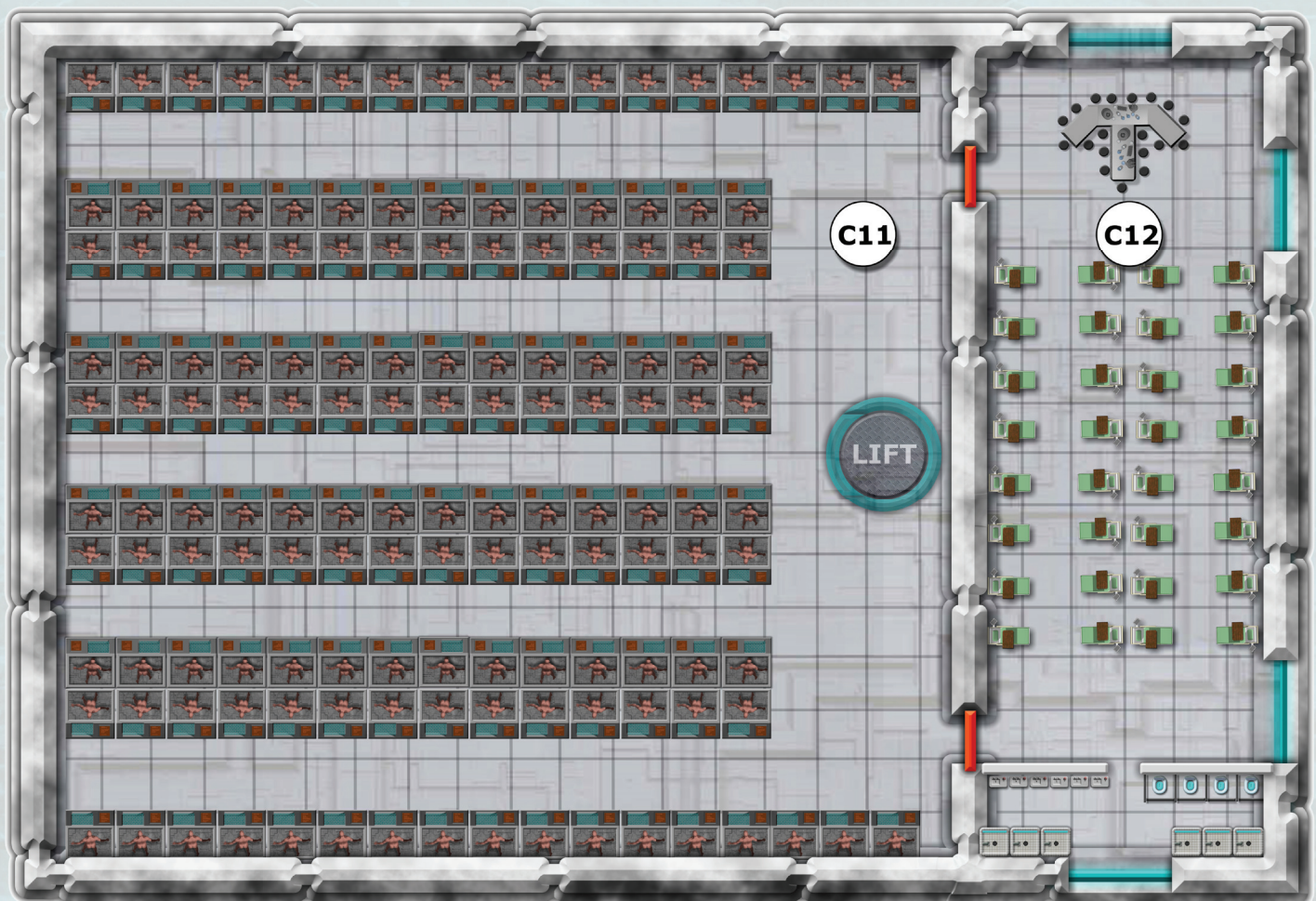
CREW QUARTERS

1 Square = 5 Feet

C9: Food Processor

This contains the apparatus that dispenses the Dzjaeri nutrient paste, a purely vegetarian food source that smells and tastes like a cross between jellied beets and week-old cabbage.

Technology: This room contains a functioning computer workstation, used to control the food dispenser. Knowledge of the Dzjaeri tongue (or a successful DC 20 Culture check) and a successful DC 20 Computers check enables a user to dispense a bowl of nutrient paste. As a result of neh-thalggu sabotage, the food dispenser stops producing nutrient paste 12 hours after the PCs arrive aboard the *Ardent Hope* (as described the *The Deal* and *The Mission* sections). Once the PCs complete their mission and reactive the nutrient processors, the food dispenser functions normally again.

C10: Refresher

The crew members share this bathroom and showering facility. It is lined with metal toilets, washing sinks, and glass shower stalls. Walking into a shower stall automatically turns on soothing, hot water. The water cycle stops when the user exits the shower. Immediately after exiting the shower, an instantaneous gust of air blasts the user and completely dries him or her. Though unsettling, the air blast is harmless.

COMMAND AND CREW CRYOGENICS

C11: Cryogenics Chamber

This massive chamber provides storage for the *Ardent Hope's* cryogenically frozen crew. There are a total of 438 cryo-pods, stacked atop one another in three levels, and 282 of the pods contain a cryogenically frozen Dzjaeri. The frozen crew includes the ship's captain, Lorrm Kevaahr (N male human soldier), 11 sub-commanders (identical stats to Sub-Commander Orem), and scores of other crew members. There is a Lift access near the middle of the east wall.

Technology: There is a functional computer workstation attached to the side of the Lift access tube. Knowledge of the Dzjaeri tongue (or a successful DC 30 Culture check) and a successful DC 30 Computers check enables a user to retrieve a cryo-pod (or lift one into place overhead). Retrieval takes one minute and involves the pod being grabbed and lifted into position by a large robotic arm. Once a pod is retrieved and set on the floor,

WAKING THE DZJAERI

The process for reviving a cryogenically frozen Dzjaeri is very time consuming. Upon immediately extracting a Dzjaeri from hibernation, the creature tending to the extracted Dzjaeri must succeed at a DC 25 Medicine check to stabilize and revive the Dzjaeri. If this check is failed, the extracted Dzjaeri must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or immediately die from massive system shock. If the Medicine check succeeds, the extracted Dzjaeri survives the initial extraction process. When a Dzjaeri is initially brought out of cryogenic hibernation, he or she remains unconscious for one week and must be regularly monitored, cared for, and fed. After one week, the patient can attempt a DC 10 Fortitude save at the beginning of each day to awaken. Once awake, the patient remains blind for another 1d4+1 days, as the cryogenic chemicals slowly withdraw from the optical nerves.

wheels extend from the bottom of the pod. The pods are surprisingly light and easy to push on these wheels. Once the Dzjaeri extract a pod, they push it to the medical bay (area **C12**) so the occupant can be revived under medical supervision. See the Waking the Dzjaeri sidebar for further details on reviving a being from cryogenic sleep.

C12: Medical Bay (CR 10)

This large room serves as the *Ardent Hope's* primary medical facility. There is a smaller secondary medical bay on the Passenger Deck (area **P3**), though its systems were taken offline and its power was diverted to the Command Decks 300 years ago. The room is lined with 32 padded medical couches, each designed to monitor a patient's vital signs and diagnose injury and disease. However, only two of the couches' display monitors are currently active. The northern section of the room contains a regeneration table, a miracle of Dzjaeri medical technology that the crew has been saving for an emergency. The regeneration table also functions as a surgical table, allowing MED-21-001 to perform various procedures on the Dzjaeri crew.

To the south is a small room containing several washbasins, toilets, and storage cabinets. Once filled with medical supplies and various advanced pharmaceuticals, these cabinets are now empty.

Creature: A medical robot named MED-21-001 is stationed here. The last of its kind, some of MED-21-001's critical systems have deteriorated and made it dangerously unstable. Though MED-21-001 is not a threat to the Dzjaeri crew, it becomes confused when it sees the PCs. Programmed to treat the Dzjaeri, MED-21-001 mistakes a PC's

alien appearance as a serious medical condition. The robot immediately approaches the first PC to enter the room and — with great, obvious concern — asks the PC to lie down on one of the functioning medical couches (see **Technology** below). If the PC refuses to comply, MED-21-001 attempts to use its sedative spray or restraints on the PC. If MED-21-001 manages to subdue its target, it carries the PC to the medical couch. As the robot does so, it requests any Dzjaeri or other PCs present to "Please do not interfere! The patient requires my immediate attention!" as it tells the PC it carries to "Please remain calm! Do not resist!"

When the medical couch displays its findings, MED-21-001 twitches in disbelief and begins repeating the words "Immediate surgery required!" in Dzjaeri over and over again. The robot then carries the PC to a surgical table and attempts to strap the PC to it (requiring two successful combat maneuver checks against the PC). If MED-21-001 manages to strap the PC to the table, the PC must succeed at a DC 17 Strength check to escape while the robot spends the next 2 rounds programming the surgical table to perform a random barrage of harmful and unnecessary surgeries. If the PC is unable to escape the table within 2 rounds, the PC suffers 10d12 points of piercing and slashing damage and 1d6+1 points of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution damage. If attacked, MED-21-001 becomes completely unhinged and fights to the death. However, even in its current state, MED-21-001's programming refuses to allow it to attack or harm a Dzjaeri.

MED-21-001   CR 10

N Medium construct (technological)
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +19

DEFENSE   HP 150

EAC 23; **KAC** 24
Fort +10; **Ref** +10; **Will** +14
Immunities construct immunities
Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits, vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee slam +21 (2d8+18)
Ranged stickybomb grenade III +19 (explode [10 ft., entangled 2d4 rounds, DC 20])
Offensives Abilities sedative spray
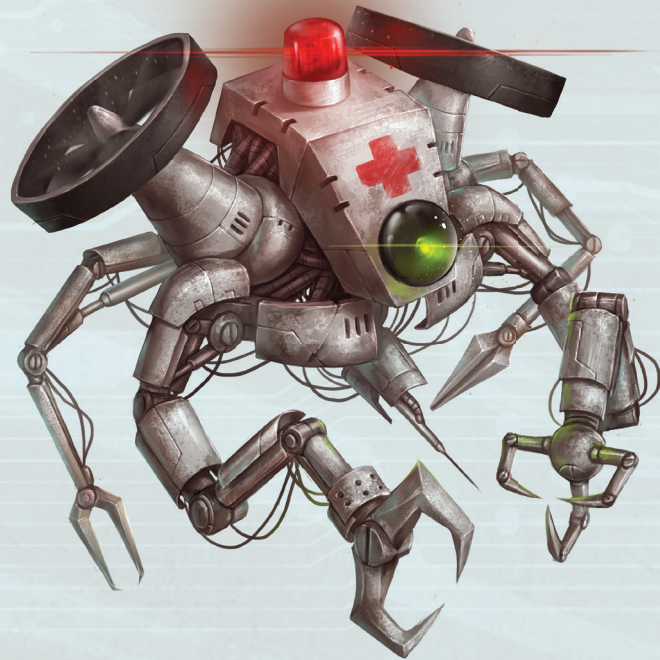
TACTICS

During Combat MED-21-001 uses its sedative spray and stickybomb grenades to hinder foes. It uses its slam attacks to dispatch those who enter melee with it.
Morale Its reasoning irrevocably impaired, MED-21-001 fights until all PCs in sight are dead.

STATISTICS

Str +8, **Dex** +5, **Con** —, **Int** +5, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5
Skills Computers +19, Engineering +19, Life Science +24, Medicine +24, Sense Motive +24
Languages Aklo, Dzjaeri
Other Abilities unliving, repair
Gear stickybomb grenades III (5)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Repair (Ex) As a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, MED-21-001 can repair damage done to itself, healing 4d10 points of damage.
Sedative Spray (Ex) Once per round as a standard action, MED-21-001 can emit an

anesthetizing mist in a 20-foot cone. Creatures caught inside the effect must succeed at a DC 19 Fortitude save or fall unconscious for 1d6 minutes. With a successful save, a creature is merely sickened for 1d6 rounds. This is a poison effect.

Technology: Of the 32 medical couches, only the two couches with active display monitors are fully functional. If a humanoid lies on the couch, the couch instantaneously runs a thorough physical diagnostic and displays its findings (in the Dzjaeri tongue) on the display monitor. The medical couch automatically identifies common injuries and diseases (broken bones, cuts and bruises, the common cold, non-magical diseases, etc.) and grants a +5 bonus to any Medicine checks made to treat the injury to anyone with at least 1 rank in the Medicine skill who understands the Dzjaeri tongue. The medical couch cannot diagnose supernatural afflictions, or infestations from molds, slimes, or similar hazards.

Treasure: The following medical supplies are currently stored in the various cabinets around the room: an advanced emotion regulator^SA, two doses of green lotus extract^SCR, one dose of a tier 3 sedative^SCR, a chemalyzer^SA, a poacher class injector pistol with 20 darts^SA, and a green nanite hypopen^SA. Additionally, one of the still-functional medical couches is a regeneration table^SCR. See the *Starfinder Armory* and *Starfinder Core Rulebook* for details on this technological equipment.

SCIENCE LABS

C13: Transporter Arrival and Sterilization

This chamber includes a 25-foot by 40-foot glass-enclosed area with a narrow outer area. The outer area contains a control panel and a floor-to-ceiling glass wall that separates the two areas. The glass is the same high-density plastic that forms the *Ardent Hope*'s viewport windows (hardness 10, hp 100, break DC 40).

Hazard: The inner area is the sterilization chamber, used to neutralize any potentially harmful parasites and diseases from the bodies of alien creatures before they're allowed to enter the *Ardent Hope*.

Technology: As described in the Arrival section, the door leading into the sterilization chamber is electronically locked, requiring a successful DC 34 Engineering check to bypass. The control panel in the outer area contains a functioning computer

HAZARD: STERILIZATION SPRAY (CR 6)

The sterilization spray is a technological hazard that can be triggered as a full round action with a DC 24 Computers check. When it is triggered, all creatures inside the glass-enclosed area are doused with a combination of chemically infused mist and intense ultraviolet radiation and must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save to resist being sickened for 1d6 hours. Even with a successful save, creatures exposed to the sterilization spray are still sickened for 1d6 rounds. Creatures exposed to the sterilization spray receive the benefits of remove affliction (caster level 20th), but only for diseases, infestations, or poisons. The sterilization spray does not remove curses, blindness, or deafness.

console, controls for the mechanism that locks the door leading into the sterilization chamber, controls used to dispense the sterilization spray, and an embedded communications device. There is a Lift access in southwest corner of the outer area.

C14, C15, C16: Labs

These three laboratory chambers are nearly identical. They are clean, sterile environments, with white plastic benches, tables, counters, and storage lockers. Most of the tables and counters are crowded with scientific and alchemy equipment.

Creature: Unhinged by the recent escape of the neh-thalggus, a robot in Lab Two (area **C15**) has grown unstable and may attack the PCs if they antagonize it.

A lone metallic figure shakes glassware filled with liquids and makes vague appraising sounds until it notices the interruption. At this, it turns to face its unwelcome guests, and one of its arms suddenly crackles with electricity.

After the Dzjaeri managed to capture one of the neh-thalggu during the initial attack, they reactivated an analysis robot (ST-3-VI-3) for the task of identifying anything about the creature that the Dzjaeri could use to their advantage. Unfortunately, the robot's programming has deteriorated during the thousands of years it spent in stasis, which the Dzjaeri have not yet realized. It now sees any intrusion, especially by non-Dzjaeri, as a threat to the lab's integrity and assumes that the characters will contaminate any samples it has. Even though it no longer has its neh-thalggu test subject, it warns the PCs to leave immediately; if they do not comply within 1 round, it attacks.

If any Dzjaeri accompany the characters during this encounter, they insist that the PCs leave the lab at once and will summon Sub-Commander Orem and any available security officers to help deter the PCs if necessary. Their resources are scarce, and they don't want to risk losing one of their robots unless absolutely necessary.

ST-3-VI-3 — CR 10

XP 9,600

N Medium construct (technological)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +19

DEFENSE — HP 150

EAC 23; KAC 24

Fort +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities hardness 10, resilient; **Immunities** construct immunities

Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits, vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee electrified arm +19 (2d8+15 E), slam +18 (2d8+15 B)

Ranged integrated inferno flame pistol *(Starfinder Armory)* +21 (2d8+10 F; critical Burn 1d8)

TACTICS

During Combat ST-3-VI-3 uses its integrated inferno flame pistol to drive away its foes, but it will not hesitate to use its more lethal electrified arm to dispatch those who enter melee with it.

Morale Aware that it is the only means to effect a cure for the bacterium, ST-3-VI-3 flees when it reaches 10 hp.

STATISTICS

Str +5, **Dex** +8, **Con** —, **Int** +3, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +0

Skills Computers +19, Life Science +24, Medicine +24, Physical Science +24, Sense Motive +19

Languages Dzjaeri

Gear inferno flame pistol with 2 high capacity petrol tanks (40 petrol each)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Integrated Weapons (Ex) see above

Resilient (Ex) ST-3-VI-3 receives a +3 racial bonus on all saving throws.

Technology: All three labs have a functioning computer workstation. Each lab is also a fully functional medical bay, synthesis bay, and tech workshop (*Starfinder Core Rulebook*). Lab Three (area C16) is also fitted with a steel-enforced restraining harnesses along the north wall. This makeshift device was used to restrain the neh-thalggu that had been captured by the Dzjaeri during the initial attack. The harness is irrevocably damaged from the neh-thalggu's escape.

C17: Observation Lounge

The large chamber was originally designed as a lecture hall and observation lounge. Several rows of large padded chairs line the middle of the chamber, all facing west, where two enormous, crystal clear windows flank a pair of 15-foot tall double doors. The windows stretch from the floor to the ceiling, 30 feet overhead and provide a clear view into the multi-colored jungle of the Terrestrial Enclosure.

Creatures: Since the initial neh-thalggu attack, two Dzjaeri security officers are posted here at all times.

Security Officer	**CR 4**

XP 1,200
HP 50 (see *Appendix 1: NPC Gallery*)

Technology: The massive double doors leading into the Terrestrial Enclosure are electronically and magnetically sealed, though they show signs of lightning and acid damage on the Terrestrial Enclosure side, having been damaged by the neh-thalggus in a recent attack. Despite the damage, the doors remain quite strong (hardness 10, hp 150, break DC 40). The glass windows are made of the same high-density plastic that forms the *Ardent Hope's* viewport windows (hardness 10, hp 100, break DC 40). A control panel used to unlock and mechanically open the doors is located on the wall to the right of the doors.

Another control panel next to the eastern door contains a shipboard communications device.

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF INTEREST ON THE COMMAND DECKS

Primary Lift Shaft: The 12-foot diameter Primary Lift shaft descends 600 feet from the Command Bridge subdeck at the top of the ship down the Science Labs subdeck (area **C13**), then drops 1,100 feet to the Passenger Deck and another 400 feet to the Engineering Deck (area **E7**). The Lift consists of a circular 12-foot diameter hole in the floor and/or ceiling. Using advanced magnetic-levitation technology, the Lift provides a permanent effect identical to *flight* cast as a 2nd level spell to any creature that steps into the open "pit." Merely stepping into the Lift shaft allows a creature to automatically hover in mid-air while inside the shaft. A creature hovering inside the shaft can, as a free action, speak the Dzjaeri word for up ("kaah") or down ("ethuu") to ascend or descend the shaft, or speak the Dzjaeri word for stop ("vosh") to hover in mid-air.

Unfortunately, the Lift no longer functions below the Science Labs subdeck. Any attempt to descend below area **C13** subjects a character to a 1,500-foot free fall to the Engineering Deck (landing at the Lift location in area **E7**).

Escape Pods: The primary Lift shaft was once also the access point for all of the *Ardent Hope's* escape pods. However, all of the escape pods were dismantled and their parts used to maintain the rest of the ship. The hatches for the escape pod have all been welded shut and are no longer accessible.

External Airlock: The top of the Lift shaft terminates in a hatch-like door set into the ceiling (hardness 10, hp 250, break DC 50). Beyond the door is a small, 15-foot diameter round chamber ringed by viewport windows (hardness 10, hp 100, break DC 40) and a second, identical hatch-like door that leads into the vacuum of outer-space. The doors are designed so that only one of them can be opened at a time. Additionally, the outer door is magnetically locked and cannot be opened unless someone at one of the *Ardent Hope's* functioning computer workstations enters the proper commands by succeeding at a DC 30 Computers.

