

STARFINDER®



DEAD SUNS

ADVENTURE PATH

INCIDENT AT ABSALOM STATION

ROBERT G. McCREARY



SUNRISE MAIDEN TIER 3

Sanjaval Vagabond

Medium explorer

Speed 10; **Maneuverability** good (turn 1); **Drift** 1

AC 13; **TL** 13

HP 55; **DT** —; **CT** 11

Shields light 60 (forward 15, port 15, starboard 15, aft 15)

Attack (Forward) gyrolaser (1d8)

Attack (Port) light laser cannon (2d4)

Attack (Starboard) light laser cannon (2d4)

Attack (Aft) flak thrower (3d4)

Attack (Turret) light particle beam (3d6)

Power Core Pulse Green (150 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** basic mid-range sensors, crew quarters (good), extra light weapon mount (aft), mk 3 armor, mk 3 defenses, mk 1 duonode computer (tier 1, artificial personality upgrade); **Expansion Bays** cargo holds (2), escape pods, recreation suite (HAC/gym)

Modifiers +1 to any 2 checks per round, +2 Computers, +1 Piloting; **Complement** 1-6

The Sanjaval Spaceflight Systems Vagabond-class multipurpose light transport/freighter is a versatile workhorse with a reputation for durability and reliability. In service for over 100 years, Vagabonds are still regularly used throughout the Pact Worlds as cargo haulers, smuggling ships, and exploratory survey vessels. While a crew of six is the standard complement for the Vagabond, the ship's coordinated control interface and double redundancies on critical systems were designed to allow a single pilot to operate the vessel with little difficulty.

Utilizing the popular explorer frame, the Vagabond is equipped with a Pulse Green power core, high-grade Dakkar M10-E thrusters, and a Signal Basic Drift drive. Standard armament is a Gorkal broad-arc gyrolaser mounted forward, supplemented by two Reinbach light laser cannons port and starboard. In addition, a turret-mounted Arabani Arms light particle beam projector provides 360-degree offensive capability at intermediate range.

One of the Vagabond's most popular features is its completely customizable modular expansion bays. Sanjaval Spaceflight Systems produces a variety of interchangeable service modules, from technomantic laboratories to deluxe guest cabins, all of which can be easily swapped out as needed at any basic spaceport in only a fraction of the time it takes to convert one expansion bay to another on other starships.

The *Sunrise Maiden* is a stock Vagabond. Captain Moriko Nash's personal touches to the ship can be seen in the captain's cabin and the vessel's customized expansion bays, which include twin cargo holds, six escape pods, and a custom recreation suite incorporating both a gym and a holographic amusement chamber.

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Development Lead • Robert G. McCreary

Authors • Jason Keeley, Robert G. McCreary, Owen K.C. Stephens, and James L. Sutter

Cover Artist • David Alvarez

Interior Artists • Leonardo Borazio, Taylor Fischer, Victor Manuel Leza Moreno, Mark Molnar, Mirco Paganessi, Miroslav Petrov, and Allison Theus

Cartographer • Damien Mammoliti

Starfinder Creative Director • James L. Sutter

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Amanda Hamon Kunz, Jason Keeley, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, and Mark Seifter

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ON THE COVER



Artist David Alvarez gives us a glimpse of Absalom Station's seedy underbelly with his depiction of Ferani Nadaz, boss of the Downside Kings, one of the station's most notorious street gangs.



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This book refers to several other Starfinder products, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Starfinder hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at paizo.com/sfrd.



Paizo Inc.

7120 185th Ave NE, Ste 120

Redmond, WA 98052-0577

paizo.com

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FORTUNE IN THE STARS

Take your station, check your helmet seals, warm up the thrusters, and strap in, because the Starfinder Adventure Path is ready to launch! The book you hold in your hands contains the very first adventure written and published for the Starfinder Roleplaying Game, but it's also the inaugural volume of the brand-new Starfinder Adventure Path, the first in a series of linked adventures that together form an entire campaign for Starfinder. If you're not familiar with the Adventure Path concept, check out A Path to the Stars on page 3, which outlines what you can expect from each bimonthly Adventure Path volume to come.

One of the primary goals we have for the Starfinder Adventure Path is to feature material that can be used by both players and Game Masters. The adventures are primarily geared for GMs, of course, but there's still plenty of room for new toys for players and their characters. In every volume of the Starfinder Adventure Path, we plan to offer additional rules content that players can use, whether

that means new equipment or weapons, new feats or spells, or new character options. Much of the setting material we'll be debuting in the Adventure Path can help immerse players in the Starfinder campaign setting and provide story hooks and ideas for vibrant characters with deep connections to the people and places of the Pact Worlds and beyond. In addition, many of the new alien creatures presented in Adventure Path volumes will include racial traits, so that players can build characters of these races (with GM permission, of course). After all, what's a galaxy without a whole host of aliens to play, meet, or fight?

If this is your first look at the Starfinder RPG, welcome! You'll soon see that while there are lots of sci-fi elements in this adventure (and in Starfinder in general), there is plenty of magic as well! That's because Starfinder is a science fantasy game that combines ancient magic and advanced technology and gives players a wide range of options to choose from, both when creating characters and in play.

If you're already acquainted with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, you'll likely notice some similarities between Starfinder and Pathfinder, but there are also quite a few differences. Starfinder is very much its own game, with its own rules, themes, and setting—you can't just trade in your crossbow for a laser pistol! That said, the game is designed for new players just as much as for experienced ones, so whether this is your first foray into Starfinder, or even into RPGs in general, this game is for you. No previous knowledge of Pathfinder is required—just a willingness to have fun!

A PATH TO THE STARS

The Starfinder Adventure Path is designed to present entire campaigns to play using the Starfinder RPG rules. Each Adventure Path will run for a year, with a new volume released every other month. Each volume of the Adventure Path includes a new chapter in the campaign, supplementary articles that provide additional details on the Starfinder campaign setting, and new rules content for the Starfinder RPG that players and GMs alike can make use of. Each volume also includes a new installment of the Starfinder Adventure Path "Alien Archives," which furnishes a variety of alien creatures and monsters for GMs to add to their Starfinder games (many of which appear in the accompanying Starfinder adventure). In addition, the "Codex of Worlds" in each volume introduces a new planet, expanding the Starfinder campaign setting and suggesting hooks for GMs to set their own adventures on these worlds. Finally, we'll be presenting a brand-new starship in each volume as well, complete with full statistics and deck plans, ready for use by the PCs or their enemies.

DEAD SUNS

Our first Starfinder Adventure Path, Dead Suns, kicks off with "Incident at Absalom Station," an adventure for four 1st-level characters by yours truly. Designed to introduce Starfinder to GMs as well as players, the adventure begins on Absalom Station, but the campaign will take the heroes throughout the Pact Worlds and far beyond. There are threats both familiar and unfamiliar for the player characters to face, as well as opportunities for the players to get to know the Starfinder setting and many of Starfinder's rules, including the excitement of starship combat! Of course, you can't have starship combat without starships, so the adventure also provides the heroes with their very own ship to use during the entire campaign—that is, if they can find the ship and survive the dangers that the adventure throws at them first! (Take a look at the inside covers of this volume if you want an early peek at the *Sunrise Maiden*.)

We've also got a huge gazetteer of Absalom Station, the metaphorical center of both the Pact Worlds and the wider Starfinder campaign setting, by Starfinder Creative Director James L. Sutter. This gazetteer greatly expands on

the information presented in the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*, describing in detail many of the station's neighborhoods and districts, as well as political factions and notable inhabitants.

This is followed by a selection of magical relics whose origins lie in the distant past on lost Golarion, by Starfinder Design Lead Owen K.C. Stephens. If you're familiar with the Pathfinder RPG and its campaign setting of Golarion, you may recognize a few of these ancient relics—though they've been updated for the futuristic setting that is Starfinder! These items make excellent additions to the options available in the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*, though of course GMs can use them to equip enemies, too!

No Adventure Path would be complete without monsters, so in this month's "Alien Archives," Jason Keeley and I present seven new creatures. Many of these appear in this month's adventure, but they can be always used to populate your own scenarios as well.

Finally, this month's volume also features a brief description of the ocean world Heicoron IV in the first installment of the "Codex of Worlds."

As to where the Dead Suns Adventure Path goes after "Incident at Absalom Station," just turn the page for the Dead Suns Campaign Outline, which gives you a look at the overall plot of the Adventure Path and a brief overview of each of the campaign's six adventures. As you can see, there's a lot still to come!

Once you've had a chance to read through "Incident at Absalom Station" and the additional material in this volume, come visit us at paizo.com. Our messageboards can be a valuable and informative resource for players and GMs alike, with discussions on a wide variety of topics, including both the Starfinder Roleplaying Game and the Dead Suns Adventure Path. While you're there, check out some of the other resources available for Starfinder, such as the *Starfinder Alien Archive*, *Starfinder Core Rulebook Pawn Collection*, *Starfinder Flip-Mat: Basic Starfield*, *Starfinder GM Screen*, *Starfinder Player Character Folio*, and more, available at paizo.com/starfinder or your local game store. And don't forget to keep an eye on our blog, also at paizo.com, where you can learn about new and upcoming releases for Starfinder and the Starfinder Adventure Path.

So let's get started—"Incident at Absalom Station" is only pages away, and there's fortune to be found among the stars! I hear a ship has just arrived at Absalom Station, towing a strange asteroid and missing its crew. I wonder what that's all about? Let's play some Starfinder and find out!

Rob

Robert G. McCreary
Senior Developer, Starfinder Design Lead
rob.mccreary@paizo.com

INCIDENT AT ABSALOM STATION

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ANCIENT THREATS REAWAKEN

DEAD SUNS ADVENTURE PATH

A new danger threatens the Pact Worlds when a derelict ship arrives at Absalom Station towing a mysterious asteroid—an asteroid that's actually a fragment of an ancient alien superweapon called the Stellar Degenerator, capable of destroying entire stars. In the Dead Suns Adventure Path, the PCs are members of the Starfinder Society, and their task is twofold: to learn all they can about this ancient technology and the alien civilizations behind it, and to prevent the weapon from falling into the wrong hands.

In the first half of the Adventure Path, the PCs acquire their own starship, which will be their home and base of operations throughout the campaign, and which they can upgrade and personalize as they advance in level. The PCs travel to various locations throughout the Pact Worlds (the primary setting of the Starfinder Roleplaying Game) to gather what information they can on the Stellar Degenerator. As the campaign unfolds, the PCs also discover that two other groups—the Cult of the Devourer and the Corpse Fleet—have learned of the alien superweapon and seek to add it to their own arsenals.

In the second half of the campaign, the PCs head out into the wider galaxy in search of the Stellar Degenerator, visiting distant worlds and uncovering more ancient alien technology and history, all the while racing against both the Devourer cult and the Corpse Fleet. Through the course of the Adventure Path, the PCs embark on personal journeys that will take them from neophytes in the Starfinder Society to saviors of the Pact Worlds—provided they succeed, of course!

For more details on the events precipitating the Dead Suns Adventure Path, see the Adventure Background on page 5.

INCIDENT AT ABSALOM STATION

Starfinder Adventure Path #1, Levels 1–2

A deserted ship named the *Acreon* arrives at Absalom Station from hyperspace, towing behind it a mysterious asteroid dubbed the Drift Rock. The PCs come to Absalom Station to join the Starfinder Society but soon find themselves caught up in a gang war instigated by two factions—the Hardscrabble Collective, the scrappy mining clan that owns the *Acreon*; and Astral Extractions, the large corporation that hired the ship. With both factions vying to claim the ship and the asteroid,

CAMPAIGN OUTLINE

SPOILER ALERT!

On these pages you'll find the background and outline for the Dead Suns Adventure Path. If you intend to play in this campaign, be warned! These pages spoil the plot for the upcoming adventures as thoroughly as possible.

the Starfinder Society hires the PCs to investigate the death of one of its members caught in the gangs' crossfire. After exploring some of Absalom Station and dealing with the gangs, the PCs are hired by Gevalarsk Nor, Eox's ambassador to Absalom Station, who is serving as a mediator between the factions. The PCs' job: to explore the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock and learn what happened to the crew.

The PCs take a shuttle to the quarantined *Acreon*, but one of the warring factions sends a ship to attack them, giving them their first taste of starship combat. The PCs can find no trace of the deserted mining ship's crew, but they do find the ship infested with alien monsters and opportunistic scavengers. The PCs continue their explorations on the Drift Rock, which is honeycombed with tunnels and rooms, and learn the final fate of the *Acreon*'s crew, while also dealing with an extraterrestrial monster that inhabits the asteroid. The PCs eventually learn that the asteroid is incredibly ancient and that it is a fragment of some larger alien structure or artifact, perhaps a weapon, though its exact nature remains an enigma. They also discover the *Sunrise Maiden*, a ship lost in hyperspace 75 years ago, which they can claim for themselves. But as soon as the PCs leave the Drift Rock in their new starship, they come under attack from a mysterious ship!

TEMPLE OF THE TWELVE

Starfinder Adventure Path #2, Levels 3–4

Now in possession of a ship, the *Sunrise Maiden*, the PCs must battle their way off the Drift Rock, eventually finding out that the exiled Corpse Fleet of Eox was behind the attack. Eager for more information about the Drift Rock's origins, the party travels to Castrovel, home of some of the best universities in the Pact Worlds. In Qabarat, one of Castrovel's most powerful Iashunta city-states and the planet's primary spaceport, the PCs must navigate the politics of academia at the esteemed University of Xenoarchaeology and Xenoanthropology. Eventually, the characters uncover an obscure pre-Gap reference to an ancient, forgotten, elven temple-city on Castrovel called the Temple of the Twelve, which had supposedly found evidence of an advanced extraterrestrial civilization long ago.

In search of the Temple of the Twelve, the PCs must embark on an overland journey through the teeming jungles of Castrovel's

western continent, facing some of the planet's dangerous flora and fauna, as well as members of the Cult of the Devourer, who are likewise interested in the Drift Rock's secrets and have followed the PCs to Castrovel. Upon reaching the abandoned and overgrown elven temple-city, the characters must contend with Castrovelian Devourer cultists who have taken over much of the crumbling ruins. After exploring the ruins, the PCs learn that the elves had discovered an almost unimaginably immense megastructure called the Gate of Twelve Suns, which relates in some way to the Drift Rock and, potentially, to an ancient alien superweapon. Unfortunately, the Cult of the Devourer is now also looking for the Gate of Twelve Suns, and though the PCs might have defeated the cult's agents on Castrovel, those cultists were receiving their orders from a secret asteroid base in the Diaspora.

SPLINTERED WORLDS

Starfinder Adventure Path #3, Levels 5–6

Tracking the Cult of the Devourer from Castrovel, the PCs travel to the scattered worldlets of the Diaspora to investigate the cult's secret asteroid base. Upon locating the base, however, they discover that the cult has abandoned it. The PCs can find no details about why the cult left the base or where they might have gone, but the PCs do find evidence that the Corpse Fleet has also visited the base, along with indications that the Corpse Fleet may have stolen and deleted files from the base's computer systems.

With new evidence of the Corpse Fleet's involvement, the party travels to Eox to investigate the exiled navy and to research alien superweapons, as Eox is the only Pact World to have developed such a weapon. Although Eox's government has supposedly disavowed the Corpse Fleet, the reality is more nuanced, and as the PCs undertake research and question various Eoxian officials to find the truth, Corpse Fleet agents oppose them at every step. Eventually, the PCs recover the Devourer cult's files from the Corpse Fleet agents, learning from them that the Cult of the Devourer abandoned its Diaspora base to search for the Stellar Degenerator in a distant star system called Nejeor.

THE RUINED CLOUDS

Starfinder Adventure Path #4, Levels 7–8

Chasing the Cult of the Devourer, the PCs depart the Pact Worlds for the expanses of the Vast, journeying to the uncharted star system of Nejeor, where they discover the ruins of an ancient alien civilization on the gas giant Nejeor VI. This ruined city, Istamak, once belonged to the kishalee, the alien species that defeated the sivvs and captured the Stellar Degenerator. Kishalee civilization fell into decline millions of years ago, and since that time, the kishalee have devolved into a savage, degenerate species called the kish that now inhabits the ruins of Istamak.

The kish no longer have knowledge of their ancestors' great civilization or scientific advances, which have become

the foundation of kish legend and superstition. As the PCs explore Istamak, they can piece together clues in the ruins to learn that the Stellar Degenerator is real and was hidden away in its own demiplane, which can only be accessed through a kishalee megastructure called the Gate of Twelve Suns. Unfortunately, the PCs also discover that the Cult of the Devourer was in Istamak before them and is already on its way to the Gate of Twelve Suns!

THE THIRTEENTH GATE

Starfinder Adventure Path #5, Levels 9–10

The PCs travel to the Gate of Twelve Suns: a massive, artificial construction on a scale far beyond the capabilities of modern Pact Worlds engineering. Built by the ancient kishalee civilization, the Gate of Twelve Suns consists of 12 stars arranged in a circle, each orbited by a single controller moon. The PCs arrive only to find that the Cult of the Devourer has claimed the alien megastructure and is trying to access the Stellar Degenerator's demiplane. The PCs must contend with Devourer cult ships guarding the gate before exploring some of the controller moons to learn how to activate the Gate of Twelve Suns—and how to prevent the Cult of the Devourer from doing the same. Once the PCs defeat the cult and its leader, they can open the Thirteenth Gate. As the demiplane containing the Stellar Degenerator is revealed, the Corpse Fleet suddenly appears in orbit around the Gate of Twelve Suns. They have secretly been tracking the PCs' ship since it left Eox, and the undead fleet has appeared at the last minute to seize control of the Gate of Twelve Suns and the Stellar Degenerator!

EMPIRE OF BONES

Starfinder Adventure Path #6, Levels 11–12

Outnumbered and massively outgunned by the Corpse Fleet in orbit around the Gate of Twelve Suns, the PCs must find a strategy to prevent the Corpse Fleet from getting its hands on the Stellar Degenerator. There is no way the PCs can take on a fleet of such great size with their single ship, and even if they managed to slip away undetected, it would leave the Stellar Degenerator in the hands of the Corpse Fleet. The PCs have only one viable strategy—a daring gambit to infiltrate the Corpse Fleet flagship, the *Empire of Bones*, seize control of it, and use it to destroy both the Stellar Degenerator and the Corpse Fleet itself.

After sneaking aboard the *Empire of Bones*, the PCs fight their way through security protocols and past the ship's undead crew to reach the flagship's bridge, where they must defeat the Corpse Fleet's bone sage admiral and his top officers to take command of the ship. Only then can the PCs set the ship to self-destruct and pilot the vessel into the demiplane on a collision course with the Stellar Degenerator. If successful, the PCs can destroy the ancient sivr superweapon and deal a decisive blow to the Corpse Fleet, but they'll still need to escape the flagship before the destruction of the Stellar Degenerator closes the gateway out of the demiplane!

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INCIDENT AT ABSALOM STATION

PART 1: ABSALOM GANG WAR

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When a deserted ship towing a peculiar asteroid arrives at Absalom Station, the heroes find themselves caught up in a dispute between two factions and their street-gang allies.

PART 2: GHOST SHIP

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Hired to investigate the derelict ship and its cargo, the heroes fight for their lives in a starship-to-starship battle against a hired mercenary before facing the current occupants of the quarantined ship.

PART 3: PHANTOMS OF THE DRIFT

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The heroes explore the mysterious asteroid called the Drift Rock. There they learn the true fate of the deserted ship's crew—and discover that the asteroid is far stranger than anyone could have imagined. The heroes also get a starship of their own when they find one abandoned on the asteroid!

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Incident at Absalom Station" is designed for four characters.

1

The PCs begin this adventure at 1st level.

2

The PCs should reach 2nd level while exploring the *Acreon*, and they should be 2nd level before venturing onto the Drift Rock.

3

The PCs should be 3rd level by the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Millions of years ago, two highly advanced, alien starfaring civilizations—those of the sivvs and the kishalee—were locked in a vicious war. The conflict ranged across multiple distant star systems for centuries, killing millions and consuming an incredible amount of resources on both sides. Both species were teetering on the edge of economic and societal collapse, but neither side could manage to get the upper hand. To decisively end this cycle of destruction in their favor, the sivvs developed a superweapon of almost unimaginable power called the Stellar Degenerator. The kishalee learned of the doomsday device, however, and defeated the sivvs before they could use the superweapon against them. The kishalee hid the Stellar Degenerator inside a hastily constructed demiplane and built a vast megastructure called the Gate of Twelve Suns that was required to access the demiplane and control the superweapon inside. Eventually, the kishalee civilization fell, as all civilizations eventually do, and the Stellar Degenerator, the Gate of Twelve Suns, and the secrets of their operation were forgotten.

After millions of years, the Stellar Degenerator has finally resurfaced. More than 200 years ago, a slice of the Stellar Degenerator's hidden demiplane was dragged into the Drift, bringing a portion of the ancient sivv superweapon with it. Since then, this fragment of the Stellar Degenerator—which looks like nothing more than an unremarkable asteroid—has floated undisturbed through the Drift. Until now.

A few weeks ago, the prospecting ship *Acreon*, owned by a scrappy clan of asteroid miners called the Hardscrabble Collective, discovered an asteroid floating in the Drift while traveling to Absalom Station from Near Space. Always looking for their next claim, the miners captured the asteroid and towed it behind their ship—but when the *Acreon* arrived at Absalom Station, its crew had disappeared, leaving the ship deserted. Station security immediately quarantined the ship and the mysterious asteroid at a safe distance from the station, pending further inquiry.

Two groups have stated a vested interest in the *Acreon* and the asteroid. One is the Hardscrabble Collective, which owns the ship and claims mineral rights to the asteroid. The other is Astral Extractions, a large mining company that hired the Hardscrabble Collective and the *Acreon* to explore potential sites for future exploitation. Both groups claim the sole right to investigate the disappearance of the *Acreon*'s crew and determine the fate of both the ship and the asteroid.

On Absalom Station, rumors and conjecture abound regarding the disappearance of the *Acreon*'s crew and the origin and nature of the enigmatic asteroid, which people

are now calling the "Drift Rock." Astral Extractions and the Hardscrabble Collective have been unable to come to terms with each other regarding the disposition of the *Acreon* and its cargo, and while they wait for arbitration, both groups have begun gathering supporters from among Absalom Station's street gangs. The dispute has been simmering just below the surface, but it's about to explode into open clashes in the halls of Absalom Station—a conflict that will soon include the Starfinder Society as well.

Two other factions are interested in the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock, though less publicly. The first is the exiled Corpse Fleet of Eox, which wants to recover secret cargo it placed on the ship. The second is the Cult of Devourer, which enters the scene when news spreads of the fate of the *Acreon*'s crew. As the campaign begins, neither of these two groups is aware of the Stellar Degenerator, but once they learn of the superweapon's existence, the factions will stop at nothing to acquire the doomsday device for their own purposes—which would have dire consequences for the safety and security of the Pact Worlds.

PART 1: ABSALOM GANG WAR

The Dead Suns Adventure Path starts on Absalom Station, the gigantic space station that occupies the former orbit of the sun's now-vanished third planet, Golarion. Absalom Station is the administrative and cultural center of the Pact Worlds, and now serves as the system's primary home of humanity. The player characters should have some sort of connection with the Starfinder Society, either as new members or as prospective applicants (at the very least, the PCs should have a good reason to ally themselves with the Society), and have come to Absalom Station to find work.

The PCs don't need to be acquainted with one another yet; they've all made arrangements to meet a dwarven Starfinder named Duravor Kreele in Docking Bay 94. Kreele has promised to show them around the station, help them get settled, and facilitate their membership into the Starfinder Society. The adventure assumes that the PCs are all passengers on the shuttle *Okimoro*, which has just arrived at Absalom Station, landing in Docking Bay 94. If any characters are natives of Absalom Station, they can be either returning to the station after a short time away or present in the docking bay awaiting the shuttle's arrival. Adjust the first encounter as necessary to account for any PCs that are not passengers on the shuttle. The players should take a few moments to make introductions and describe their characters to each other before moving on to the first encounter, Caught in the Crossfire, on the next page.