Treasure: A small closet in the airlock chamber contains eight space suits, 32 rolls of ion tape (*Starfinder Armory* 105) and two zipsticks (*Starfinder Armory* 109).
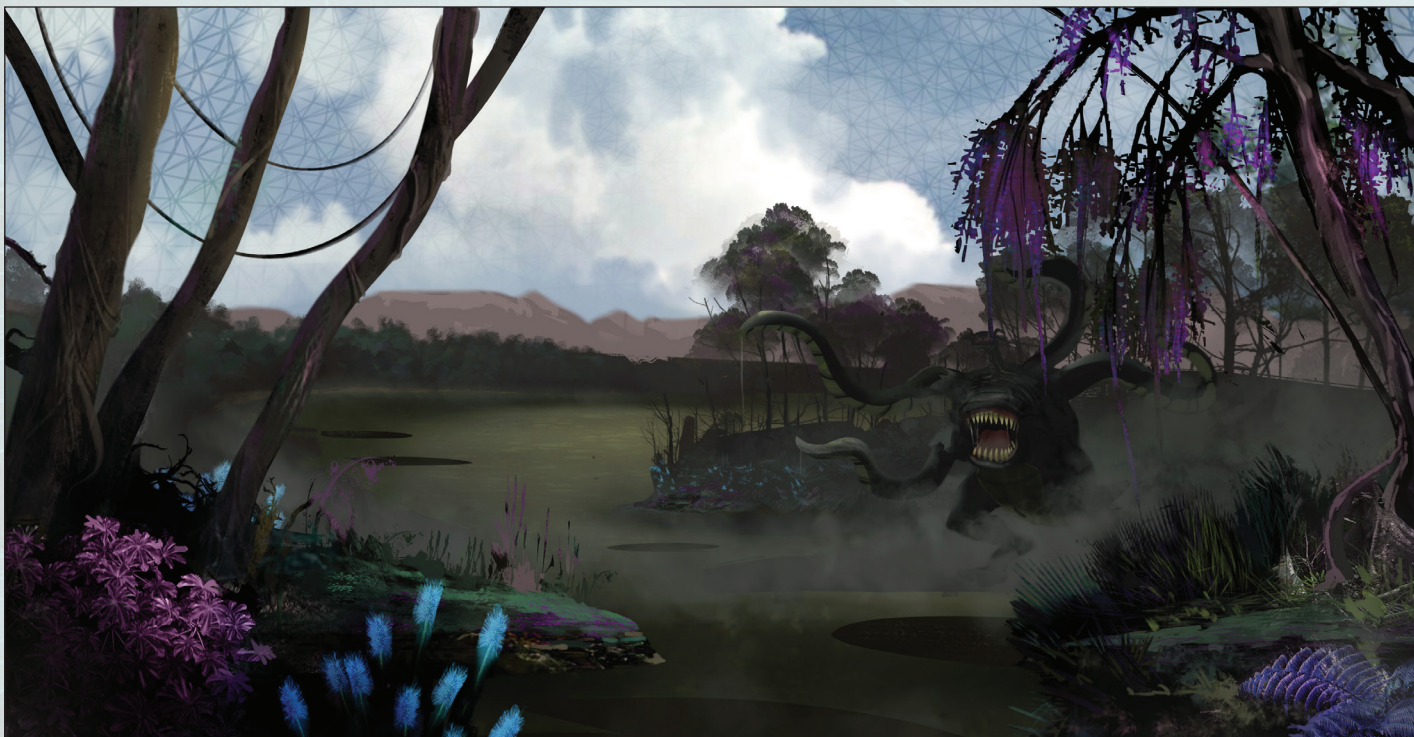
THE TERRESTRIAL ENCLOSURE

The *Ardent Hope's* Terrestrial Enclosure continues to support a simulated environment meant to mimic Dzjaera, the lost homeworld of the Dzjaeri people. Powered by a pair of small fusion reactors (buried dozens of feet below the enclosure), the passage of 53 centuries has seen the habitat's vegetation grow into a dense jungle of brightly colored trees, thick vines, and lush undergrowth (considered difficult terrain). In the center of the enclosure is a freshwater lake of murky dark-green water, surrounded by tall marsh grasses, reeds, and small cypress trees.

Air, Climate, and Illumination: The air in the Terrestrial Enclosure is exceptionally humid and thick with the smell of vegetation and the sounds of countless alien insects. Late each afternoon (from 3 PM until 6 PM) the enclosure simulates a mild rain, which lowers the near-constant sweltering temperature averaging 95° F (see rules for Heat Dangers in Chapter 11 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*) down to a more tolerable 85° F. The lower temperature lasts during the rain and for two hours afterwards.

Until recently, the metal dome 300 feet overhead simulated Dzjaera's sky and featured a 24-hour day and night cycle. During the day, the sky remained a vivid silver-blue, lit by a radiant blue-white sun, while the moonless nights were dim and barely lit by a sky of simulated stars. However, since Reactor-2 in the Environmental Control Center (see area **TE8**) was recently sabotaged by the neh-thalggu, the lighting in the enclosure has almost completely failed. Until the reactor is repaired, only ambient lighting emanating from the dome ceiling remains, which casts the entire enclosure in a soft violet light (equal to dim light).

Fauna: The Dzjaeri designed the Terrestrial Enclosure with the intention to preserve as many of its native fauna a possible, and populated it with a wide variety of creatures native to their world. These creatures were supplemented with a number of alien animals the Dzjaeri encountered during their centuries-long diaspora. Unfortunately, when the toadhemoth (see area **TE3**) awoke from its lethargic state and suddenly grew to its current size, it immediately became the apex predator and devoured nearly all of the animals inside the enclosure. A few hardy animals still persist, including a mated pair of aurumvoraxes (see area **TE2**) and the bio-engineered vegge-elk that roam the enclosure in small herds.

Flora: The vegetation in the terrestrial enclosure is thick and lush and very colorful. The alien trees average 30 feet in height and feature long drooping fronds with colors like bright scarlet, deep violet, and lustrous emerald-blue. Vines are usually dark red or golden yellow in color, and are dotted with flowers and
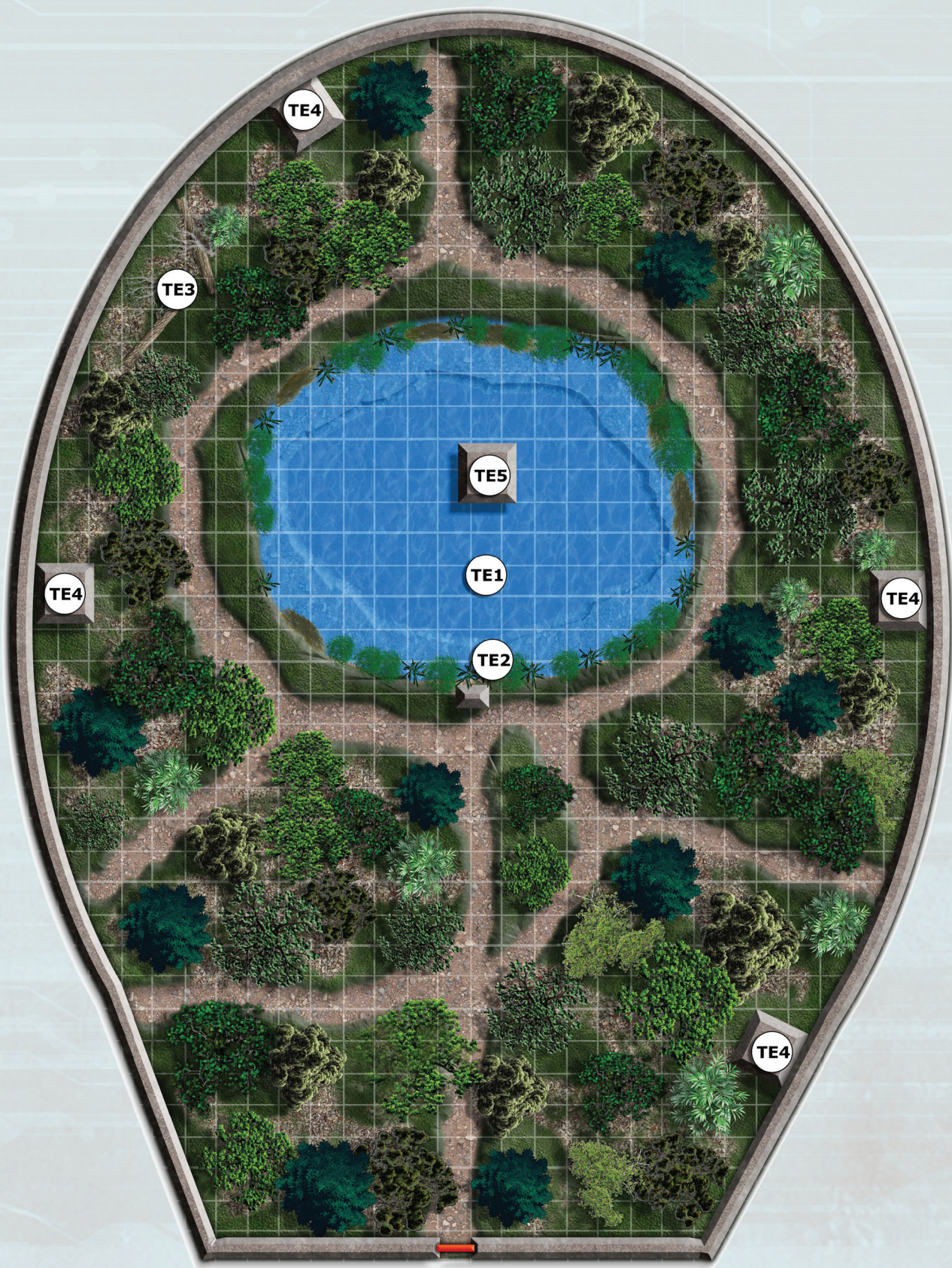
TERRESTRIAL ENCLOSURE: 1   1 Square = 5 Feet

sweet-smelling orchids. Grasses and undergrowth are typically a very dark greenish-blue. In addition to the benign alien flora, the Terrestrial Enclosure is home to several varieties of dangerous plant-life.

Pathway: A 10-foot wide cobblestone path winds its way through the Terrestrial Enclosure. The cobblestones were manufactured on the Dzjaeri homeworld long ago and still bear a bio-engineered coating that repels plant growth. Though most of the paths are obscured by the jungle canopy dozens of feet overhead, the paths remain clear of vines, grass, and other vegetation.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Check for random encounters every 15 minutes the PCs spend exploring the Terrestrial Enclosure. There is a 50% chance of having a random encounter.

Roll (d20)	Encounter (CR)
1–5	Dangerous Flora
6–7	Vegge-elk Herd (CR 7)
8–9	Assassin Vine Patch (CR 8)
10–11	Alien Flytrap (CR 10)
12	Aurumvoraxes (CR 11)
13	Neh-thalggus (CR 12)
14–20	Toadhemoth (CR 14)

DANGEROUS FLORA

The Terrestrial Enclosure contains a variety of strange, alien flora, some of which is semi-sentient and poses minor hazards to the PCs. Each time this encounter occurs, roll 1d4 to determine the type of annoying flora the PCs encounter.

1. Grabber: A tangle of vines suddenly lurches toward a random PC and attempts to entangle the character. The target must succeed at a DC 19 Reflex save or gain the entangled condition. The entangled condition persists until the entangled PC escapes with a successful DC 30 Acrobatics check (a full-round action) or the vines are destroyed. Each round the character remains entangled, he or she takes 2d8 points of bludgeoning damage as the vines slowly tighten and constrict. The vines have a hardness of 2 and 10 hit points. They take half damage from bludgeoning attacks.

2. Hallucinogenic: A nearby patch of flowering vines sprays the air with pollen that contains a mind-altering toxin. The flowers target a random PC and all creatures within 30 feet of the target must succeed at a DC 19 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Wisdom damage, become confused for 1d6 rounds, and then remain sickened for 1d4 hours. This is a poison effect.

3. Hooter: A nearby plant frond opens and begins hooting very loudly. The plant itself doesn't impart a negative effect on the PCs, but the noise is likely to draw the attention of any nearby predators in the enclosure.

4. Sprayer: A plant frond opens adjacent to a random PC and attempts to douse the character with sticky, sickly-sweet smelling goo. A successful DC 19 Reflex save avoids the spray. If the PC becomes coated with the goo, the chance for having a random encounter increases by 20% for the next 1d4 hours. If the targeted PC rolls a natural 1 on the Reflex save, he or she is also blinded for 1d6 hours. A PC coated with the goo can only remove it by totally immersing himself in water for two minutes, though this does not negate the blindness. If a PC attempts to do this in the central lake (area **TE1**), the starving lukwata is alerted immediately.

Assassin Vine Patch (CR 8)

A clutch of six assassin vines grow in a tangle here, blending in well with the alien trees, bushes, and tall tropical grasses.

Assassin Vines (6)	**CR 3**

XP 800
N Large plant
Init −2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +8
Aura entangling plants (20 ft., DC 12)

DEFENSE	**HP 40 EACH**

EAC 14; **KAC** 16
Fort +7; **Ref** +5; **Will** +2
Immunities electricity, plant immunities;
   Resistances cold 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft.
Melee slam +11 (1d6+7 B plus grab)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
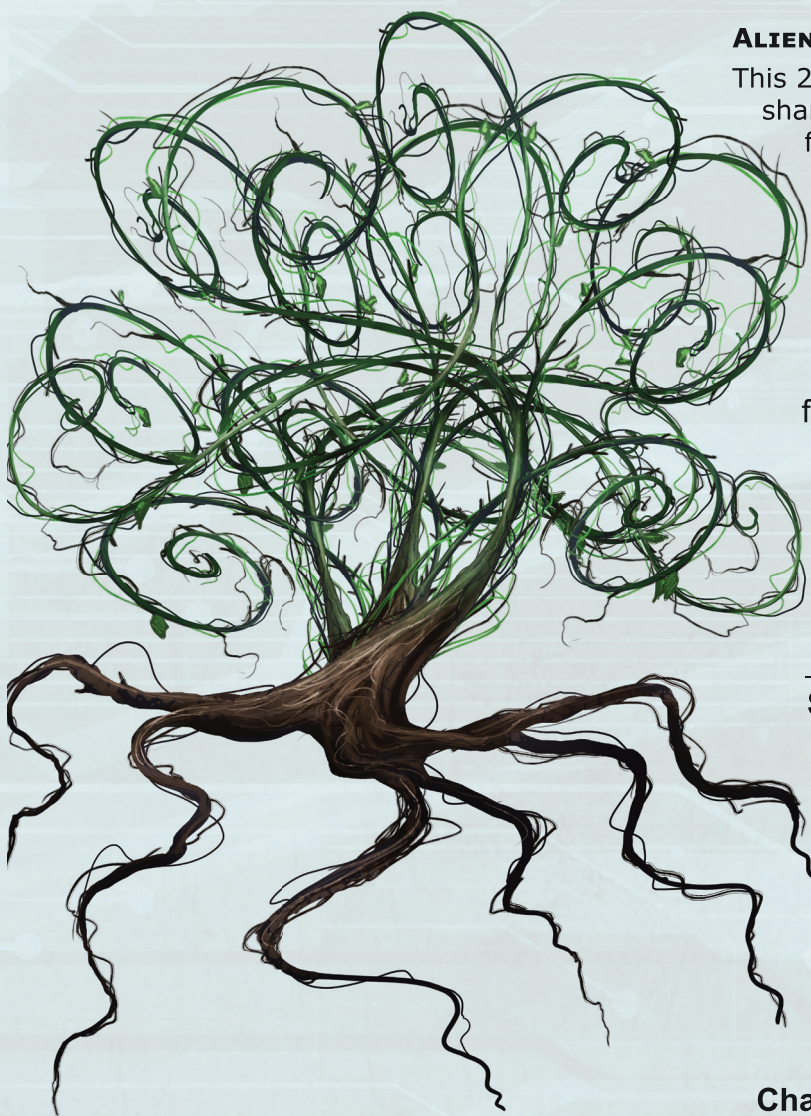
Alien Flytrap (CR 10)

This 20-foot long mass of vines and hook-like barbs shares the bizarre, multi-colored hues of the alien flora within the Terrestrial Enclosure.

GIANT FLYTRAP — CR 10

XP 9,600
N Huge plant
Init +7; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +24

DEFENSE — HP 168

EAC 23; **KAC** 25
Fort +14; **Ref** +12; **Will** +9
Immunities plant immunities;
Resistances acid 20

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.
Melee bite +22 (2d10+15 P plus swallow whole)
Multiattack 4 bites +16 (1d10+15 P plus swallow whole)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Special Attacks swallow whole (1d10+15 A & B, EAC 23, KAC 21, 42 HP)

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +3; **Con** +8; **Int** −5; **Wis** +1; **Cha** −2
Skills Stealth +19, Survival +19

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate swamps
Organization solitary, pair, or grove (3–6)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Swallow Whole (Ex) A giant flytrap can only swallow whole targets that are at least two size categories smaller than itself. When the flytrap swallows a victim whole, the seal formed is airtight, so the victim risks suffocation. The victim is also considered pinned. A giant flytrap that is grappling or pinning a foe cannot attack other targets with that bite but is not otherwise hindered.

STATISTICS

Str +4; **Dex** −2; **Con** +2; **Int** —; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0
Skills Perception +8, Stealth +8
Other Abilities mindless

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forest
Organization solitary, pair, or patch (3–6)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Entangling Plants (Su) Mundane plants within 20 feet of the assassin vine grasp at non-plant creatures in that area, entangling them for one round if they fail a DC 11 Reflex save. This aura is suppressed while the assassin vine is waiting in ambush.

Aurumvoraxes (CR 11)

The PCs encounter the two aurumvoraxes (see area **TE2**) while the starving creatures are out hunting.

Neh-thalggus (CR 8-12)

The PCs encounter 1d4 neh-thalggus (see areas **TE6** and **TE8**). The neh-thalggus are on their way to inspect one of the air and nutrient processor units (areas marked **TE4**). If the PCs encounter at least three neh-thalggus, the creatures fight to the death. Otherwise, they flee to the Environmental Control Center (**TE5**) to warn their companions. Deduct any neh-thalggus killed in this encounter from the creatures in areas **TE6**, **TE7**, and **TE8**.

Vegge-Elk Herd (CR 7)

The Dzjaeri populated the Terrestrial Enclosure with bio-engineered game animals befitting their vegetarian diets. The only creatures remaining from the dozens they originally brought on board are a number of four-legged plant creatures that look and behave similarly to herd animals the PCs are likely familiar with. Occasionally hunted by the toadhemoth, the vegge-elk tend to gather in small herds for mutual protection. Normally docile creatures, they easily startle and jump across the party's path when they get spooked.

VEGGE-ELK (8)	**CR 1**

XP 400
N Medium plant
Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE	**HP 20**

EAC 11; **KAC** 13
Fort +5; **Ref** +3; **Will** +1
Immunities plant immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.
Melee antlers +8 (1d6+3 P)

STATISTICS

Str +2; **Dex** +4; **Con** +2; **Int** -4; **Wis** +1; **Cha** -2
Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +10

Toadhemoth (CR 14)

The PCs encounter the toadhemoth (see *Appendix 2: New Monsters*).

TERRESTRIAL ENCLOSURE ENCOUNTER AREAS

TE1: Central Lake (CR 11)

A lake of dark green water dominates the middle of the massive jungle-filled artificial habitat. The lake is ringed by reeds, small cypress trees, and other tropical undergrowth. The lake itself has a mild salty smell. In the center of the lake sits a square metal platform, a few feet above the waterline. It is completely devoid of plant growth.

Reminding the Dzjaeri of their home planet, which was dotted with numerous freshwater lakes and cenotes, the central lake served as a peaceful location for reflection for the crew of the *Ardent Hope*, and as an emergency water supply. Since the Dzjaeri no longer monitor the pumps to maintain the water's purity, it has become brackish and unpotable. It currently only supplies the riot of plants in the Terrestrial Enclosure with water. A 40-foot square island made of dull gray steel (area **TE5**) sits in the center of the lake. The artificial island rises two feet above the waterline and is completely devoid of flora. The lake's bottom drops off very quickly, reaching a depth of 50 feet within 10 feet of the shore.

Creature: An ancient and elusive 20-foot long lukwata has long called the central lake home, ever since it was captured by the Dzjaeri from a waterworld the *Ardent Hope* visited centuries before they became stranded in the asteroid field. Utterly famished, the lukwata was content to remain at the bottom of the central lake, away from the simulated light of the Dzjaeri sun, where it subsisted on algae and its own organic detritus. In fact, none of the currently awakened Dzjaeri even remembers the creature or realizes it still haunts the central lake. However, with the recent dimming of the enclosure lights (due to the shutdown reactor at area **TE8**), the lukwata has started to patrol the surface of the lake once more, curious about the change in the above-water environment. As soon as it detects a living creature in or near the lake's surface, it attacks.

LUKWATA	**CR 11**

XP 12,800
N Huge magical beast (aquatic)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +20

DEFENSE
HP 180

EAC 24; **KAC** 26
Fort +15; **Ref** +15; **Will** +10
DR 10/nonmagical weapons; **SR** 27
Weaknesses eldritch encrustation

OFFENSE

Speed swim 40 ft.
Melee bite +24 (4d6+19 P plus grab)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat The lukwata's tactics are simple and brutish. It focuses on one foe at a time, biting and gnawing at its target with great ferocity.
Morale Famished and exceptionally aggressive, the lukwata fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str +8; **Dex** +3; **Con** +5; **Int** -4; **Wis** +3; **Cha** +0
Skills Athletics +25

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Damage Reduction (Ex) A lukwata's damage reduction is penetrated only by nonmagical weapons (hybrid weapons, and weapons with fusions or fusion seals attached to them count as magic for the purpose of this ability.)

Digest Magic (Su) A magic or hybrid item swallowed by a lukwata must make a DC 18 Fortitude save after an hour or become permanently nonmagical. Hybrid items get a +4 bonus to this save.

Dispelling Bite (Su) When a lukwata scores a critical hit with its bite, the victim is affected as if targeted by a *greater dispel magic* spell. The caster level for this effect is equal to the lukwata's CR (CL 11th for most lukwatas).

Eldritch Encrustation (Su) Crystalline growths along the lukwata's digestive tract contain large deposits of magical energy. These nodes are responsible for the magical feedback that surrounds each lukwata, granting it its spell resistance, damage reduction, dispelling bite, and digest magic abilities. *Dispel magic* cast on a lukwata can negate these powers for 1 minute — the CL of the effect is treated as the lukwata's CR (CL 11th for most lukwatas).
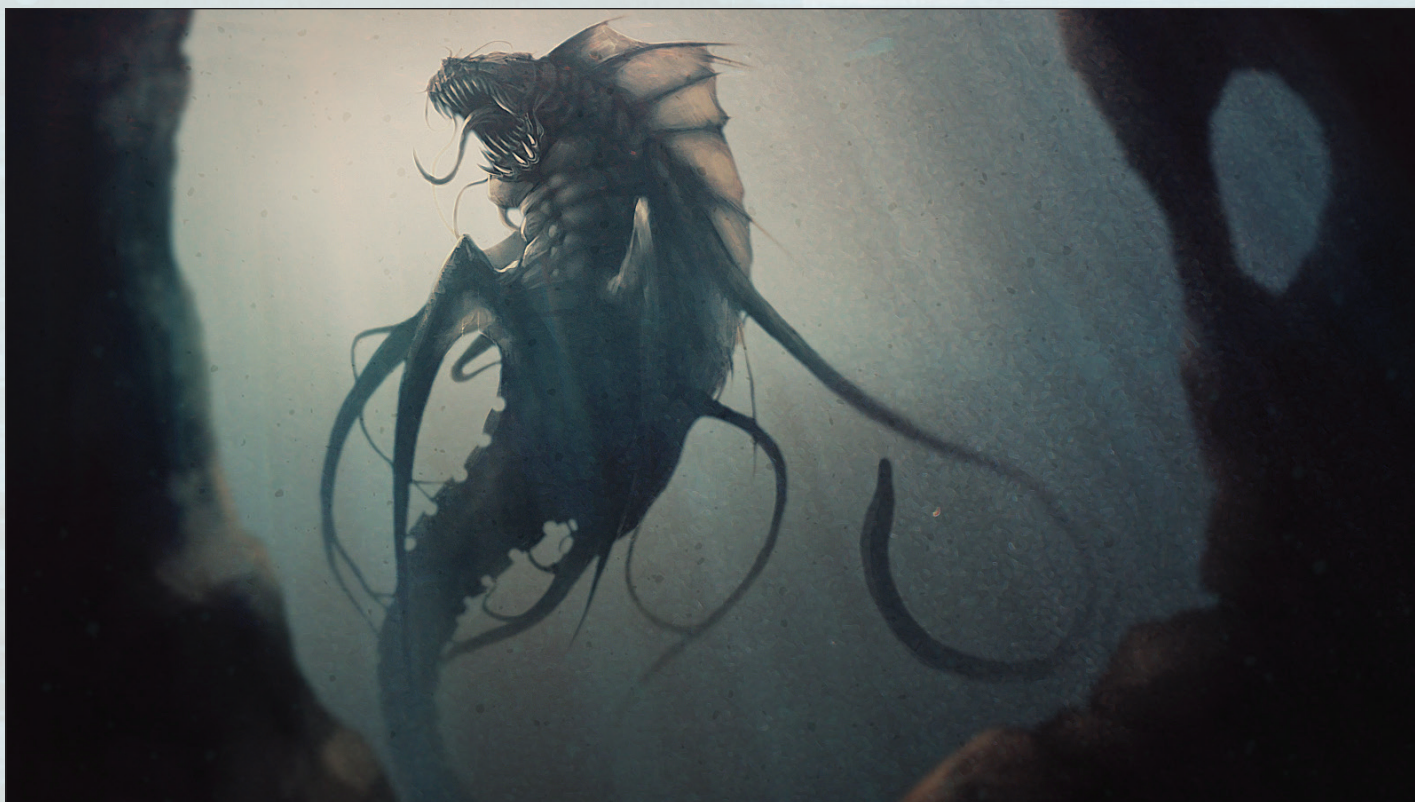
TE2: Aurumvorax Redoubt (CR 11)

A mated pair of aurumvoraxes dug out a burrow at the edge of the central lake where they hide from the toadhemoth.

Rather than through some sort of machinery, a clawed creature seems to have dug out the dark hole here. Though partially obscured by reeds and marsh grasses, it's easy to see the hole is the burrow of some animal.

Creatures: Pulled from their homeworld and placed inside the Terrestrial Enclosure, the aurumvoraxes luckily found something that approximated their home. The original aurumvoraxes the Dzjaeri collected from a distant world have dwindled over the years, and the population is now down to just a single mated pair and their kit. The aurumvoraxes enjoyed being the apex predators of the enclosure until the neh-thalggus accidentally released the toadhemoth from its stasis ten days ago, but after encountering and narrowly escaping the ravenous creature, they give it wide berth and stick to the area around the central lake, which the voracious desert-dwelling toadhemoth avoids. The creatures have burrowed into the soil near the shore of the lake and are currently subsisting on plant life and the remaining fauna (mostly insects and tiny harmless mammals) that come to the lake to drink. With the presence of their one-month-old kit and sudden lack of hunting grounds, the pair reacts with heightened their aggressiveness if anything approaches their home.

AURUMVORAX   CR 9

XP 6,400
N Small magical beast
Init +7; **Senses** blindsight (scent) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE   HP 143

EAC 23; **KAC** 25
Fort +12; **Ref** +12; **Will** +8
Defensive Abilities ferocity; DR 10/piercing or slashing; **Immunities** poison; **Resistances** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.
Melee bite +22 (4d6+16 plus grab; critical 2d6 bleed)

STATISTICS

Str +7; **Dex** +3; **Con** +4; **Int** –4; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +1
Skills Stealth +17

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate plains, hills, or forests
Organization solitary or pair

TACTICS

During Combat The pair has hunted together for years and attack foes from flanking positions. They focus on one creature until they have dropped it and then move on to the next.
Morale The famished beasts fight to the death to defend their lair and their offspring.

Development: The aurumvoraxes are starving since the toadhemoth makes most of the enclosure its territory. Even though they're magical beasts, a PC who offers the creatures food and does not act aggressively can make a DC 28 Survival check to calm the creatures. If a PCs succeeds at a DC 20 Life Science or a DC 25 Sense Motive, they are aware of this fact. Characters who befriend the aurumvoraxes — and can communicate with them — gain allies against the toadhemoth and the neh-thalggus, though they will not leave the Terrestrial Enclosure.

TE3: Toadhemoth Lair (CR 14)

The voracious toadhemoth, the undisputed master of the Terrestrial Enclosure, dwells here among a clutter of fallen trees and trampled vegetation.

The overgrowth thins here, where a dozen trees have been knocked down and lie in a tangled and splintered heap resembling an enormous nest. The cause for the lack of growth becomes apparent as a massive toad-like creature bursts through the shattered trees and foliage, sending splintered wood and plant matter flying in all directions as it launches an attack.

Creature: The Dzjaeri visited a barren alien moon long ago that was inhabited by a strange predator distantly related to the common froghemoth. Dubbed toadhemoths by the Dzjaeri, these desert-dwelling froghemoth offshoots were the apex predators on their small, harsh world even though they were barely larger than a riding dog. The Dzjaeri collected several of the creatures, though all but one died shortly after being introduced to the Terrestrial Enclosure. Shortly after its arrival the creature entered into a dormant state that caused the Dzjaeri to assume that it also might not thrive in its new environment. The Dzjaeri scientists failed to realize that the small creature's metabolism was very slowly acclimating itself to its new, food-rich environment. The toadhemoth "slept" for several hundred years, slowly growing to its current massive size. The Dzjaeri monitored the toadhemoth as it grew — alleviating their concern about the creature's health — and hoped to learn something of its strange physiology. The toadhemoth may have slept for far longer if the neh-thalggu had not awakened it from its hibernation during their exploration of the Terrestrial Enclosure. In the ten days since its awakening, the toadhemoth has ravaged the animal population within the Terrestrial Enclosure. It attacks anything it sees. Its nest lacks the vegetation prevalent in the rest of the enclosure, since it crushed the plants into the ground or destroyed plants that attempted to attack it.

When the neh-thalggus awoke the beast, it immediately snagged and ate one of the completely surprised creatures. The toadhemoth found the creature unappetizing and vomited up its remains a few minutes after choking it down. A PC that succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check notices the neh-thalggu's half-digested remains lying in a tangled heap a few feet from the toadhemoth's nest.

TOADHEMOTH   CR 14

XP 38,400
HP 250 (see *Appendix 2: New Monsters*)

TACTICS

During Combat The toadhemoth begins combat by using its croak ability. Due to its extreme hunger, the monster focuses its attacks on any creatures stunned or staggered by its croak first, hoping for an easy meal.
Morale The toadhemoth fights to the death and pursues fleeing prey relentlessly. It only breaks off from pursuit if its prey enters or crosses the Terrestrial Enclosure's central lake or it loses sight of its prey for more than 10 minutes.

Technology: PC that succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check notices a broken photon pistol partially buried beneath a fallen tree trunk near the center of the toadhemoth's nest. A terrified Dzjaeri security officer dropped this fully charged photon pistol after pursuing the neh-thalggus into the enclosure and suddenly finding himself being chased in turn by a ravenous toadhemoth. The toadhemoth inadvertently trampled the pistol and broke it, but a *make whole* spell will repair it.

TE4: Air and Nutrient Processors (CR 8)

A 12-foot tall rectangular slab of dark gray metal rises from the ground here. Completely devoid of plant growth, it hums and vibrates softly and radiates a small amount of warmth. One of the slab's wider sides has a strange 1-foot-square seam set into it, at about eye level.

Technology: This is one of the Terrestrial Enclosure's four air and nutrient processors. These devices serve two purposes. First, they process and purify the air in the Terrestrial Enclosure, providing essential nutrients and the precise mix of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and oxygen for the plants to thrive. Secondly, the devices collect animal and plant waste through the soil and turn it into the nutritious food paste that sustains the hibernating Dzjaeri passengers and crew and serves as the primary food source for the active Dzjaeri crew. The air and nutrient processor is 12 feet tall, 3 feet wide and 6 inches thick. Another eight feet of the device is buried under the ground, and radiating from it is a root-like array of thick wire conduits, rotating sensor modules, specimen gathering tubes, and steel piping that connects each of the other air and nutrient processors as well as critical biological processing systems deeper in the heart of the *Ardent Hope*.

Thanks to some deliberate sabotage by the neh-thalggu, all four of the air and nutrient processors no longer work. The Dzjaeri can live with stale air (the *Ardent Hope* is equipped with basic air-scrubbing systems), but more troubling to them are the broken nutrient processors. With the nutrient processors offline, the Dzjaeri face an ever-dwindling supply of food stores and the lives of the passengers and crew in cryogenic hibernation face slow starvation.

When the PCs reach the air and nutrient processor, Sub-Commander Orem (who has been monitoring their progress via comms) is able to walk the PCs through the process of repairing the processor if they require assistance. The first step is using the sonic wrench to open the control panel, which is hidden behind the rectangular seam in the face of the metal slab. Without Orem's instructions, finding the panel requires a successful DC 27 Perception check. When the control panel opens, the PCs will have access to dozens of buttons, levers, and multi-colored sensor pads.

Reactivating an Air and Nutrient Processor: A PC must use the sonic wrench to reactivate an air and nutrient processor. The task requires three DC 29 Engineering checks. Each check requires 1 minute of uninterrupted work to complete, whether the check is a success or failure. If none of the PCs have ranks in Engineering, a PC can substitute three successful DC 20 Intelligence checks, though each Intelligence check requires 10 minutes of uninterrupted work, whether the check is a success or failure.

Hazard: If a PC fails a check to reactivate an air and nutrient processor by 5 or more, she accidentally triggers a dangerous backlash of sonic and electrical energy. If this happens, all creatures within 10 feet of the air and nutrient processor must succeed at a DC 18 Reflex save or take 8d12 points of damage (half of this is electricity damage and half is sonic damage).

Development: When the PCs successfully reactivate an air and nutrient processor, read the following:

The dark gray metal slab suddenly shimmers with a silvery glow as its humming and vibrations intensify. A moment later, a steady stream of mist begins to leak from tiny pores along the top of the metal slab. The mist drifts high and quickly fades into the air

The mist is actually a precise mix of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and oxygen, intended to nourish the plants inside the Terrestrial Enclosure, as the air and nutrient processor attempts to heal any biological damage inflicted on the Terrestrial Enclosure's plant life due to being offline for the past few days. Though the gases are not harmful, the special mixture unintentionally mimics the pheromones of the toadhemoth (area **TE3**). If the PCs have not yet killed the monstrous creature, the toadhemoth is roused by the release of these gases and arrives 1d6 minutes later. Stimulated by the pheromone-like scent, the toadhemoth attacks any creature it encounters with exceptionally savagery and receives a +4 bonus to all attack and damage rolls for the duration of the encounter. This encounter occurs each time the PCs reactivate one of the air and nutrient processors, unless they slay the toadhemoth.
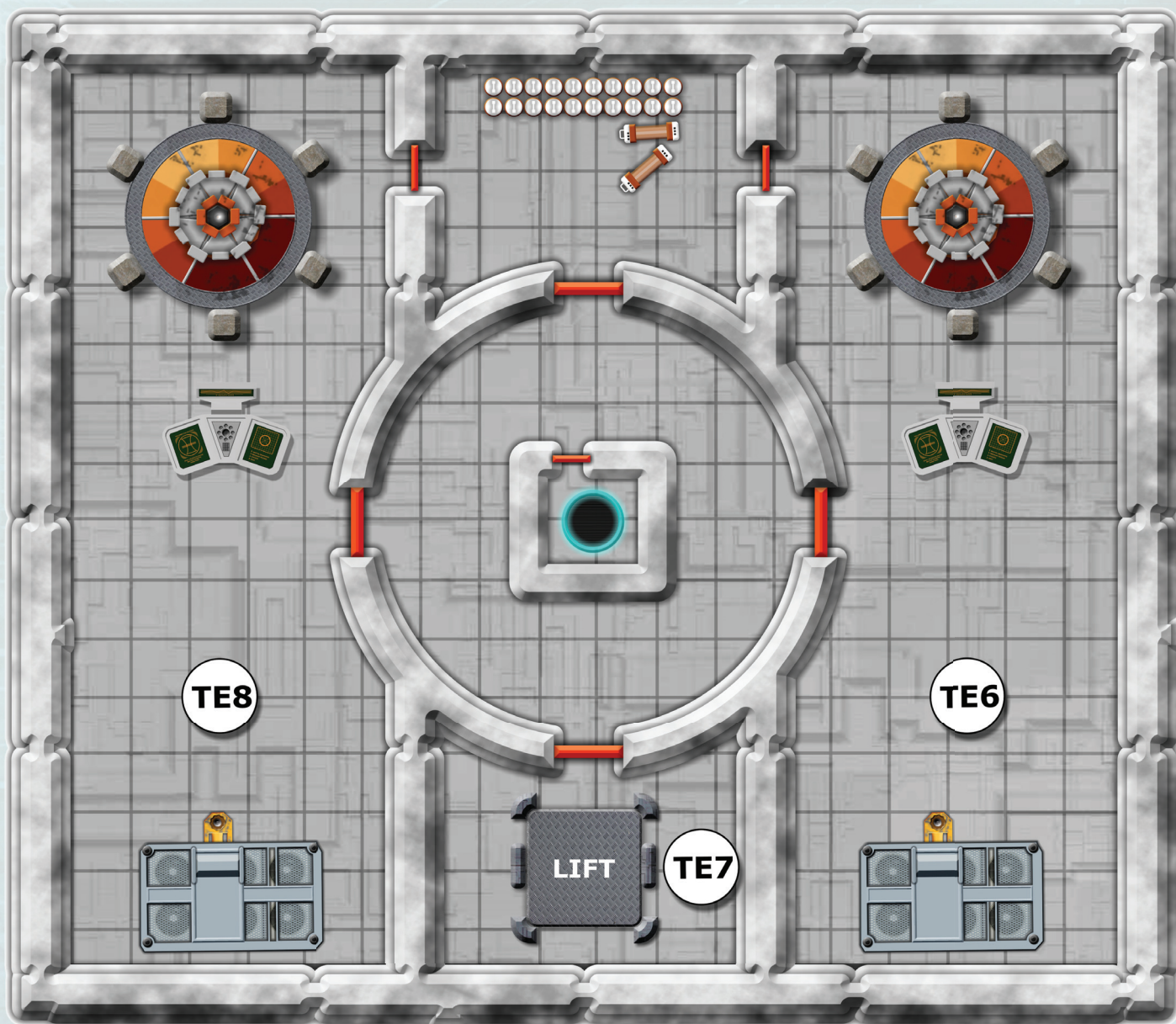
TERRESTRIAL ENCLOSURE: 2

TE5: The Metal Island

A square island made of dull gray metal sits in the middle of the central lake. It is completely devoid of plant life.

The artificial island in the middle of the lake rises two feet above the waterline. An access hatch in the center of the island leads to the Environmental Control Center below (areas **TE6**, **TE7**, and **TE8**). A successful DC 30 Perception check notices the hatch from the far shore of the central lake, though PCs stepping foot on the island or flying above the lake spot it automatically. Beyond it is a 5-foot diameter circular shaft with metal ladder rungs set into the wall. The shaft descends 70 feet to the Environmental Control Center chambers.

At the bottom of the shaft is a 10-foot square chamber that opens into the center of a 40-foot diameter circular chamber. There are dozens of control panels and view screens set along the curved walls of the larger outer chamber, which were once used to maintain the environment in the Terrestrial Enclosure. Conduits of wires lead along the ceiling and attach to the reactors in the adjacent rooms.

The unmarked room to the north (opposite area **TE7**) holds fuel cells for the reactors and a pile of discarded strips of metal. A PC that succeeds on a DC 38 Engineering check identifies the discarded metal as shielding for Dzjaeri circuitry, meant to provide a barrier between dangerous live wiring and living beings. If the PCs ask Sub-Commander Orem about the discarded metal, he identifies it as protective shielding right away. The neh-thalggus removed the metal shielding from the circuitry around the damaged Lift in area **TE7**, in order to create the trap described there.