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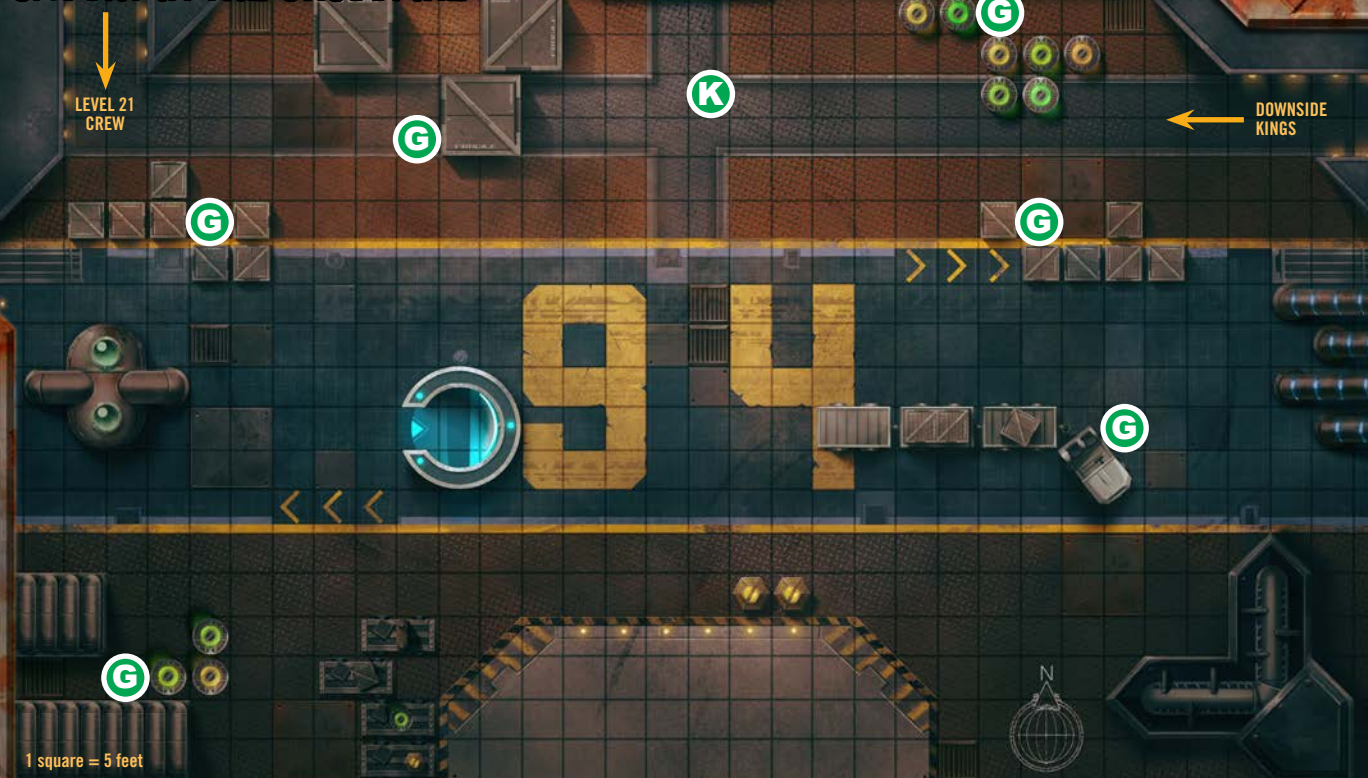
ABSALOM
STATION

RELIQS OF
GOLARION

ALIEN
ARCHIVES

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CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE



CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE (CR 2 OR 4)

The *Okimoro* has just landed in Docking Bay 94, one of scores of docking bays occupying the starlike arms that encircle Absalom Station's equator. Final docking procedures take a few minutes, at which point the cabin attendant welcomes the shuttle's passengers to Absalom Station, and the PCs can disembark from the *Okimoro* onto the floor of Docking Bay 94.

To set the scene and get the adventure started, read or paraphrase the following.

The brightly lit docks of Absalom Station are abuzz with activity as travelers bustle by, preparing to board or disembarking from starships bound to or from any of dozens of worlds. Brash and swaggering starpilots, scurrying ysoki mechanics, and expectant colonists mingle with enigmatic kasatha mystics, hard-faced asteroid miners, imposing vesk mercenaries, and more, creating a microcosm of the abundance and variety of life in the Pact Worlds. New arrivals meet friends, loved ones, or business contacts, and are whisked away into the humming activity of daily life on the vast space station. Beyond them, ground crews tend to the docked ships, and dockworkers in mechanized cargo lifters load and unload freight and baggage. A sharp tang of ozone hangs in the air—a byproduct of electrical discharges from the docked ships—but underneath, the station's atmosphere has a slightly used aroma. The docking bay's deck plates thrum beneath your feet, though whether it's from the passage of innumerable feet or the vibrations of the station's power conduits and air recycling systems is impossible to say.

Creatures: The PCs' Starfinder contact, **Duravor Kree** (LN male dwarf), is awaiting their arrival in the docking bay, but two other groups—members of a pair of rival Absalom Station street gangs, the Downside Kings and the Level 21 Crew—are moving stealthily into the docking bay at the same time. The two gangs have been adversaries for years, but their animosity toward each other has flared in recent days, as each gang has been hired by one of the factions currently competing over the fate of the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock: Astral Extractions and the Hardscrabble Collective. Astral Extractions has ordered the Kings to intimidate the Collective's members and keep any other faction (such as the Starfinders) from intervening in the dispute. The Level 21 Crew, hired for protection by the Hardscrabble Collective, got wind of the Kings' activities and headed to Docking Bay 94 to confront their rivals.

When all the PCs have set foot in the docking bay, allow them to attempt Perception checks. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 5 Perception check sees Kree waiting for them in the middle of the docking bay. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check also notices the two groups of people on the fringes of the docking bay furtively taking up defensive positions among stacks of cargo crates and machinery.

Kree is tall and lanky for a dwarf, with a bristly, iron-gray beard and deep-set eyes beneath bushy eyebrows. With his patched and stained coveralls, the dwarf looks like just another dockworker, but a badge bearing the symbol of the Starfinder Society stands out on his chest. Kree checks the computer he's holding and looks up to scan the crowd. When he sees the PCs, he raises a hand in greeting and gives them

a friendly smile. Before the PCs can return the greeting, however, the air is suddenly filled with laser blasts as the Kings and the 21 Crew open fire on each other. Bystanders scream and flee in terror, diving for cover or milling about frantically. Kreeel freezes, paralyzed with fear.

There are six gang members in total: three Downside Kings and three Level 21 Crew (use the Absalom Station gang member stat block below for members of both gangs). The Downside Kings enter the docking bay from the northeast (see the Directions in Space sidebar) and take up the positions marked **G** on the right side of the map. The Level 21 Crew enter from the northwest and take up the positions marked **G** on the left side of the map. Duravor Kreeel stands in the middle of the docking bay at the position marked **K** on the map. The PCs start in the area marked with caution lines in the bottom center of the map.

The first round of combat is a surprise round. Only the gangs and PCs who succeeded at the more difficult Perception check to notice the approaching gang members can act during this round. Have each of the PCs roll 1d6; on a roll of 1, that character is targeted this round by one of the gang members. At the same time, the PCs see a laser beam hit Kreeel. The dwarf falls to the floor without a sound and does not move.

Following the surprise round, combat continues as normal. The gangs have no idea who the PCs are, and the scene is utter chaos. Each round, randomly determine whether the individual gang members shoot at the PCs or the other gang. If they can't get a clear shot at any of the PCs, they fire at the opposing gang. Even though the gangs are shooting at the PCs, it should be clear to them that the gangs' real targets are each other; the PCs are just caught in the crossfire.

There is plenty of cover available in the docking bay for combatants on all three sides to make use of, from crates and shipping containers to baggage carts, machinery, and even an information booth near the middle of the docking bay. The precise type of cover (partial, normal, improved, or total) these objects provide is left for you to determine, and the PCs (or the gang members) might be able to increase their amount of cover by ducking down or dropping prone behind smaller objects. In any case, both the PCs and gang members would be well advised to take advantage of the opportunities for cover within the docking bay.

Discourage the PCs from engaging both gangs at the same time; that would make this a CR 4 encounter—a challenge of epic difficulty for 1st-level PCs! Instead, let them know it's better to focus their fire and take out one group of enemies at a time. Neither gang is interested in talking; their blood is up and they just want to hurt their rivals. Once all three members of one gang have been killed, the survivors from the other gang immediately stop fighting and flee the docking bay, disappearing into the depths of the station.

PCs who want to check on Kreeel or give him medical aid find that the dwarf is already dead, with a hole burned

DIRECTIONS IN SPACE

One difficulty with mapping locations on a space station, starship, asteroid, or other object floating in space is the lack of cardinal directions. With no magnetic poles, which way is east on a space station? To address this problem, standard cardinal directions are still used on space stations, asteroids, and other free-floating bodies without a magnetic north. However, these directions are completely arbitrary; "north" on one space station has no relation to magnetic north or "north" on another space station. While this is perhaps not the most accurate way of describing directions in space, it does allow for easier descriptions of locations and relative positions in terms that everyone is familiar with. These definitions are used only for locations in space without a common reference point; on larger moons and planets, the cardinal directions retain their standard definitions.

Starships, on the other hand, use the same descriptors as the ship's facing, which are the same directions used for firing arcs in starship combat. So forward is toward the front (or bow) of the ship, aft is toward the rear (or stern) of the ship, port is toward the left side of the ship, and starboard is toward the right side of the ship.

completely through his neck from the laser beam. No matter what they try, nothing the PCs do can save him. It's important that Kreeel dies before the PCs can do anything about it; their investigation of the dwarf's death on behalf of the Starfinder Society is the impetus for the following sections of the adventure.

ABSALOM STATION GANG MEMBERS (6) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

LE or CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Perception** +10

DEFENSE **HP 13 EACH**

EAC 10; **KAC** 12

Fort +2; **Ref** +4; **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +3 (1d6+2 B)

Ranged azimuth laser pistol +6 (1d4+1 F; critical burn 1d4)

STATISTICS

Str +2; **Dex** +3; **Con** +1; **Int** -1; **Wis** +0; **Cha** -1

Skills Athletics +4, Bluff +5, Intimidate +9, Stealth +5

Languages Common

Gear flight suit stationwear, azimuth laser pistol with battery (20 charges), club, credstick (150 credits)

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Development: As the battle winds down, station security finally arrives, but too late to join in the fight. Emergency medical services follow a few minutes later to assist the injured. Security personnel question witnesses (including the PCs) and take their statements. Fortunately, the witnesses agree that the PCs didn't start the fight, so they are free to go. If asked, any of the security officers can identify the two groups involved as two of Absalom Station's most infamous street gangs: the Downside Kings and the Level 21 Crew.

If necessary, the emergency medics can administer first aid to the PCs or treat deadly wounds (using the Medicine skill). They can also confirm that Kreeel is dead and make arrangements for the body. If the PCs search the dwarf's body, they find little other than his computer, which contains the name and description of each of the PCs, as well as one additional name: Chiskisk, and an address. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture check to recall knowledge recognizes the name as that of a high-ranking Starfinder on Absalom Station, and the address as that of the Lorespire Complex, the Starfinder Society's headquarters on the station.

Story Award: If the PCs somehow manage to avoid combat by escaping or sneaking out of the docking bay without engaging either of the gangs, award them 600 XP, as if they had defeated one of the gangs.

THE STARFINDER SOCIETY

Since Duravor Kreeel was the PCs' only Starfinder connection on the station, it's likely they'll want to make contacting the Society their first priority, if only to inform the organization that Kreeel is dead. If they want to get settled on the station first, see Absalom Station Investigations on page 11 for some brief guidelines. If the PCs don't think of getting in touch with the Starfinders themselves, the Society eventually approaches them, inviting them for a meeting at the organization's headquarters, the Lorespire Complex.

Locating the Starfinder Society is straightforward; besides the address on Kreeel's computer, the PCs can easily find the address of the Lorespire Complex on a public information kiosk in the docks, or a PC can persuade almost any station native to direct them to the location with a successful DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information. The Lorespire Complex, located in Absalom Station's Ring sector, is a campus with multiple buildings and rooms, though its eponymous spire is what people most associate with the Starfinder Society's headquarters. Upon their arrival, the PCs are greeted by a receptionist who inquires as to their business with the Starfinder Society. If the PCs mention the

shootout in the docking bay, Duravor Kreeel's death, or the name found on Kreeel's computer (Chiskisk), the receptionist points them toward a small waiting room and politely asks them to wait. After several minutes, a functionary arrives to lead them to a cluttered but clean office deep in the complex.

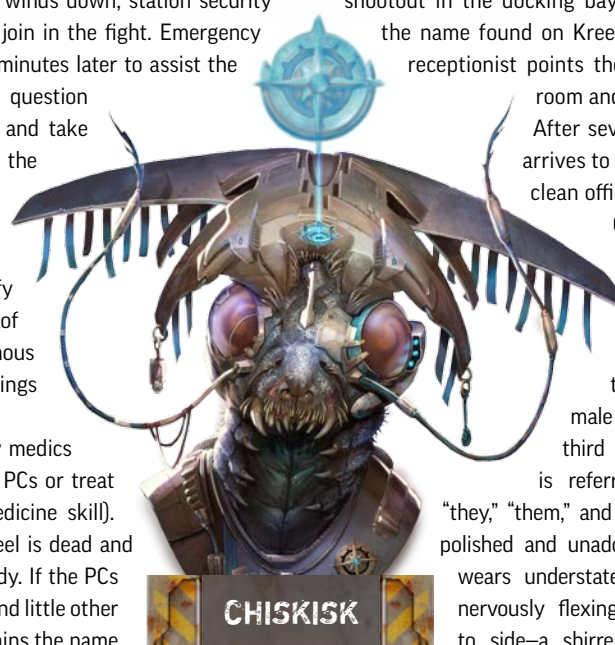
Creature: Waiting in the office for the PCs is **Chiskisk** (N host shirren), a member of the Starfinder Society's elected leadership council, the Forum. Chiskisk is neither male nor female, but host, the third shirren sex, and as such is referred to with the pronouns "they," "them," and "themselves." Seated behind a polished and unadorned plastic desk, Chiskisk wears understated business clothes and is nervously flexing their antennae from side to side—a shirren expression of perplexity.

Chiskisk welcomes the PCs, offers them refreshments (filtered water and processed-protein wafers), and bids them sit down before introducing themselves. If the PCs have not yet mentioned that Duravor Kreeel was killed, Chiskisk is puzzled about their unescorted arrival at the Lorespire Complex, and asks them where the dwarf is. Once Chiskisk learns of Kreeel's death (or if they are already aware), the shirren gets down to business, speaking telepathically in the PCs' heads.

"I am sorry that I cannot welcome you to Absalom Station under better circumstances. I assure you that such attacks are not a daily occurrence, though I realize that is likely small comfort to you. I am pleased that none of you were seriously hurt, but I grieve for Duravor's death. He was a valued member of the Society, and a friend. May the Lady of Graves be kind in her judgment of his soul." The shirren bows their head momentarily, then looks up, their compound eyes glittering.

"What puzzles me is the reason behind the attack." Chiskisk taps a few commands into their computer. "According to the incident report just released by station security, two gangs were involved in the attack: the Downside Kings and the Level 21 Crew. Gang wars are not uncommon on the station, but they usually confine themselves to the more lawless sectors like the Puddles. It is rare for street gangs to battle openly in public areas like the docks. I cannot help but wonder whether all is as it seems. There must be a reason why those two gangs were at Docking Bay 94 at that time—the time of your arrival, coincidentally. But was it coincidence? Were you and Duravor just innocent bystanders caught in the crossfire, or might you and he have been specifically targeted? And if so, why?"

"My understanding is that you are interested in becoming Starfinders, and since you were witnesses to the attack, I



would like to ask you to investigate the incident on behalf of the Society. Find out exactly what happened and why. It may simply be a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time—I have no doubt station security will rule it so—but if Duravor was murdered, I would like to find justice for my friend. At the same time, this will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your own skills and abilities and show the Society that you are worthy of the title 'Starfinder.' Good luck."

Assuming the PCs agree to investigate the attack and Duravor Kreel's possible murder, Chiskisk has little else to offer them at this point; Absalom Station's street gangs are not the shirren's specialty, and their suspicion regarding Kreel's death is just that—it's up to the PCs to find proof, if any exists. Chiskisk does give their personal comm code to the PCs, so they can call and report if necessary, but for the most part, the PCs will be on their own.

Chiskisk also transfers 200 credits to each of the PCs' accounts (a "signing bonus plus expenses," the shirren calls it) and suggests they get settled on the station before starting their investigation. If the PCs have not yet found a place to stay, Chiskisk recommends a small hotel called the Moons of Sleep. Located just a short walk from the parks and towers of the Eye, the hotel is centrally located, and has both efficiencies and suites available. Furthermore, the Moons offers discounted lodging to Starfinders who book rooms for at least a week's stay: 16 credits per week for an efficiency, or 50 credits per week for a small, two-bed suite.

Development: Chiskisk doesn't have a particular defined role in the rest of the adventure, but you can develop the shirren Starfinder as needed to assist the PCs. Chiskisk has lived on Absalom Station for many years and can act as a friendly NPC to help the PCs get their bearings on the station, answer any questions they might have (without giving away any plot points, of course!), or gently point them in the right direction if they're unsure of their next step. Chiskisk will not join any combat missions, however, and should not overshadow the PCs—let them make the decisions and try to solve problems on their own as much as possible.

ABSALOM STATION INVESTIGATIONS

Before they start their investigation, the PCs are probably going to want to get themselves established on Absalom Station and get a sense of what the station has to offer. The adventure focuses on those locations important to the PCs' investigations, but you can use the Absalom Station gazetteer beginning on page 38 to add further detail and flavor to the vibrant space station. If the PCs have already met Chiskisk, they can follow the shirren's suggestions for finding accommodations, but the huge space platform has no shortage of rooms for rent (see page 235 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook* for prices).

Once the PCs have a place to stay, they can learn more about current events on the station. By far the biggest news, discussed endlessly on newsfeeds and in public conversation,

is the arrival of the derelict ship *Acreon* a few days ago, the whereabouts and fate of its missing crew, and the nature of the mysterious "Drift Rock" the ship brought with it (as detailed in Adventure Background on page 7). Rumors and speculation are rampant: the *Acreon*'s crew witnessed something significant and were killed to keep it secret; the entire crew went mad and walked out the airlocks; the Drift Rock contains precious riches, from rare and valuable minerals to advanced technology, or even legendary treasures of lost Golarion, preserved before the planet disappeared.

The other main topic of discussion is the disagreement between Astral Extractions and the Hardscrabble Collective, both of whom claim ownership of the Drift Rock and the right to examine the *Acreon* and determine the fate of its crew.

To learn more information, the PCs must initiate their own investigations, either through research on the station's infosphere or by questioning locals throughout the station. The PCs' most likely lines of inquiry are divided into the following topics: Duravor Kreel, the Hardscrabble Collective, Astral Extractions, the Level 21 Crew, and the Downside Kings. Each of these topics is detailed in its own section below, which outlines the information the PCs can learn with a successful Culture check (or other skill check, when applicable) to recall knowledge or a successful Diplomacy check to gather information. The PCs can attempt the Culture checks to see what they know on their own, but if they carry out research on Absalom Station's infosphere first (requiring a successful DC 10 Computers check to access the unsecured public system), they can take 20 on the skill check to recall knowledge. The results of these checks are cumulative; on a successful check, the PCs should learn all of the information for lower results as well.

Although the PCs' inquiries and the information they can learn are represented by simple skill checks, feel free to flesh out the investigations via roleplaying encounters with various denizens of Absalom Station. In short, this section of the adventure can and should be modified to meet the needs of your game and your players with as much detail as you deem necessary.

DURAVOR KREEL

The PCs can learn the following about Duravor Kreel. Beyond the information below, there is little else to learn; he had no family on the station, few close friends, and no known enemies.

Result	Information
10+	Duravor Kreel was a midranking member of the Starfinder Society. Most of his work focused on mineral prospecting, but he also took an interest in mentoring new and prospective members of the Society.
15+	Kreel was a native of the Diaspora, the diffuse asteroid belt between Verces and Eox, and was known to have ties to dwarves and other mining

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groups in the region. An outspoken champion of miners' rights, Kreel was active in challenging large corporate interests that exploited individual miners and laborers, including Astral Extractions.

- 20+** Kreel had personally invested money in the Hardscrabble Collective. In addition, one of his cousins was a member of the group, but she died in a mining accident—the result of safety violations perpetrated by her contract employer, Astral Extractions.

ASTRAL EXTRACTIONS

In addition to the Culture skill, the PCs can also use Profession (corporate professional or miner) to recall knowledge about Astral Extractions.

Result	Information
10+	Astral Extractions is a powerful mining conglomerate with business ties throughout the Pact Worlds. Most of the company's operations are centered in the Diaspora and the rocky moons of the outer planets, but it has also begun sending scout vessels into the Vast in search of new claims. The company recently hired one of the Hardscrabble Collective's ships, the <i>Acreon</i> , for one of these exploratory missions.
15+	The public face of Astral Extractions is that of an ethical and respectable corporation, but outside of the public eye, some say the company uses hired muscle—corporate mercenaries, strikebreakers, and even criminal elements—as proxies to intimidate and threaten those who stand in its way.
20+	Following the arrival of the <i>Acreon</i> , Astral Extractions secretly hired a violent Absalom Station street gang called the Downside Kings to coerce the Hardscrabble Collective into abandoning its claims on the <i>Acreon</i> and the Drift Rock.
30+	Underworld sources claim that Astral Extractions specifically ordered the Downside Kings to target Duravor Kreel, whose anticorporate activism was well known to the company's board of directors, to discourage other parties (particularly the Starfinders) from intervening in the <i>Acreon</i> matter.

Development: If the PCs want to investigate Astral Extractions directly, they can easily find its corporate offices in Bluerise Tower in the Ring, one of the most expensive pieces of real estate in Absalom Station. Unfortunately, their efforts are stymied by the indifferent bureaucracy of the huge interplanetary corporation. At most, persistence (and a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check) earns them an appointment with a coolly professional lashunta corporate agent introducing herself as Ms. Joss. She listens attentively to everything the PCs have to say and confirms that Astral Extractions has had business dealings with the Hardscrabble

Collective in the past, but declares that the company is currently awaiting arbitration over the disposition of the *Acreon* and its cargo and has no further statements to make at this time. After thanking the PCs for their interest in Astral Extractions, Ms. Joss ends the meeting. There is little else the PCs can do; Astral Extractions is a powerful and influential corporation with its own private security force and the latest in anti-intrusion countermeasures, and any attempts by the PCs to attack, break in, or hack the company's offices or computer network end only in failure. If the PCs suspect the company of wrongdoing, they'll need to find proof elsewhere.

Story Award: Award the PCs 400 XP if they learn that Astral Extractions hired the Downside Kings as muscle to intimidate the Hardscrabble Collective. If the PCs also discover that the Kings were specifically instructed to murder Duravor Kreel, award them an additional 200 XP. These awards are the same whether the PCs are investigating the company or the gang (see page 13) and can only be earned once each.

THE HARDSCRABBLE COLLECTIVE

In addition to the Culture skill, the PCs can also use Profession (miner) to recall knowledge about the Hardscrabble Collective.

Result	Information
10+	The Hardscrabble Collective is a clan of stubborn asteroid miners that operates primarily among the scattered planetoids of the Diaspora. It has no offices or base of operations, but the clan members usually view the Armada—the ever-changing fleet of ships that orbit Absalom Station—as a central gathering place. Collective crews hire their ships out to a wide variety of business concerns, including Astral Extractions, which recently employed the Collective ship <i>Acreon</i> to scout for new mining prospects in the Vast.
15+	While the Hardscrabble Collective calls itself a clan, it is more of a cooperative business enterprise, a coalition of dozens of ships' crews who have banded together for mutual benefit and safety. While some of the Collective's members are related, most of them are individuals from a dozen different races: humans, dwarves, androids, ysoki, and more. Nevertheless, the Hardscrabble Collective is as tightly knit as many families, and members fiercely look after one another's welfare.
20+	Following the arrival of the <i>Acreon</i> and Astral Extractions' claim on the ship and the Drift Rock, the Hardscrabble Collective contracted with an Absalom Station street gang called the Level 21 Crew to protect its members and its interests on the station until the dispute can be resolved.

Development: If the PCs want to talk or meet with members of the Hardscrabble Collective personally, they'll

find it difficult, to say the least. The group has no offices on the station, and the employment firm that handles contracts for them only states that the Collective is not currently accepting any jobs. Even if the PCs manage to contact one of the Collective's ships in the Armada outside Absalom Station, the only response they get is the following: "Pending arbitration and on the advice of our attorneys, we are not responding to any public inquiries."

Story Award: If the PCs learn that the Hardscrabble Collective hired the Level 21 Crew for protection, whether from their investigation of the Collective or of the gang (see below), award them 400 XP. The PCs can earn this reward only once.

THE DOWNSIDE KINGS

Finding information about the Downside Kings is a bit more difficult, as they have less of a public presence due to their extralegal activities. Only the lowest result (DC 10) can be learned with a Culture check to recall knowledge; the PCs must use Diplomacy to gather information or Intimidate to garner the additional knowledge from higher results.

Result	Information
10+	The Downside Kings are a brutal street gang that controls several decks of Absalom Station's lower levels, or "Downside," through a combination of intimidation and violence. They are known to engage in a wide variety of illegal activities, from extortion, fraud, robbery, smuggling, and theft, to drug and arms trafficking, kidnapping, murder-for-hire, and trafficking in sentient species.
15+	<i>(Diplomacy or Intimidate only)</i> Turnover among the Downside Kings' leadership is high, but the gang's current boss is a barbarous human woman named Ferani Nadaz.
20+	<i>(Diplomacy or Intimidate only)</i> Astral Extractions has recruited the Downside Kings to threaten the Hardscrabble Collective and pressure the miners into handing over the <i>Acreon</i> and the Drift Rock to the company without dispute.
20+	<i>(Diplomacy or Intimidate only)</i> The Downside Kings are known to use a nightclub called Fusion Queen (see area B) as a front for their illegal activities.
30+	<i>(Diplomacy or Intimidate only)</i> Fearing that the Starfinders might be interested in the Drift Rock, Astral Extractions contracted the Downside Kings to kill Duravor Kree in hopes of preventing any Starfinder interference.

Story Award: Award the PCs 400 XP if they discover that Astral Extractions hired the Downside Kings. If the PCs also learn that the Kings were specifically instructed to murder Duravor Kree, award them an additional 200 XP. These awards are the same whether the PCs are investigating the gang or the company (see page 12) and can be earned only once each.

THE LEVEL 21 CREW

Like those of the Downside Kings, the Level 21 Crew's illicit undertakings limit the gang's public presence. Only the lowest result (DC 10) can be learned with a Culture check to recall knowledge; the PCs must use Diplomacy to gather information or Intimidate to garner the additional knowledge from higher results.

Result	Information
10+	The Level 21 Crew are a street gang that claims (unsurprisingly) Level 21 of Absalom Station's seedy lower decks as its territory. Their known criminal endeavors include theft, fencing stolen goods, gambling, prostitution, racketeering, and smuggling.
15+	<i>(Diplomacy or Intimidate only)</i> The Level 21 Crew may be a criminal gang, but they have a reputation in their territory (and neighboring levels) for promoting community empowerment, and many neighborhood residents tolerate or tacitly endorse their activities. The gang has also been known to hire itself out to defend marginalized and threatened groups or factions. A grizzled ysoki called Jabaxa currently leads the Level 21 Crew.
20+	<i>(Diplomacy or Intimidate only)</i> Fearing retribution from powerful corporate interests, the Hardscrabble Collective has recently hired the Level 21 Crew for protection.
30+	<i>(Diplomacy or Intimidate only)</i> Those who want to get in touch with the Level 21 Crew can leave word at a bodega called Mama Fats' (see area A), which the gang uses as a message drop.