TE6: Reactor-1 (CR 12)

The northern end of this long chamber is dominated by huge cylindrical device made of blue-black steel. The device stands nearly fifteen feet tall and is roughly twenty feet in diameter. Crackling arcs of blue-white and crimson energy dance between the six arm-like appendages radiating from the device. Multiple bands of quickly rotating steel discs whirl in a constant circle near the top of the device, where the strange energy coalesces and intensifies a thousand fold. Aside from the cracking bands of energy and the whisper-like rush of the spinning steel discs, the device is surprisingly quiet.

The reactor in this room hums with life. An array of wires feed from the device up to the ceiling in large bundles that feed through the walls and ceiling. A desk rests against the wall opposite the reactor. Reactor-1 regulates the heat, the weather, and the day/night cycle inside the Terrestrial Enclosure.

Creatures: Four neh-thalggus hole up here while they plan a course of action for destroying the crew and taking over the *Ardent Hope*. After their initial assault, the eight neh-thalggus killed several Dzjaeri, including a science officer, whose brain was consumed by one of the creatures. The neh-thalggus evaded Dzjaeri pursuers and escaped into the Terrestrial Enclosure. They avoided the mated pair of aurumvoraxes lairing near the central lake. However, one member of their group fell to the voracious toadhemoth after waking it from its hibernation. The seven remaining creatures fled to the metal island in the middle of the lake (area **TE5**), found the hatch leading below, and decided to risk that rather than face an armed contingent of Dzjaeri or wait for the toadhemoth to pick them off one-by-one.

Though the neh-thalggu each carry a full number of brains in the blister-like growths on their bodies, they only have one Dzjaeri brain, and since the

brain belonged to a science officer with only a rudimentary understanding of engineering systems, they have had trouble working out the *Ardent Hope's* engineering systems. However, after days of trial and error, the creature possessing the Dzjaeri-brain was able to instruct the others on how to sabotage the air and nutrient processors and the reactor.

NEH-THALGGUS (4)   CR 8

XP 4,800
HP 125 (see page 9)

TACTICS

Before Combat If the neh-thalggus are aware of the PCs arrival, they use *polymorph*^{AA} to appear as Dzjaeri in an attempt to peacefully direct the PCs out of the Environmental Controls Center. If the PCs see through this ruse, the neh-thalggus attack.

During Combat The neh-thalggus attempt to decisively win combat and use their most powerful spell-like abilities to destroy their opponents.

Morale The neh-thalggus fight to the death, since they expect no mercy from the Dzjaeri or the PCs.

Development: The four neh-thalggus are annoyed that their sabotage efforts have failed to completely disrupt the biological systems keeping the Dzjaeri alive. When the PCs interrupt them, the creatures have just come to the decision to sabotage the

reactor in this chamber as well, in order to cripple the *Ardent Hope's* biological systems once and for all. If the neh-thalggus manage to deactivate this second reactor, the *Ardent Hope* will cease production of the nutrient paste the Dzjaeri depend on for food immediately. Additionally, biological support systems will cease functioning for all of the Dzjaeri in cryogenic hibernation, resulting in the deaths of all hibernating passengers and crew in three days. The neh-thalggus require two hours of uninterrupted work to successfully sabotage the reactor.

Technology: A functioning computer workstation built into the desk flashes with strange Dzjaeri symbols that display the status of this room's reactor and the devices that it feeds. If Sub-Commander Orem is consulted and shown the read-out on the workstation's monitor via comms, he can confirm this reactor is functioning perfectly.

TE7: Service Lift (CR 12)

This small room is dominated by a 12-foot square pit in the middle of the floor that drops well out of sight. About a foot or so below the pit's rim, a net-like barrier of sparking wires and crackling circuitry blocks access to the otherwise open shaft.

This non-functioning Lift is similar to the one that traverses the Command Decks (though this Lift has a square-shaped shaft and the Lift that traverses the Command Deck has a circular Lift shaft), and it provides a connection to the Passenger Deck (area **P1**) and the Engineering Deck (area **E2**). The neh-thalggus sent three of their number down the Lift shaft to explore the rest of the ship, while the other four remained behind to sabotage the reactors and air and nutrient processors. See area **P2A** on the Passenger Deck for the fate of the three neh-thalggus explorers.

Trap: When the three neh-thalggus failed to return at their appointed time, the remaining four neh-thalggus (see area **TE6**) succumbed to paranoia and came to believe the Dzjaeri were responsible for their companions' recapture or deaths. Unable to guard all of the access points to the Environmental Control Center, the creatures removed the metal shielding to expose the circuitry here and used it to create a trap. Any creature moving to within 5 feet of the edge of the Lift shaft becomes a conductor for the electrical energy from the live circuitry. The exposed circuitry trap is connected to the reactor in area TE6, so it will not run out of charges as long as Reactor-1 continues to function.

35

Exposed Circuitry   CR 12

XP 19,200
Type technological; **Perception** DC 5; **Disable**
   Engineering DC 33

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity; **Reset** automatic (after 1
   round)
Effect Creatures moving within 5 feet of the Lift
   shaft's edge are struck by an electrical arc
   (12d12 damage); **Reflex** DC 21 for half.

TE8: Reactor-2 (CR 10)

This room is similar in appearance to **TE6**. However, the computer workstation's console screen has been smashed and the reactor is dark and quiet. Scorch marks surround the reactor, as it vented radioactive fuel while the neh-thalggu sabotaged it. The neh-thalggus anticipated the radiation discharge and were able to avoid injury. A PC that succeeds at a DC 30 Physical Science check identifies the scorch marks as radioactive discharge.

Technology: When the PCs enter this chamber, Sub-Commander Orem (who is viewing their progress via comms) begins to talk the PC holding the sonic wrench through the process of reactivating the reactor.

Reactivating the Reactor: A PC must use the sonic wrench to reactivate Reactor-2. The task requires two consecutive DC 30 Engineering checks. Each check requires 10 minutes of uninterrupted work to complete, whether the check is a success or failure. If none of the PCs have ranks in those skills, a PC can substitute a single successful DC 20 Intelligence check, though each Intelligence check requires one hour of uninterrupted work, whether the check is a success or failure.

Hazard: If a PC fails a check to reactivate Reactor-2 by 5 or more, they accidentally release a High amount of radiation (see *Starfinder Core Rulebook* 403) from the reactor. When the radiation leaks, the *Ardent Hope's* scrubbing systems automatically activate and the door to **TE8** slams shut and locks (hardness 20, hp 30, break DC 28, Engineering DC 32) — anyone standing in the doorway must succeed at a DC 19 Reflex save or be struck by the door and take 5d12 points of bludgeoning damage. A computerized voice then emanates from the reactor, and begins to repeat the following (in Dzjaeri): "Danger. Lethal levels of radiation

detected. Scrubbing systems activated." The radiation immediately fills area **TE8**, but does not seep further into the Environmental Control Center. The radiation persists for 5 minutes, until the *Ardent Hope's* microscopic radiation-scrubbing nanites finish cleaning the chamber. After the nanites eliminate the radiation, the voice says the following (again, in Dzjaeri): "Radiation levels have returned to normal. Please report to the Medical Bay at your earliest convenience for a complete physical diagnostic."

   Radiation Leak Hazard: Radiation Level High; Save Fort DC 22 (see *Starfinder Core Rulebook* 403).

CONCLUDING PART TWO

When the PCs successfully reactivate Reactor-2 it instantly stirs to life and begins to function like the reactor in area **TE6**. Sub-Commander Orem thanks the PCs over comms, and then asks if they have accounted for all eight of the escaped neh-thalggus. However, before they can respond, a series of violent explosions rock the *Ardent Hope*. Proceed immediately with the *Tremors and Explosions* event in **Part Three.**
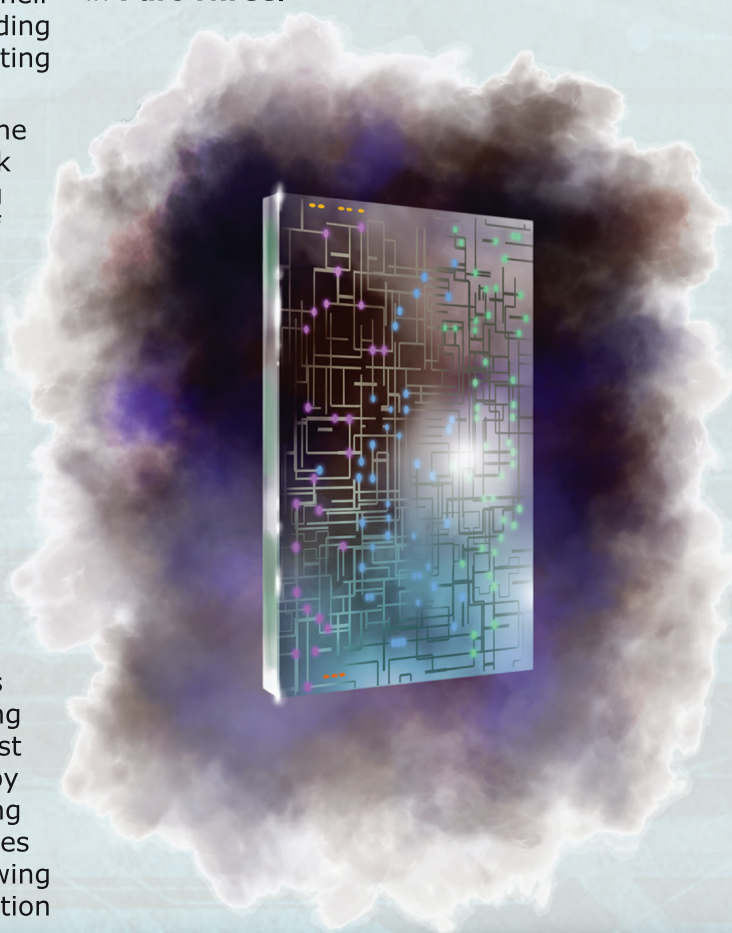
PART THREE

In Part Three, the PCs venture into the lower decks of the *Ardent Hope* as they race against time to save the ship from self-destructing. After saving the ship, the PCs find evidence that a shape-shifting alien horror even more dangerous than the escaped brain-eaters is responsible for the *stardrive*'s sabotage and now stalks the *Ardent Hope's* labyrinthine corridors. The PCs must unmask and destroy this alien menace to not only save the Dzjaeri, but to also prevent the alien multiplying and spreading throughout the entire system. Failure could bring an apocalyptic disaster to countless worlds.

EVENT: TREMORS AND EXPLOSIONS

Suddenly, the entire world lurches violently as a series of explosions echo throughout the ship. Distant alarms sound as the ship continues to rock and vibrate spasmodically.

Far below the PCs on the Engineering Deck, the recently revived qomok has initiated the self-destruct sequence for the *Ardent Hope's* dark matter fusion *stardrive* (see area **E8** for additional details). The *Ardent Hope* shudders violently for several seconds. All creatures aboard the *Ardent Hope* take 6d12 points of nonlethal bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone and stunned for 1 round. A successful DC 21 Reflex save reduces this damage by half and eliminates the stunned effect. The explosions subside after a few seconds. However, every few minutes the *Ardent Hope* continues to suffer from small tremors that last for five to ten seconds. None of these tremors are strong enough to knock the PCs prone or injure them, but they are unnerving.

PCs in view of one of the *Ardent Hope's* external viewports can see that the lower portion of the vessel is now emitting a massive jet of violet-white energy trailing miles into outer-space. If the PCs do not report this to the Dzjaeri, a somewhat battered and beleaguered Sub-Commander Orem soon contacts them via comms to explain that an unknown entity has initiated the self-destruct sequence on the *Ardent Hope's stardrive* engine. If the sequence is not shut down, the *stardrive* — the *Ardent Hope's* primary power source will permanently fail and the *Ardent Hope's* systems will soon follow, dooming everyone on board. Sub-Commander Orem beseeches the PCs to deactivate the self-destruct sequence, as the Dzjaeri have no safe means of descending the

non-functioning Lift shaft and — more importantly — time is of the essence.

The sub-commander explains that the PCs have two hours to descend to the Engineering Deck, gain access to the Main Reactor Control Center (area **E8**), and deactivate the *stardrive*'s self-destruct sequence. The sub-commander will help the PCs navigate their way to the Main Reactor Control Center chamber and will walk them through the process of interfacing with the *stardrive*'s main computer and deactivating the self-destruct sequence. If the PCs seem hesitant or outright refuse, the sub-commander reminds them that thousands of lives are in their hands. If that doesn't work, he reminds them that if the *stardrive* self-destructs, they won't be able to sell it later.

THE DESCENT

The PCs have two options to reach the Engineering Deck. They can use magic or other means to descend the Lift shaft at area **TE7** or the Lift shaft that links the Command Decks with the lower decks. If Sub-Commander Orem is consulted, he beseeches the PCs to take the most expedient route — the functioning Lift in area **TE7**. The Lift shaft at area **TE7** descends 1,030 feet to the Passenger Deck (arriving in area **P1**) and another 400 feet to the Engineering Deck (arriving in area **E2**). The Lift shaft on the Command Deck descends 1,100 to the Passenger Deck (arriving in area **P5**) and another 400 feet to the Engineering Deck (arriving in area **E7**).

PASSENGER DECK

Though the PCs are likely to bypass the Passenger Deck on their initial descent, they might visit here after they deactivate the self-destruct sequence. The Passenger Deck is located 1,100 feet below the Command Decks and 1,030 feet below the Environmental Control Center. The bulk of the Passenger Deck holds the remaining population of Dzjaeri who fled their homeworld's destruction 5,300 years ago. These Dzjaeri have no appreciable skills for maintaining or piloting the ship, so they have spent the last 5,300 years in cryogenic hibernation.

As noted in the *Ardent Hope Room Descriptions* section, with the exception of the Cryogenic Chamber (area **P5**), the Passenger Deck chambers are unlit. Additionally, because the Dzjaeri powered down this deck, repurposed critical wiring and electronics, and diverted most of the remaining power to the Command Decks centuries ago, none

of the lighting panels or computer workstations on this deck functions.

P1: Common Area

This large octagonal chamber contains tables, benches, counters, and a dozen or so food dispensers, similar to the ones on the Command Deck above. The entire room is dark and silent.

This unlit large area was designed as a central meeting place for the Dzjaeri passengers. Tables, benches, and a large galley storage area containing vegetarian nutrient cubes for the residents take up the majority of the space in the common area, but the engineers also left some open space to allow the Dzjaeri to engage in physical activity. The two small rooms to the south are both refreshers, similar in design to area **C10**. Though the room remains unlit, the showers and toilets function just like the ones described in area **C10**.

A PC that succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check notices a few drops of recently dried dark blood around the Lift shaft and a few more blood stains scattered across the middle of the chamber. This blood belongs to the wounded neh-thalggus hiding in the abandoned Dzjaeri apartments who fled through this chamber after their disastrous encounter with the neh-thalggu on the Engineering Deck a day ago. Upon noticing the blood, a PC can track the neh-thalggus to their hideout (area **P2A**) with a successful DC 21 Survival skill check.

Technology: All of the technological devices — including the computer workstations and the food dispensers standing in the southeast section of the chamber — were stripped of most of the wiring and components ages ago and no longer function. The functioning Lift in the middle of the room connects to the Environmental Control Center 1,030 feet above or the Engineering Deck 400 feet below.

P2: Apartments

This large odd-shaped chamber has a 40-foot high ceiling. A dozen or so columns made of steel and glass, and stretching from floor to ceiling, lines the middle of the chamber. Upon closer examination, each column is actually a four-story structure containing windows and doors. The columns each have a spiral staircase providing access to all four floors.

Furnished with only essential items, such as floor mats and light bedding, these four-story buildings were designed as living quarters for the Dzjaeri passengers. Each floor was designed to accommodate up to three Dzjaeri families.

Technology: Like most of the other chambers on this deck, none of the apartments have functioning lighting and were stripped long ago of any useful technological trappings.

P2A: Neh-thalggu Hideout (CR 14)

Unlike the other apartments, this apartment reeks of blood and other unidentifiable smells.

From outside appearances, this apartment is the same as all the others. However, the bottom floor apartment is covered in blood (that of the neh-thalggu). After the neh-thalggus' disastrous battle with the qomok, they retreated to this apartment to recover from the fight.

Creatures: The three neh-thalggus charged with exploring the *Ardent Hope's* lower decks ventured to the Passenger Deck first. Led by the neh-thalggu that had consumed a Dzjaeri science officer's mind during their initial attack, the neh-thalggus explored this deck and soon discovered the Cryogenic Chamber (area **P5**). Figuring that the thousands of frozen humanoids posed no threat, the trio moved on to Engineering Deck, where they found engineering equipment and other devices beyond their comprehension. Not wanting to risk destroying themselves by tampering with their finds, they carefully continued their exploration of the *Ardent Hope* and eventually entered the Machine and Robot Storage Chamber (area **E1**). This chamber intrigued the neh-thalggu, for a large section of the northwest corner of the room was obliterated long ago and is now a gaping hole that leads directly into outer-space. The hull breach occurred centuries ago, the result of a missile attack launched from an Empire of the Void starship as the *Ardent Hope* fled the destruction of the Dzjaeri homeworld. Though the Dzjaeri engineers were unable to repair the massive hull breach, they used their ultra-advanced technology to construct a force field barrier that now prevents the atmosphere from the *Ardent Hope* from leaking away.

As the clever and exceptionally perceptive neh-thalggu studied the force field and the hull breach they noticed something the Dzjaeri engineers failed to spot centuries ago. Wedged into the *Ardent Hope's* asteroid hull, just a few feet beyond the hull breach, was a strange pod-like object that blended in almost perfectly with the asteroid hull's rocky

PASSENGER DECK

500 Feet

1 Square = 10 Feet

P2

P2a

P1

P3

P4

P5

LIFT
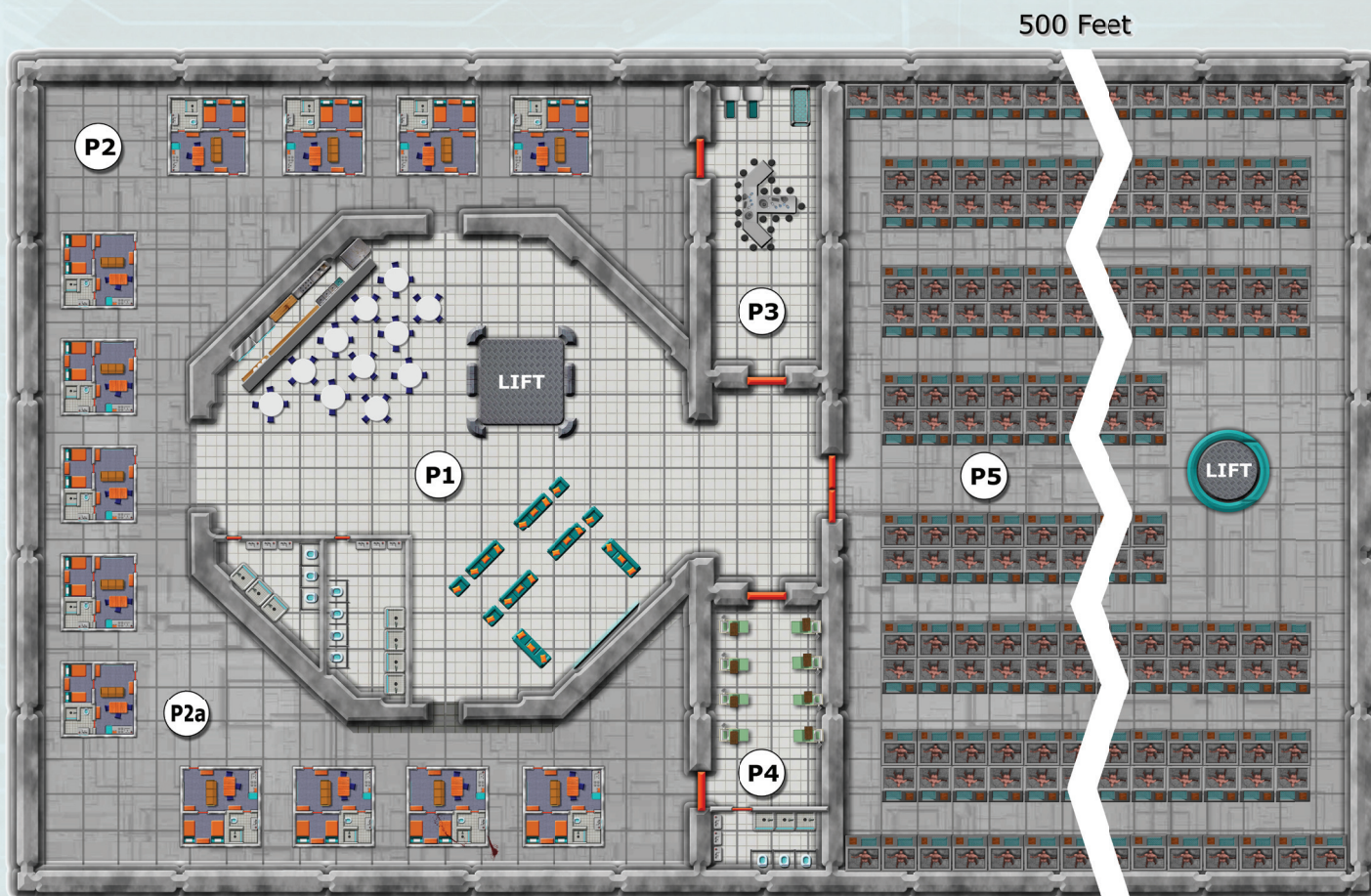
LIFT

surface. Insatiably curious, the neh-thalggu decided to extract and study the pod. One of the creatures used its *life bubble* spell to survive in the vacuum of space long enough to extract the pod from the *Ardent Hope's* hull. The neh-thalggu then brought the pod aboard the ship.

Upon closer examination, the "pod" turned out to be a bizarre, multi-limbed alien creature that had squeezed its form into a ball in its attempt (as the neh-thalggu surmised) to survive the vacuum of deep space. After their examination of the alien creature, the neh-thalggu concluded the strange hitchhiker was long dead, and neither a threat nor of any use to them. So, they left it behind and continued their exploration of the Engineering Deck.

Three hours later, the qomok emerged from its death-like state of hibernation, tracked the neh-thalggus to the Main Reactor Control Center (area **E8**), and attacked them. The melee was brief and bloody. The qomok quickly killed one neh-thalggu and managed to infect another with its alien infection. The two surviving neh-thalggus (the infected neh-thalggu and the uninfected neh-thalggu) panicked and fled to the Passenger Deck.

The neh-thalggus are now in hiding on the third floor of this apartment, nursing their wounds. They have not fully healed (as indicated by their hit points in the statistics below), so they do not want to leave and risk another encounter with the qomok. The uninfected neh-thalggu has not noticed that its companion has fallen victim to the qomok's alien infection and is very close to transforming into a new qomok. In fact, only moments before the PCs encounter the creatures, the infected neh-thalggu succumbs to the qomok's alien infection. It the neh-thalggu and the qomok do not notice the PCs' approach, the PCs might witness the qomok's transformation or its attack on the uninfected neh-thalggu.

Neh-thalggu   CR 8

XP 4,800
HP 125 (now 88) (see page 9)

TACTICS

During Combat The neh-thalggu only fights if cornered. It fights to the death, using its most powerful spells to defend itself.

Morale The neh-thalggu becomes terror-stricken when its companion transforms into a qomok and tries to flee as soon as possible. The creature makes its way to the Cryogenic Chamber (area **P5**), where it makes its final stand. Unless coerced by magic, the neh-thalggu prefers death over cooperating or allying with the PCs.

Qomok   CR 15

XP 51,200
HP 275 (see *Appendix 2: New Monsters*)

TACTICS

During Combat During the first round of combat, the newly spawned qomok uses a full-round action to grotesquely transform its body until it only vaguely resembles a neh-thalggu. It uses its alter shape ability to sprout multiple, insect-like legs, an assortment of horns and body spikes, numerous half-formed animal and humanoid faces, and a great misshapen head possessing the worst aspects of a wolf and a reptile. This immediately triggers its frightful presence ability. The qomok attacks savagely and indiscriminately at any creature within reach and tries to attack a new target each round, hoping to infect as any creatures as possible. When it attacks, it remains in its strange hybrid form as it uses a swift action each round to generate a succession of clawed limbs, maws, or tentacles a different special attack form.

Morale The newly formed qomok shares the memories and experiences of its "parent" qomok (and the long line of qomoks that spawned it) and believes that by fighting aggressively it buys the parent qomok enough time to advance its goal of crashing the *Ardent Hope* into the surrounding asteroids. The qomok fights to the death, trying to kill or infect as many creatures as possible.
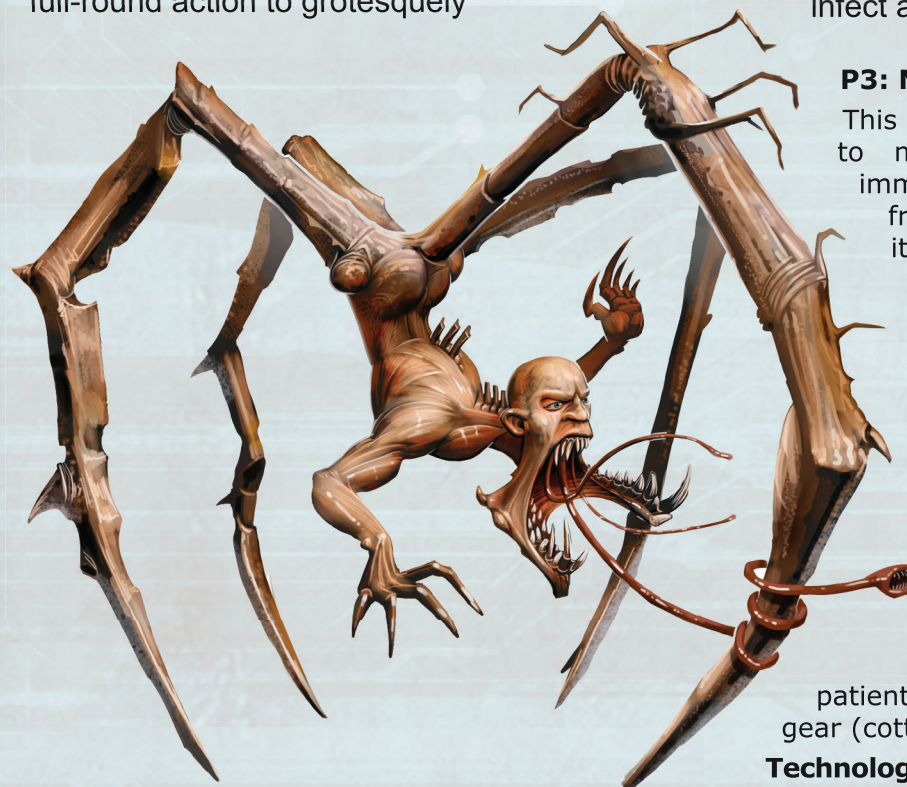
P3: Medical Bay

This secondary medical bay was designed to monitor the health of passengers immediately after they are awakened from cryogenic hibernation. However, its systems were taken offline and its power was diverted to the Medical Bay (area **C12**) on the Command Decks shortly after the *Ardent Hope* fell dormant in the asteroid field 300 years ago. The room contains a single offline medical couch, an offline computer workstation, and a used regeneration table that has obviously had large components removed. The walls are lined with lockers and various medical cabinets, all of which are mostly empty except for mundane items like surgical masks, patient robes, and assorted nontechnical gear (cotton swabs, tongue depressors, etc.).

Technology: In their haste to strip this room of useful medical gear, the Dzjaeri overlooked 2 *mk 3*

serums of healing and a *serum of enhancement (scientist)*. If the PCs search the medical cabinets, a successful DC 15 Perception check locates these items.

P4: Recuperation Room

This chamber was designed to provide a place for recently revived passengers to rest and recuperate from the ordeal of being cryogenically frozen. Patients typically remained here for the first week or two after emerging from cryogenic hibernation, where their health was monitored by medical staff and they received intravenous nourishment and other supplemental care. There are eight offline medical couches here, their components stripped and repurposed centuries ago to keep important systems on the Command Decks functioning. The room to the south contains functioning wash basins and toilets.

P5: Cryogenic Chamber

This massive, mist-shrouded chamber is very cold and hums with mechanical life. Rows upon rows of strange glass and metal containers fill the chamber, each containing a single sleeping humanoid. A thick layer of rime coats everything in this room, including the many pipes and flexible tubing overhead that connects to each of the containers.

The room is kept at a steady temperature of 20° F (see rules for Cold Dangers in Chapter 11 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*). A dozen insulated cold-weather jumpsuits (equivalent to space suits) hang from the wall next to the room's entrance, which the PCs can don if they intend to spend more than an hour here. A thin layer of rime covers everything here and the frigid, misty air somewhat obscures sight, including darkvision. A creature within 10 feet can see normally, creatures 10 to 15 feet away have concealment (attacks have a 20% miss chance), and creatures farther than 15 feet away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker can't use sight to locate the target). A moderate wind (11+ mph) disperses the mist immediately, though it returns in 1d4+1 rounds.

This large warehouse-like room holds the passengers of the *Ardent Hope* in thousands of pods stacked atop one another all the way up to the ceiling (40 feet above). There are 10,000 pods here, though the Dzjaeri only had 8,722 passengers when they fell into orbit in the asteroid field three centuries ago. Unfortunately, that number was recently been reduced to 8,720.

A little over a day ago, shortly after the trio of exploring neh-thalggus discovered and released the hibernating qomok (as described in areas **P2A** and **E1**), the qomok made its way here. The creature immediately extracted a hibernating Dzjaeri named Neryan and infected the hapless young man with its alien infection (see area **E7** for the Neryan's fate). The qomok then studied the sleeping humanoids until it found the Dzjaeri it wanted: Tezelle, one of the original designers of the *Ardent Hope.* Instead of infecting Tezelle to create another of its kind, the qomok extracted the sleeping woman from her pod, reduced her body to a soupy sludge with its feeding tendril, and then absorbed and completely assimilated her. Armed with Tezelle's knowledge of the *Ardent Hope's* engineering systems, the qomok assumed her form and returned to the Engineering Deck. Once there, the creature initiated the self-destruct sequence on the *Ardent Hope's stardrive* (triggering the *Tremors and Explosions* event encounter) before making its way to the Command Decks to deal with the active Dzjaeri crew.

PCs searching the chamber easily spot the two smashed open stasis pods, both with their occupants missing. One of the pods (Tezelle's) has a large rime-covered blood-red stain on the floor in front of the smashed pod. This is where the qomok assimilated the chief engineer. A successful DC 30 Medicine check recognizes the stain as a mix of liquefied human blood, flesh, bones, and viscera, though how the human dissolved into such a ghastly state remains a mystery.
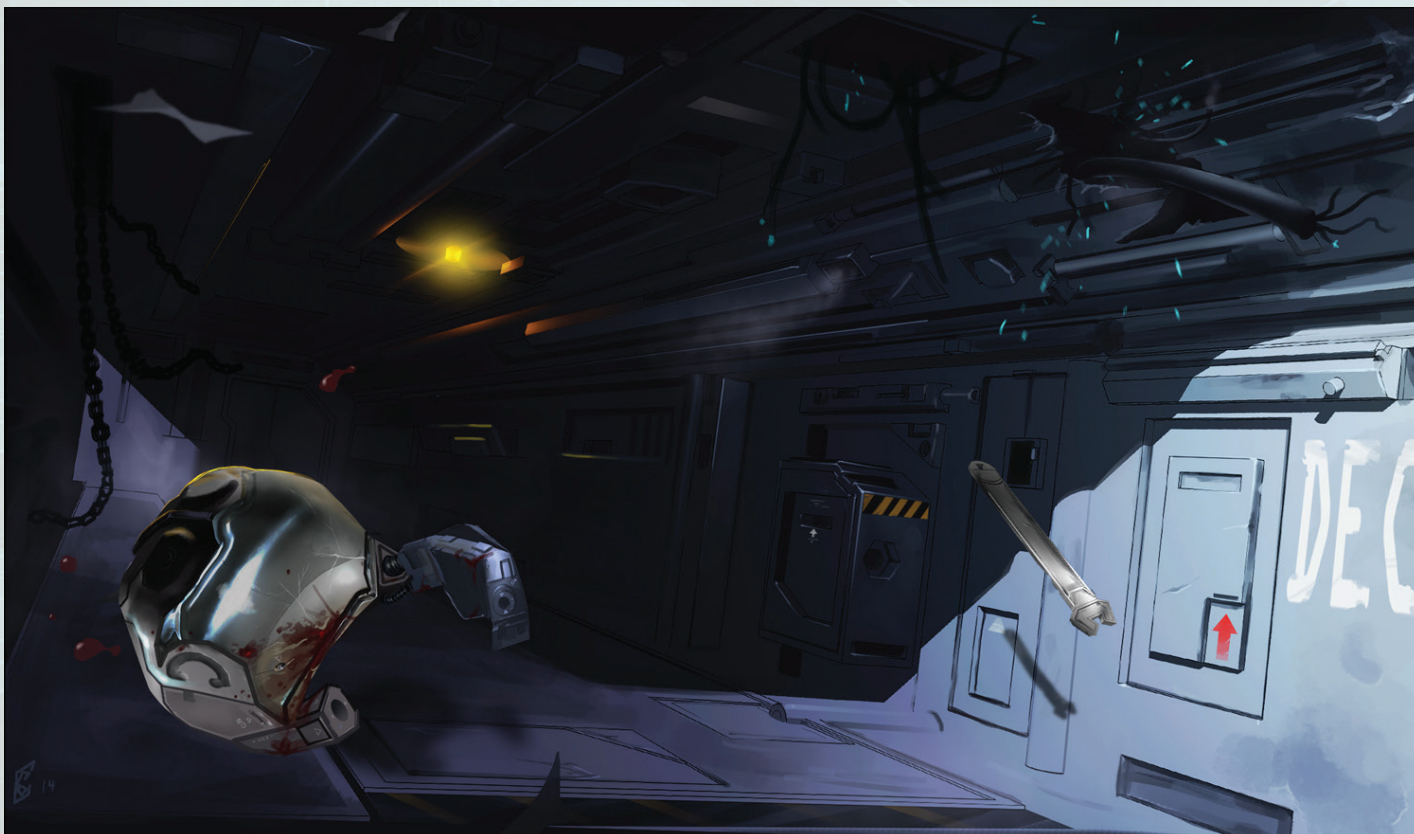
Technology: Simple readouts on a pod display the name and status of the inhabitant. See the *Waking the Dzjaeri* sidebar for additional information on the Dzjaeri cryogenic hibernation process. A Lift access at the eastern end of the chamber ascends 1,100 feet to the Science Lab Subdeck (area **C13**) and descends 400 feet to the Engineering Deck (area **E7**).

ENGINEERING DECK

The Engineering Deck lies in the belly of the ship, another 400 feet below the Passenger Deck. This deck was designed to contain all of the *Ardent Hope's* power distribution, production lab, and navigational systems, all powered by an immense dark matter fusion reactor, the Dzjaeri *stardrive*. This deck suffered extensive damage during its escape from Empire of the Void starships 5,300 years ago. Many of the walls are blackened, melted, or warped in some way and show signs of being repaired or shorn up by Dzjaeri engineers long ago. These damaged areas are even more profound in the areas in which the *Ardent Hope's* hull was breached and then repaired (areas **E1**, **E2**, **E5**, and **E7**, with area **E1** featuring the worst breach). There is no lighting on this deck unless otherwise noted.

The entire deck vibrates and thrums with the loud rumbling sound of the *stardrive* (which is embedded in the *Ardent Hope's* asteroid hull a few dozen feet below this deck) and various heavy machines and plasma turbines. All of the doors on this level (unless otherwise indicated) are closed and unpowered.

E1: Machine Fuel/ Robot Storage and Hull Breach

A huge section of the northwest corner of this room was destroyed long ago, leaving a huge rent that reveals the inky black void of outer space beyond. A shimmering haze of pale blue energy stands as a barrier between the hole and the rest of the room.

Note: If the PCs have not yet deactivated the self-destruct sequence on the *Ardent Hope's stardrive*, they can see a long jet of violet-white energy emitting from the rear of the *Ardent Hope* that trails miles into outer-space.

The hull breach occurred 5,300 years ago; the result of a missile attack launched from an Empire of the Void starship as the *Ardent Hope* fled the destruction of the Dzjaeri homeworld. Though the Dzjaeri engineers were unable to seal the massive hull breach, they used their technology to construct a

force field barrier that now prevents the atmosphere from the *Ardent Hope* from leaking away. The force field has no effect on living or inanimate matter, and a living being can easily pass through the barrier without harm — though this exposes the creature to the cold vacuum of outer-space (immediately subjecting the creature to suffocation and the intense cold and pressure of the hard vacuum of deep space).

Hazard: Unprotected creatures that pass through the force field are immediately exposed to the vacuum of space (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 394).

Technology: Once a storage area and workshop for maintaining the *Ardent Hope's* robots, all of the robots, equipment, and tools kept here were sucked into space when the hull breach occurred. Only a few items bolted to the floor remain. To the south stand nine empty robot storage bins, resembling eight-foot tall, six-foot-diameter door-less cages bolted to the floor.

To the northeast stand 16 four-foot-tall, one-foot-diameter, liquid-filled fuel drums, which have sat here unused since the destruction of the Engineering Lab (area **E2**) centuries ago. Each drum weighs 500 pounds. To open a fuel drum, a creature must spend a full-round action turning the drum's valves, which requires a successful DC 10 Strength check. Once a fuel drum is opened or otherwise breached (each drum has hardness 10, hit points 10, break DC 25) the fuel automatically disperses and fills a 30-foot radius area with a burning napalm-like substance that continues to burn for 1d6+4 rounds. Creatures and organic material caught in the area take 10d12 points of fire damage each round (Reflex DC 19 for half).

E2: Engineering Lab

This large odd-shaped chamber looks like it once suffered major damage. The floors, walls, and ceiling are rent and melted in places. Sections of the floor and walls have had newer sections of metal welded over them in an effort to patch what must have been the effects of a devastating attack. The northern half of the room is cast in a strange blue-white glow, emanating from a strange device on the north wall.

Before the *Ardent Hope* suffered damage during its escape from the Dzjaeri homeworld centuries ago, this chamber served as an important workshop and laboratory that functioned as a combined synthesis bay and tech workshop (*Starfinder Core Rulebook 300)*. However, this chamber was the recipient of several direct hits from devastating Empire of the Void weapons, which resulted in horrific damage. After the *Ardent Hope* safely escaped, the Dzjaeri engineers patched up the damage and then stripped this room of all of the damaged machinery and components.

Technology: A line of plasma conduits run the length of the Engineering Deck, mounted on the floor along the north wall of areas **E2**, **E5**, and **E7**, with more plasma conduits on the east and west wall of **E7**. The plasma conduits provide bright light to areas within 60 feet and dim light out to another 120 feet. Each plasma conduit is 18 feet high and 40 feet long and consists of two plasma inducers (the plasma inducers are each 20-foot tall steel columns). A constant jet of blue-white plasma energy arcs and sizzles between the two plasma inducers. The jet is set about 15 feet off the floor and is safe, unless of course living matter touches it. Creatures coming into contact with the plasma energy, even for a brief moment, take 10d12 points of damage (half of this is fire damage and half is electricity damage). A successful DC 19 Reflex save reduces this damage by half. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points by this damage are instantly reduced to a fine gray dust (as *disintegrate*).

THE STARDRIVE

The pinnacle of Dzjaeri engineering technology, the *Ardent Hope* is equipped with a *stardrive*, a massive dark matter fusion reactor that provides power for the ship and once provided the *Ardent Hope* with the ability to instantaneously travel the vast distances between the stars. Even though the *Ardent Hope's* *stardrive* is effectively crippled, the dark matter fusion reactor still provides more than enough power to keep the ship's life support and other essential systems running and maintain the *Ardent Hope's* orbit. Even in its semi-dormant state, the *stardrive* burns with the energy of ten suns. This energy is safely dispersed through the plasma conduits running through areas **E2**, **E5**, and **E7**, the enormous turbine machines in area **E5**, and the two plasma turbines in area **E7**.

E3: Engineers' Lounge

This room was designed to provide the *Ardent Hope's* engineers with a place to rest and unwind after long shifts. A dozen dusty cots, four large dining tables, and a non-functioning food dispenser are all that remain in this area.

E4: Tool Closet and Recharging Station

This small room was designed to store tools and other gear useful to engineering tasks. Though most of the useful items were repurposed by the Dzjaeri long ago, a few items were left behind.