Story Award: If the PCs find out that the Hardscrabble Collective has hired the Level 21 Crew, whether from their investigation of the gang or the Collective (see above), award them 400 XP. These awards are the same whether the PCs are investigating the gang or the company (see page 12) and can be earned only once each.

A. MAMA FATS' (CR 3)

Mama Fats' is a bodega located on the twenty-first deck in the Spike, the crowded, run-down lower half of Absalom Station. The surrounding neighborhood is low-end, but not quite a slum, and PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Culture check recognize graffiti on the walls as gang tags marking this as territory of the Level 21 Crew. The gang uses Mama Fats' as a message drop and safe house, but nothing about the shop marks it as anything other than a small neighborhood grocery store.

If the PCs come here in search of the Level 21 Crew, they can leave word with **Mama Fats** (N female halfling) herself. The gang invites the PCs for a meeting at the bodega the following day.

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How this encounter plays out depends on your players. The adventure assumes that the PCs are most likely to sympathize with the Hardscrabble Collective (and by extension, the Level 21 Crew) and oppose the Downside Kings, but that is not necessary for the adventure to continue. The PCs might instead choose to curry favor with Astral Extractions, or they might decide to remove the threat of both gangs. In short, this can be either a diplomatic or a combat encounter, depending on the PCs' goals.

Creatures: When the PCs arrive for the meeting they set up with the gang, they are escorted to a room in the back of the bodega, where the gang's leader, Jabaxa, waits for them along with two of his gang members. Jabaxa is a ysoki who has led the Level 21 Crew for several years and is a shrewd judge of character. If the PCs are friendly (or at least not overtly hostile), Jabaxa invites them to have a seat and pours out a shot of bathtub moonshine for each of them as a gesture of hospitality before asking them their business.

Jabaxa's initial attitude is indifferent. To improve the ysoki's attitude, a PC must succeed at a DC 16 Diplomacy check.



If a PC can make him at least friendly, Jabaxa will share what he knows. He flatly denies that his crew killed Duravor Kree (they don't even know who he was) and blames the murder on the Downside Kings. He claims that it was the Kings who started the shootout in Docking Bay 94, as well; his crew was there only to oppose them.

If the PCs have not learned any of the information about the Kings from the Downside Kings table on page 13, Jabaxa is more than happy to fill in any gaps in their knowledge, including the location of the Kings' hideout (though he does not know that Astral Extractions specifically ordered the Kings to kill Kree). Jabaxa's main concern is the rival gang; as long as the PCs aren't looking to mess with either the Level 21 Crew or the Hardscrabble Collective, he's got no beef with them. No matter how friendly or helpful the PCs make Jabaxa, however, he is unwilling to commit any of his gang members to help the PCs attack the Downside Kings. His job is to protect the Hardscrabble Collective, not to provoke Astral Extractions or the Kings into expanding the conflict.

JABAXA CR 1

XP 400

Male ysoki envoy

LE Small humanoid (ysoki)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE HP 17

EAC 11; **KAC** 12

Fort +1; **Ref** +5; **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee survival knife +4 (1d4+1 S)

Ranged pulsecaster pistol +6 (1d4+1 E nonlethal)

Offensive Abilities envoy improvisation (get 'em)

TACTICS

During Combat Jabaxa takes cover and selects the most dangerous-looking opponent each round to target with his get 'em envoy improvisation. If an enemy attacks him directly, or if his gang members are killed, Jabaxa returns fire with his pulsecaster.

Morale Jabaxa surrenders or attempts to flee if reduced to fewer than 6 Hit Points.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +4; **Con** +0; **Int** +1; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +2

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +10, Engineering +10, Intimidate +5, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +10, Survival +5

Languages Common, Ysoki

Other Abilities cheek pouches, moxie, persuasive

Gear second skin, pulsecaster pistol with battery (20 charges), survival knife, credstick (235 credits)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Persuasive (Ex) When attempting a Charisma-based skill check, Jabaxa rolls twice and takes the higher result.

LEVEL 21 CREW (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

LE Absalom Station gang member (see page 9)

HP 13 each

TACTICS

Morale The gang members shoot at anyone threatening Jabaxa or themselves with their laser pistols.

Morale The gang members attempt to flee if reduced to 3 Hit Points or fewer, or if Jabaxa is killed.

Development: If the PCs attack the Level 21 Crew and have not yet learned about the Downside Kings' hideout, they can find a map in the bodega's back room that marks the location of Fusion Queen (area B).

B. FUSION QUEEN

Fusion Queen is a nightclub located in the lower levels of Absalom Station, deep in Downside Kings territory. The Kings also own and operate the club, using it as a hideout and base of operations. The neighborhood is somewhat depressed, but still considered trendy in certain circles, and the club is usually filled with patrons (most of whom have no connection with the gang) at all hours, day or night.

How this encounter plays out depends on your players. The adventure assumes that the PCs are most likely to side with the Hardscrabble Collective and Level 21 Crew and attack the Downside Kings, but that is not necessary for the adventure to continue. For their part, however, the Downside Kings are not much interested in diplomacy. Astral Extractions has paid them well, and the gang makes no apologies for their actions. Might makes right in the eyes of the Downside Kings, and they're more likely to attack diplomatic PCs than waste time talking to them. Nevertheless, you should feel free to modify the following encounters to match the goals of your players as needed.

Use the map on page 16 for this location.

B1. FRONT DOOR (CR 1)

Lurid neon lights brighten the otherwise dingy space station corridor here, advertising the main entrance to Fusion Queen. Characters who succeed at a DC 15 Culture check can recognize the club's logo, a stylized crown, as a variant of the Downside Kings' symbol.

Creatures: Two Downside Kings guard the front doors of the nightclub, stopping anyone attempting to enter and searching them for weapons, as well as barring entry to anyone they feel doesn't match the club's usual clientele. Due to the current conflict with the Level 21 Crew, the gang members are particularly alert for trouble. The guards attack anyone who threatens them with hostility, or if they find any weapons in a search. The PCs can attempt to negotiate their way inside, but the guards' initial attitude is unfriendly and they are suspicious, requiring either a successful DC 20 Diplomacy or DC 19 Intimidate check to succeed. If the PCs fail at one of these checks, the gang members attack.

DOWNSIDE KINGS (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; Perception +10

DEFENSE

HP 13 EACH

EAC 10; KAC 12

Fort +2; Ref +4; Will +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +3 (1d6+2 B)

Ranged azimuth laser pistol +6 (1d4+1 F; critical burn 1d4)

TACTICS

Morale The gang members use their clubs to bludgeon anyone who gives them difficulty, but if they find weapons in a search or are attacked at range, they draw their laser pistols and open fire.

Morale The gang members attempt to flee if reduced to 3 Hit Points or fewer.

STATISTICS

Str +2; Dex +3; Con +1; Int -1; Wis +0; Cha -1

Skills Athletics +4, Bluff +5, Intimidate +9, Stealth +5

Languages Common

Gear flight suit stationwear, azimuth laser pistol with battery (20 charges), club, credstick (150 credits)

Story Award: If the PCs manage to get past the front door guards without arousing their suspicions, award them 400 XP, as if they had defeated the gang members in combat.

B2. BAR AND DANCE FLOOR

The dimly lit interior of the nightclub is filled with the press of sweaty bodies, a haze of narcotic smoke, and the pounding beat and ululating vocals of bakarang music blaring from the main stage in the northeast corner of the room. A sinuous bar winds around the northwest corner, offering a variety of drinks and drugs for purchase. Booths line the south wall of the club, facing the main stage in the northeast corner and the crowded dance floor beneath it. Gyrating dancers stand atop four smaller stages scattered around the club: one behind the bar, one in the center of the room, and two flanking the main stage. Wide double doors marked "Staff Only" exit the room to the west.

A small room that serves as a coat check (area B2a) stands just inside the club's front doors to the left.

If the PCs question any of the club's patrons, they find that none of them are involved with the Downside Kings, and few are even aware that the nightclub is associated with the gang. The bar and wait staff also deny any knowledge of the gang, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Sense Motive check can tell they are lying. In any case, no one in the club will assist the PCs or answer their questions, and if the PCs are too persistent or

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B. FUSION QUEEN

1 square = 5 feet

make a nuisance of themselves, one of the staff heads to the back office (area **B4**) to alert the gang's boss, Ferani Nadaz.

Treasure: Fusion Queen collects most of its patrons' payments digitally from credsticks, but if the PCs loot the club's cash register behind the bar, they find 317 credits in hard currency.

B3. STOREROOM (CR 2)

This large storeroom is filled with supplies for the bar outside, including bottles of hard alcohol, kegs of beer, and boxes of food and recreational stimulants. One corner holds amplifiers, musical instruments, and costumes for the club's entertainers. A single door stands in the north wall.

Creatures: Three Downside Kings are sitting at a table in this room playing cards. They're here to provide additional security for the club, if needed, and they stop anyone entering who's not a member of the gang or the club's staff. They immediately attack if they see any weapons.

DOWNSIDE KINGS (3)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

HP 13 each (see page 15)

Treasure: The bar supplies are worth a total of 1,500 credits if sold or fenced as trade goods, though they are quite bulky, and it would likely take several trips to completely empty the storeroom (any surviving Downside Kings would not look kindly on such wholesale theft from the gang, however).

The entertainment equipment in the storeroom can be sold or fenced for an additional 500 credits.

B4. BACK OFFICE (CR 3)

The Downside Kings orchestrate most of their gang business from this office, which contains a desk, several chairs, and vidscreens tuned to multiple entertainment feeds. A door to the northeast leads to a secure storage area (see Treasure on page 18).

Creatures: The gang's boss, a human woman named Ferani Nadaz, and her bodyguard, Vrokilayo Hatchbuster, wait in this room. Ferani ascended to the leadership of the Downside Kings only a few months ago by savagely killing the gang's former boss, but she has consolidated her power quickly and violently, and most of the Kings' rank-and-file members regard her with a mixture of respect and fear. Ferani's bodyguard Vrokilayo is a powerfully built vesk who earned his sobriquet when he single-handedly bashed in a locked hatch to get at a thief who stole from the Kings. He is utterly devoted to Ferani, and she regularly repays the vesk's loyalty with a handsome share of the gang's take.

Unless the PCs have been exceptionally stealthy, the pair have likely heard the sounds of combat in the storeroom outside and are prepared to deal with intruders. Ferani stays behind her desk for cover, while Vrokilayo moves to intercept any intruders. If the PCs want to talk with Ferani instead of fighting, see Development on page 18.

FERANI NADAZ

CR 1

XP 400

Female human mechanic
CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE

HP 20

EAC 11; **KAC** 12

Fort +3; **Ref** +3; **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +4 (1d6+2 B)

Ranged tactical semi-auto pistol +6 (1d6+1 P)

Offensive Abilities combat tracking

TACTICS

During Combat Ferani designates a weak-looking enemy using combat tracking and focuses her attacks on that character, switching targets only if another foe threatens her directly.

Morale If reduced to 5 Hit Points or below, Ferani runs. She surrenders only if there is no escape.

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +2; **Con** +1; **Int** +4; **Wis** +0; **Cha** -1

Skills Computers +10, Culture +5, Engineering +10, Intimidate +10, Piloting +5, Survival +5

Languages Common

Other Abilities artificial intelligence (exocortex), custom rig

Gear estex suit I, club, tactical semi-auto pistol with 30 rounds, datapad (tier 1 computer), key card to area B4a, credstick (500 credits)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Combat Tracking (Ex) As a move action, Ferani can designate and track a single foe, gaining a +2 bonus to attack rolls against that target.

VROKILAYO HATCHBUSTER

CR 1

XP 400

Male vesk soldier

NE Medium humanoid (vesk)

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE

HP 22

EAC 12; **KAC** 14

Fort +5; **Ref** +1; **Will** +3; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities armor savant

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee assault hammer +8 (1d6+5 B) or unarmed strike +8 (1d3+5 B)

Ranged azimuth artillery laser +6 (1d10+1 F; crit burn 1d6) or frag grenade I +8 (explode [1d6 P, 15 ft.]) or shock grenade I +8 (explode [1d8 E, 15 ft.])

Offensive Abilities awesome blow, fighting style (blitz), natural weapons, rapid response

TACTICS

During Combat If foes are grouped together, Vrokilayo

throws a grenade at them. Otherwise, he fires at the toughest-looking opponent with his artillery laser, but if an opponent gets close, he's all too happy to switch to his hammer and use his awesome blow ability.

Morale Vrokilayo fights to the death to defend Ferani.

STATISTICS

Str +4; **Dex** +1; **Con** +2; **Int** -1; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +5, Intimidate +10

Languages Common, Vesk

Gear troop ceremonial plate, assault hammer, azimuth artillery laser with 2 batteries (20 charges each), frag grenade I, shock grenade I, credstick (200 credits)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Awesome Blow (Ex) As a standard action, Vrokilayo can attempt a melee attack with his assault hammer against a single creature's KAC + 8. If he succeeds, the target takes 1d6+5 bludgeoning damage, is knocked 10 feet



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in a direction of Vrokilayo's choice, and falls prone. The target must be moved in a straight line, and if it hits an obstacle, it takes 1d6 nonlethal damage.

Treasure: The Downside Kings keep their stolen loot and illegal profits in the secure storage room to the northeast (area **B4a**). The door to the room is locked (Engineering DC 20 to disable, though Ferani has a key card). Inside are a holoskin, an autotarget rifle with five magazines of longarm rounds (10 cartridges each), two incendiary grenades I, two *mk 1 serums of healing*, a quick-release sheath armor upgrade, 500 UPBs, and half a dozen credsticks holding 100 credits each.

Development: If the PCs try to talk with Ferani, they'll find it challenging. Her initial attitude is hostile, so the PCs must succeed at a DC 26 Diplomacy check just to make her unfriendly. Intimidation is difficult as well, requiring a successful DC 25 Intimidate check (Vrokilayo's presence in the room increases the DC by 5). Any failure causes Ferani and Vrokilayo to attack immediately. If the PCs manage to intimidate Ferani or make her indifferent, they can convince her to talk, but she remains surly and aggressive. Ferani boasts of the Downside Kings' association with Astral Extractions, and with a second successful DC 25 Diplomacy or Intimidate check, will even admit to killing Duravor Kreeel ("to send the Hardscrabblers and Starfinders a message," she sneers). If the PCs ask about the Level 21 Crew, Ferani can share any of the information about the rival gang from the Level 21 Crew table on page 13, including the gang's use of Mama Fats' bodega as a safe house.

The PCs can learn the same information if they capture and interrogate Ferani, though the Intimidate DC is reduced to 20 as she no longer has Vrokilayo to back her up. In this case, a second Intimidate check is not required to make Ferani confess that Astral Extractions hired the Downside Kings to kill Duravor Kreeel, but she gives up that information only in exchange for a promise that she'll be handed over safely to station security.

If the PCs kill Ferani, or are unable to convince her to talk, they can still find proof of Kreeel's murder at the gang's hands on Ferani's datapad, which requires a successful DC 17 Computers check to hack. If successful, the PCs can find numerous files confirming many of the Downside Kings' criminal activities—including several communications between Astral Extractions and the Downside Kings, ordering the gang to kill Duravor Kreeel both as a message to the Hardscrabble Collective that the corporation means business and to keep the Starfinder Society from getting too curious about the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock.

WRAPPING UP THE INVESTIGATION

What the PCs do with the knowledge they learn during their investigations is up to them, though if they found out that the Downside Kings were responsible for Duravor Kreeel's death, they'll likely want to report their findings to Chiskisk.

The shirren commends the PCs for their successful investigation and thanks them for risking their lives to find justice for Duravor.

If the PCs captured Ferani Nadaz or any other gang members, Chiskisk can arrange for them to be handed over to station security. If the PCs killed Ferani, Chiskisk asks the PCs to keep the details to themselves but isn't one to judge, believing that one reaps what one sows. In either case, Chiskisk asks for any evidence the PCs might have found regarding the Downside Kings' involvement in Kreeel's murder to turn over to station officials. The shirren also recommends that the PCs leave any ramifications of Astral Extractions' possible criminal enterprises to Absalom Station's legal system; the company has a powerful presence on the station, and Chiskisk doesn't want the PCs or the Starfinder Society to risk a battle that neither has much chance of winning.

Chiskisk is also pleased to officially welcome the PCs into the ranks of the Starfinder Society (for those who wish to join), and states that they are looking forward to the discoveries the PCs will make and the knowledge that they will share with the Society in the future. The shirren doesn't have any further jobs for them at this time, but is interested and somewhat troubled by the revelation that Astral Extractions is attempting to keep the Starfinders away from the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock. As a result, Chiskisk asks the PCs to keep their eyes and ears (or antennae) open for any further news about the contentious ship and its mysterious cargo that might be of interest to the Society.

Story Award: If the PCs find proof that Astral Extractions ordered the killing of Duravor Kreeel and bring the Downside Kings to justice, award them 400 XP.

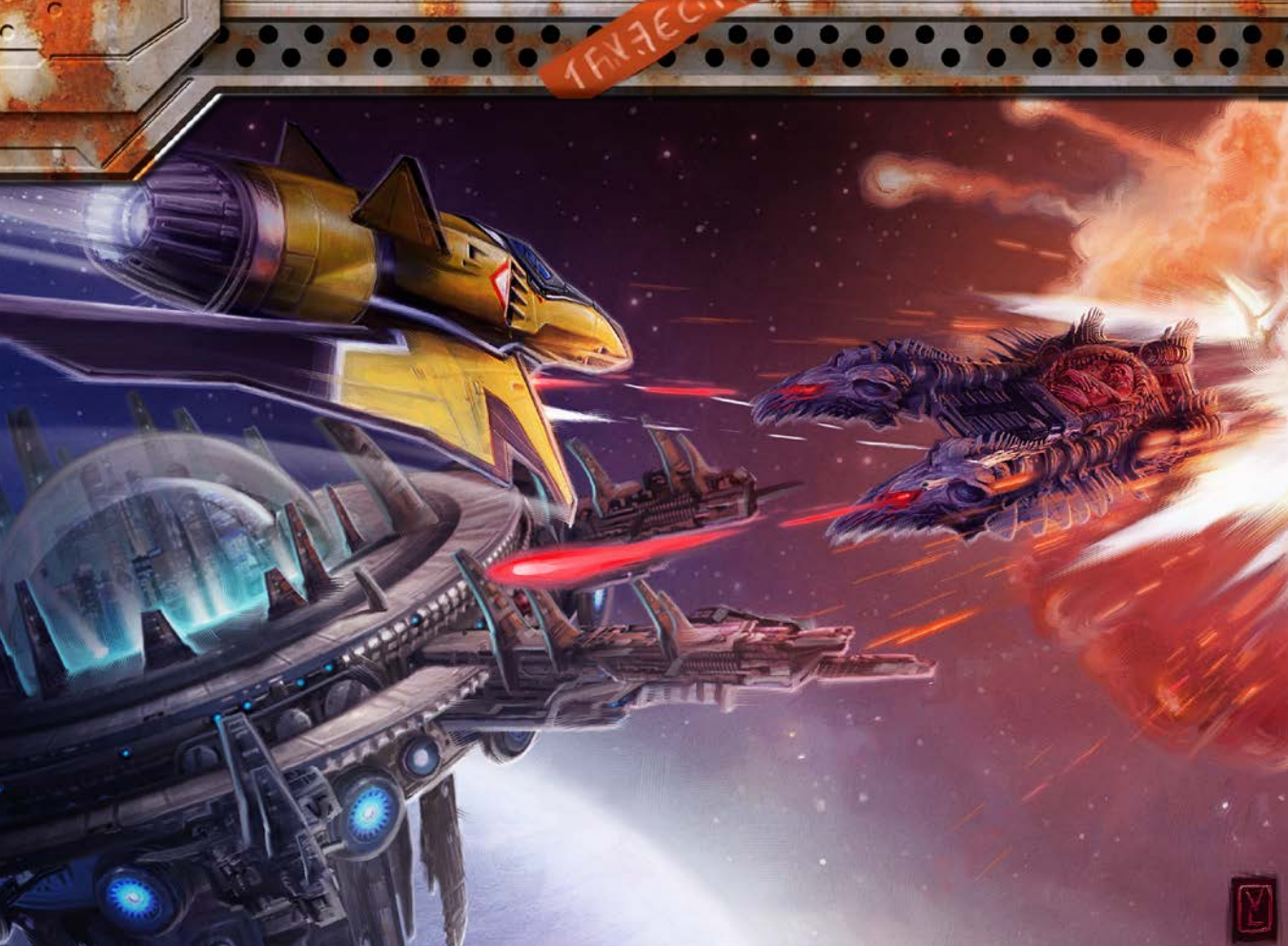


Once they have concluded their investigation of Duravor Kreeel's death, the PCs are once more on their own. If they want to explore more of the station, you can use the Absalom Station gazetteer beginning on page 38 to liven their stay, but the PCs will soon discover that the mystery of the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock is not yet done with them.

MEDIATION

A few days after the PCs confront Ferani Nadaz and the Downside Kings, a messenger arrives at their lodgings with an invitation (printed on paper that is as black as the void of space) requesting their company for a meeting with His Excellency Gevalarsk Nor, the ambassador of Eox.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 5 Culture check can recall that Eox is a planet inhabited almost entirely by undead creatures.



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Its dominant species, the humanlike elebrians, were forced to transform themselves into undead to survive an ancient cataclysm that almost destroyed their world. Although many sentient species find them disturbing, the elebrians are not considered “monsters,” at least in polite society. Eox is a full signatory to the Pact, and its undead inhabitants are equal citizens of the Pact Worlds. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture check recognizes Gevalarsk Nor as the head of Eox’s diplomatic delegation to the Pact Council.

The meeting takes place at the Eoxian embassy in Absalom Station’s wealthy Parkside neighborhood in the Eye. The embassy is normally restricted to Eoxian citizens and foreigners with official business, but the PCs’ invitation gives them authorization to enter. The Eoxian embassy has been decorated in a style reminiscent of traditional Eoxian architecture—black marble and bone-pale limestone, vaulted ceilings, sepulchral furnishings, and disconcertingly organic architectural details. Inside, a pair of undead skeletal attendants lead the PCs to a spare but well-appointed office that feels something like the inside of an ancient mausoleum.

Creature: The office is that of Eox’s ambassador to Absalom Station, **Gevalarsk Nor** (LE male elebrian necrovite). Nor’s elongated cranium marks him as an elebrian, a native of Eox, and he is clearly undead—his skeletal countenance displays no scrap of flesh, and an eerie light burns in his otherwise empty eye sockets. A necrovite is a spellcaster who has used its powerful magic to achieve immortality in the form

of eternal undeath, storing its consciousness and soul in a technomagical relic called an electroencephalon. Nor is not statted up in this adventure, as he is a CR 13 opponent—far beyond the PCs’ power level—but if necessary, statistics for a necrovite can be found on page 11 of *Starfinder: First Contact*.

Nor greets the PCs and offers them seats. Once they’re comfortable, he addresses them.

“Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I’m certain you’re aware of the recent interest in the prospecting ship *Acreon* and the asteroid being referred to as the ‘Drift Rock,’ and I believe you’re also acquainted with the dispute between Astral Extractions and the Hardscrabble Collective over both the ship and the asteroid. Both parties are currently awaiting legal arbitration, but the wheels of justice often turn quite slowly. As a result, I have offered my services as a mediator in hopes of finding a solution that is equitable to both factions.

“The first step in this, of course, is learning the specifics of the opposing claims. Reports of your recent endeavors in dealing with some of Absalom Station’s most notorious gangs have led me to believe that you might be useful in this undertaking as well. You’re new to the station, you seem to possess a wide range of skills and abilities, and you certainly appear capable. In short, you’re perfectly positioned as a neutral third party that could cut through all of the red tape surrounding this issue and get to the heart of the matter.

"I would like you to go to the *Acreon*, find out precisely what happened to its crew, and ascertain the value of its asteroid cargo, as well as determine whether this Drift Rock is truly as 'mysterious' as the media claims."

The PCs are free to question Nor for additional details, but he doesn't know much more—that's one of the reasons he wants to hire the PCs. The ambassador does offer each of the PCs a sum of 600 credits for their efforts, however.

If asked why he offered to mediate between Astral Extractions and the Hardscrabble Collective, Nor states that he has no ties to either faction and genuinely wants to help. He believes in the power of diplomacy, and hopes to avoid any further violence over the issue.

If the PCs ask the ambassador if he has any personal interest in the matter, or if they seem likely to accept his proposal, Nor provides a final piece of information.

"There is one additional detail that I'd like to ask your help with," Nor says, steepling his bony fingers. "Among its other cargo, the *Acreon* was carrying a package destined for the embassy. Of course, with the ship being quarantined, the package has been undeliverable. I've been eagerly awaiting its arrival, and I'd consider it a personal favor if you could find the package and bring it to me when you return to the station. It's clearly marked, so I don't imagine it will be too difficult to find."

Nor won't reveal what's inside the package, but if pressed for more details, he assures the PCs that it contains no contraband and that there are no illegalities involved. He's simply asking them to retrieve his personal property from the ship, and he offers the PCs each an additional payment of 500 credits if they deliver the cargo to him when they return to the station. Nor is a highly skilled politician, and it's very difficult to determine if he is hiding anything (requiring a successful DC 38 Sense Motive check to detect any deception).