Technology: A recharging station identical to the one in area **C3** is built into one of the walls here. A search of the shelves and storage cabinets here reveals the following technological items: a chemalyzer[SA], three fire extinguishers[SCR], a flashlight[SCR], a pair of magnegloves[SA], an inertial-reinforcement belt[SA], a pair of microgoggles[SA], and an engineering tool kit[SCR].

E5: Heavy Machinery

This enormous chamber is filled with all manner of equipment, from roaring turbines to disassembled vehicles and other gear. Like other rooms on this deck, this chamber shows signs of ancient damage—warped walls and floors, scorched deck areas, and the like. The northern half of the room is cast in a strange blue-white glow, emanating from a long row of strange devices running the length of the north wall.

Technology: The devices along the north wall are plasma conduits (as described in area **E2**). The room is dominated by dozens of enormous turbine machines that help disperse the incredible amount of energy produced by the semi-dormant *stardrive*. These turbines constantly whirl and roar loudly and impart a –10 penalty to all sound-based Perception checks made in this chamber.

A number of partially assembled and disassembled vehicles, including tractors, excavators, bulldozers, flight-capable gyrocopters, and small boats with outboard engines line the southern wall. The Dzjaeri leadership reasoned that the vehicles and heavy equipment would be needed when they found a habitable world and needed to construct homes and other buildings on its surface. Sub-Commander Orem can identify the machines and their purposes if the PCs show him the machines via comms.

Development: If Sub-Commander Orem is shown these vehicles over comms, he suddenly asks the PCs to focus the camera on a strange half-assembled cylinder-shaped machine. The cylinder-machine is six feet long, three feet in diameter, and weighs 400 pounds. At first the sub-commander doesn't recognize the machine, and since the PCs have more important things to do (i.e. save the ship's *stardrive* from self-destructing) he tells the PCs to ignore it and continue to the Main Reactor Control Center (area **E8**). However, the sub-commander will ask the PCs to return to examine the strange machine after they deactivate the self-destruct sequence. When the PCs return, he asks them to camera at the machine as he studies it for several minutes. He

then concludes that the machine seems to be some sort of half-constructed escape pod and is definitely not a work of Dzjaeri engineering. He hypothesizes that either the neh-thalggu or the strange aliens the PCs encountered in the Main Engineering Hub (**E7**) must have started building it in order to use it to escape the *Ardent Hope*. However, he adds, it probably wasn't the neh-thalggus since they would have trouble fitting inside the man-sized cylinder.

The sub-commander is correct; this is an unfinished escape pod. The parent qomok started working on the pod, using pieces of machinery scavenged from this chamber, hoping to use it to escape to the nearest populated planet. The qomok is unconcerned about time or distance, believing that as long as it's floating in space, it will eventually arrive at a location where it can begin assimilating and infesting other living creatures. If the qomok is unmasked in the *Who's the Thing* event (see below), it may grow desperate and return here to finish working on the pod. The qomok requires six uninterrupted hours of work to finish the escape pod. It will then carry the pod to the External Airlock at the top of the Primary Lift shaft to make its escape.

E6: Radiation Suit and Reactor Fuel Storage

These two identical rooms contain radiation suits and provide storage for additional fuel drums.

Technology: An Estex suit IV[SCR] upgraded with a radiation buffer armor upgrade[SCR] hangs from a metal peg along one wall, alongside two sets of Extex suit II armor, four sets of Extex suit I amor, all upgraded with radiation buffer armor upgrades as well. These suits were used by workers who worked in areas of the Engineering Deck that might be frequently exposed to radiation. Since the power has long been diverted from this level, the Dzjaeri haven't been able to scavenge this area for equipment. A radiation sweeper[SA] is kept inside a plastic case embedded in the wall here. These two storage rooms also contain 20+1d6 fuel drums, identical to the fuel drums described in area **E1**.

E7: Main Engineering Hub (CR 15)

This enormous brightly lit chamber is dominated by a pair of gigantic orange steel machines that whirl and roar and constantly emit a shimmering haze of blue-violet energy. More strange machines line the north, east, and west walls. Like other rooms on this deck, this chamber shows signs of ancient damage — warped walls and floors, scorched deck areas, and the like.

ENGINEERING DECK

800 Feet

1 Square = 10 Feet

This is the primary engineering hub, where machinery critical to the *Ardent Hope's* engineering systems are kept and maintained. The ceiling here is 40 feet high. The two plasma turbines and the multiple plasma conduits (see Technology below) constantly whirl and roar loudly and impart a −10 penalty to all sound-based Perception checks made in this chamber. Even with the *Ardent Hope's* engines operating at minimum capacity, the energy cycling through these powerful machines is extraordinary and the energy coursing through these machines keeps this chamber brightly lit.

A PC that succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check realizes a scorch-mark on the floor between the two plasma turbines is from very recent heat damage and is possibly less than a day old. A second successful DC 20 Perception check notices a scorched and empty fuel drum purposefully hidden in the southeast corner of the room.

Creatures: After the qomok extracted Neryan from his cryogenic hibernation pod and infected the sleeping Dzjaeri with its alien contagion (as described in area P5), it carried Neryan's dying body to this chamber and waited patiently for it to transform into a new qomok. As it waited for the new qomok to come into being, the parent qomok decided it needed more than one "soldier" to guard the Engineering Deck from possible interlopers. Using the Chief Engineering Officer Tezelle's memories, the parent qomok retrieved a fuel drum from area E6 and told the newly made qomok to open it. The ensuing conflagration triggered the qomok's split ability, which divided the newly formed qomok into three Small-sized qomoks. These creatures now lurk in the northeastern corner of the room. These qomoks are significantly weaker than the parent qomok. See the qomok description (*Appendix 2: New Monsters*) for additional information.

Small Qomoks (3)　　　　　　　　　　CR 12

XP 19,200
HP 200 (see *Appendix 2: New Monsters*)

Technology: The devices along the north wall are plasma conduits (identical to the ones described in area E2) and the two 30-foot tall orange machines are plasma turbines, which siphon and then redistribute energy directly from the stardrive below. After the qomok activated the self-destruct sequence, a read-out on both plasma turbines provides a handy countdown timer to devastation.

Along the walls facing the Main Reactor Control Center (area **E8**), are eight interactive consoles with numerous dials and readouts that display a plethora of data about the stardrive, such as its core temperature, its operating capacity, energy output, and a hundred other technical details. Figuring out the meaning of the readouts requires a DC 30 Physical Science check, though Sub-Commander Orem can interpret the information on the consoles if he's shown them through comms. If the *stardrive's* self-destruct sequence has not yet been deactivated, all of these consoles flash red warning symbols and display a countdown to the *stardrive's* final meltdown.

E8: Main Reactor Control Center

Read the following when the PCs examine the door leading into area **E8**:

It is obvious that someone or something has deliberately jammed several large pieces of metal into these doors to prevent them from being opened.

Shortly after it initiated the self-destruct sequence on the *Ardent Hope's* stardrive, the qomok gathered several steel rods from among the disassembled vehicles and heavy machines in area **E5** and jammed them into these doors. To bypass the damaged doors, a PC must succeed at a DC 35 Engineering check or the doors must be battered open. The doors have 20 hardness, 30 hit points, and a break DC of 28. Read the following when the PCs enter area **E8**:

This large room contains ten computer workstations, though only three of these currently look activated. A pair of large display screens dominates the east wall, each covered with hundreds of strange symbols, numbers, and images.

Technology: This room is the command and control center for the *Ardent Hope's* stardrive.

There are ten computer workstations here, though only three of them are currently functioning. Two large window-like display screens are affixed to the east wall. They display a staggering amount of information about the *stardrive's* current status that appears as hundreds of blinking multi-colored numbers and alien symbols. As with the consoles in area **E7**, figuring out the meaning of the readouts requires a DC 30 Physical Science check, though Sub-Commander Orem can interpret the information if he's shown the display screens through comms. If the *stardrive's* self-destruct sequence has not yet been deactivated, all of these consoles flash red warning symbols and display a countdown to the *stardrive's* final meltdown.

Deactivating the self-destruct sequence: A PC can deactivate the self-destruct sequence from any of the three functioning computer workstations. It's a complicated process that requires direct communication with Sub-Commander Orem via comms. If the PCs lost somehow lost their comm units, they can establish communications with the sub-commander on one of the computer workstations. Communicating via a computer workstation requires knowledge of the Dzjaeri tongue (or a successful DC 28 Culture check) and a successful DC 28 Computers check. With the sub-commander's assistance, a PC can deactivate the self-destruct sequence with two consecutive DC 37 Computers checks. The DC increases to 42 if the PCs somehow lose contact with Sub-Commander Orem. Each check requires 2 minutes of uninterrupted work to complete, whether the check is a success or failure. If none of the PCs have ranks in Computers, a PC can substitute a single successful DC 22 Intelligence check, though each Intelligence check requires 10 minutes of uninterrupted work, whether the check is a success or failure.

Development: If the PCs successfully deactivate the self-destruct sequence, Sub-Commander Orem thanks the PCs over comms and actually smiles. He then immediately focuses his attention on the strange creatures the PCs encountered in the Main Engineering Hub (area **E7**). He then asks the PCs for their assistance yet again. Concerned over this new alien threat, the sub-commander asks the PCs to perform a quick sweep of the Engineering Deck and Passenger Deck and eradicate the creatures if more are encountered. He also asks the PCs to check on the hibernating passengers in the Cryogenic Chamber (area **P5**). If the PCs seem unwilling to help, he offers them one of the Dzjaeri photon pistols as a prize.

Assuming the PCs agree to help, continue with the **Bug Hunt** event below.

EVENT: BUG HUNT

After saving the ship from destruction, the PCs are free to explore the *Ardent Hope's* Engineering Deck and Passenger Deck, as they search for additional hostile aliens. GMs are encouraged to run this event as a sandbox, allowing the PCs to explore the ship at their own pace. If the players grow restless or begin to lose focus, GMs should use Sub-Commander Orem to subtly guide the PCs to the two critically important encounters areas: the Neh-thalggu Hideout (area **P2A**) and the Cryogenic Chamber (area **P5**). After the PCs visit these encounter areas, they should begin to understand the true threat they face. GMs can then continue with the **Slaughter on the Command Decks** event.

EVENT: SLAUGHTER ON THE COMMAND DECKS

Shortly after the PCs visit areas **P2A** and **P5**, Sub-Commander Orem contacts them over comms. Read or paraphrase the following:

Sub-Commander Orem's voice, sounding uncharacteristically anxious, suddenly emits from everyone's comm units. "My crew is under attack here on the Command Bridge. We need your help immediately!" The sub-commander says something else, but his words are drowned out by several loud noises that sound like minor explosions combined with the sound of a burning torch being snuffed out by water. These sounds are followed by a great deal of shouting and inhuman shrieking. The sub-commander shouts a single word: "Hurry." The comms then go silent.

PCs that have witnessed a photon pistol firing instantly recognize the minor explosion noises as blasts from one of those Dzjaeri weapons. GMs should now continue with the **Who's the Thing** event.

EVENT: WHO'S THE THING? (CR 15 OR 16)

GMs should familiarize themselves with the following actions and reactions of the qomoks and the Dzjaeri crew members. This section is intentionally left as unscripted as possible to give GMs freedom to tailor the qomoks' actions and properly challenge the PCs. This section could be

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE PCS FAIL?

If the PCs fail to deactivate the *stardrive's* self-destruct sequence before the two-hour time limit expires, the *Ardent Hope* is doomed. One second after the two-hour countdown ends, the *stardrive* detaches from the *Ardent Hope* and spins away from the crippled ship. A moment later, the *stardrive* uses all of its remaining power to initiate a jump into the heart of the closest star. The Dzjaeri engineers designed the *stardrive* to do this to prevent it from crashing into and likely destroying a populated world. Once the *stardrive* arrives in the heart of the closest star, it melts down and is utterly consumed, causing little more than a brief solar "hiccup." Meanwhile, the *Ardent Hope*, now lacking any sort of power source, loses all system functionality, likely resulting in the deaths of every slumbering passenger and any individual that doesn't manage to vacate the ship before life support and the environmental controls fail completely. What happens at this point is beyond the scope of this adventure, but the outcome should be exceptionally grim for those aboard the *Ardent Hope*.

played out as another sandbox, with the disguised qomoks biding their time until the PCs and the Dzjaeri are at their weakest. Alternately, this section could just as easily wrap-up very quickly (and violently), especially if the two disguised qomoks are identified right away.

IMPORTANT EVENTS

While the PCs were exploring the Passenger Deck and the Engineering Deck, the parent qomok made its way to the Command Decks to eliminate the Dzjaeri. Here is a run-down of important events:

- When the parent qomok arrived on the Science Labs deck it surprised the custodial specialist Erem while the Dzjaeri was cleaning the Sterilization Chamber (area **C13**). The qomok quickly, and horrifically, twisted the man's head from his shoulders. Erem's headless body still lies inside the Sterilization Chamber in plain sight.

- The qomok then made its way to Science Lab 3 (area **C16**) where it encountered the science officers Essira and Taela. Essira managed to flee to the Observation Lounge (area **C17**), where she alerted the two security officers posted there, Renix and Tes. Essira then fled to the Command Bridge (area **C1**) without knowing the fate of her sister or the two security officers.

- Renix and Tes rushed to **C16** and arrived just as it finished absorbing and assimilating Taela. The qomok killed Tes by biting her in half and managed to render Renix unconscious. It then absorbed and assimilated Renix and assumed the security officer's form. Science Lab 3 now looks like a slaughterhouse, with blood and body parts littering the entire room.

- The qomok/Renix then made its way to the Lounge and Recreation Hall (area **C8**), where it shot and killed the security officer Loro. Loro's body still lies in on the floor there, his head blackened and half-erased from multiple photon pistol strikes.

- Meanwhile, Essira arrived on the Command Bridge (Area **C1**) and alerted Sub-Commander Orem, the senior security officer Jathis, and the other custodial specialist Inex that a hostile alien was ravaging the crew. This is when Sub-Commander Orem contacted the PCs via comms.

- The qomok/Renix soon made its way to the Command Bridge, where it surprised the surviving Dzjaeri, who believed the qomok was actually Renix. The qomok immediately opened fire on the surprised Dzjaeri with Renix's photon pistol. During the attack, Jathis and Inex were both injured. All of the Dzjaeri present then witnessed the qomok shed its "Renix" disguise to assume the form of a hairy slug-like creature with multiple rending claws, a wolf-like maw, and dagger-sized teeth.

- The qomok then fled and the sub-commander pursued it.

THE PCS ARRIVE

When the PCs arrive on the Command Deck, they find scorch-marks from multiple photon pistol blasts on the walls and floor of the junction hallway between areas **C1**, **C2**, and **C3**. All of the rooms appear abandoned, except for the Command Bridge (area **C1**), where they find Jathis, Essira, and Inex. Jathis is injured (he is currently at 11 hit points) and his photon pistol has eight charges left. Inex is also injured (he is currently at 30 hit points).

Inex, however, contracted the qomok's alien infection during the brief melee with the creature. A PC that examines Inex and succeeds at a DC 37 Medicine check notices that Inex has contracted some sort of very subtle infection. If Inex's condition goes unnoticed, he succumbs to the alien infection 10 minutes after the PCs arrive and transforms into a new qomok. Anyone interacting with Inex after this occurs that succeeds at a DC 30 Sense Motive check realizes that Inex has undergone an extremely subtle, yet horrific change. If Inex's transformation goes unnoticed, the qomok/Inex does not immediately attack. Instead it bides its time as it waits for the parent qomok to arrive (see *Orem Arrives* below). In the meantime, the qomok/Inex does what it is told and tries to keep a low profile. If the qomok wearing Inex's form is unmasked, the qomok fights for two rounds and then tries to flee down to the Engineering Deck to continue its work on the escape pod in area **E5**. If cornered there, the qomok fights to the death.

In the sub-commander's absence, Jathis assumes command of the *Ardent Hope* and he openly consults with the PCs on the best way to defend against the alien threat. While discussing their options with the PCs, if none of the PCs mention it first, the science officer Essira suggests the creature can assume any form it wants. She then relates how the creature took on a completely different form when it attacked her and her sister in Science Lab 3.

OREM ARRIVES

Twenty minutes after the PCs arrive, Sub-Commander Orem returns with Essira's sister Taela. He explains that he pursued the alien and it evaded him on the Science Labs deck. He believes it possibly fled into the Terrestrial Enclosure or back down the Lift shaft to one of the lower decks. "Taela" is in fact the parent qomok; the creature assumed her form and successfully deceived the sub-commander into believing it really is Taela.

At this point a standoff occurs. Jathis and Inex (now a newly formed qomok and in direct telepathic communication with the parent qomok that has taken on Taela's form) become very vocal about not wanting the sub-commander and Taela to re-join them inside the Command Bridge. Jathis fears that one or both of them could be the alien in disguise. Essira, on the other hand, wants her sister to rejoin them and asks the PCs to intervene. Sub-Commander Orem tries to remain calm, but Jathis has become somewhat unhinged by recent events. Unless the PCs intervene, Jathis draws his photon pistol and opens fire on Sub-Commander Orem. Orem does not return fire; instead, he and the qomok/Taela flee into the Armory (**C3**), where he intends to hold up until things calm down. Again,

unless the PCs stop her, Essira flees with the sub-commander and her sister to the Armory. In his current state, Jathis may also fire on Essira as she tries to flee and rejoin her sister.

If the parent qomok manages to isolate Sub-Commander Orem (and possibly Essira) in the Armory, it soon attacks them and tries to assimilate one or both of the Dzjaeri. When the parent qomok begins its attack against the sub-commander, the qomok wearing Inex's form also reveals itself and attacks the PCs (and any remaining Dzjaeri).

Qomoks (2)   CR 15

XP 51,200
HP 275 (see *Appendix 2: New Monsters*)

TACTICS

During Combat During the first round of combat, the newly spawned qomoks use a full-round action to grotesquely transform their bodies until they only vaguely resemble the Dzjaeri they are masquerading. The qomoks fight intelligently yet with a savage alien ferocity. Each round they use their mutable form ability to generate a new special attack form.

Morale If one of the qomoks is destroyed the other creature tries to flee to the Terrestrial Enclosure, hoping to lose its pursuers in the alien jungle. The qomok then makes its way to area **E5** to finish work on its escape pod. If encountered in area **E5**, the qomok fights for two rounds and flees again. This time, it makes its way to the Cryogenic Chamber (area **P5**) and tries to infect as many of the hibernating Dzjaeri as possible. It repeats these tactics (fleeing into the Terrestrial Enclosure, then back to area **E5**, then back to the Cryogenic Chamber) until it is destroyed. If the qomok realizes the PCs arrived on a functioning ship, it may attempt to ambush and assimilate one of the PCs in order to gain the knowledge necessary to hijack the PCs' own ship and navigate it to the closest populated planet.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs destroy both of the qomoks they are hailed as heroes by any surviving Dzjaeri. True to his word, Sub-Commander Orem rewards the PCs with whatever he promised them in the *Deal* section. If Orem wasn't initially forced to barter the *Ardent Hope*, he offers it — and any technological secrets it possesses — to the PCs if they are able to tow the Dzjaeri to a habitable planet where they can finally settle after being adrift for so long. What the PCs do with the ship and the Dzjaeri is beyond the scope of this adventure but could certainly lead to many more adventures!