If the PCs accept the job, Nor tells them that he has already received permission from station security to send an exploratory team to the *Acreon* and that he has arranged for the PCs to use one of the station's shuttles for transport as soon as they are ready. He also provides the PCs with a small observer robot that will accompany the PCs and record their expedition. The ambassador wants an objective record that he can provide to both sides as a foundation for his mediation efforts. The PCs won't have to do anything with the bot themselves; it will simply follow them and observe. Nor recommends the PCs investigate the *Acreon* first, to see if

they can find any traces of the ship's crew, before they begin exploring the Drift Rock.

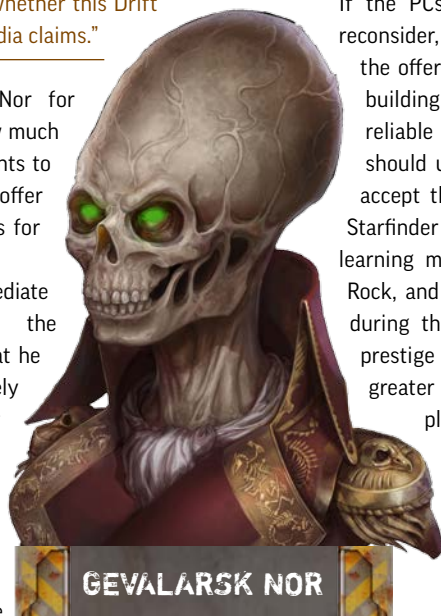
If the PCs refuse, Nor politely asks them to reconsider, and take some time to think about the offer. They could do much good, and start building reputations as peacemakers and reliable troubleshooters. If necessary, you should use Chiskisk to encourage the PCs to accept the job. In light of recent events, the Starfinder Society has become interested in learning more about the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock, and any discoveries the PCs might make during their explorations could increase their prestige in the Society and possibly earn them greater opportunities in the future. If the players balk at working for an undead creature, Chiskisk can also remind them that Eoxians are not considered enemies, and are just as worthy of trust as any other sentient species in the Pact Worlds.

Once the PCs have accepted the job, Nor tells them that the ship he has arranged for them will be available the following morning. The PCs have the rest of the day to prepare for the mission and wrap up any outstanding business they have on the station, but the two groups at the heart of the dispute also make use of this time to attempt to influence the PCs.

FACTIONAL INFLUENCE

In his role as mediator between Astral Extractions and the Hardscrabble Collective, Ambassador Nor has informed both factions of his intent to send independent investigators to the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock. Although both parties have agreed to this plan of action, neither trusts the other to avoid interfering in the process, so representatives of both Astral Extractions and the Hardscrabble Collective contact the PCs before they leave in an attempt to sway the PCs' findings in their favor. This is primarily a series of roleplaying encounters meant to give the PCs more insight into the two factions' goals, and can be as detailed or as brief as you wish to make it.

Astral Extractions is the first to reach out to the PCs, asking them to attend a private meeting at the corporate headquarters in Bluerise Tower. A lashunta corporate professional named Ms. Joss (whom the PCs might have already met; see page 12) warmly greets the PCs and thanks them for agreeing to meet. The purpose of the meeting, Ms. Joss informs them, is to give the PCs a better sense of Astral Extractions' corporate philosophy and how that informs the company's business dealings. She begins with a slickly produced marketing presentation that highlights Astral Extractions' efforts in discovering, developing, and managing much-needed natural resources from across the galaxy and



selling them in the Pact Worlds. It's clear that the presentation does not represent the whole truth (it is marketing material for investors and the public, after all), but there's nothing outright false about the claims made.

Having established the noble services that Astral Extractions provides for companies and citizens throughout the Pact Worlds, Ms. Joss recounts details of the company's contract with the Hardscrabble Collective—namely, that the *Acreon* was hired to prospect for unclaimed, unexploited mineral resources on behalf of Astral Extractions, which would then hold all rights and claims to those discoveries. Ms. Joss states that Astral Extractions simply wants what their contract gives them rights to. The *Acreon* found the Drift Rock—an unclaimed, unexploited mineral resource, as defined in the contract—while working for Astral Extractions, so rights to the asteroid belong to the company. This certainly seems to be a plausible interpretation of the contract's terms, but it's also evident that the contract assumes the *Acreon*'s crew would simply identify sites for future development by the company. It's less clear how the terms of the contract might apply to a more portable potential resource—such as a small asteroid that could be brought with the ship itself.

In any event, after presenting her case to the PCs, Ms. Joss simply asks them to carefully consider the merits of Astral Extractions' claim and keep open minds while investigating the ship and asteroid. Astral Extractions will, of course, accept the results of Ambassador Nor's mediation, but Ms. Joss does mention that the company is always interested in hiring competent freelancers for a variety of tasks, and hints—obliquely, of course—that the PCs could find lucrative employment opportunities in the future if their findings support Astral Extractions' claims.

The Hardscrabble Collective makes a more personal appeal to the PCs. One of its members, Otal Serissi, invites the PCs to visit his ship, the *Dust Runner*, out in the Armada. A red-skinned human from Akiton, Captain Serissi is also something of an unofficial spokesman for the Hardscrabble Collective, and he wants the PCs to better understand what the Collective stands for. The *Dust Runner* is a working tramp freighter, practical and utilitarian, with little in the way of luxury or even comfort. Yet Captain Serissi takes great pride in his ship—which is also his home and his livelihood—a fact that is plainly evident as he affably escorts the PCs on a tour of the vessel.

Afterward, Serissi sits down with the PCs in the galley, and over cups of hot black coffee, explains why the fate of the *Acreon*, and especially its crew, is so important to the Hardscrabble Collective. The Collective's members aren't rich; most of them scratch out whatever meager livings they can from the rocks of the Diaspora, so the occasional corporate contract—like the *Acreon*'s contract with Astral Extractions—is an opportunity few have the luxury to refuse. But the Collective values its independence and freedom greatly, and it constantly struggles against exploitation and even takeovers

at the hands of would-be corporate overlords. It's clear that the crew of the *Acreon* staked their own claim on the Drift Rock, believing that the terms of their contract allowed them to do so. Is it any surprise that the Hardscrabble Collective would be suspicious of Astral Extractions' attempts to lay sole claim to the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock following the mysterious circumstances of their arrival at Absalom Station?

The members of the Hardscrabble Collective call themselves a clan, and they mean it. Once you join, you're family. Members look out for each other, defend each other, and care for each other. The Collective doesn't know what value, if any, the Drift Rock might have, but they know the worth of their brothers and sisters on the *Acreon*. They need to know what happened to the *Acreon*'s crew, as any family needs to know the fate of their loved ones. And if the worst has happened, then perhaps whatever wealth the Drift Rock holds can help ease the loss of the families left behind. That's all they really care about.

Captain Serissi tells the PCs that the Hardscrabble Collective isn't disputing Astral Extractions' contract with the *Acreon*; they're happy to turn all of the files and findings from the ship's prospecting mission over to the company, but the ship, and the claim its crew staked on the Drift Rock, belong to the Collective. Before ferrying the PCs back to Absalom Station, Serissi wishes them good luck on their investigation of the *Acreon* and implores them to do their best to find out what happened to the ship's crew.

Development: The PCs can choose to support the claims of either faction or remain independent and not take sides at all. In the long run, it matters little—whichever group the PCs are most opposed to will try one last time to influence events (see *Interceptor Attack!* below), but the campaign will soon move past this localized dispute over one ship and its cargo. As the PCs will soon discover, the Drift Rock is just a piece of a much bigger—and far more valuable—puzzle that attracts the interest of other groups with influence far beyond Absalom Station, and that it has the potential for widespread ramifications throughout the Pact Worlds.

Once the PCs have had the chance to hear out both factions and are ready to leave, go to the next encounter, *Interceptor Attack!*, below.

INTERCEPTOR ATTACK! (CR 2)

As promised, Gevalarsk Nor has procured a ship for the PCs—the shuttle *Hippocampus*, which is waiting in a private docking bay. The *Hippocampus* is one of numerous shuttles that regularly ferry passengers and cargo between Absalom Station and visiting ships that either are too big to dock directly with the station or prefer to remain among the ships of the Armada. Originally a Ringworks Wanderer model, the *Hippocampus* has been heavily modified for station security use, and Nor has further modified it for the PCs' expedition with upgraded armor, defenses, shields, power core, and sensors, and the addition of a turret-mounted coilgun. With no idea what the PCs might face, Nor has even outfitted the

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shuttle with life boats, just in case. The *Hippocampus* has no pilot, both because Nor assumes the PCs would prefer to fly the shuttle themselves and to maintain neutrality in the matter by not involving any of the station's crew. Make no mistake, however—the *Hippocampus* belongs to Absalom Station. Nor has arranged to borrow the shuttle for the PCs' use, but it is not their ship to do with as they please, and the station expects the ship to be returned.

When they first board the shuttle, each of the PCs should choose a crew role (captain, engineer, gunner, pilot, or science officer), as described on page 316 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. The *Hippocampus*'s statistics are presented below, though the players should update the shuttle's Armor Class and Target Lock based on their chosen pilot's Piloting skill ranks. Make sure the players have access to a copy of the ship's stats, preferably using the starship sheet on page 524 of the *Core Rulebook*—they'll soon need it, when they get their first taste of starship combat!

HIPPOCAMPUS

TIER 1

Upgraded Ringworks Wanderer (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 310)

Small shuttle

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** perfect (turn 0)

AC 14; **TL** 14

HP 35; **DT** —; **CT** 7

Shields basic 20 (forward 5, port 5, starboard 5, aft 5)

Attack (Forward) light laser cannon (2d4)

Attack (Turret) coilgun (4d4)

Power Core Micron Ultra (80 PCU); **Drift Engine** none;

Systems basic mid-range sensors, extra light weapon mount (turret), mk 3 armor, mk 3 defenses, mk 1 trinode computer; **Expansion Bays** cargo hold, guest quarters (common), life boats

Modifiers +1 any three checks per round, +2 Computers, +3 Piloting; **Complement** 1–4

The *Hippocampus*'s thrusters take only a couple of minutes to warm up, Absalom Traffic Control gives clearance for takeoff, and the PCs launch into space. No Piloting check is needed; the PCs' destination is not far from Absalom Station and the course has been preprogrammed into the shuttle's computer. It takes the PCs only 2 hours to reach the quarantine zone around the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock. Along the way, they can get a good view of the exterior of Absalom Station, as well as the so-called Armada, the endlessly moving fleet of independent ships that surrounds the gigantic space platform.

Once the *Hippocampus* passes through the last fringes of the Armada, there should be nothing but open space between it and the *Acreon*—but someone has other plans for the PCs. The *Hippocampus*'s sensors pick up a small ship that detaches itself from the bulk of the Armada and turns toward the shuttle on an intercept course. Strangely, however, the ship's transponder does not seem to be working—it's not

broadcasting any identification codes, and the ship does not respond to any hails. An alarm suddenly sounds in the cockpit of the *Hippocampus*—the mystery ship is armed, and its targeting lasers are trained on the PCs' shuttle!

Starship Combat: Astral Extractions has decided that the PCs' meddling has gone too far, and through shell companies it has purchased an interceptor called the *Stiletto* and hired an android mercenary named Clara-247 to pilot the ship and attack the PCs' shuttle before they can reach the *Acreon*. The adventure assumes that Astral Extractions orders the attack because the PCs are likely more sympathetic to the Hardscrabble Collective's claim, but if the PCs' goals are closer to those of the corporation, then it's the Collective that is behind the attack (this doesn't change any of the details of the encounter, only the motives behind it). The *Stiletto* is an Eoxian ship, so the PCs might think that Ambassador Nor has betrayed them, but in fact, such ships are available to other races as well, and Nor has nothing to do with the attack.

Statistics for the *Stiletto* are presented below, and Clara-247's full stat block is on page 31, if it's needed. The battle takes place beyond the range of Absalom Station's automated defenses, and any Steward ships currently on patrol are too distant to reach the PCs in time, so they are on their own. Fortunately, the *Hippocampus* is armed, so the PCs can fight off the *Stiletto*—provided their own piloting and gunnery skills are up to the task!

This encounter uses the starship combat rules in the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. You'll need a map with 1-inch hexes, such as *Starfinder Flip-Mat: Basic Starfield*, and some sort of miniatures or tokens to represent the two ships, such as those included in the *Starfinder Core Rulebook Pawn Collection* (both available at paizo.com or your local gaming store). Place the *Hippocampus* at the bottom edge of the map, pointing toward the opposite edge (the direction of the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock). Roll 3d6+5 to determine how many hexes lie between the *Stiletto* and the *Hippocampus*, and place the interceptor that distance away on one of the side edges of the map, pointing toward the PCs' ship. Make sure the PCs have the stats for the *Hippocampus*, and the battle can begin!

STILETTO

TIER 1/2

Death's Head Necroglider (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 306)

Tiny interceptor

Speed 12; **Maneuverability** perfect (turn 0)

AC 17; **TL** 17

HP 30; **DT** —; **CT** 6

Shields basic 10 (forward 3, port 2, starboard 2, aft 3)

Attack (Forward) gyrolaser (1d8), light EMP cannon (special)

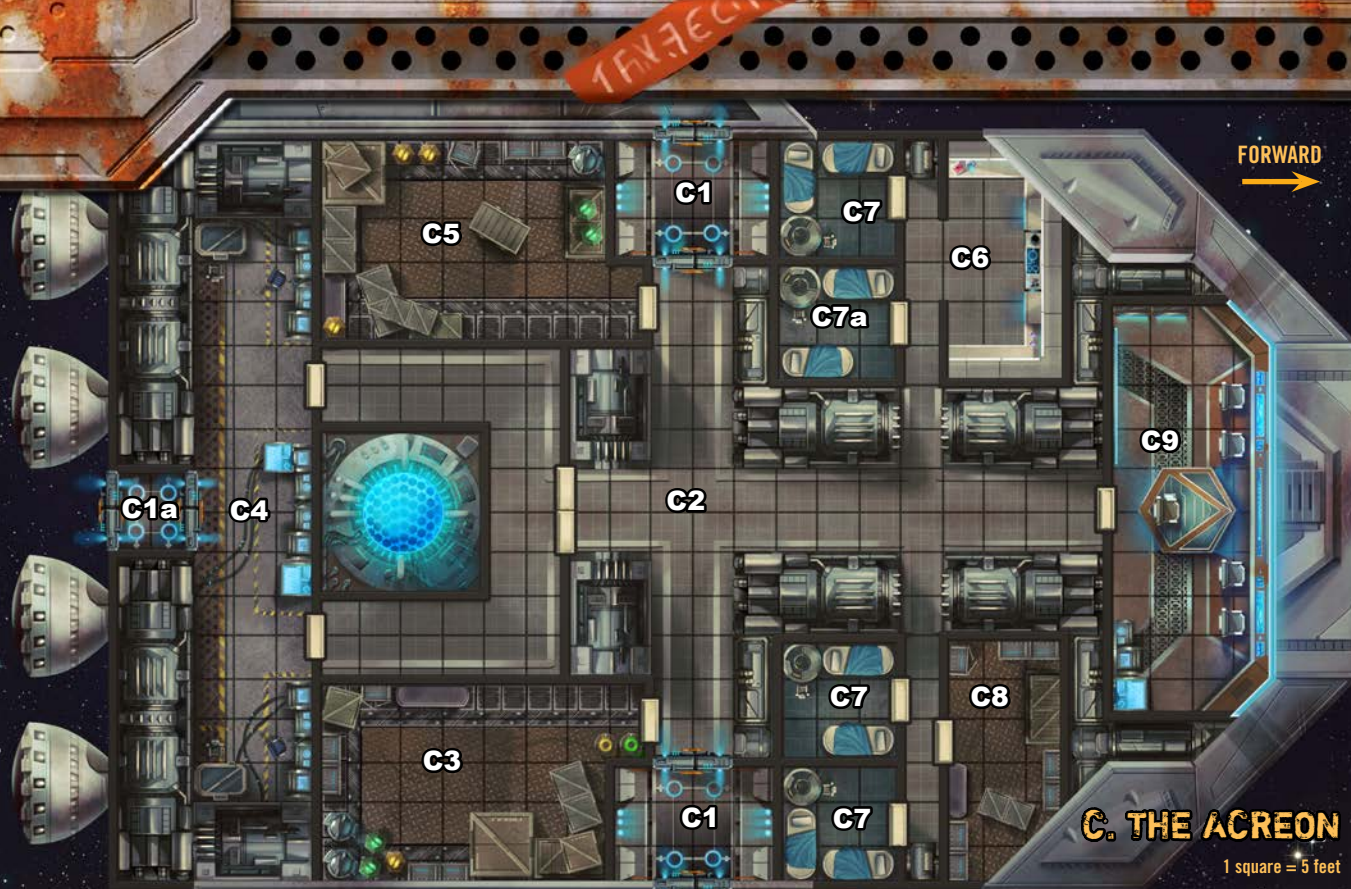
Power Core Micron Heavy (70 PCU); **Drift Engine** none;

Systems basic computer, budget short-range sensors, mk 3 armor, mk 3 defenses; **Expansion Bays** none

Modifiers +1 Piloting; **Complement** 1

CREW

Pilot Clara-247 (CN female android operative; see page 31);



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Computers +8 (2 ranks), Engineering +8 (2 ranks), gunnery +6, Piloting +14 (2 ranks)

Development: If the PCs win the starship battle, they can continue on their way to the *Acreon* (area **C**). Most likely, they only disable the *Stiletto*, and the ship's pilot crash-lands the interceptor on the Drift Rock (area **D**).

If the *Hippocampus* is reduced to 0 or fewer Hull Points, the PCs lose the battle, but the shuttle is only disabled, and they can still limp the rest of the way to the *Acreon*. Even if the *Hippocampus* is destroyed (by taking more than 70 Hull Points of damage), the PCs can use the shuttle's life boats to escape the wreck and reach the *Acreon*.

Whether the PCs win or lose this battle, they encounter Clara-247 in person later in the adventure (see area **D1**).

Story Award: If the PCs defeat the *Stiletto*, award them 600 XP for the encounter.

C. THE ACREON

When the crew of the *Acreon* first discovered the Drift Rock while still within the Drift, they landed on the asteroid to explore and determine whether it contained any valuable minerals. On the asteroid's surface, they found several weirdly smooth rocks or geodes that seemed to be composed of the precious starmetal called noqual. The crew took the strange rocks back to the *Acreon*, unaware that they were actually the cocoons of hibernating spaceborne predators called akatas. They also attracted the attention of another Drift Rock denizen, a creature called a garaggakal, which followed the crew back to their ship. Sensing a potential food source in the living crew members, the akatas inside the

cocoons quickly hatched and spread throughout the *Acreon*. After losing two of their number to the combined assault of the akatas and the garaggakal, the crew opened one of the airlocks and purged the ship's atmosphere in an attempt to kill their attackers. When that failed, the overwhelmed crew abandoned ship and retreated to the Drift Rock—a refuge that would become their tomb.

Following the starship battle with the *Stiletto*, the PCs can continue their journey to the *Acreon* unhindered. The *Acreon* is an old prospecting and mining ship that has seen years of hard use in the asteroid fields and hard vacuum of the Pact Worlds and beyond. It's a boxy and ungainly ship, and its patched and repatched outer hull bears the scars of countless micrometeorite impacts and is faded from exposure to the radiation of space. The *Acreon* floats alone in space, far from Absalom Station, its only companion the misshapen asteroid called the Drift Rock (see area **D**), which is tethered behind the ship on long tow cables. The *Acreon*'s transponder broadcasts a repeating message that the ship is under quarantine by order of Absalom Station security, warning away any curious onlookers and would-be explorers.

A PC can scan the *Acreon* with the *Hippocampus*'s sensors by attempting a DC 15 Computers check. If successful, they can identify the ship as a Medium transport that can carry a full crew complement of six. The sensors are unable to get a good reading on any life signs that might be present on the ship, however. The ship's aft airlock is open, exposing the interior of the ship to vacuum. The *Acreon* is armed, though none of its weapons are currently active, and its power core is outputting minimal energy—enough for life support, gravity,

and basic ship functions, but little else. If the PCs scan the Drift Rock, see area **D** for more information.

If the PCs want to explore the Drift Rock before they investigate the *Acreon*, you should encourage them to follow Ambassador Nor's recommendation and go to the ship first. They can still explore the asteroid beforehand if they want, but be aware that the encounters on the Drift Rock may be more difficult at this time, as the adventure assumes that the PCs visit the *Acreon* first.

The PCs can dock the *Hippocampus* with the *Acreon* directly or park the shuttle nearby in a matching orbit and spacewalk to the quarantined ship. They can gain entry through any one of the *Acreon*'s three airlocks (area **C1**). Inside the *Acreon*, standard gravity is in effect, and the ship's corridors and rooms are lit with emergency lighting, providing dim light. Ceilings are 8 feet high throughout the ship. Unless otherwise noted, all of ship's interior doors (excluding the airlock hatches) are locked in the open position. Individual doors can be manually closed, and all doors on the ship can be remotely closed (or opened) from the bridge (area **C9**). The ship has no atmosphere until repressurized (see area **C9** for details).

Use the map on page 23 for this location.

C1. AIRLOCKS

The *Acreon* is outfitted with three airlocks: port, starboard, and aft. The airlocks are mostly identical, though the auxiliary aft airlock (area **C1a**) is crammed between the ship's main thrusters and is therefore smaller than the two main airlocks. Both sets of hatches in the aft airlock are open to space. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs first enter the ship.

Flickering emergency lights do little to dispel the darkness inside the derelict ship, and the sense of abandonment is only heightened by the apparent lack of any movement or life inside its airless corridors. Artificial gravity is still functional, however, so there's likely still power to run essential systems and possibly restore life support and atmosphere to the ship. Unfortunately, there are still no obvious clues as to the fate of the *Acreon*'s vanished crew.

If they so desire, the PCs can easily close the aft airlock using the controls in any of the airlocks or on the bridge (area **C9**), though they'll need to go to the bridge to repressurize the ship with a breathable atmosphere, a process which takes 1d4 minutes. In addition, tow cables are attached to the ship's hull near the aft airlock, mooring the Drift Rock (area **D**) to the *Acreon*.

C2. MAIN CORRIDOR (CR 1)

This long corridor seems to run most of the length of the ship from bow to stern. Signs of battle—bullet holes, scorch marks, and droplets of blood—are clearly visible on the walls

and floors. A small body in a space suit lies sprawled on the floor in the middle of a junction in the hallway.

This corridor connects the *Acreon*'s bridge (area **C9**) and engineering (area **C4**) to the ship's other areas. The corridor splits into two branches around the ship's power core, just forward of engineering.

Lying on the floor in the center of the corridor's main intersection is the body of a dead space goblin (which can be recognized as such with a successful DC 5 Life Science check). A companion of the goblins in area **C7a**, this one was killed by one of the akatas infesting the *Acreon* before the rest locked themselves in the crew quarters.

Creature: Any PC who investigates the dead goblin or otherwise moves into the intersection attracts the attention of an akata prowling the corridor. A PC can identify the akata with a successful DC 11 Life Science check; a PC who exceeds the DC by 5 or more also recalls the akatas' weakness—a susceptibility to salt water. The akata fights to the death.

AKATA

CR 1

XP 400

HP 18 (see page 55)

C3. STARBOARD CARGO HOLD (CR 3)

One of the ship's two main cargo holds, this large room contains a small science lab, compact mining equipment, and collected rock samples from the *Acreon*'s prospecting mission.

Creatures: The cargo hold also houses two akatas that attack as soon as they detect living prey.

AKATAS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

HP 18 each (see page 55)

Treasure: Numerous resinous shards litter the floor of the cargo hold. The PCs can identify these shards as the remnants of akata cocoons with a successful DC 16 Life Science check. The cocoon scraps are composed of the valuable starmetal noqual (see the sidebar on page 26). In total, the noqual pieces have 2 bulk and are worth 1,000 credits. In addition, a PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check notices a flame pistol lying on the floor of the cargo hold, discarded by one of the *Acreon*'s crew. The pistol's petrol tank currently has 8 petrol remaining.

C4. ENGINEERING (CR 3)

Surrounded by machinery, this long chamber stretches across the width of the ship. All of the *Acreon*'s main engineering functions can be operated from this room, which also contains a tech workshop expansion bay. The ship's power core can be accessed through maintenance panels in the forward wall.

Creatures: Two akatas currently occupy the engineering bay. They attack any living creature that disturbs them.

AKATAS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

HP 18 each (see page 55)

Treasure: The noqual fragments of two more akata cocoons (like those found in area C3) are scattered throughout engineering. They have 2 bulk and are worth 1,000 credits. In addition, up to 300 UPBs can be salvaged from the tech lab here. Lastly, a PC who succeeds at a DC 5 Perception check can find a tactical arc emitter underneath one of the engineering consoles, dropped by one of the *Acreon*'s crew as they fled the ship. The rifle's battery has 12 charges remaining.