If even one of the qomoks manages to successfully escape the *Ardent Hope,* either with its makeshift escape pod or the PCs' own ship, it plots a course for the most populated planet in the system and begins attacking and assimilating every creature it encounters as it attempts to further its goal of absorbing and assimilating all life. Though a qomok can only assimilate Small, Medium, Large, or Huge-sized creatures, the qomok's aggressiveness and tenacity could eventually lead to apocalypse-level devastation to the entire planetary system. How this plays out is beyond the scope of this adventure, but the outcome should be spectacularly grim.
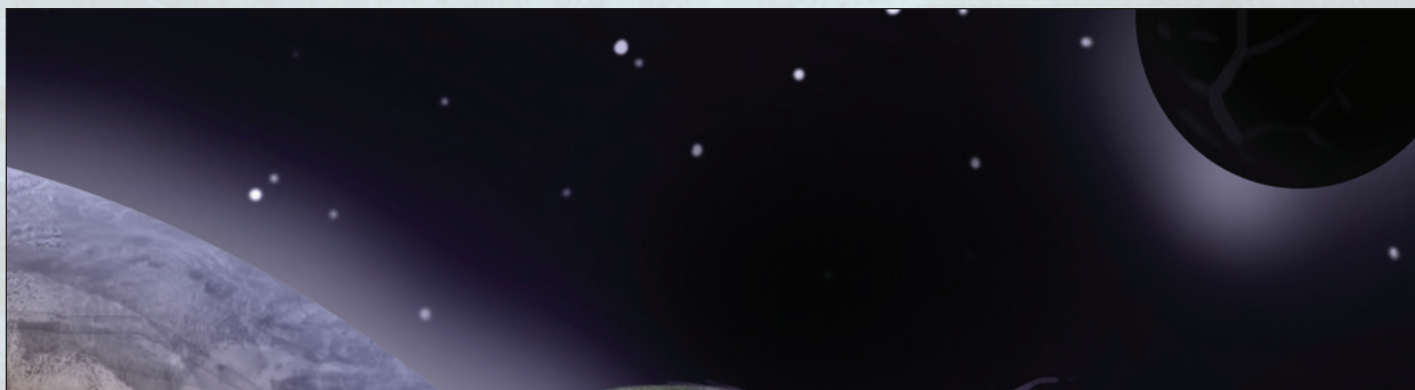
APPENDIX 1: NPC GALLERY

DZJAERI

Shortly after the Ardent Hope fled its home system, all of the passengers and crew were placed in cryogenic hibernation. They stayed that way for thousands of years, until the ship's AI Father failed permanently 300 years ago. Now a 12-member skeleton crew remains awake to man the ship, and every five years the skeleton crew returns to suspended animation and is replaced by another 12-member crew. With enough crew members to support 25 separate skeleton crews, each skeleton crew serves a 5-year shift every 250 years. So, in the last 5,300 years, the skeleton crew members have only physically aged a few years.

THE SUB-COMMANDER

The aging sub-commander still maintains a lithe, muscular physique. Though wrinkles mar his face and his hair has become thin and wispy, Orem's eyes shine with intelligence and compassion for his people.

SUB-COMMANDER OREM   CR 6

XP 2,400
Male human operative
N Medium humanoid (human)
Init +6; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE	HP 80

EAC 20; **KAC** 21
Fort +5; **Ref** +10; **Will** +9
Defensive Abilities evasion, uncanny shooter

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.
Melee tactical dueling sword +13 (1d6+7)
Ranged photon pistol +14 (2d10+6 F & Force; critical burn 2d4)
Offensive Abilities debilitating trick, trick attack +3d8

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +5; **Con** +0; **Int** +3; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +2
Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +19, Computers +14, Culture +19, Diplomacy +19, Engineering +14, Intimidate +19, Sense Motive +19
Languages Aklo, Common, Dzjaeri
Other Abilities operative specialization (detective), operative exploit (glimpse the truth)
Gear D-suit I, photon pistol with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), tactical dueling sword

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Uncanny Shooter (Ex) Sub-Commander Orem does not provoke attacks of opportunity when making ranged attacks with small arms.

DZJAERI SCIENCE OFFICERS

The science officers are the twin sisters, Essira and Taela. Though still distraught at losing their lover and fellow scientist, Arvinen, during the neh-thalggu attack, Essira and Taela remain unflappably optimistic and uncharacteristically bubbly for Dzjaeri. Assigned as escorts while the PCs remain on the Command Decks, Essira and Taela assail their guests with a constant barrage of questions about their world and the creatures that populate it.

Dzjaeri Science Officers   CR 3

XP 800
Female human mechanic
N Medium humanoid (human)
Init +1; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE	HP 35

EAC 14; **KAC** 15
Fort +2; **Ref** +4; **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee tactical baton +9 (1d4+3)
Offensive Abilities target tracking, overload (DC 14)

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +1; **Con** +0; **Int** +4; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +1
Skills Culture +8, Computers +13, Engineering +8, Diplomacy +8, Life Science +8, Medicine +13
Languages Aklo, Common, Dzjaeri, Draconic
Gear tactical baton, medkit
Other Abilities artificial intelligence (exocortex), mechanic trick (quick patch)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Combat Medic (Ex) A Dzjaeri Science Officer can make Medicine checks to administer first aid without provoking attacks of opportunity. If the Medicine check is successful, the target also regains 6 hit points. Creatures can only benefit from this secondary effect once per day.

DZJAERI SECURITY OFFICERS

The security officers, Jathis, Loro, Renix, and Tes, are expert shots with the photon pistol. Typically stern and discreet, the security officers are career soldiers, prepared to defend their crewmates with their lives. The senior security officer Jathis is effectively the second-in-command after Sub-Command Orem. Jathis is a no-nonsense veteran soldier that does everything by the book. Tall and muscular, he has dark eyes and keeps his head clean shaven.
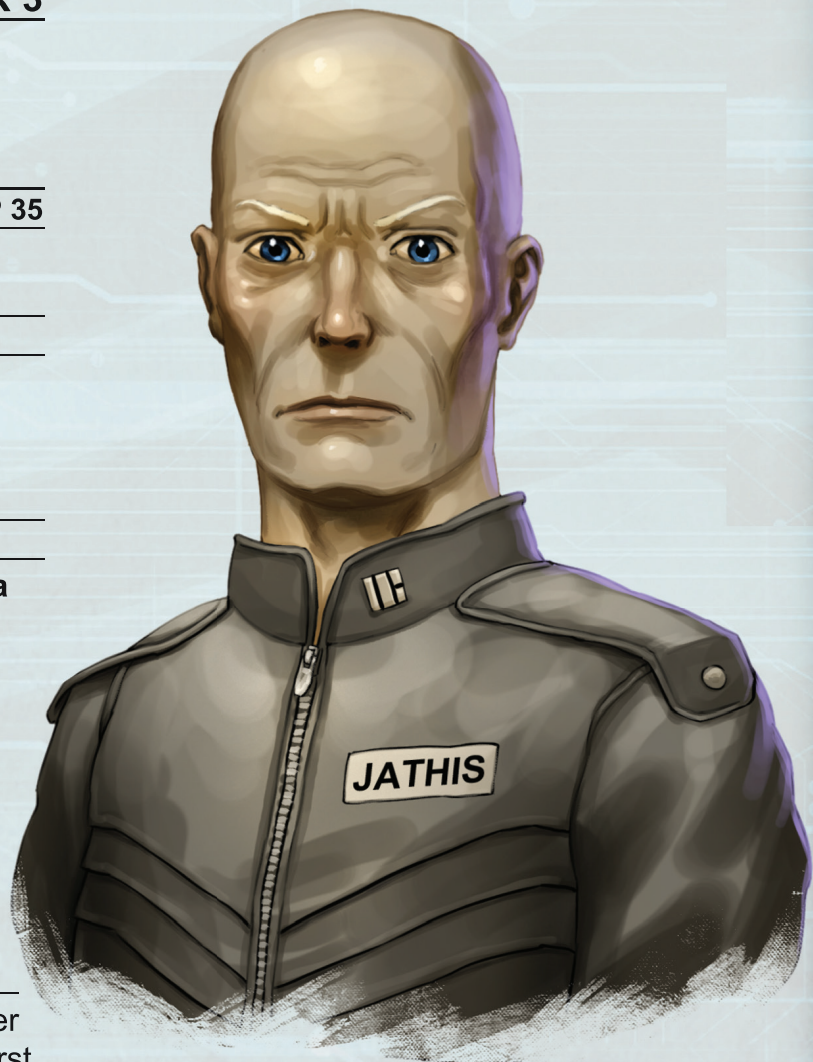
Dzjaeri Security Officers   CR 4

XP 1,200
Male human soldier
N Medium humanoid (human)
Init +5; **Perception** +10

DEFENSE	HP 50

EAC 18; **KAC** 19
Fort +6; **Ref** +6; **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee tactical baton +9 (1d4+7)
Ranged photon pistol +10 (2d10+8 F & Force; critical burn 2d4)
Offensive Abilities fighting styles (sharpshoot)

STATISTICS

Str +3; **Dex** +5; **Con** +1; **Int** +0; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0
Skills Athletics +10, Engineering +10 Intimidate +15, Sense Motive +10
Feats Deadly Aim
Languages Dzjaeri
Gear graphite carbon skin, photon pistol with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges), tactical baton

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sniper's Aim (Ex) when making a ranged attack against a target with cover, a Dzjaeri Security Officer reduces the AC bonus from cover by 2. This ability can't be used against targets with total cover.

DZJAERI CUSTODIAL SPECIALISTS

Frem and Inex perform custodial and general maintenance duties aboard the Ardent Hope. Though quiet and exceptionally introverted, the men are polite and generally good-natured. Though somewhat dim-witted, Frem and Inex are excellent mechanics and troubleshoot issues with Sub-Commander Orem constantly as the Ardent Hope's systems continue to deteriorate.

DZJAERI CUSTODIAL SPECIALISTS (2)   CR 3

XP 800
N Medium humanoid (human)
Init +0; **Perception** +8

DEFENSE	HP 35

EAC 14; **KAC** 15
Fort +4; **Ref** +2; **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee tactical baton +4 (1d4+5)

STATISTICS

Str +2; **Dex** +0; **Con** +4; **Int** -1; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0
Skills Athletics +13, Bluff +13, Computers +8, Engineering +13, Intimidate +8, Sense Motive +8
Languages Dzjaeri
Gear tactical baton, engineering kit

APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

QOMOK

A slight tremor in the man's face heralds the arrival of a ghastly horror. What was a man moments ago suddenly rips itself apart: its flesh bursts open, blood and viscera spray in all directions, and its internal organs liquefy and ooze to the floor. As the man-thing contorts and expands in impossible directions, great multi-jointed insectoid legs and a sickening array of clawed limbs, oily tentacles, and sucking mouths sprout from its ruined torso and its face ruptures to form an awful split-faced maw of jagged teeth.

QOMOK   CR 15

XP 51,200
CE Large aberration (shapechanger)
Init +5; **Senses** all-around vision, blindsight (scent), darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +26

DEFENSE	HP 275

EAC 29; **KAC** 31
Fort +17, **Ref** +17, **Will** +15
Defensive Abilities hard to kill, mutable form, regeneration 10 (fire); **Immunities** ability damage, ability drain, bleed, death effects, disease, mind-affecting effects, ooze immunities, petrification, sonic attacks
Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (see mutable form)
Melee claw +35 (6d4+22 S plus infection) or feeding tendril +33 (0 damage plus attach)
Multiattack 4 various attacks (bites, claws, pincers, tentacles, etc.) +22 (6d4+22 B, P, or S plus infection)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with feeding tendril)
Offensive Abilities feeding tendril, infection (DC 21), mutable form

STATISTICS

Str +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +9, **Int** +5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +5
Skills Athletics +31, Intimidate +26, Survival +26

Languages Aklo (see mutable form)
Other Abilities assimilate, compression, mutable form, no breath

ECOLOGY

Environment warm and temperate land
Organization solitary or invasion (2–5)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Assimilate (Ex) When a qomok slays a creature (excluding non-native outsiders, oozes, plants, and creatures that do not have blood) by draining the creature's blood with its feeding tendril, the qomok can completely absorb the creature's remains and assimilate them into its own body. It takes a qomok 1 minute to absorb a creature's remains (regardless of the creature's size), and as it absorbs a creature the qomok is completely helpless. An assimilated creature's body is annihilated and can only be restored to life using miracle or wish. After it absorbs and assimilates a creature, a qomok gains detailed information about the creature's identity and personality and has access to all the creature's memories. A qomok does not gain access to a creature's abilities unless it uses its alter form ability to mimic the creature's form.

Feeding Tendril (Ex) As a full action, a qomok can create and attack with a long feeding tendril. If the qomok's feeding tendril attack succeeds, it automatically attaches and deals

no damage on the round on which it hits. However, at the beginning of the victim's turn and each turn it remains attached, the victim takes 4d6 points of damage as the feeding tendril drains the victim's blood. An attached feeding tendril can be removed with a successful Strength DC 15 check made as a standard action, or the qomok can remove its feeding tendril from its target as a swift action.

Hard to Kill (Ex) A qomok does not age, nor does it need to eat, breathe, or sleep. A qomok is also immune to the harmful environmental effects of outer space and vacuum as well as pressure damage from being immersed in deep water. Each of the qomok's individual cells is a separate living organism, and if the creature is not killed by fire it quickly fully heals. A qomok reduced to 0 hit points by any attack other than one that inflicts fire damage is not destroyed nor does it fall unconscious. Instead, the qomok becomes staggered until its regeneration ability restores it to at least 1 hit point. A qomok reduced to 0 hit points by fire damage immediately enters a state of hibernation. A qomok trapped in an environment of extreme cold or in the vacuum of outer space for more than ten minutes also enters hibernation. While in this state, the qomok can take no actions, is helpless, and its regeneration ability ceases to function. A qomok forced into hibernation after taking fire damage awakens in 12+2d6 hours once its charred remains cool. A qomok forced into hibernation due to extreme cold or exposure to the vacuum of outer space remains in hibernation until it enters a warmer environment, whereupon it awakens in 1d4 days. Once a qomok awakens, its regeneration ability begins functioning again.

Infection (Ex) When a creature takes damage from any of a qomok's melee attacks (and does not die), is struck by the qomok's feeding tendril, or if a creature damages a qomok with its bite attack, it must succeed on a DC 21 Fortitude save or contract an exceptionally virulent infection that eventually overwrites the creature's DNA and transforms it into a qomok. The infection works like a physical disease, except it ignores the target's immunity to diseases. Detect affliction can reveal the existence of the infection (the infection is considered a disease for purposes of that spell) and remove affliction can remove the infection. A creature that succumbs to the infection and transforms into a qomok can only be restored via miracle or wish.

> ***Qomok Infection***
> **Type** disease (injury); **Save** Fortitude DC 21
> **Track** physical; **Frequency** 1/minute
> **Effect** When an infected creature reaches the dead state, the victim transforms into a qomok.
> **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

The infection works insidiously, with the victim feeling and showing no signs of discomfort and the presence of the infection is nearly undetectable, save via *detect affliction* or similar magic or the use of a medical lab (requiring a successful DC 30 Medicine check). When the infection transforms a creature into a qomok, the transformation is extremely subtle as well. Creatures observing the victim as he or she transforms must succeed on a DC 30 Sense Motive check to notice something is amiss. Additionally, victims that transform into a qomok often do not realize they have transformed into a monster, as the qomok's personality prefers to hide beneath the replicated personality of its victim. When the qomok's personality takes over (usually in response to a threat or to feed), the victim's replicated personality "blacks out" and the qomok erases all memory of the event from the replicated personality's mind. Infected creatures that die before transforming into a qomok rise as a qomok 2d6 minutes after death. Creatures killed and reduced to sludge by a qomok's feeding tendril attack are automatically infected and transform into a qomok 2d6 rounds after death if the qomok does not assimilate the creature's body before that time elapses.

Mutable Form (Ex) A qomok's body is extremely mutable and can adapt to respond to almost any situation. This ability is identical to change shape with the following additions and exceptions:

- When a qomok attacks, its body bursts open to display a variety of strange and terrifying body parts and portions of anatomy from creatures it previously absorbed with its assimilate ability. As a swift action, a qomok can alter its form and use any of the following special attacks in conjunction with one of its melee attacks:
  - Attach
  - Grab
  - Swallow Whole (8d6+22 A, EAC 29, KAC 27, 68 HP)
- As a full action, during which the qomok is completely helpless, a qomok can perfectly mimic the last creature it absorbed with its assimilate ability. A qomok can use this ability to assume the appearance of specific individuals with perfect accuracy, right down to matching the original creature's DNA. A qomok replicates the appearance of any scars or physical wounds (though it does not suffer damage itself), illnesses or diseases possessed by a victim (though it does not suffer any ill effects), as well as any physical deformities, such as missing eyes or limbs. None of the qomok's ability scores are adjusted when it mimics a victim's form. While it mimics a victim's form, a qomok knows (and can speak) any languages known by the victim and gains the use of the victim's feats, racial traits, skills (default to the qomok's skill modifier if it is higher than the victim's skill modifier), and extraordinary abilities. A qomok uses its victim's DCs when it mimics an ability it does not already possess; however, any DCs less than 21 become 21. If the victim had immunity or resistance to any energy types, the qomok gains resistance 20 to those elements, though the qomok cannot gain immunity or resistance to fire. A qomok gains any weaknesses (such as light blindness) and vulnerabilities of the creature for as long as it continues to mimic it. A qomok does not gain the use of a victim's supernatural abilities, spellcasting, or spell-like abilities.

- As a move action, a qomok can generate body parts that provide it with one of the following additional forms of movement: burrow 20 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average), or swim 30 ft.
- As a reaction to being struck by a fire attack that reduces it to less than half of its maximum hit points, a qomok splits into two identical copies of itself. Each copy has half of the original's remaining hit points (rounded down) and decreases by two size categories. A split qomok can continue to split if it suffers additional fire damage, until the copies become Diminutive or the qomok is reduced to 10 or less hit points. Except for its Intelligence score, the qomok's statistics do not change when it decreases in size. A qomok reduced to a size of Tiny or Diminutive, gains an Intelligence score of 2. A Tiny or Diminutive qomok becomes focused on self-preservation and generally avoids combat unless it can attack without endangering itself. Two or more copies of the same qomok can merge as a full action. The copies that merge combine their total remaining hit points. A qomok increases one size category for each copy that merges and cannot grow larger than size Large.

The remote reaches of the universe are home to bizarre phenomena and horrific alien life forms beyond normal comprehension, most of which pale in comparison to the unspeakable and utterly alien horror epitomized by the qomok. Known by many names throughout the universe, but most often as "Things," qomoks are shape-shifting parasitic organisms with the ability to absorb, assimilate, and then perfectly mimic the bodies of other living creatures. A qomok's original form resembles a fleshy mass of oozing viscera, covered with rope-like tendrils and undulating sucker-mouths that slithers and shambles with surprising agility. In this form, a qomok is roughly 12 feet in diameter and weighs 2,000 pounds. However, most qomoks haven't assumed this shape since the first qomok left its distant homeworld billions of years ago, for the creatures are driven by an irresistible drive to absorb and assume their victims' forms.

Extremely paranoid, and with an unrivaled instinct for self-preservation and survival, qomoks prefer to attack lone targets so they do not needlessly endanger themselves. When attacking, a qomok shifts its body asunder in a spectacle of gore and violence, generating various extremities and toothy maws, in an attempt to surprise its prey. It then ensnares its victim with its feeding tendril so it can be absorbed and assimilated. When a qomok's true nature is exposed, the creature will react depending on its current size, health, and the nature of the threat. Smaller copies of a qomok will usually attempt to flee, whereas a full-sized and healthy qomok will often attack multiple creatures head on in an attempt to quickly overwhelm and neutralize them. However, true to its self-preserving nature, a qomok will almost always prefer to flee if its cover is not completely lost.

Ecology

A qomok has only assimilation and self-preservation in mind. It will selfishly save itself or even attack other qomoks or other copies of itself in order to avert attention and suspicion. A qomok's level of intelligence is determined by its size. Larger qomoks are extremely intelligent; it is theorized that full-sized qomoks have the combined intelligences of all the organisms they have ever assimilated. Smaller copies are much less intelligent, and often show little creativity or goals other than survival.

Qomoks have little regard for organic life, seeing living creatures merely as prey and conveniences by which they can gain newer, more versatile forms. They care nothing for emotions, and have no need for personal relationships, religion, or mercy. Due to their intense paranoia and overriding instinct for self-preservation, as well as their callous indifference for "lesser" life forms, qomoks rarely communicate with sentient prey. When they do converse, they do so only to maintain their cover, avert attention away from themselves, or confuse their prey. Qomoks have only slightly more regard for their own kind, including their own infection-spawned offspring. Although they will cooperate with one another when they share a common enemy or goal, qomoks only do so if the association serves their personal need for assimilation and survival.

Though highly intelligent and able to use most technology and magic items, qomoks are not adept at spellcasting. Whether due to their alien physiology or some other psychological barrier, qomoks cannot cast spells or mimic the supernatural or spell-like abilities of other beings. While their natural forms are decidedly alien, they can spontaneously generate limbs and other body parts that allow them to use tools and magical items as easily as a humanoid. Though they are able to wield weapons with as much skill as an assimilated creature, qomoks prefer to use their natural weapons in combat.