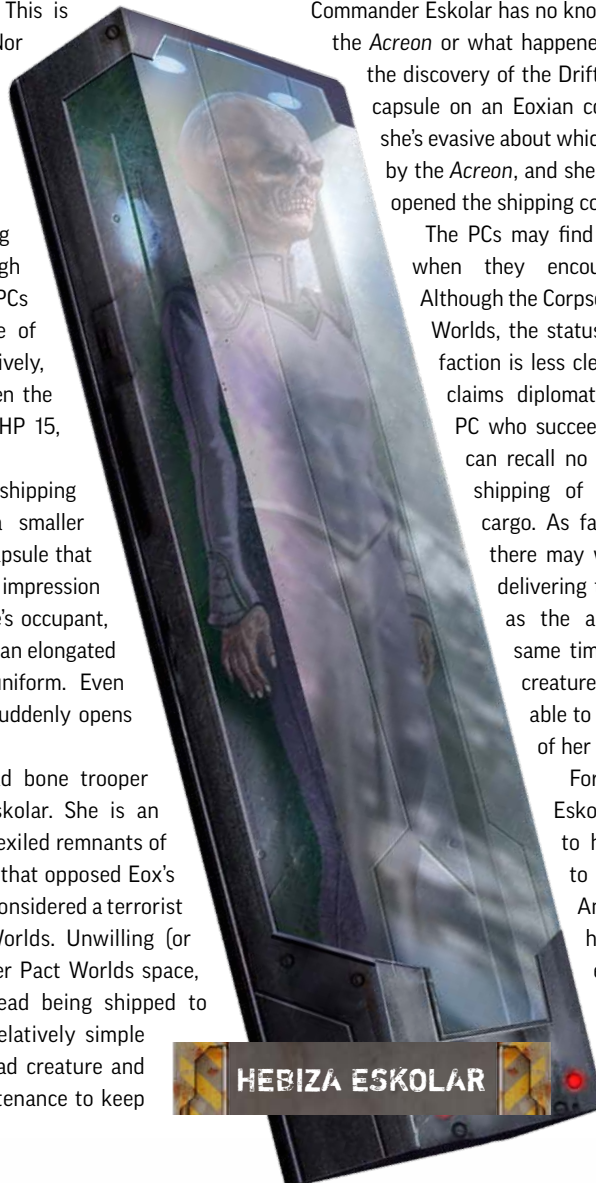
C5. PORT CARGO HOLD (CR 3)

The *Acreon*'s port cargo hold contains much of the ship's supplies—extra food and water stores, replacement air filters, spare parts, and the like. There is also a shipping container approximately 8 feet square, addressed to the Eoxian Embassy on Absalom Station. This is the "package" that Gevalarsk Nor asked the PCs to recover for him.

The container is sealed and has no manifest detailing its contents, but if the PCs are curious, they can attempt to open it with a DC 20 Engineering check to disable a device (though the DC increases to 25 if the PCs don't want to leave any trace of their tampering). Alternatively, the PCs can try to forcibly open the plastic container (hardness 8, HP 15, break DC 24).

Creature: If the PCs open the shipping container, they find inside a smaller transparent polycarbon plate capsule that looks much like a coffin—an impression only heightened by the capsule's occupant, a skeletal humanoid figure with an elongated cranium wearing a military uniform. Even more surprising, the skeleton suddenly opens the capsule and stands up!

The "skeleton" is an undead bone trooper named Commander Hebiza Eskolar. She is an officer of the Corpse Fleet, the exiled remnants of Eox's officially disbanded navy that opposed Eox's membership in the Pact and is considered a terrorist military threat in the Pact Worlds. Unwilling (or perhaps unable) to openly enter Pact Worlds space, Commander Eskolar was instead being shipped to Absalom Station as cargo; a relatively simple proposition, as she is an undead creature and requires no life support or sustenance to keep her alive during the journey.



HEBIZA ESKOLAR

When revealed, Eskolar is momentarily disconcerted until she realizes she is still on the *Acreon* and not Absalom Station. She soon regains her composure, however, and asks the PCs what is going on. If questioned, Eskolar introduces herself, though she doesn't mention her rank or affiliation with the Corpse Fleet. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Culture check to recall information can recognize her uniform as that of a commander of the Corpse Fleet, but even if confronted with this fact, Commander Eskolar neither confirms nor denies it. If the PCs seem friendly, or if they inform her that they're working for Gevalarsk Nor, Eskolar asks to be taken to the ambassador as soon as possible. If pressed, she claims that she's traveling to Absalom Station to serve as a military attaché assigned to the Eoxian diplomatic mission, but refuses to disclose anything else about the circumstances of her presence as "cargo" on the *Acreon*, her relationship with Ambassador Nor, or other business on the station.

Secure in her shipping container for the entire trip, Commander Eskolar has no knowledge of what transpired on the *Acreon* or what happened to the ship's crew, or even the discovery of the Drift Rock. She was sealed in her capsule on an Eoxian colony in Near Space (though she's evasive about which one) before being picked up by the *Acreon*, and she remained there until the PCs opened the shipping container.

The PCs may find themselves in a conundrum when they encounter Commander Eskolar. Although the Corpse Fleet is outlawed in the Pact Worlds, the status of avowed members of the faction is less clear, and in any event, Eskolar claims diplomatic standing. Furthermore, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture check can recall no specific laws prohibiting the shipping of willing sentient species as cargo. As far as the PCs can likely tell, there may well be nothing illegal about delivering the bone trooper to Nor—just as the ambassador claimed. At the same time, Eskolar is an evil undead creature, and some PCs might not be able to overlook that fact, regardless of her legal status.

For her part, Commander Eskolar would prefer to return to her capsule and for the PCs to honor their agreement with Ambassador Nor and deliver her container to the Eoxian embassy. She refuses to entertain any other ideas about getting her to the station or to Nor, especially if there's any chance of Absalom Station's security

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NOQUAL

Noqual is a starmetal—one of several precious metals mined from asteroids and scattered worlds throughout the universe. Noqual looks somewhat like a pale green crystal, but can be worked as easily as iron or steel. Noqual's crystalline structure gives it a strength that belies its surprisingly low weight. More importantly, noqual is strangely resistant to magic. Objects made of noqual gain a +4 bonus to saving throws against a magical effect.

Melee weapons or ammunition fashioned from noqual gain a +1 enhancement bonus to damage rolls against magical constructs and undead creatures created by spells.

One bulk of noqual ore is worth 500 credits. Noqual increases the cost of one cartridge of ammunition by 40 credits, and a melee weapon by 2,000 credits.

forces getting involved. Eskolar likewise declines to assist the PCs in their explorations of the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock—they are not her problem, and she has her own business to attend to. If the PCs are overtly hostile, attempt to capture or restrain her (other than in her capsule), or threaten to turn her over to the Stewards or Absalom Station security, Eskolar responds with lethal force.

HEBIZA ESKOLAR

CR 3

XP 800

Female elebrian bone trooper technomancer (see page 56)

HP 34

TACTICS

During Combat If attacked, Eskolar casts *supercharge weapon* on her pistol before opening fire. In combat, she alternates between casting spells and firing her weapon.

Morale Commander Eskolar fights until destroyed, willing to die to carry out her orders, whatever they may be.

Development: Commander Eskolar's fate is in the hands of the PCs. The easiest way for them to resolve this encounter is to take Eskolar to Gevalarsk Nor as promised—though there's likely no way to hide from the ambassador the fact that they learned the contents of his "cargo," unless the PCs never open the shipping container at all. But that is not their only option; Eskolar won't allow the PCs to arrest or capture her without a fight, but they could convince her that they plan to honor their agreement, only to hand her over to the Stewards when they return to Absalom Station (and if they reseal her in her shipping crate, Eskolar has little control over what they do with her). Lastly, of course, the PCs can simply kill the bone trooper.

Regardless of what the PCs decide to do, the result of their interaction with Commander Eskolar will have repercussions later in the Adventure Path, so take note of the PCs' actions in dealing with the Corpse Fleet officer.

Story Award: If the PCs deliver Commander Eskolar to Gevalarsk Nor as agreed, award them 400 XP for completing the job. If they capture Eskolar and turn her over to security (whether locked in her shipping container or otherwise), award them 800 XP, as if they had defeated her in combat. If the PCs don't open the container and never meet Eskolar, they gain no additional XP.

C6. GALLEY

The crew prepared and shared meals in this kitchen and eating area, though the quality of the preserved rations leaves something to be desired.

Development: If the PCs are aware of the akatas' susceptibility to salt water, they can utilize the supplies in the galley to make salt water to use as a weapon against the creatures.

C7. CREW QUARTERS (CR 1)

These four identical cabins served as shared living quarters for the *Acreon*'s crew. Each contains two simple bunks, a pair of lockers, a small sink, and the miners' personal possessions.

The door to one of the portside cabins (area **C7a**) is closed and barricaded from the inside and must be broken down to get inside (hardness 8, HP 30, break DC 22). Up to two characters can cooperate to break down the door; this follows the same rules as using aid another for a skill check. See Creatures below for the room's current occupants.

Creatures: When news of the *Acreon*'s arrival and subsequent quarantine hit Absalom Station, a trio of space goblins found the prospect of looting the derelict ship irresistible. They stowed away on a ship that was passing close to the quarantine zone and launched themselves out of an airlock with jury-rigged handheld thrusters, and barely managed to reach the *Acreon* before their air ran out. After refilling their air tanks from the *Acreon*'s supply, the goblins began exploring the ship, but their scavenging was interrupted by the akatas infesting the vessel. The goblins' junklasers were ineffective against the akatas, and one of the goblins was slain almost immediately (its body lies in area **C2**), so the two survivors fled to one of the crew cabins (area **C7a**) and barricaded themselves inside.

The two goblins are terrified of the akatas and react violently to anyone breaking through their makeshift barricade. They fire their junklasers wildly for 2 rounds before they realize their attackers are not akatas, at which point they surrender and grovel for their lives, begging to be taken to safety.

SPACE GOBLINS (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Starfinder: First Contact 8

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +3

DEFENSE **HP** 6 EACH

EAC 11; **KAC** 12

Fort +0; **Ref** +2; **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 35 ft.

Melee dogslicer +0 (1d4 S)

Ranged junklaser +3 (1d4 F; critical burn 1d4)

Offensive Abilities tinker, unstable junklaser

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +3; **Con** +0; **Int** +1; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Computers +7, Engineering +7, Stealth +7, Survival +3

Languages Common, Goblin

Gear tattered flightsuit, dogslicer, junklaser, makeshift engineering tools

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Tinker (Ex) As a move action, a space goblin can remove the penalties associated with the broken condition from a single piece of equipment until the start of his next turn. The item then becomes unusable for 10 minutes (and retains the broken condition after that until it is fixed).

Unstable Junklaser (Ex) A space goblin's laser pistol is crafted from a mishmash of broken casings, leaking energy cells, and other random material. A junklaser is similar to a holdout laser pistol, except it has a range of only 60 feet. If the wielder of a junklaser rolls a natural 1 when attacking with it, he must immediately attempt a DC 18 Engineering check. Success means that the junklaser gains the broken condition. Failure means that the gun explodes in 1d3–1 rounds, functioning as a frag grenade I (explode [1d6 P, 15 ft.], Reflex DC 13 half); a result of 0 rounds means the junklaser explodes immediately—randomly determine the corner of the wielder's square that is the center of the burst. A thrown junklaser has the same range increment as a grenade.

Treasure: The goblins didn't have much time to explore the ship before the akatas set upon them, but they did manage to scrounge a few items of value, including an incendiary grenade I, two shock grenades I, a stickybomb grenade I, two detonators, a tool kit (engineering kit), a fire extinguisher, and 500 UPBs. In addition, PCs who search the crew quarters and succeed at a DC 15 Perception check can find a dropped computer key card (which can be used to access the ship's computer system; see area **C9** for details) and a credstick with 500 credits that one of the prospectors stashed under her bunk.

Development: If the PC don't kill the goblins outright, the creatures beg the PCs to take them with them. The goblins are more than happy to aid the PCs in combat, though they're

likely more of a hindrance than a help. Outside of combat, they're eager to tinker with the PCs' gear, offering "helpful" suggestions on how they can boost a weapon's damage output or upgrade the life support of a PC's armor. Play up the goblins as unruly, exasperating, destructive, explosives-loving looters that every once in a while might actually be useful—but don't be too sad if they don't survive for long.

Story Award: If the PCs rescue the goblins and take them safely off the *Acreon*, award the PCs 400 XP, as if they had defeated the goblins.

C8. CREW STORAGE (CR 1)

The door to this room is closed and trapped (see Trap below). Inside is a storeroom containing the crew's personal mining and prospecting tools and other supplies.

Trap: One of the *Acreon*'s crew jury-rigged a laser blast trap on the door to the storeroom that fires a single-shot laser at the character who opens the door.



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JURY-RIGGED LASER BLAST TRAP

CR 1

XP 400

Type technological; **Perception** DC 21; **Disable** Engineering DC 15 (disable motion sensors)

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect laser +11 ranged (3d6+1 F)

Treasure: When the first akata broke out of its cocoon, one of the *Acreon*'s crew found and collected the cocoon's fragments and placed them here. The resinous shards of noqual (see the sidebar on page 26) have 1 bulk, are worth 500 credits, and can be identified as the remains of an akata cocoon with a successful DC 16 Life Science check. In addition, the PCs can find a *disruptive* fusion seal (5th), two *mk 1 serums of healing* and three medpatches in the storeroom.

C9. BRIDGE (CR 4)

A wide transparent aluminum window stretches across the forward wall of this control room; twinkling lights in the distance are all that can be seen of Absalom Station and the ships of the Armada surrounding it.

The *Acreon*'s main bridge contains four stations equipped with consoles and controls for operating most of the ship's systems and functions, including its tier 2 computer system. Most of the control consoles are powered down or on standby, but the PCs can access the basic, unsecured functions of the ship's computer with a DC 10 Computers check to access the system (they can take 20 on this check). Success allows the PCs to remotely close (or open) any or all of the doors on the ship, including the airlock hatches, and repressurize the ship (which takes 1d4 minutes). They can also control the ship's lighting, increasing the light level throughout the ship to normal light if they wish.

To access more advanced functions (such as the *Acreon*'s logs), the PCs must first hack into the ship's secured computer files. The *Acreon*'s computer is a tier 2 computer with a secure data module and firewall and lockdown countermeasures. Hacking the system requires a successful DC 21 Computers check and two full actions. If the PCs found the computer key card in area **C7**, it grants them a +5 bonus to the check. The ship's log is contained in a secure data module kept behind a firewall, requiring a second Computers check and two more full actions to hack, this time with a DC of 23 (once again, the key card from area **C7** grants a +5 bonus to the check). Successfully hacking the firewall allows the PCs to access the secure data module and view the ship's logs, but without root access, it does not enable them to manipulate the data in any way (such as copying or deleting it). See Development below if the PCs successfully access the *Acreon*'s logs.

The PCs can take 20 on Computers checks to hack the *Acreon*'s computer, but doing so automatically triggers the computer's lockdown countermeasure, which locks them out

of the system for 1d6 hours. The PCs can also attempt to retry failed checks, though three failed attempts also triggers the lockdown. The lockdown cannot be disabled, but it can be physically bypassed with a successful DC 21 Engineering check. If the PCs fail any Computers check by 5 or more while using key card from area **C7**, the system automatically locks the key card's access and it no longer provides its bonus.

Creatures: Three akatas are currently on the bridge. They attack any living creature they detect nearby.

AKATAS (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

HP 18 each (see page 55)

Treasure: The noqual fragments (see the sidebar on page 26) of three more akata cocoons are scattered throughout the bridge, and can be identified with a successful DC 16 Life Science check. Together, the noqual shards have 3 bulk and are worth 1,500 credits.

Development: If the PCs successfully access the ship's log, they can learn some of what befell the *Acreon*'s crew. The logs detail the discovery of the Drift Rock, the crew's initial exploration of the asteroid's surface and the strange "geodes" they found there. The captain then states that the crew was under attack from monsters that "hatched" from the geodes they brought back to the ship (the description of the monsters matches the akatas that the PCs have already faced). The next entry is more hurried, and the sounds of combat are audible in the background. "There's something else—it came from the rock!" the captain reports with more than a trace of panic in his voice. "We're getting overwhelmed! I'm going to open the ship to vacuum—maybe that'll slow them down!" The log's final entry was recorded in engineering (area **C4**) and shows the captain in his space suit. "Purging the air didn't work. I've set the autopilot to continue on to Absalom Station, but we're abandoning ship. We'll fall back to the rock and try to regroup there. *Acreon* out." There are no further entries.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully access the *Acreon*'s logs, award them 600 XP.

PART 3: PHANTOMS OF THE DRIFT

Having found no traces of the *Acreon*'s crew aboard the derelict ship, the PCs' next goal should be to explore the mysterious asteroid accompanying the ship, particularly if they were able to access the ship's log and learned that the crew abandoned ship and fled to the Drift Rock. The PCs can either return to the *Hippocampus* and land the shuttle on the



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asteroid, or they can exit the *Acreon* through its aft airlock and make their way along the tow cables connecting the Drift Rock to the ship.

DEPARTURE OF THE HIPPOCAMPUS

Shortly after the PCs enter the Drift Rock, the *Hippocampus* (if it was not disabled or destroyed) automatically leaves on autopilot to return to Absalom Station—a detail Gevalarsk Nor failed to mention to the PCs. Station authorities only agreed to loan Nor the shuttle to take the PCs to the *Acreon*, not bring them back. Concerned that the PCs might discover something dangerous on the ship or the asteroid that could threaten the entire station if they brought it there—the same reason they quarantined the *Acreon* in the first place—the authorities decided to wait and see what, if anything, the PCs found first. If there were no problems, they could always send the shuttle back to pick up the PCs. It doesn't matter when (or even if) the PCs find out that the *Hippocampus* has left, as long as it's too late for them to do anything about it. It does mean that the PCs are stuck on the Drift Rock for the time being. Fortunately, there's another ship on the asteroid, just waiting for the PCs to salvage it! See area **D9** for more details.

D. THE DRIFT ROCK

The Drift Rock seems to be nothing more than a small, nondescript asteroid, but it is actually a fragment of the ancient superweapon once known as the Stellar Degenerator. Essentially vacant for millennia (except for a solitary security robot that has barely managed to withstand the ravages of time), the Drift Rock has acquired a few new inhabitants since it was dragged out of the kishalee demiplane and into

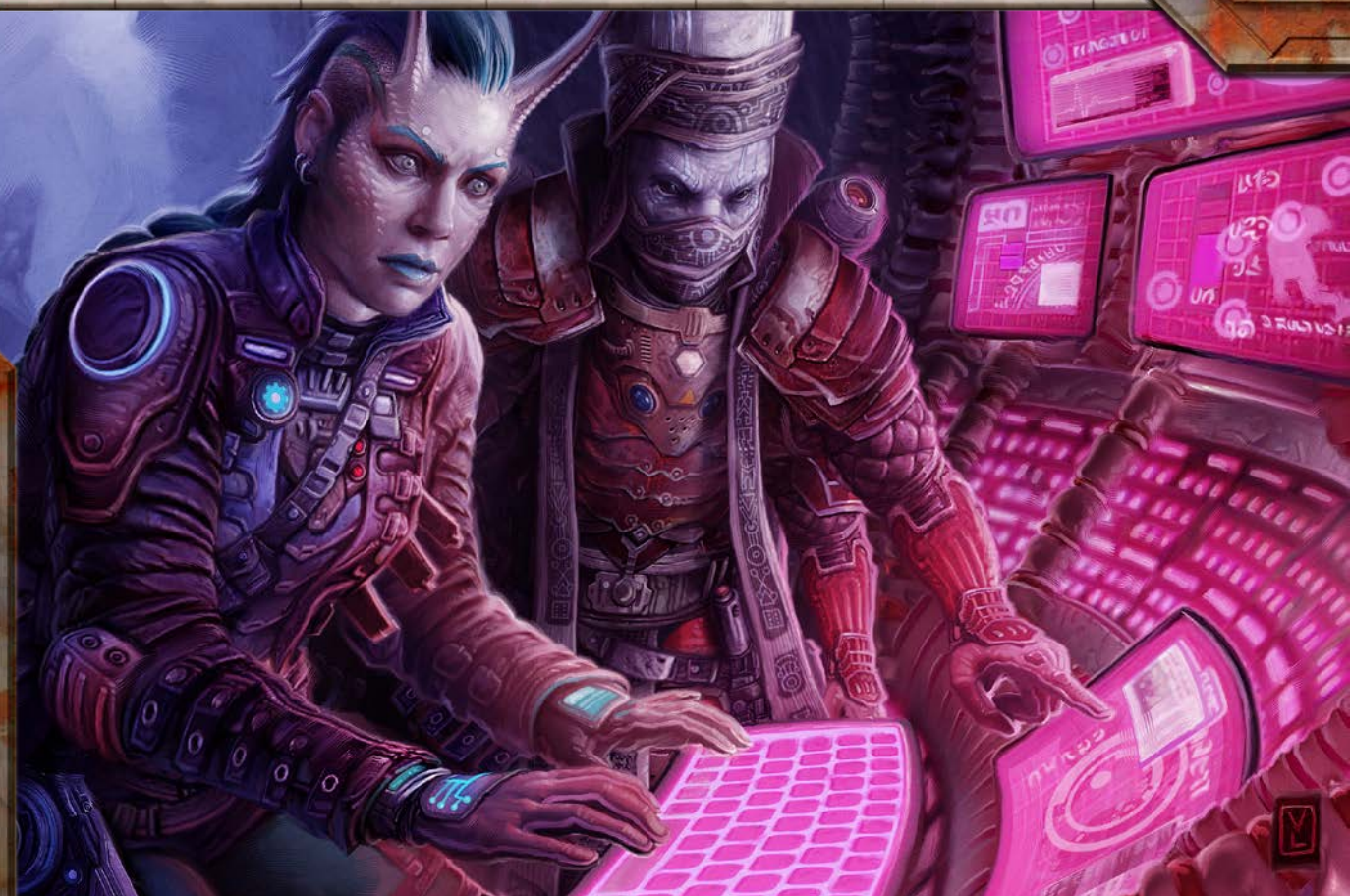
the Drift. In fact, the crew of the *Acreon* weren't even the first humans to discover the asteroid.

Seventy-five years ago, a human explorer named Moriko Nash came across the Drift Rock during her own Drift travel. She landed her ship, the *Sunrise Maiden*, and set out to explore the asteroid, unaware that her ship had picked up a stowaway in the Drift—a strange creature native to the demiplane called a garaggakal. The garaggakal attacked Captain Nash on the Drift Rock, and the explorer soon died of her wounds. The garaggakal took up residence in the abandoned chambers within the asteroid, while Nash rose as an undead creature called a driftdead.

Decades later, the cocoons of a small pack of hibernating akatas landed on the Drift Rock. There they remained until awoken by the arrival of the *Acreon*'s crew. Once the akatas infested the prospecting ship, the crew retreated to the Drift Rock, where they found a tunnel leading into the asteroid's interior. The crew took shelter there, not knowing that they had been infected with the akatas' void death. Now the remaining members of the *Acreon*'s crew persist as undead void zombies, hosts to gestating akata larvae that will eventually develop into fully grown adult akatas.

Nevertheless, the garaggakal remains the undisputed master of the Drift Rock. It doesn't care about the undead that now share its home, but since the *Acreon* towed the asteroid out of the Drift and into normal space, the garaggakal is cut off from the energy that sustains it, and it is eager to feed on living prey—such as the PCs.

The Drift Rock is a rocky asteroid only a few thousand feet in diameter with an unremarkable, irregular surface. If a PC succeeds at a DC 15 Computers check while scanning the



Drift Rock with the *Hippocampus*'s sensors, he learns that the asteroid has no atmosphere and is primarily composed of rock and metal. Strangely, the sensors can pick up no additional information, as if the Drift Rock itself is interfering with the sensor readings.

To learn more, the PCs can use the *Hippocampus*'s sensors to visually survey the Drift Rock in greater detail, or they can physically explore the surface of the asteroid. If a PC succeeds at a DC 10 Physical Science check to recall knowledge while inspecting the asteroid, she notices one unusual feature: one side of the Drift Rock seems to have been sheared cleanly off, as if it was once part of a larger planetoid or celestial body. With a result of 15 or higher on the check, she gleans another odd detail: unlike on most asteroids, no impact craters mar the Drift Rock's surface, as if it had been somehow protected from the ravages of space for millions of years.

If the PCs succeed at a DC 15 Perception check while studying or exploring the Drift Rock, they find a rocky overhang concealing a cave entrance that seems to lead inside the asteroid. The cave does indeed become a tunnel that bores into the Drift Rock's interior, leading to areas **D1** and **D2**. (The other entrances to the Drift Rock's interior, in areas **D3** and **D9**, are considerably more difficult to find and are further concealed by the asteroid's sensor-blocking properties.)

The following are standard features of the Drift Rock. There is no atmosphere inside the asteroid, and the tunnels and rooms are completely dark unless otherwise indicated.

There is also no gravity in areas **D1** through **D5** or the tunnels connecting those chambers, though the natural walls in those areas are rough enough to provide plenty of handholds. See page 402 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook* for rules on adventuring in zero gravity. On the other hand, areas **D6** through **D9** (and their connecting corridors) enjoy standard gravity, courtesy of the ancient sivv technology buried deep within the Drift Rock. Unless otherwise noted, corridor and tunnel ceilings are 15 feet high, while caverns and rooms have 30-foot-high ceilings.

Use the map on page 29 for this location.

D1. CRASHLANDER (CR 2)

Large chunks of rubble are scattered across this cavern. A large boulder lies to the west.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 5 Physical Science check can determine that the cavern (and the surrounding tunnels) is not a natural formation, but was excavated from the rock of the asteroid. The cavern is otherwise unremarkable.

Creature: After the space battle between the *Hippocampus* and the *Stiletto* (see page 22), the interceptor's pilot, Clara-247, made her way to the Drift Rock, either crashing her ship on the asteroid if the PCs won that battle, or landing there if she was victorious. Either way, she plans to make sure the PCs never leave.

Clara-247 hides behind a large boulder at the far western side of the chamber, and keeps her shirren eye rifle trained on the entrance to the cavern. If the PCs enter the cavern, they can attempt to notice her with a Perception check opposed by Clara-247's Stealth check. If the android operative remains hidden, she gets to act in a surprise round and activates her holographic clone operative exploit before opening fire on the PCs in subsequent rounds.

CLARA-247

CR 2

Female android operative
CN Medium humanoid (android)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;
Perception +8

DEFENSE

HP 23

EAC 13; **KAC** 14

Fort +1; **Ref** +6; **Will** +5; +2 vs. disease, mind-affecting effects, poison, and sleep

Defensive Abilities evasion, operative exploit (holographic clone 1/day), upgrade slot (jump jets)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee survival knife +6 (1d4+2 S)

Ranged tactical shirren-eye rifle +8 (1d10+2 P) or azimuth laser pistol +8 (1d4+2 F; critical burn 1d4)

Offensive Abilities precise shot, trick attack +1d8

TACTICS

Before Combat Clara-247 hides behind a large boulder, gaining cover (+4 to AC, +2 to Reflex saves).

During Combat Clara-247 activates her holographic clone operative exploit on the first round of combat, then tries to take out foes with her sniper rifle from a distance. If sniping is not an option or her enemies get too close, she uses Stealth to make trick attacks with her laser pistol, maneuvering in zero-g with her jump jets.

Morale Clara-247 is a hired gun, not an ideologue. If she is reduced to fewer than 6 Hit Points, she surrenders.

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +4; **Con** +0; **Int** +2; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +1

Skills Acrobatics +13, Computers +8, Engineering +8, Piloting +13, Stealth +13

Languages Common, Vercite

Other Abilities constructed, flat affect, operative specialization (ghost)

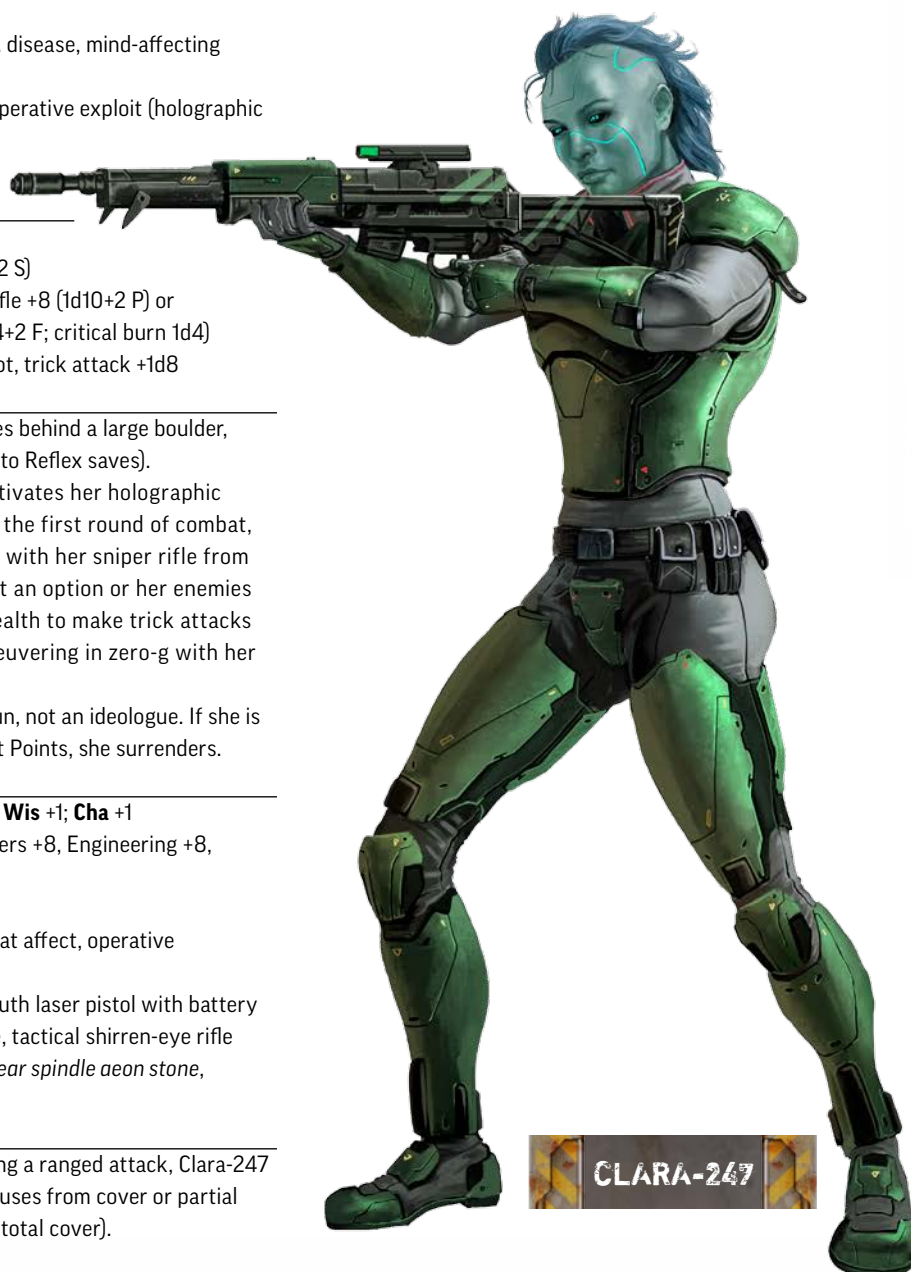
Gear freebooter armor I, azimuth laser pistol with battery (20 charges), survival knife, tactical shirren-eye rifle with 25 longarm rounds, *clear spindle aeon stone*, credstick (300 credits)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Precise Shot (Ex) When making a ranged attack, Clara-247 ignores the target's AC bonuses from cover or partial cover (but not improved or total cover).

Development: If the PCs capture and interrogate Clara-247, she admits that she was hired to kill them, although she doesn't know who her employer is, since they used shell companies to hire her (though it shouldn't be too hard for the PCs to guess who was behind the attack). At this point, she wishes the PCs no further ill will; she's had two chances and failed both times, so she's willing to let bygones be bygones if the PCs are.

Clara-247 knows nothing about either the *Acreon* or the Drift Rock other than the rumors circulating on Absalom Station, nor does she care. She has no interest in helping the PCs in combat or with their explorations, though if the *Stiletto* crashed, she might offer her aid in exchange for passage off the Drift Rock. Otherwise, the PCs will need to persuade her



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(and offer her payment of at least 500 credits) to join them—if they feel they can trust her.

D2. MISSING CREWMAN

A dead humanoid body floats in this cavern.

The corpse is that of a human male. It's still wearing an estex suit with a patch that reads "ACREON," identifying it as a member of the mining ship's crew. A PC who inspects the body and succeeds at a DC 15 Medicine check, or who casts a spell such as *detect affliction*, determines that the man was not infected with the akatas' void death. In fact, this crew member was lucky—he died of his wounds shortly after the crew retreated here, and so avoided a horrifying transformation into a void zombie.

Treasure: The dead crew member is wearing an estex suit I with a backup generator armor upgrade and is holding an empty survival flare gun.

D3. CAVERN OF THE VOID (CR 1)

Four tunnels exit this cavern to the north, south, east, and west. Strangely, however, while the south and west passages are hewn rock, the north and east passages are finished and lined with some sort of polished, metallic plating on the walls, floors, and ceiling.

The nature of the plating on the corridor walls can be identified with a successful DC 15 Engineering or Life Science check (see area D6 for more details). The northern corridor goes in a perfectly straight line for about 100 feet until it ends at a hole facing the void of space (the corridor once connected to other portions of the Stellar Degenerator, before the Drift Rock was sheared off).

Creature: One of the unfortunate crew of the *Acreon*, now a void zombie containing the gestating larva of an akata, wanders this cavern. The prospector is wearing a space suit, but the lower half of its helmet is shattered, and a repulsive, bloated blue-gray "tongue" hangs from the remnants of the zombie's lower jaw—the feeding tendril of the larval akata inside. The void zombie attacks anyone entering the cavern.

VOID ZOMBIE CR 1

XP 400

HP 22 (see page 61)

TACTICS

During Combat The void zombie single-mindedly focuses its attacks on the closest opponent.

Morale The void zombie fights until destroyed.

D4. LOST IN THE DRIFT (CR 2)

This chamber is similar to the other excavated caverns within the Drift Rock, with tunnels exiting to the north,

west, and southeast. The corridors to the north and west are finished and paneled. The northern passage ends after about 50 feet, where the ceiling has collapsed in a wall of fallen rock (like the northern corridor in area D3, this corridor once connected to other areas of the Stellar Degenerator).

Creature: This room hosts a strange undead creature called a driftdead. The creature was once Moriko Nash, the captain of the *Sunrise Maiden*, who first discovered the Drift Rock 75 years ago. Her body lies in area D7; her ship is parked where she left it, in area D9. Moriko had been trapped in the tiny chamber that contains her corpse since she died 75 years ago, but when the *Acreon* towed the Drift Rock out of the Drift a few days ago, she was finally freed—her physical undead form faded away and she became incorporeal, able to pass through doors and walls. Disoriented in her new incorporeal state, Moriko has aimlessly haunted the chambers of the Drift Rock ever since, but she is loath to venture far from her physical remains. If the PCs have already found Moriko's body in area D7, they can recognize the driftdead as the same person—or at least what's left of her.

Moriko's decades of confinement and undead existence have engendered a hatred for life in what's left of her warped mind. In her incorporeal undead state, Moriko does not interact with the void zombies now inhabiting the Drift Rock. Still fixated on the circumstances of her death, she avoids the garagakal in area D9, but she attacks any living creature that enters the cavern and chases fleeing foes throughout the asteroid, passing through walls to cut off her victims' flight.

MORIKO NASH CR 2

XP 600

Female driftdead (see page 57)

HP 22

TACTICS

During Combat Moriko attempts to tear her foes apart with her Drift rip ability from a distance, but once an opponent is affected by her confusion aura, she moves in to rip them apart personally with her incorporeal claws. Moriko uses her incorporeal form to her advantage, hiding within walls and floors to attack foes before retreating back out of reach, only to emerge once again, harrying her foes as they move throughout the Drift Rock.

Morale Moriko fights until destroyed.

D5. FINAL FATE OF THE ACREON'S CREW (CR 3)

Two passages exit this cavern, one to the northeast and one to the northwest. An incongruous door, more akin to what one would expect to find on a space station, stands in the south wall.

Beyond the southern door, the rooms and corridors are all finished with ceramic-metallic plating (see area D6 for details) and artificial standard gravity is in effect.

Creatures: Two void zombies—the last of the *Acreon's* crew—inhabit this cavern. If the PCs were able to access the *Acreon's* logs (see area **C9**), they can recognize one of the void zombies as the captain of the ship. The zombies launch themselves toward any intruders, their feeding tendrils twitching with hunger.

VOID ZOMBIES (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

HP 22 each (see page 61)

Treasure: One of the void zombies is still carrying a credstick with 470 credits. In addition, an azimuth laser rifle and needler pistol float in this chamber, discarded by the void zombies after their transformation. Both weapons are depleted of charges and ammunition.

D6. MYSTERIOUS MACHINERY (CR 3)

In stark contrast to the caverns elsewhere inside the Drift Rock, this chamber looks more like a room on a space station or starship. Rather than the unfinished rock of the asteroid, the walls, floor, and ceiling are clad with finished sheets of some polished, metallic substance, along with components of unrecognizable equipment. Panels on some of the walls flash with lights and mysterious symbols, and an almost infrasonic hum of unseen machinery pulses through the walls.

This room was a supplementary maintenance and monitoring station for the Stellar Degenerator. The lights on the machinery provide dim light in this room.

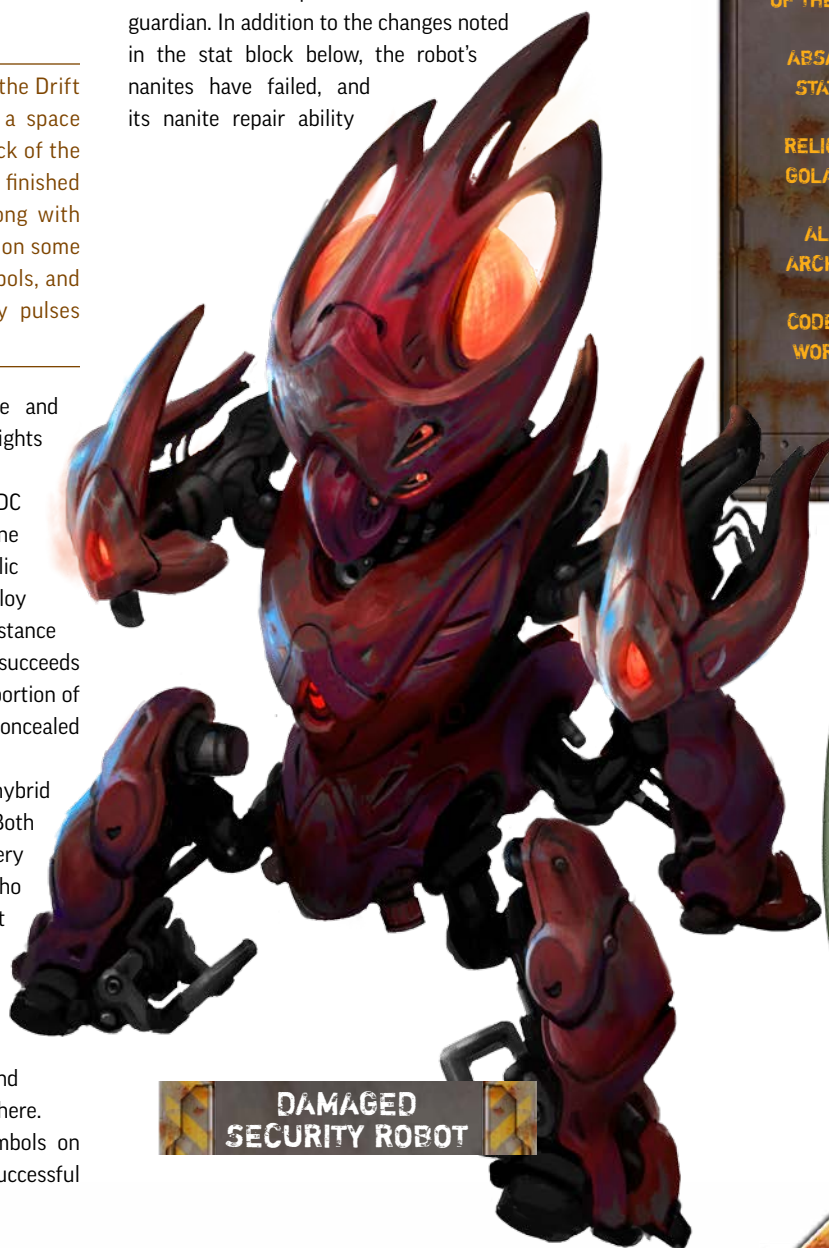
A PC who examines the walls and succeeds at a DC 15 Engineering or Life Science check can determine that the wall panels are some sort of ceramic-metallic plating that is as strong and durable as adamantite alloy (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 408), but is itself a substance unknown to Pact Worlds material science. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check notices that the lower portion of a wall panel in the northwest corner is actually a concealed hatch that blocks off area **D7**.

The equipment in the room is ancient sivr hybrid machinery that blends magic and technology. Both *detect magic* and *detect tech* identify the machinery as hybrid technology, but not its purpose. A PC who studies the machinery can attempt to identify it with a DC 30 Engineering or Mysticism check to identify technology or magic. If successful, the PC realizes that it is advanced technology of a type not seen in the Pact Worlds system and that it seems to primarily deal with monitoring the status and operation of larger, unknown systems located elsewhere.

The PCs can also attempt to decipher the symbols on the wall panels with a DC 30 Culture check. If successful

(or if using magic such as *comprehend languages*), they can recognize them as error messages and warning indicators in an unknown language. It's impossible to divine the exact nature of the errors and warnings, however, even with magic—there's simply not enough context or information (for the same reason, a PC who fails the Culture check by 10 or more doesn't misconstrue the meaning of the symbols; she's simply unable to decipher them).

Creature: An ancient kishalee security robot patrols this room. It has mostly remained on standby for the millions of years since the Stellar Degenerator was forgotten. The robot reactivated when sensors detected intruders on the Drift Rock (the garaggakal and Moriko Nash). The millennia have not been especially kind to the robot, and the toll of years has damaged and weakened it. The security robot's statistics were originally presented in *Starfinder: First Contact*, but it has been modified to represent this ancient kishalee guardian. In addition to the changes noted in the stat block below, the robot's nanites have failed, and its nanite repair ability



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no longer functions. The robot attacks any non-kishalee trespassers (which effectively means anyone), and fights until destroyed, but it does not leave this chamber.

DAMAGED SECURITY ROBOT

CR 3

XP 800

Starfinder: First Contact 13

N Medium construct (technological)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +10

DEFENSE

HP 38

EAC 16; **KAC** 16

Fort +4; **Ref** +4; **Will** +1

Immunities construct immunities

Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits, vulnerable to electricity; see page 54

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +8 (1d6+6 B)

Ranged ancient integrated tactical arc emitter +11 (1d4+4 E or stun; critical arc 1d6)

Offensive Abilities jolting arc

STATISTICS

Str +3; **Dex** +5; **Con** —; **Int** +1; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +15, Computers +10, Intimidate +10

Languages Common

Other Abilities unliving

Gear integrated arc rifle

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Construct Immunities (Ex) Constructs are immune to bleed, death effects, disease, mind-affecting effects, necromancy effects, paralysis, poison, sleep, and stunning. They are also immune to ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, nonlethal damage, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect works on objects or is harmless). Effects that specifically state they override these immunities affect constructs normally.

Jolting Arc (Ex) Once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action, a security robot can shoot an arc of electricity at up to four creatures within 40 feet (no two of which can be more than 30 feet apart). This arc deals 1d8 electricity damage to each target (Reflex DC 13 half).

Unliving (Ex) A security robot has no Constitution modifier and is immediately destroyed when it reaches 0 Hit Points. An unliving creature doesn't recover from damage naturally, but a construct can be repaired with the right tools or healed with spells like *make whole*. Unliving creatures don't breathe, eat, or sleep. They can't be raised or resurrected.

Treasure: The security robot's design clearly originates from beyond the Pact Worlds. If the PCs defeat or disable the robot, they can sell it as a curiosity to a scholar or collector for 2,000 credits.

Development: While much of the electronics and machinery in this room appears operational, it's essentially nonfunctional. The PCs can try to operate some of it, but anything they try has no effect, since the Drift Rock is no longer connected to the Stellar Degenerator. Removing any of this machinery requires cutting into the walls and irrevocably damaging the equipment, negating any value it might have.

D7. SEALED BOLTHOLE

The closed hatch to this room has been barricaded from the inside and must be broken down before the PCs can enter (hardness 10, HP 30, break DC 24, Engineering DC 25).

This small chamber was once a storage area for spare parts and small maintenance and repair robots, but it is now empty save for the dead body of Moriko Nash, captain of the *Sunrise Maiden*, who first discovered the Drift Rock 75 years ago. Wounded and chased through the asteroid by the garaggakal, Moriko found this room and hid inside. She barricaded the hatch behind her, but that proved little barrier to the garaggakal, given its ability to phase through walls. Moriko used her personal force field to keep the garaggakal at bay, but when the force field's battery eventually ran out of power, she killed herself to avoid whatever fate the Drift monster had in store for her. She rose from death as a driftdead, but she was unable to escape this room until she became incorporeal when the Drift Rock entered normal space. The undead Moriko Nash can now be found in area **D4**; if the PCs have already encountered Moriko there, they can recognize the body here as belonging to the driftdead. If the PCs inspect the body, numerous wounds are visible, but the cause of death appears obvious: a self-inflicted wound to the head.

Treasure: The PCs can salvage Moriko's gear from her body. It's still wearing an estex suit I with a brown force field, though the force field's battery is depleted. The body also carries two *spell amps of lesser restoration* and a personal datapad (tier 1 computer). Moriko's empty static arc pistol lies on the floor next to her outstretched hand.

Development: Moriko Nash recorded her final message to posterity on her datapad before she died. The datapad's battery is dead, but if the PCs provide a new power source, they can access the unsecured computer with a successful DC 10 Computers check and find out what happened to Moriko.

In the recording, Moriko identifies herself as the captain of the independent starship *Sunrise Maiden*, and briefly relates her discovery of a strange asteroid in the Drift. She landed her ship in a cavern on the asteroid and began exploring other chambers inside it, but she was attacked by a terrifying monster that seemed to consume life energy and could walk through walls. Wounded and unable to escape the monster, Moriko managed to modify her armor's force field to extend in a bubble around her, as the monster

seemed unable to pass through the force field. Nevertheless, Moriko realized her force field would eventually run out of power, and the monster would finally be able to reach her. She ends the recording with the following.

"I think I've come to terms with it. I won't survive, but at least I've explored strange worlds and seen wonders I would never have dreamed of as a child. I guess everything comes to an end eventually. I've always been the master of my own fate, and I'm not going to change now." Captain Nash holds up a pistol. "When my force field goes down, I'll fight. But I'm saving my last charge for myself. My life, my death.

"This is my last will and testament.

To whoever finds this recording, I leave the *Sunrise Maiden* to you. It's a good ship, and no matter where I've gone, it's always brought me home... until now. If you treat it right, it'll do the same for you. Leave my body where you found it—we came from the stars, and to the stars I'll return—but the *Maiden* deserves to keep flying." Nash takes a deep breath and ends the recording.

PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Culture check recognize the *Sunrise Maiden* as the name of a starship that was reported lost in the Drift in 242 AG. The ship and its crew were never found—until now. The *Sunrise Maiden* remains in area D9, where Captain Nash left it 75 years ago.

D8. ANCIENT CONTROL ROOM (CR 3)

The various lights and controls on the machinery in this room provide dim light. This chamber seems torn between two worlds—its southeastern half is an unfinished rock wall, while the northeastern portion of the room is finished with the same ceramic-metallic plating found in area D6. An auxiliary control room for the Stellar Degenerator, this chamber contains similar hybrid technomagical machinery that can be identified and interacted with as described in area D6, though successfully identifying the technology reveals that it has control functions rather than simple status monitoring. In fact, a complex control panel is built into the north wall that may allow the PCs to learn more about the Drift Rock and its original function, if they can access the controls.

The PCs can attempt to access the control console by hacking into the control room's computer system, requiring a successful DC 25 Computers check and three full actions. If the PCs fail the check by 5 or more (or take 20 on the check), it triggers a malfunction in the console (see Trap below), but they can try again. If successful, they gain access to the system (or what's left of it), but there's another obstacle to overcome—understanding the alien programming.



MORIKO NASH

Interpreting the complex code requires a successful DC 30 Culture check to decipher it (the PCs can't count the console as a computer terminal for the purposes of taking 20 on this Culture check). Alternatively, *comprehend languages* allows a PC to automatically understand the data. If successful, the PCs learn that the equipment in this room is designed to operate minor subsystems of some larger structure or device, though the control room is no longer connected to that structure. The exact nature of the missing structure remains a mystery, though references to systems such as "Backup Power Transmission," "Maneuvering Thrusters," and "Auxiliary Fire Control" hint that it may have been some sort of space-based weapon system. In addition, the data reveals

that these systems and the control room itself are incredibly ancient—possibly even millions of years old. In fact, it appears that the Drift Rock is not just an asteroid that was repurposed as a control center, but that it was a part of the larger structure that was designed and artificially constructed at the same time as the machinery and controls here. And if all that is true, then the Drift Rock represents a find of major significance, for not only is it a piece of heretofore-unknown technology of exceedingly advanced age, but the larger structure it was once a part of may still be somewhere among the stars, just waiting to be discovered!

If the PCs fail the Culture check to decipher the data by 10 or more, they might misinterpret the information in some way—they may think this is a control room for some sort of massive power plant, or perhaps that the Drift Rock is a strange type of starship. If this is the case, they'll need to rely on someone else (such as Chiskisk or Ambassador Nor) to later interpret the data to learn the real secrets of the Drift Rock!

Trap: If anyone fails the Computers check to access the control console by 5 or more, the console malfunctions and sparks with electricity, shocking the triggering creature.

MALFUNCTIONING CONTROL CONSOLE CR 3 XP 800

Type hybrid; **Perception** DC 24; **Disable** Engineering or Mysticism DC 19 (disable short-circuiting components)

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect arc of electricity (6d6 E); Reflex DC 14 half

Story Award: If the PCs learn that the Drift Rock is likely a portion of a larger structure or weapon, award them 600 XP.

D9. STARSHIP GROTTO (CR 5)

With its vaulted ceiling and smoothed stone floor, this sprawling cavern has the appearance of a primitive shuttle

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hangar or landing bay—an impression reinforced by the presence of a starship taking up the majority of the space. Only the western wall is finished with the ceramic-metallic plating found elsewhere in the complex; the remainder of the cavern is hemmed by natural rock walls. Huge doors stand in the eastern wall of the chamber—doors easily big enough to accommodate the starship parked in front of them. Of more immediate interest, however, are the two human bodies splayed on the floor just inside the western doors, their internal organs spread artfully on the floor around the corpses.

The ceiling of this room is 60 feet high. This cavern was in fact designed as a docking bay of sorts—one of many on the Stellar Degenerator. The ship parked inside the cavern is the *Sunrise Maiden*, the ship of Captain Moriko Nash (see area **D7**), left here 75 years ago. Captain Nash found the hangar doors open when she first discovered the asteroid, and she landed the *Sunrise Maiden* in the landing bay. After finding a small control panel in the cavern, Nash managed to close the doors, sealing her ship inside. From the outside, the doors are disguised from sensors and sight by powerful technomagic holograms that render them indistinguishable from the surface of the Drift Rock.

The pair of bodies on the floor are the *Acreon*'s last two missing crew members—see Creature below for an explanation of their fate.

Creature: A rare creature native to the Drift called a garaggakal has chosen this cavern as its lair. Originally brought to the Drift Rock aboard the *Sunrise Maiden*, the garaggakal took up residence in the asteroid. It lived here for decades, feeding on planar energies in between hunting forays into the Drift for live prey. When the crew of the *Acreon* discovered the Drift Rock and explored the asteroid's surface, the garaggakal sensed their emotions and started hunting them instead. The creature killed two of the *Acreon*'s crew in its initial assault on the ship and then brought their bodies back here to its lair so it could drain the last of their life energy and study their corpses. With the exception of Moriko Nash, whose body it never got to examine, the garaggakal had never encountered a human before, and it is exceedingly curious about the new species it's discovered. The grisly display on the cavern floor is the result of the garaggakal's exploratory dissections.