Habitat and Society

Qomoks originated on a tiny, swamp-covered moon orbiting a gas giant world in a remote corner of the universe. They began as microscopic clusters of semi-sentient cells that took a bizarre turn on the evolutionary path and developed the ability to assimilate and mimic other organic cells. After a few billion years, the qomoks grew prodigiously and became the dominant species on their homeworld. The immortal qomoks then spent eons slithering about their muddy little world, occasionally absorbing and assimilating one another. Though highly intelligent, these qomoks were unfathomably savage; they formed no society, no religion, and were content to focus their attentions on the swampy surface of their world, remaining completely unaware of the stars above and any worlds beyond their own.

That changed when an elder thing explorer happened upon the qomok homeworld. Having visited scores of inhabited worlds in its own long lifetime, the elder thing immediately recognized the qomoks' physical resemblance to the bio-engineered shoggoths — a powerful slave race created by the elder things. Insatiably curious, the elder thing began a long-term study of the qomoks with the goal of eventually collecting a live specimen and weaponizing it. Unfortunately for the elder thing, and for many future denizens of the universe, this ill-planned scheme was a disaster. One day, after several years of safely studying the qomoks from the air, the elder thing landed on an outcropping of rock that was too close to one of the creatures. The qomok ensnared the elder thing with its feeding tendril and swiftly absorbed and assimilated the overmatched explorer.

In that instant, as the qomok absorbed the elder thing's body and mind, its own consciousness expanded a million-fold. The qomok's thoughts flooded with the memories, knowledge, and experiences of the elder thing, and it suddenly became cognizant of the existence of other living creatures and other worlds. Led by an insatiable drive to assimilate other life forms, the qomok assumed the elder thing's winged form and immediately launched itself into the sky. Mimicking

the elder thing's ability to travel between the stars, the qomok hurled itself through interstellar space and slipped into hibernation. Eventually, untold eons later, the sleeping qomok fell to the surface of an inhabited world. Since that time, this single qomok has seeded its kind on many worlds as it slowly and inexorably spreads its race across the universe.

SMALL QOMOKS

CE Small aberration (shapechanger)
Init +4; **Senses** all-around vision, blindsight (scent) 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +22

DEFENSE	HP 200

EAC 26; **KAC** 28
Fort +14; **Ref** +14; **Will** +13
Defensive Abilities hard to kill, mutable form, regeneration 10 (fire); **Immunities** ability damage, ability drain, bleed death effects, disease, mind-affecting effects, ooze traits, petrification, sonic attacks
Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (see mutable form)
Melee 2 extremities +25 (3d6+17), bite +22 (3d6+17) or feeding tendril +22 (1 point plus attach and infection)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with feeding tendril)
Offensive Abilities feeding tendril, infection (DC 19), mutable form

TACTICS

Before Combat The qomoks spend time studying the PCs and telepathically coordinating their attacks. Before they attack, the qomoks each use their alter self ability to transform their bodies to resemble a multi-limbed crab-like creature with a bloated split-faced Dzjaeri head and a dozen eye-stalk tentacles protruding from it. They attack if they are spotted or if the PCs attempt to bypass the damaged door leading into area **E8**.
During Combat The qomoks emerge wailing and screeching, sounding like a Dzjaeri in excruciating pain. The qomoks each attack

a separate PC. They immediately attack any dying or helpless PCs with their feeding tendrils.
Morale If two of the qomoks are killed the survivor flees to area E2. It wants to lure the PCs further away from the Command Decks, so the parent qomok has more time to insinuate itself among the Dzjaeri crew. When the qomok reaches area **E2** it uses its mutable form ability to generate a set of wings and flees up the Lift shaft to the Environmental Control Center (area **TE7**). It waits there to ambush any PCs following it. At this point, if the qomok is attacked by fire it flees into the Terrestrial Enclosure.

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +4; **Con** +8; **Int** +4; **Wis** +4; **Cha** +4
Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +22, Bluff +27, Disguise +27, Intimidate +22, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +27
Languages Aklo (see mutable form)
Other Abilities assimilate, compression, no breath

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Assimilate (Ex) As a standard qomok.
Feeding Tendril (Ex) As a standard qomok.
Hard to Kill (Ex) As a standard qomok.
Infection (Ex) As a standard qomok.
Mutable Form (Ex) As a standard qomok.

TOADHEMOTH

This enormous, toad-like creature has three eyestalks atop its warty head and a massive maw full of sword-sized teeth. In place of arms, six huge tentacles whip about menacingly.

TOADHEMOTH	CR 14

XP 38,400
N Gargantuan aberration
Init +0; **Senses** all-around vision, blindsight (thermal) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +26

DEFENSE	HP 250

EAC 29; **KAC** 31
Fort +16; **Ref** +16; **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities ferocity; **Immunities** cold and electricity (partial); **Resistances** fire 10
Weaknesses cannot swim, dazed by cold and electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.
Melee bite +27 (4d8+21 plus grab)
Multiattack bite +21 (4d8+21 plus grab), 6 tentacles +18 (2d6+21 plus grab)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.
Offensive Abilities croak (DC 21), swallow whole (3d8+14 B, EAC 29, KAC 27, 62 HP)

STATISTICS

Str +9; **Dex** +0; **Con** +7; **Int** -5; **Wis** +5; **Cha** +0
Skills Athletics +31, Stealth +26, Survival +26

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All-Around Vision (Ex) A toadhemoth's stalked eyes allow it to see in all directions at once. It cannot be flanked.

Cannot Swim (Ex) Toadhemoths avoid water because they cannot swim. If a toadhemoth enters deep water it automatically becomes dazed, sinks, and drowns a number of rounds later equal to twice its Constitution score.

Croak (Ex) Once every 1d4 rounds, as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, a toadhemoth can emit a great bellowing croak to disable nearby creatures. Creatures within 60 feet of the toadhemoth must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save to avoid being stunned for 1 round and then staggered for another 1d6+1 rounds. Creatures that succeed on the Fortitude save are merely staggered for 1d4 rounds. This is a sonic effect and the save DC is Constitution-based.

Dazed by Cold and Electricity (Ex) Although a toadhemoth is immune to damage from cold and electricity, whenever it would otherwise take such damage it is instead dazed for 1 round.

Toadhemoths are a strange, alien offshoot of the common froghemoth. Toadhemoths dwell in deserts and vast arid plains. Their olive-brown hides are hard and warty, and much thicker than a standard froghemoth's. They avoid water, for they cannot swim, and get the moisture they need by eating plant matter and their usual carnivorous diet. Otherwise, they are similar in demeanor and voraciousness to froghemoths. On their homeworld, toadhemoths are 4 feet tall and weigh 50 pounds. However, once introduced to a world inhabited by a variety of edible animal life, the creature's metabolism undergoes an astonishing alteration that causes the toadhemoth to eventually transform into Gargantuan-sized monstrosity. The completely transformed toadhemoth detailed in this adventure is 36 feet tall and weighs 28 tons.

APPENDIX 3: NEW TECHNOLOGY

PHOTON PISTOL

Price 75,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.
Proficiency exotic (firearms); **Dmg** 2d10 fire and 2d10 force; **Critical** Burn 2D4; **Range** 100 ft.
Capacity 40; **Usage** 2 charges; **Special** touch

CONSTRUCTION

Craft DC 30; **Cost** 25,000 gp
Craft Technological Arms and Armor, military lab

A photon pistol emits a devastating beam of searing light infused with highly agitated photons. Photon pistols have two settings — switching between settings is a swift action.

Stun: On this setting, the photon pistol deals non-lethal damage and only uses 1 charge.

Kill: On this setting, the photon pistol deals lethal damage and uses two charges.

Creatures reduced to −1 or lower hit points by a photon pistol on the kill setting must succeed on a DC 25 Fortitude save or be reduced to a puddle of smoldering goo (they are effectively disintegrated).

Photon pistols must be recharged at a specially designed recharging station once their Capacity drops to 0. The *Ardent Hope* has two such stations: one in the Armory (area **C3**) and one in the Tool Closet (area **E4**) on the Engineering Deck.

Command Center

Terrestrial Enclosure

Reactor

Passenger

Service Lift

Lift

Engineering

Reactor

CREW QUARTERS – KEYED

C9

C10

LIFT

C7

C7

C6

C8
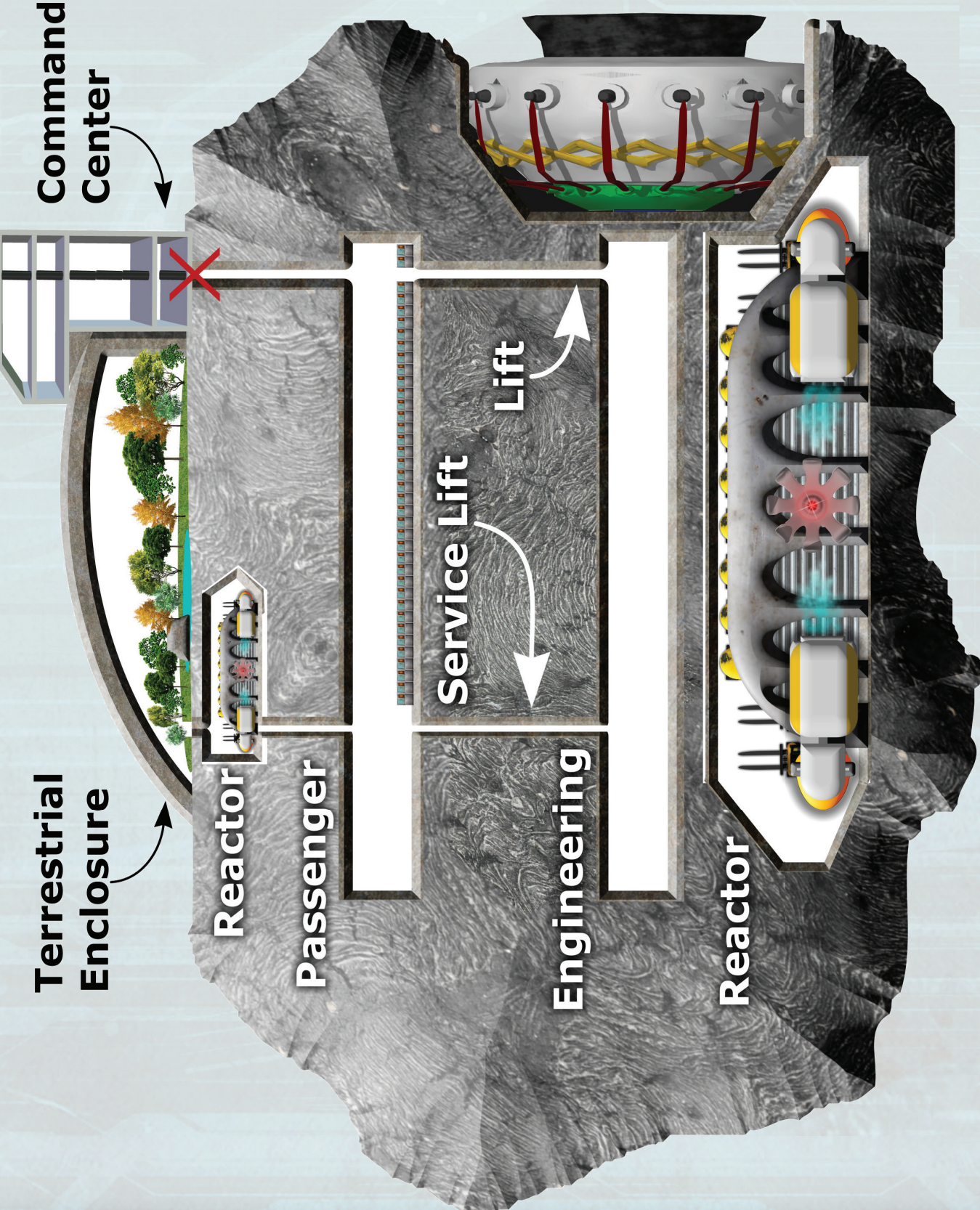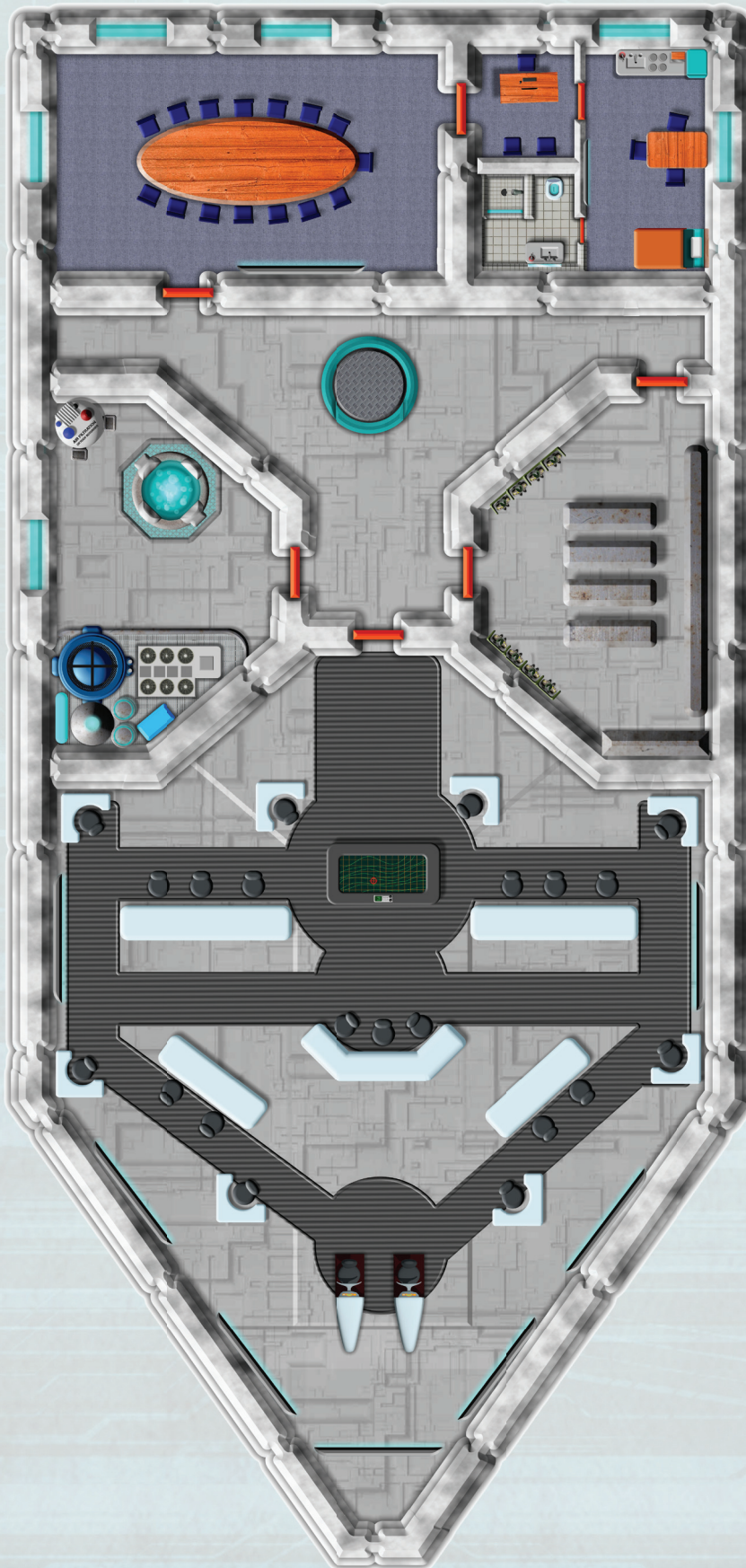
1 Square = 5 Feet
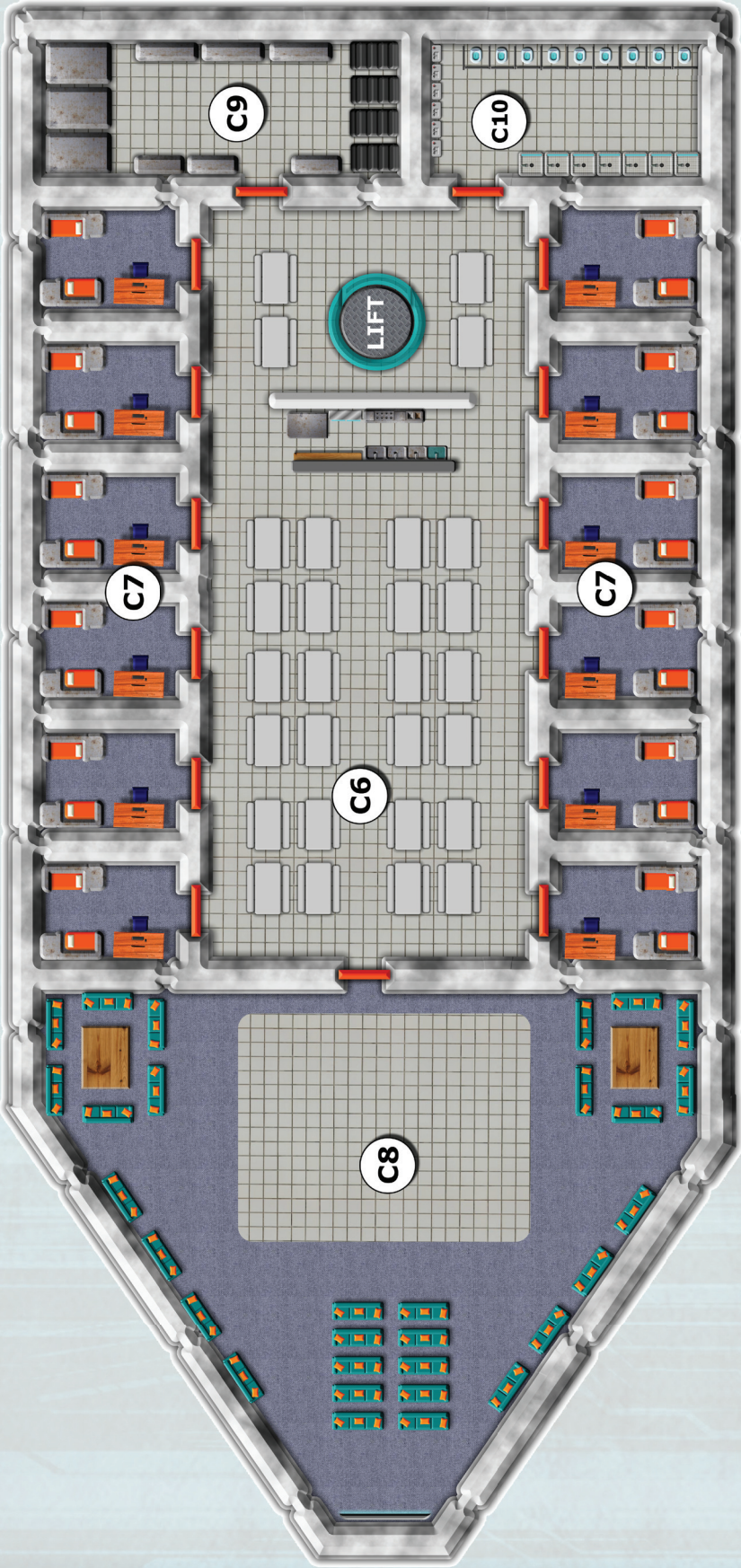
C9 Food Processor

C10 Refresher

C9 Food Processor

C10 Refresher

C6 Galley

C7 Crew Apartments

C8 Lounge and Recreation Hall

C6 Galley

C7 Crew Apartments

C8 Lounge and Recreation Hall

It Came from Beyond the Stars!

It Came from Beyond the Stars!

What begins as a simple effort to claim and retrieve a derelict alien starship quickly turns perilous when the PCs survive an attack by space pirates only to find themselves trapped aboard the very ship they tried to salvage. Aboard the alien vessel, the PCs encounter an enigmatic race of humanlike star-farers, trapped in a small section of their own ship and in dire need of assistance. Tasked with hunting down the starfarers' recently escaped monstrous alien enemies, the PCs must make their way through steel-clad hallways, an artificial jungle stocked with dangerous creatures, and finally into the long-abandoned bowels of the ancient ship, where they come face-to-face with a threat of unimaginable cosmic horror ... an alien threat that has just initiated the ship's self-destruct sequence!

Starfall is a high-level, high-stakes *Starfinder Roleplaying Game* adventure designed for 13th-level characters, providing enough experience to gain a level and more should they survive and destroy the aliens among them! Grab this exciting 74-page adventure today and **Make Your Game Legendary!**