Since the Drift Rock was brought into the Material Plane, the garaggakal can no longer sustain itself on Drift energy, and there's no live prey left on the asteroid—except for the PCs. The garaggakal likely detects the PCs' emotions with its sense through ability before they even enter the cavern, and it's eager to feed again and learn more about these strange creatures that keep willingly coming into its lair.

The garaggakal attacks the PCs as soon as they enter the grotto. If any of the PCs are non-human, the garaggakal focuses its attention on them—they're even newer to it than

humans. As it leeches their life energy away, it telepathically marvels at how their anatomy differs from that of humans and idly speculates about the exciting new flavors it's going to enjoy.

GARAGGAKAL

CR 5

XP 1,600

HP 75 (see page 58)

TACTICS

During Combat The garaggakal initially attacks its foes in melee combat with its lamprey-like bite to get a "taste" of its prey, but if reduced to fewer than 60 Hit Points, it keeps its distance and uses its life leech ability to bolster itself. If anyone deals electricity damage to the garaggakal, it turns on them to take out the greatest threat. If its victims try to run away, the garaggakal pursues them throughout the Drift Rock, using its phase through ability as needed to catch them or cut them off.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 25 Hit Points, the garaggakal attempts to flee, phasing through walls if necessary.

Treasure: If the PCs search the cavern, they can find several unusual art objects that the garaggakal has collected from myriad civilizations over the years while hunting in the Drift. Ranging from bizarrely unsettling to delicately exquisite, these examples of exotic fine art are worth a total of 2,000 credits. Of course, the biggest treasure here is the *Sunrise Maiden* itself. The ship is detailed in Development below, but its cargo holds contain salvageable trade goods that are worth another 2,000 credits.

Development: The PCs can easily recognize the *Sunrise Maiden* as a Sanjaval Vagabond, a common (though somewhat outdated) model of starship known for its toughness and dependability. If the PCs found Moriko Nash's last will and testament in area **D7**, then the *Sunrise Maiden* is legally theirs now. If the PCs didn't find Captain Nash's body, they can still learn of her fate when they investigate the ship. Moriko also transmitted her final message (see area **D7**) to the ship's computer, and a flashing display on one of the *Sunrise Maiden*'s bridge consoles indicates the presence of the recorded message, which the PCs can easily play back. In addition, they can use the recording's metadata to pinpoint the captain's location in area **D7** and find her body at this point, if they wish. In any case, with the departure of the *Hippocampus* (which the PCs might only discover at this point; see page 29), the *Sunrise Maiden* is the PCs' only way off the Drift Rock. The *Sunrise Maiden*'s statistics can be found on the inside front cover; a map of the ship appears on the inside back cover.

A PC can find the control panel to open the grotto's hangar doors with a successful DC 10 Perception check while searching the grotto. Operating the doors requires a successful DC 17 Computers check to hack the controls or



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DC 20 Engineering check to disable device. Once the doors are open, the PCs can fire up the *Sunrise Maiden*'s power core, warm up the thrusters, and take off to head back to Absalom Station.

If the garaggakal managed to escape the PCs, it might stow away on the *Sunrise Maiden*, hoping the ship eventually returns to the Drift. The next time the ship enters the Drift, the garaggakal can emerge from hiding to attack the PCs—this time in its corporeal form—when they least expect it.

Story Award: Award the PCs 600 XP for inheriting the *Sunrise Maiden* and acquiring their own ship.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs have not yet fully explored all of the chambers within the Drift Rock, they can do so at this point—the *Sunrise Maiden* can wait until they're ready to return to Absalom Station. The abandoned starship is designed to serve as the PCs' personal ship and home base for the remainder of the Adventure Path. Although it's currently a tier 3 starship, the *Sunrise Maiden* will advance in capability along with the PCs, and will hopefully develop

a personality of its own over the course of the campaign, possibly becoming as much of a character as each of the PCs!

Of course, the *Acreon* and the Drift Rock remain contested between Astral Extractions and the Hardscrabble Collective, and the PCs might still have unfinished business of their own to attend to, most notably the fate of Commander Hebiza Eskolar and the PCs' own deal with Ambassador Gevalarsk Nor. Unfortunately, the PCs are not going to manage to keep what they discovered about the true nature of the Drift Rock secret, even if they want to. The observer bot that Nor sent along with the PCs has been broadcasting its data the entire time, and the ambassador has made the feed public (after carefully editing out any evidence of Commander Eskolar's presence, of course). As a result, all of Absalom Station is abuzz with the revelation of the Drift Rock's ancient origin, and the PCs themselves have even become minor celebrities on the station! (If the PCs disabled or destroyed the observer bot, Nor managed to plant a surreptitious recording device on one of the PCs, ensuring that the data gets out there one way or another.)

But all of these concerns must wait for now, for as soon as the PCs leave the Drift Rock, they come under attack from another starship lying in wait for them outside the asteroid. The PCs' battle with this mysterious ship, and their efforts to learn more about the Drift Rock and its origins, kicks off the next exciting installment of the Dead Suns Adventure Path, "Temple of the Twelve."



ABSALOM

THE ARMADA



THE SPIKE



THE ARMS



STATION

JATEMBE PARK



THE PLENARA



FOGTOWN



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ABSALOM STATION IS THE METAPHORICAL CENTER OF THE PACT WORLDS—THE HUB AROUND WHICH ALL THINGS REVOLVE. IT WAS HERE THAT THE PACT WORLDS AS A FORMAL ENTITY WERE CREATED, VIA THE EPONYMOUS ABSALOM PACT, AND IT REMAINS THE SYSTEM'S HEART GOVERNMENTALLY, CULTURALLY, AND ECONOMICALLY. ALL SENTIENT SPECIES, FROM THE FAMILIAR TO THE MOST ALIEN, ARE WELCOME IN ITS STREETS, WITH THE MYSTERIOUS ARTIFACT AT ITS HEART ACTING AS A SINGULARLY POWERFUL HYPERSPACE BEACON. ABSALOM STATION FINDS ITS SIGNIFICANCE ONLY GROWING AS THE RACES OF THE PACT WORLDS SPREAD OUT ACROSS THE GALAXY.

ABSALOM STATION

NG space station

Population 2,130,000 (46% human, 9% android, 9% ysoki, 7% lashunta, 5% shirren, 4% dwarf, 4% halfling, 4% kasatha, 3% vesk, 2% gnome, 1% nuar, 6% other)

Government council (Syndicsguild led by Prime Executive)

Qualities academic, cultured, financial center, major port and trade center, technologically average

Maximum Item Level 20

ORIGIN AND HISTORY

Due to the Gap, no one knows who built Absalom Station or why—whether it was created as a run-of-the-mill space platform, a lifeboat during some frantic exodus from doomed Golarion, or something else entirely. Its thoroughly mechanical nature and walls of ceramic, metal, and plastic lead most scholars to assume it was built by ordinary mortals, while its population of historically Golarion-based species, as well as its position in the precise orbit vacated by Golarion, suggests that Golarion natives were responsible for the vast undertaking. What's more, records show that when the Gap ended and station residents found themselves unsure about their pasts, the station seemed lived in and worn, implying that they'd already been there for quite some time. Even today, the mysteries surrounding the station's origin and its ties to Golarion's disappearance make it a natural draw for Gap researchers, who constantly strive to infer bits of objective truth from the shifting morass of the station's past.

After the Gap, Absalom Station's inhabitants found themselves even more adrift than most cultures, with no home world and no trustworthy records of their social ties and governance. Anarchy reigned; gangs based on racial or religious identities looted and fought in the streets, and systems broke down as people abandoned their posts. Only when a runaway malfunction nearly resulted in the venting of the entire station's atmosphere did people recognize their precarious position and begin to pull together, with the heads

of the various gangs forming the first Syndicsguild and electing the first Prime Executive, Loqua Tem.

With the advent of Drift travel, the residents of Absalom Station were surprised to find it transformed from a backwater raft of "homeless" races—most notably humanity—to the most prosperous and powerful port in the Pact Worlds. Early post-Gap engineers attempting to understand the station's workings had known for several years that the station's power core was no mere reactor but rather a powerful magical artifact called the *Starstone*, believed to be the same object that had lain at the heart of the station's namesake city on Golarion and through whose magic lomedae and other deities had risen to godhood. Locked away behind unbreachable defenses, it had always provided enough free energy to power the entire station, yet it came to reveal a new function: no matter where in the galaxy a ship started from, the *Starstone* made Drift travel to the space around Absalom Station as quick and safe as hopping between planets in a single system. Now, no matter how far explorers may roam, Absalom Station is always right next door.

The next decades were marked by harsh growing pains as Absalom Station struggled to retain its independence. Various other governments attempted to claim the station, most notably the Bone Sages of Eox, who launched the Magefire Assault in 7 AG only to be rebuffed by the station's formidable defensive batteries. Since then, having dedicated itself to neutrality and equitable trade, Absalom Station became the natural headquarters for newly formed interplanetary organizations and eventually the seat of government for the Pact Worlds, forever giving all other planets in the system a stake in defending its independence.

GOVERNMENT

As an independent Pact World, Absalom Station is ruled by the Prime Executive, a term-limited position with theoretically absolute authority over the station's legislation and management. Colloquially known as the "Primex," the Prime Executive is elected and advised by the Syndicsguild,

a council of neighborhood representatives called syndics who do much of the real work of running the station and who, while bound by the Primex's decrees, also have the ability to remove their leader from power at any time and call for a new election. Partitioning the station's different neighborhoods into dozens of electoral districts over the years—many times in ways that favor one faction over others—means that, while most syndics are democratically elected, some corporate or criminal enclaves are dynasties in all but name.

The current Prime Executive, **Kumara Melacruz** (LG female human envoy), is only halfway through her first term, but she's already garnered controversy for her crackdown on white-collar crime and her progressive stance on non-human immigration to the station. She's survived one assassination attempt so far, and allegations are still flying as to whether the culprits were corporations fearing her policies, the Six Tip Gang angry over the arrest of its leader, or the nativist Strong Absalom movement.

In addition to its own government, Absalom Station also hosts the Pact Worlds' representative body, the Pact Council, meaning that the station is constantly flooded with delegates and ambassadors from other worlds. While this is good for business and gives Absalom Station residents easy access to the movers and shakers of the Pact Worlds, it also creates tension, as these foreign nationals operate with varying degrees of diplomatic immunity. The Stewards, the Pact Worlds' primary peacekeeping force, also maintain a headquarters on Absalom Station, and local laws allow corporations to employ private security in their holdings, so citizens sometimes find Absalom Station's legal system a jurisdictional nightmare, while savvy criminals often manage to slip through the cracks. Those in the know often warn that the station is never more than one misstep away from chaos, as security contractors and militant zealots wage shadow wars with street gangs and each other, alien ambassadors negotiate world-shaking trade deals, and explorers go to any lengths to beat rivals' claims to new planets. Still, station security does the best it can, and most denizens of Absalom Station live and work in relative safety—at least in the nicer neighborhoods.

Absalomians take deep pride in their political independence, but it comes at the price of fear. While some see the expansion of Pact Council power as the primary threat and others worry about corporate or military takeovers by other worlds, all realize how valuable their station is—and what a precarious situation that puts them in. Fortunately, whoever built the station seems to have had defense in mind. In times of conflict, a tremendous blast shield closes over the station's central dome, and huge superlaser and mass driver batteries open all across the station's surface, filling the void with a web of death while the station's immense repositioning thrusters nudge it out of the way of danger. Though the station itself has relatively few military vessels—just enough for security to deal with

problems in the Armada—this is a deliberate choice, as both the Steward fleet and the Armada are required to defend the station in times of trouble.

RESOURCES

As Absalom Station lacks the natural resources of even the smallest planet or asteroid, its inhabitants have had to get creative in order to survive. Fortunately, what technology can't solve, magic can.

The *Starstone* provides for the station in two key ways. By offering free energy on a massive scale, the artifact-powered



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central reactor allows the station to undertake many energy-intensive forms of agriculture and recycling in order to feed and reclaim nutrients from its citizens. Strangely, while this energy appears limitless for most industrial uses, attempts to store it in battery form and transport it beyond the station in industrial quantities inevitably fail, with the batteries mysteriously losing charge as they travel away from the station. Yet, the *Starstone's* real value to the station is its function as a supercharged Drift beacon, making Absalom Station the first trading post for anyone—domestic or alien—jumping into the system, as well as the last stop before heading out. It's this trade, plus the station's concentration of corporate and governmental headquarters, that keeps enough

money flowing in that minimal taxes and tariffs support the station and its people.

Absalom Station does have another valuable resource, however: information. As the home of the Starfinder Society, the station has the most data on newly discovered planets beyond the Pact Worlds, as well as the most complete known "histories" of the Gap, as scholars cross-reference and validate sources to make their best guesses on different subjects. Add to this the multitude of texts from pre-Gap Golarion included in the station's libraries and private collections, not to mention leading magical and religious schools, and Absalom Station manages to remain at the forefront of the knowledge economy.

While all sectors of the station have both wealthy and hardscrabble residents, money and power generally flow inward from the numerous bustling docks toward the station's dome and towers, while the downtrodden drift lower into the machine-cramped access warrens of the Spike.

SOCIETY

Absalom Station is a melting pot. Though many see the station as the hereditary home of all Golarion's races, particularly of humanity, today its corridors are choked with natives of other planets, and its status as the primary waypoint in and out of the Pact Worlds means even the rarest spacefaring species can sometimes be found in its docks.

For all the station's multiculturalism, however, humans are by far the most numerous. In the wake of the Gap, while elves retreated to Castrovel and dwarves constructed their massive Star Citadels, humanity clung to the station as a key piece of its cultural identity, finding comfort in its tangible—if mysterious—sense of history and continuity. Even today, many humans look to the station's extensive records of pre-Gap Golarion, seeking a source of pride and a sense of significance, adopting the names of bygone ethnic groups whose DNA they don't necessarily share, practicing ancient religions, or attempting to revive archaic organizations from scraps of information. Such traditionalists are often at odds with those called Second Age philosophers, who believe the Gap gave human culture a chance to start afresh and build a utopia. Of course, the majority of humans are far more concerned with their own families and livelihoods than metaphysical questions about culture. Still, humans being what they are, most of those on Absalom Station view the station as inherently theirs, with vague exceptions made for other races once native to Golarion, and treat all others as encroaching immigrants or foreign nationals. This naturally raises some hackles with the other common species on the station, many of which have been residents for just as long (as far as anyone can tell). Of late, one of the biggest conflicts on the station has been the rise of the Strong Absalom movement, a group that believes the *Starstone* belongs only to the refugee races of Golarion and that aliens



SILEK ODEGARD

should be either forbidden from using it as a waypoint or else taxed exorbitantly. This is further complicated by the group's tendency toward humanocentrism. While the political arm of the Strong Absalom movement officially decries the xenophobic terrorism of its fringe elements, its growing strength poses a grave threat to a government built on interplanetary cooperation.

Even more than race, economic class divides Absalom Station's citizens. Taxes on trade keep even the poorest on the station fed—if only with unappetizing nutrient paste and protein bricks—yet the people living in the posh corporate towers of the Eye have little in common with the impoverished wretches of the Spike. Money both democratizes and oppresses station residents: those who manage to build a fortune, legally or otherwise, tend to find the upper classes welcoming them with open arms, yet true wealth tends to remain concentrated in the hands of the elites who make the rules. Fortunately, the generally egalitarian government, organizations such as the Starfinder Society and Stewards, and the constant flow of merchants and mercenaries through the station offer even the lowliest Botscrap street rat a chance at social advancement.

On the other hand, religion helps unify the station's disparate peoples and hold its political apparatus together. Several major churches—most notably those of Abadar and Iomedae—have their headquarters here, but shrines and temples of countless gods can be found throughout the station, and most congregations are decidedly diverse. Nearly as influential are the various powerful gangs and families who look out for their members, from the rough-and-tumble Threepiece Girls of Sparks, with their infamous custom drones, to the Fleurasik family of Kemanis, which knows every politician's secrets.

GEOGRAPHY

Seen from above, Absalom Station is shaped roughly like an asymmetrical, six-pointed star spreading out in a flat plane from the Eye, the huge central dome that encloses a cluster of skyscrapers surrounded by shockingly green parks. More towers and neighborhoods, collectively called the Ring, partially fill the gaps between the station's arms, and a single tapering pillar called the Spike drops down from the station's central disk. Altogether, Absalom Station is only 5 miles across, yet its three-dimensional structure means it can house upward of 2 million people and still be easy for the uninitiated to get lost in or find themselves alone in rarely visited corridors.

Artificial gravity is in effect throughout the station, with "down" always being perpendicular to the disk and arms, toward the complex technomagical gravity field generators in the Spike's tip. Except where modifications have been made to the contrary, atmosphere and other environmental conditions seem tailored for human comfort. Station lights in many sectors are set to artificially enforce a 24-hour cycle of day and night,

and independent regulators and air scrubbers are located throughout the station for maximum safety. While interior additions and renovations are common, in both the freestanding buildings and the three-dimensional warren of chambers and corridors, actually expanding the station is difficult due to the extreme hardness of the exterior hull metal—an inconvenience that nevertheless keeps whole neighborhoods from getting decompressed by a single gunfight.

The following sections present an overview of the station's four main regions, or sectors, plus the orbiting Armada outside the station, as well as details of some key neighborhoods and notable sites. Note that these descriptions are far from comprehensive; each sector of the station contains a multitude of neighborhoods, each with its own unique character, and it's easy for a traveler to stumble from one district into another—one with entirely different inhabitants and social codes—just by crossing a street.

THE ARMS

Visitors to Absalom Station disembark along one of the station's protruding Arms, which house dozens of different docks and bays ranging from force-walled, atmosphere-filled hangars you can fly your ship into to more conventional airless bays or, if your ship is larger, docking tubes and mooring clamps. Docks are assigned by Absalom Traffic Control, yet this is more than just a question of space, as different docks all have different characteristics. A ship full of gilled kalo, for instance, would likely prefer to dock near the flooded chambers of the Puddles, while most well-off merchant captains would rather fly into the sun than pay Little Akiton's unofficial "docking fees" or watch their cargo walk away on its notoriously crime-ridden docks.

The Arms consist of more than just docks, however. Like those in spaceports anywhere, the corridors leading to the station's center are lined with everything a spacer coming stationside might need, from lodging and entertainment to bustling markets and shops. Many traders coming to the station never bother to leave the Arms, and the residential areas that have sprung up to support these services are also the most likely to contain facilities or whole neighborhoods for creatures that find the station's humanocentric living conditions unpleasant. Government-run quarantine centers left over from the Stardust Plague still operate here, now used by customs agents to screen travelers of unfamiliar species.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Fogtown: This neighborhood takes its name from its thick, multicolored atmosphere tailored to natives of the gas giant worlds Bretheda and Liavara. Nevertheless, other species visit frequently, making use of communal breathing masks in the airlocks in order to interact with representatives from the various Brethedan biotech companies or negotiate for gas-mining or research rights on Liavara.

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Puddles: Catering to water-breathing creatures, this neighborhood is a mazelike system of tanks and flooded hallways, with glass-walled tubes running throughout to accommodate air-breathing guests. Despite the inconvenience, many “huffers” (as Puddles residents sometimes derogatorily refer to air breathers) find that Puddles restaurants provide an exotic but delicious dining experience. Local company Qualdeep Ltd. makes some of the best environmental suits around, as well as weapons augmented for aquatic use.

Vesk Quarter: While most ethnic enclaves on Absalom Station are simply the result of like attracting like, this one was deliberately established in the first days following the end of the war with the Veskarium in an attempt to reduce violence and tension on both sides. Today, vesk can be found throughout Absalom Station, living and working like any other race, yet they still retain their highest concentration in the drab, barracks-like buildings of the Vesk Quarter.

NOTABLE SITES

Click-Clack Club: Named for the trademark sounds of its mechanical clientele, this bar and VR parlor caters specifically to mechanical creatures such as anacites, androids, and cybernetically enhanced folks sympathetic to the Augmented cause. Sometimes called “C3” for short, the club is run by **Tsalu** (LN male dragonkin technomancer) and his bond partner **Barnaba** (CN male ryphorian operative), both heavily augmented themselves. Though the two are notorious for running less-than-legal betting on their array of VR games, they’re quick to take augmented folks and anyone they see as social outcasts under their wings, and those who can best Barnaba in a game of Drift Racer or Infiltration X can win lucrative business contracts or favors from the club owners and their eccentric regulars.

Cosmonastery of the Empty Orbit: The alien architecture of this sprawling complex weaves like a banyan tree around a central courtyard with only a thin force field protecting it from the vacuum of space. Within its squat towers, High Sola **Tabishad Oseo Markola** (LN female kasatha solarian) runs the greatest solarian training facility outside of the *Idari* or Kasath itself. A taciturn woman, Tabishad is consumed by the idea that both Golarion’s disappearance and planet-scale engineering projects fundamentally disrupt the balance of the universe. Those who successfully graduate from her grueling program sometimes join her Order of the Empty Orbit, dedicated to preventing such deliberate reengineering of the cosmos.

Eyeswide Agency: Purveyors of “holistic investigation services,” the Eyeswide Agency is a private detective firm that operates in a moral and legal gray area, combining psychic mind-reading abilities with more conventional investigative practices. Eyeswide agents, often derisively called “headscanners,” hire themselves out for corporate espionage, missing-persons cases, unsolved crimes, and whatever else clients might require from a streetwise, rough-and-tumble psychic. While many citizens remain skeptical, the Eyeswide

Agency claims to operate within the bounds of the law (if just barely), and its utility to law enforcement and politicians in both official and unofficial capacities keeps anyone from digging too hard into supposed violations.

Fardock: At the tip of Kavalasa’s Arm, in otherwise prime docking space, stands a quiet enigma. Standing 20 feet tall, this stone archway twists like a Möbius strip and is always slightly out of focus, its surface occasionally manifesting alien runes that crest and disappear like surfacing dolphins. Inside the archway is a plane of flat green light. To either side of the mysterious portal stand the massive Farguards—two seemingly robotic stone automatons that are vaguely humanoid but with features of an alien lion and serpent, respectively. Able to generate powerful lances of the same green energy that the archway produces, these guards immediately attack anyone who comes within 40 feet of the archway. Yet, even those daredevils who’ve managed to make it past the Farguards and into the plane of green find it turning an angry purple—a glow matched by the revealed runes—before being blasted backward as streamers of bloody meat. Where the Fardock leads to, what might have emerged from it in secret, or if indeed it’s even a portal at all remains up for debate, with competing theories claiming it gives access to the chamber of the *Starstone*, distant empires, or Golarion itself. Research on the portal is limited by station security posted around the area in order to repulse any potential invasion and save on janitorial fees.

THE EYE

Absalom Station’s massive transparent central dome, filled with air and bathed in the light of the sun, is at the same time a civic center and the station’s most exclusive sector. The lush trees and fields of Jatembe Park are open to all citizens and constantly full of young lovers and artists enjoying their splendor under the watchful eyes of the druidic caretakers. At the same time, government buildings rub shoulders with the most expensive residences and corporate offices in the city—the sorts of places where heavily armed guards in formal armor check identification constantly and the lines between public and private security blur.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Kemanis: Stretching from Kemanis University—the station’s largest institute of higher education—to the Arcanamirium, Kemanis combines the enthusiastic energy of students with the money of the city’s elite to create the station’s most prominent entertainment district. High-end theaters, VR parlors, nightclubs, and hotels light the night with neon and even more elaborate magical advertisements. While station security keeps a tight rein on the district, a secretive group of individuals wearing white masks with a spiderweb pattern over one eye have been spotted skulking around lately, turning up in places they shouldn’t have access to. The goals of this so-called Shattereye Circle remain unknown, but

whether it's performance art or something more sinister, no one has managed to determine.

Nyori Palisades: Only the richest Absalomians, from virtual reality stars and celebrity inventors to colony financiers and starship magnates, reside in Nyori Palisades. The neighborhood takes its name from the stark, windowless facades of its massive bunker-like residences. Inside, each of these mansions is a unique marvel of artistry, with self-contained ecosystems, scrying windows offering real-time feeds of whatever landscapes the residents desire, and teleportation doors opening onto secret locations across the station or on other worlds. While some tenants decorate the outsides of their palisades to advertise themselves, most prefer anonymity, and property ownership is highly classified. Of late, law enforcement has begun to suspect Palisader involvement in a series of gruesome murders, but they have been unable to officially continue the investigation due to bureaucracy.

Parkside: As the name suggests, this neighborhood runs along the edge of Jatembe Park. In addition to the Plenara, home to the Pact Council, Parkside contains other government buildings such as the headquarters of the Surveying and Colonization Bureau, where explorers can make property claims on newly discovered worlds (as well as take jobs scouting and verifying proposed claims); public amenities like the Cornucopia Building, where the station's poor can receive free food and medical attention; and some of the priciest commercial real estate in the city.

NOTABLE SITES

Arcanamirium: Like Absalom Station itself, the Arcanamirium takes its name from a pre-Gap institution on Golarion, though whether it maintains a direct line of continuity with that ancient school is anyone's guess. The most prestigious magical university on the station, the Arcanamirium treats magic like the science its professors believe it to be, specializing in spellcoding and blending it with cutting-edge engineering to train some of the best technomancers in the Pact Worlds. At the same time, however, it also harbors an immense trove of ancient and alien magical artifacts in need of study, and a growing subset of magical scholars uninterested in technology—often derisively called “esotericists” by their fellow faculty—regularly provide the academy with new breakthroughs via the study of ancient magical arts.

Bastion: This imposing fortress is the headquarters of the Stewards, the Pact Worlds' primary peacekeeping force. Within its walls, new Stewards receive training for their roles as warrior-diplomats, learning everything from personal combat and battlefield tactics to individual planetary legal codes and cultural mores, such as the proper way to honor a shobhad chieftain on Akiton or convince a Brethedan to listen to you. All of the Stewards' activities across the Pact Worlds—including training, troop movements, and officers' actions—are overseen by the decorated veterans of the Conclave of Legates under the leadership of Director-General **Lin Camulan**

(LG male korasha lashunta soldier), who also sits on the Pact Council's Directorate. Though they act as the de facto military arm of the Pact Worlds, Stewards never forget that their duty is to the Pact itself rather than to individual politicians, and the Bastion is built to resist a siege, should they ever need to oppose those currently in power.

Hamisfore Theatorium: Renowned throughout the Pact Worlds, the Hamisfore Theatorium is the premiere venue for performers of all sorts on Absalom Station. It draws its unique name from the fact that the entire building can reconfigure



LIN CAMULAN

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itself, drawing back its roof and adding seats as it transforms from a traditional theater to a massive stadium. In its theater form, it hosts everything from zero-g dance troupes and laser-lit euphonics raves to the screaming theritars of the latest eyebite rock, while its stadium form fills with cheers for the local brutaris team, the Absalom Assailants, or for the best warriors in carefully regulated gladiatorial exhibitions and private security talent searches.

The owner of the theatorium, **Jebodah Hamisfore** (N male feychild gnome envoy) is the third member of his family to own the theatorium and is constantly searching for his next great act. He's particularly known for his love of alien art forms never before seen in the Pact Worlds, and he pays handsome "talent scout" fees to anyone who can introduce him to truly novel performances.

Plenara: A familiar sight on newsfeeds across the system, the stepped dome of the Plenara is the capitol building of the Pact Worlds. Inside its walls, representatives from every member world debate fiercely and publicly as part of the Pact Council, hear concerns from citizens and lobbyists, and maintain the web of alliances that binds them all together. While most issues are decided in the vast Council Chamber, particularly contentious ones are "kicked upstairs" to the Star Chamber at the dome's highest point, where the six members of the Directorate can look out over the entirety of the Eye as they decide the fate of the Pact Worlds.

Swordlight Cathedral: This cathedral, which is shaped like a blade and surrounded by statues illustrating the goddess Iomedae's 11 miraculous acts as a mortal before her ascension, rises above the immaculate white marble tiles of the Plaza Sancta Iomedaea. Inside the temple, massive stone knights raise swords to support the arched ceiling and create the feel of a true medieval cathedral, though constantly shifting holograms replace the traditional stained-glass windows. Above this impressive chamber, the building turns modern, housing high priests, visiting clergy, and a standing garrison of Iomedean crusaders to protect the cathedral's relics and records.

THE RING

Made up of corridors and spires between the protruding docks of the Arms and the cosmopolitan

Eye, the Ring is the most residential, middle-class section of Absalom Station, yet it also contains campuses for corporations and other organizations that don't need the traffic of the Arms or the prestige of the Eye.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Congregation: While churches and shrines to various gods can be found throughout the station, this vertical, wedge-shaped district is an easy go-to for faithful fresh off the docks, containing temples to most of the Pact Worlds' major deities and many of its smaller ones. Smaller shrines are funded in part by the district's linchpin: the Gathering of Vessels, a legendary academy and research center for mystics of all sorts, where both the pious and the agnostic can work together to master the strange forces they channel.

Drifter's End: Surrounding the Lorespire Complex, this district earns its name by catering to alien ambassadors from newly discovered worlds, explorers, long-haul cargo crews, and spacefaring vagabonds of all sorts. Housing is cheap and temporary, bars are noisy and full of stories, and patrons looking to hire experienced scouts and first-contact specialists clog notorious "Drifter" hangouts such as the Hard Burn, Kristoff's, and the Last Good Run.

Freemarkets: AbadarCorp has a responsibility to make money for its shareholders, yet it also has a holy duty to foster competition and create robust markets. One of the ways it squares this circle on Absalom Station is by sponsoring the Freemarkets, a riotous bazaar of entrepreneurs selling wares out of cooperative storefronts, temporary stalls, and vehicles. While station security and AbadarCorp's priests attempt to police the area and make sure business stays relatively legal, the Freemarkets are a great place to buy and sell nearly anything, from used adventuring gear and alien artifacts to custom code, magic items, and refurbished robots.

Olensa: Though this small neighborhood has always had a high concentration of humans, in recent years, disgruntled human supremacists have succeeded in forcing out nearly all non-human residents and merchants through a calculated campaign of social and economic



LUWAZI ELSEBO

pressure. In addition to creating a racial enclave, this concentrated population grants Strong Absalom an official voice in station government through its election of the group's public face, a young firebrand named **Silek Odegard** (NE male human envoy), as the neighborhood syndic.

NOTABLE SITES

Bluerise Tower: The Absalom Station government is decidedly laissez-faire toward the businesses operating on the station, yet even this minimal oversight is too much for some corporations. In Bluerise Tower, various corporations have arranged for nearly complete sovereignty over the tower levels they own, with even the Stewards having a difficult time obtaining permission to enter. Exactly why these corporations require so much privacy is anyone's guess, but official inquiries have always shown tower residents to be living in a self-described anarcho-capitalist utopia. If any tenants disagree, their complaints have never made it past their employers' private security.

Golden Vault: Any good business knows to avoid putting all its eggs in one basket, and AbadarCorp is no different, having as many regional offices as there are civilized worlds to support them. Yet, the Golden Vault on Absalom Station is the corporation's head office and the church's greatest holy site in the Pact Worlds, its golden logo blazing 10 stories tall from the side of the building. Inside the cathedral-bank, congregants worship or attend free financial-literacy courses, while secular customers negotiate with representatives for loans, product placement in AbadarCorp stores, or the blessing and witnessing of contracts. Since the notoriously impregnable safes and servers of the Golden Vault hold the wealth of entire nations, the organization regularly hires security experts to test their defenses. A recent increase in hiring has some on the street suggesting that someone might finally have breached the network and gotten away with a fortune.

Lorespire Complex: This cluster of buildings with its eponymous central spire is home to the Starfinder Society. While most people immediately think of the campus's famous Archives, with its massive collection of texts and artifacts gathered from across the galaxy and studied in communal labs, the Starfinder headquarters is also home to the offices of the organization's venture-captains, who help agents with funding and logistics for their exploration and research. The Lorespire Complex also houses the Hall of Discovery, where the elected Forum members and First Seeker **Luwazi Elsebo** (NG female human envoy) meet to steer the organization, and the vast, heavily secured machinery containing Guidance, the collective consciousness of previous Starfinder leaders.

Security Resources Pavilion: While most large private-security contractors maintain their own offices on Absalom Station, the SecRes Pavilion is a one-stop shop where those in need of quick muscle can come to have representatives from various crews bid on jobs or to interview prospective contractors for specific needs. The Pavilion is particularly useful for freelance soldiers, as anyone with a few credits and no active warrants can

hang out her shingle and compete for contracts, giving rise to its slang name of "the Merc Lurk." It's also an excellent place to gain the attention of a more established mercenary group—for better or worse—as respected organizations like Redscale Security, the Sisterhood of Iron, and Starshield Limited all keep an eye on newcomers to the Pavilion.

THE SPIKE

The hundreds of levels extending below Absalom Station's radial plane—often collectively referred to as "Downside"—are simultaneously its most crucial and least appreciated. Here, sandwiched between other heavy industry in the station's gritty underbelly, the vast machines in charge of the station's life support and defenses chug away, some only partially understood by the engineers who maintain them. The poorest classes of Absalom Station's citizenry live here, gradually trickling down and away from the light and wealth of the upper levels to build slums in former access corridors or venture into the half-explored Ghost Levels, discovered abandoned at the end of the Gap. Monsters of all sorts hunt in the depths of the Spike, from simple criminals to bizarre creatures with no apparent reason to be on the station at all, creating whole ecosystems in the gloom. Politicians occasionally champion purging and resettling everything below the lowest official neighborhoods, but they are inevitably dissuaded by scholars and experts in both science and magic who posit that the Ghost Levels and their bizarre ecosystems may contain keys to the station's function or destiny—not to mention mysterious treasures that expeditions into the unmapped levels occasionally bring back.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Botscrap: Nothing is wasted on a space station, even one as big as Absalom Station. While recyclers and biovats take care of breaking simple waste down into its components, more complex items and robotics often end up in the private junkyards of Botscrap, hauled there by the ysoki-dominated Salvage Union. Just about any spare part—including some suspiciously functional and restricted military "scrap"—can be found in the Botscrap yards, but the area is constantly plagued by gangs of goblin squatters inhabiting cramped warrens dug into Botscrap's mountains of accumulated trash.

Conduit (Pipetown): Few locals use Conduit's official name, instead preferring the vernacular name of Pipetown, and many proudly bear the kinked-pipe tattoos that proclaim them natives of this district. Even engineers armed with the best schematics struggle to find their way through the dense, seemingly endless forest of pipes that sometimes create a three-dimensional labyrinth with settlements in their clearings. As such, locals often act as guides, hunting not just for breakages that spill precious water and other resources but also for creatures such as power-sucking garmels, ferocious water tigers, and sewage-drinking colemars that feed on the pipes—and on the local inhabitants.

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Downlow: Offering affordable housing and retail space, Downlow is the largest and safest of the Spike districts, as well as one of the most cosmopolitan. Complex maraquoi family units live above shirren-run option bars along the crowded corridors, while kasathan youth and ryphorian battleflowers dare each other to visit dangerous Kuthite sensation houses. Like poor but trendy neighborhoods everywhere, Downlow is disparaged by wealthy residents of the Eye even as they succumb to its allure. While law enforcement can be scarce except during raids, the powerful Lowrigger gang keeps the neighborhood relatively safe.

Sparks: The engineering bays of Sparks range from cramped, one-person custom-tech shops to titanic dry docks for starship manufacturing and repair. Despite the massive wealth passing through the corridors of Sparks, most residents remain poor laborers and middle-class specialists, with the majority of profits flowing “upstairs” to the corporate towers. Primary corridors are kept safe by both public and private security, while access corridors and workshops off the beaten path are often plagued by vexgits and other gremlins, mephits and lightning elementals attracted to (or summoned by) large electrical discharges, and disgruntled street gangs who prey upon wealthy visitors.

NOTABLE SITES

Diamond Defense and Surplus: Absalom Station has any number of places for mercenaries and private citizens to purchase weapons and armor, from tent stalls in the Freemarkets to high-end emporiums in the Eye. Those with more particular needs, however, frequent this dingy shop off

a dirty, neon-signed alley. Always covered in her beloved knives,

Lhana “Diamond”

Nokoriso (N female ysoki operative) has a surprisingly large selection up front, but those who earn her trust can enter the basement: a warehouse-sized space filled with black-market, military-grade munitions of astonishing value, many magical and all completely untraceable. Via her connections as a member of the Golden League, Diamond is legendary in criminal circles for being able to get anyone anything they need, for the right price, as well as for being a notorious font of underworld information, so long as it doesn’t jeopardize her deals. She’s also extremely fond of brokering favors,

and those able to accommodate her feisty personality and complete her “little jobs” can earn discounts and introductions to the station’s criminal elite.

Rig House: This tumbledown establishment is so large that no one’s sure just how many rooms it has—and that’s exactly how its proprietors like it. Run by the Lowrigger gang, the infamous Rig House is simultaneously an eccentric flophouse, avant-garde performance venue, elite nightclub, community center, and makeshift government building for the Spike. As neutral territory, it hosts meetings of the rich and powerful from all over the station and beyond, and it is a well-known place for adventurous starship crews to pick up new jobs and patrons, as long as they know how to keep their mouths shut. Rumor has it that the Lowriggers have, interspersed among the public chambers, a whole set of secret rooms called the Backstairs, where those who’ve earned their respect can train, view privileged information, hide from the law, or access smuggling tunnels running throughout the station.

Starstone Reactor: Deep in the heart of the Spike lies the *Starstone Reactor*, which powers the entire station. Given the incalculable value of the *Starstone* within, Absalom Station’s elite Starstone Defenders keep the chambers surrounding the reactor under intense guard at all times, and only engineers with the highest security clearance are allowed access to

the systems that transfer the artifact’s energy to the rest of the station. These safeguards hide another fact: no one can actually reach the *Starstone* directly. The *Starstone* itself is housed in a small chamber floating in the center of a large, mostly empty space called the Core, connected only by power conduits and

four narrow bridges to the outer chambers where the engineering staff work. While heavy blast doors lead out onto these bridges, the codes locking them were apparently lost during the Gap, and any attempt to tamper with them or gain access to the Core from another direction activates overwhelmingly deadly magical defenses and causes a station-wide brownout. Still, foolhardy people occasionally try, as legend holds that those who manage to touch the *Starstone* and are found worthy can ascend to godhood, as lomedae once did. This only compounds the need for the Starstone Defenders, though engineers peering through the observation windows report strange phantoms—some of them humanoid and dressed in modern station clothing styles—



LHANA “DIAMOND”
NOKORISO

flickering in and out of existence inside the Core, leading some to wonder whether the *Starstone* has guardians of its own.

THE ARMADA

Absalom Station's unofficial fifth sector isn't actually on the station at all—it's the so-called Armada, a vast and shifting swarm of ships, both transient and permanent, that constantly orbits the station. By spurning the station's docks but still remaining nearby, the crews of the Armada's ships can gain many of the benefits of living on Absalom Station without being subject to more than the most basic laws and taxes. Ships constantly raft together to make black-market deals, and some of these conglomerations have become permanent, forming tiny space stations in their own right. Still, the majority of Armadans are simply independent ship crews who feel safer keeping to themselves or aren't interested in paying recurring docking fees. The government of Absalom Station is content to let ships remain in the Armada indefinitely so long as their crews don't cause trouble, as they appreciate the convenience and safety of having some of their less savory elements separated from innocent citizens by a mile of hard vacuum.

NOTABLE SITES

King Curney's Kasbah: A combination casino, drug den, and brothel, King Curney's Kasbah consists of an ungainly amalgamation of several large freighters and assorted smaller ships permanently welded together, their engines only barely able to keep them in orbit around the station. Legend has it that each of the myriad ships in Curney's collection was repossessed from clients who failed to repay their loans and that even now their severed heads remain in Curney's private chambers, kept alive and conscious by elaborate alien technology. Despite being singularly ugly in both body and soul, **King Curney** (NE male dwarf envoy/operative) nevertheless maintains the most popular recreational facilities for the Armada's less savory residents. Even Absalom Station's most powerful government and corporate officials have been known to organize illicit deals at the surveillance-shielded tables of his cantina, lose fortunes gambling in his "scrupulously fair" orbits games, or narrowly avoid interplanetary scandal in the synthetic flesh walls of his Pleasure Pits.

Simar Communion: The human women of the Simar Communion rarely allow outsiders beyond the reception area of their floating commune—and it's easy to tell who's an outsider, for every member of the Communion is technically the same person. For the last hundred years, this station has been home to an unknown number of identical clones, who span a full range of ages from infant to elderly. While the technology to create an adult clone is both restricted and incredibly expensive on most Pact Worlds, members of the Communion get around this by simply raising their clone-sisters from "birth," training them

in the art of being Simar. Though they're often sought for their knowledge of human genetics, psychic magic, and implant-free biohacking, it's also an open secret that the Communion's intense training regimen and near-religious dedication to self-control make them impressive operatives and assassins. As the old Armadan adage goes, when a Simar leaves her home, someone is about to have a very bad day.

Valor's Heart: A more or less permanent fixture in the Armada, this carrier serves as a training vessel where the church of Iomedae trains novice priests in the arts of holy combat. *Valor's Heart* is no mere school, however; it remains a fully operational warship that has added its might to the defense of Absalom Station on more than one occasion.



SIMAR

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RELICS OF GOLARION

Although the details of Absalom Station's construction are lost to the Gap, the links between the station and the lost world of Golarion are obvious. Many groups that now dwell on the station share the conviction that anything that was once part of Golarion is the birthright of those who can trace their ancestry back to the residents living on the station when the Gap ended. Among the items most sought after by those with the means to procure and guard them are magic relics of Golarion. While the most powerful of such relics, notably the ancient weapon *Ungarato*, are valued for their direct magic abilities, even modest magic items that can be linked to pre-Gap Golarion often serve as signs of social influence and political reach. These antiques are treasured for more than their age and rarity; many inhabitants of Absalom Station believe these magic relics contain some part of the energy of Golarion itself.

The largest known collection of Golarion relics is kept in the secret labs of the Arcanamirium, accessible to only the most talented esotericists, influential guests, and visiting scholars. Other large collections can be found in the Golden Vault, Kemanis University, and the Lorespire Complex. Silek Odegard, the syndic of the Ring's Olensa neighborhood, has a small but growing collection of relics with ties to pre-Gap Golarion human cultures exclusively. Some Olensa residents use images of specific relics in Odegard's collection as a way to indicate their support for the Strong Absalom movement without openly declaring their allegiance.

ANVIL OF TORAG

Anvils of Torag are extremely rare and highly valued relics that are believed to have come from the Five Kings Mountains of lost Golarion. Each anvil consists of a heavy iron block anchored to a 5-foot-diameter stone base engraved with magical runes and symbols. *Anvils of Torag* are much prized by dwarf collectors and the crafting guilds of dwarven star citadels, as the anvils are seen as a tangible link to Torag, the patron god of the dwarves, who disappeared during the Gap. While non-dwarf collectors often consider an *anvil of Torag* too precious to use, most dwarves think it's ridiculous to have a crafting relic and not actually use it.

An *anvil of Torag* aids in crafting equipment and magic items. If you use an *anvil of Torag* while crafting an item, you are considered to have 2 additional ranks in the appropriate crafting skill, allowing you to craft items of higher level than you would normally be able to create. A given *anvil of Torag* can be used to craft only one item per day.

Due its bulk and size, an *anvil of Torag* is generally not portable and must be properly anchored before use. An *anvil*

RELICS OF GOLARION

ITEM	LEVEL	PRICE (IN CREDITS)	BULK
<i>Anvil of Torag</i>	9	12,000	50
<i>Arclord's rod, mk 1</i>	9	14,500	L
<i>Arclord's rod, mk 2</i>	12	38,500	L
<i>Arclord's rod, mk 3</i>	17	275,000	L
<i>Arclord's rod, mk 4</i>	20	950,000	L
<i>Binding weapon fusion</i>	3	Varies*	—
<i>Blackraven axe, tactical</i>	5	3,370	1
<i>Burning weapon fusion</i>	4	Varies*	—
<i>Chained weapon fusion</i>	6	Varies*	—
<i>Dreamsilk cloak</i>	9	13,400	L
<i>Falcon boots</i>	5	3,000	1
<i>Hellknight flail, incapacitator</i>	9	19,400	L
<i>Iomedaeen crusader helm</i>	4	2,100	L
<i>Mask of the mantis</i>	8	8,400	L
<i>Spellbane weapon fusion</i>	6	Varies*	—
<i>Throneblade, sintered</i>	7	9,980	1
<i>Ungarato</i>	20	Priceless (see page 53)	2

* See page 192 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*

of Torag can be installed on a starship in an arcane laboratory, a cargo hold, or a tech workshop, or it can be placed anywhere with room to store a Large vehicle.

ARCLORD'S ROD

An *Arclord's rod* is a scepter-like device roughly 3 feet long, made of copper and capped with smoke-colored silver. These rods were used on pre-Gap Golarion by powerful spellcasters known as the Arclords of Nex, who hailed from the Golarion nation of that name.

An *Arclord's rod* is a magic weapon that can be used to make either melee or ranged attacks, but it can be used only for a single attack each round. A *mk 1 Arclord's rod* functions as a static shock truncheon for melee attacks and as a pulsecaster pistol for ranged attacks. A *mk 2 Arclord's rod* functions as an aurora shock truncheon and a static arc pistol. A *mk 3 Arclord's rod* functions as a storm shock truncheon and an aurora arc pistol. A *mk 4 Arclord's rod* functions as a tempest

shock truncheon and a storm arc pistol. An *Arclord's rod* has an unlimited capacity (it never runs out of charges) and has the analog and unwieldy special properties. Proficiency with both advanced melee weapons and small arms is necessary to use an *Arclord's rod* without penalty for melee and ranged attacks, respectively.

Once per day when you cast a spell with the electricity descriptor while wielding an *Arclord's rod*, you can add a thunderclap effect (which makes half of the spell's damage sonic damage) and a rain squall effect (which creates a fog cloud, as per the spell of the same name, centered on the target or the center of the spell's area and lasting for 10 minutes) to the spell.

BLACKRAVEN AXE

Blackraven axes were magic weapons wielded by elite warriors of lost Golarion's far north who patrolled the border between the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and the witch-haunted nation of Irrisen. Many different *Blackraven axes* from pre-Gap Golarion have been found, and all are basic melee weapons with the archaic special property. A *Blackraven axe* typically has a head shaped like a raven's beak or a stylized raven inscribed on its blade, and it has the ability to cause its targets to burst into flames—a quality that proved especially useful against the trolls the original Blackravens faced. Modern spellcasters have recreated this magic as the *burning* weapon fusion (see below). Modern *Blackraven axes* are often created by applying the *burning* weapon fusion to a tactical battleaxe. A tactical battleaxe is a 5th-level, one-handed advanced melee weapon that deals 1d8 slashing damage and has the wound critical hit effect. It has the analog special property, has 1 bulk, and costs 2,650 credits. A *tactical Blackraven axe* is presented in the table on page 50, and the price includes both the weapon and the fusion.

BURNING WEAPON FUSION

LEVEL 4

Weapons with the *burning* fusion often take on an appearance that includes numerous flame-like elements. However, if applied to a weapon that already has visual details representing crows or ravens, the fusion adds further raven-like flourishes to the weapon instead. A weapon with the *burning* fusion gains the burn critical hit effect. The burn damage for the critical hit effect is 1d6 when the fusion is applied to a 4th- or 5th-level weapon, 2d6 when applied to 6th- to 10th-level weapons, 3d6 when applied to 11th- to 15th-level weapons, and 4d6 when applied 16th- to 20th-level

weapons. If the weapon already has a critical hit effect, you can apply either the weapon's normal critical hit effect or the burn critical hit effect when you score a critical hit.

DREAMSILK CLOAK

The original *dreamsilk cloaks* were woven from the purple silk of dozens of dream spiders, arachnids native to the vast Golarion jungle known as the Mwangi Expanse.

Before the Gap, it was common for soothsayers and explorers to depend on the cloaks for the visions of the future that came to them in their sleep. Modern artificers have learned to make such cloaks by imbuing artificial fabrics with oils derived from transdimensional pesh.

While wearing a *dreamsilk cloak*, you can see details in hallucinations and illusions that others overlook. This does not give you any bonus to saving throws against illusions, but if you successfully disbelieve an illusion and convey the fact that it is an illusion to others, they gain a +6 bonus to their saving throws to disbelieve, rather than the normal +4. Additionally, if you wear a *dreamsilk cloak* for an uninterrupted period of at least 16 hours and then sleep for at least 8 additional hours while still

wearing it, you have a vivid, prophetic dream. Although the meaning of the dream isn't immediately obvious when you wake up, you can learn more as the day progresses. Once during the next 24 hours, you can cast *augury* as a spell-like ability, using your character level as your caster level.

FALCON BOOTS

Falcon boots were originally armored steel boots with integrated knee protection etched with falcons across the front. They were most commonly employed by a group called the Steel Falcons, a branch of the Eagle Knights of the Golarion nation of Andoran, and they were apparently designed for use specifically on sailing ships.

As a move action while wearing *falcon boots*, you can set your own personal, local gravity to be perpendicular to any adjacent surface able to support your weight under normal gravity conditions. This personal gravity effect only functions in normal gravity or lower. While this personal gravity is active, you gain a climb speed equal to your land speed, and if knocked prone, you fall in accordance with your personal gravity (thus falling prone in your space, even if that is on a wall or ceiling, rather than falling toward the ground as defined by the environment's normal gravity conditions).



DREAMSILK CLOAK

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If you drop an item while your *falcon boots* are active, it also falls in your space. If you move from that square before picking up a dropped item, the item becomes subject to normal gravity.

If you are not adjacent to a surface able to support your weight, your *falcon boots* cease to function and you are subject to normal gravity. You can also deactivate *falcon boots* as a move action. There is no limit to how long *falcon boots* can function as long as you remain on a surface able to support your weight.

HELLKNIGHT FLAIL

Hellknight flails were first created by the Hellknight Order of the Chain on Golarion during the years just before the Gap. Many can be traced back to Citadel Gheradesca, the ancient fortress headquarters of the Order of the Chain, where they were given out as rewards to members of the order who brought particularly high-value fugitives back to face legal consequences. Traditionally, a *Hellknight flail* was a basic melee weapon with the archaic special property that had heavy iron chains affixed to the haft of the weapon. After the Gap, various Hellknight orders discovered instructions for the creation of *Hellknight flails* among their carefully archived records. As a result, modern Hellknights have recreated *Hellknight flails* by applying the *binding* and *chained* weapon fusions (see below) to batons and similar weapons. Order of the Chain Hellknights frequently use *Hellknight flails*, as do Hellknights of other orders, as well as other law enforcement agents and bounty hunters unaffiliated with the Hellknights, though to a lesser extent. The *Hellknight flail* presented in the table on page 50 is an incapacitator with the *binding* and *chained* fusions, and the price includes both the weapon and the fusions.

BINDING WEAPON FUSION

LEVEL 3

Weapons with the *binding* fusion often feature decorative images of bars, gates, and manacles. A *binding* weapon gains the bind critical hit effect. When you score a critical hit on a target, you gain a +2 bonus to grapple checks you make against that target until the end of your next turn. If the weapon already has a critical hit effect, you can apply either the weapon's normal critical hit effect or the binding critical hit effect when you score a critical hit. You can add this fusion only to melee weapons.

CHAINED WEAPON FUSION

LEVEL 6

Weapons with the *chained* fusion gain a short chain that dangles from the haft or handle. The chain magically extends to enable the weapon to attack foes beyond the wielder's immediate reach. A *chained* weapon gains the reach weapon special property for the first attack made with it each round. After it has been used for an attack, the weapon loses the reach weapon special property until the beginning of your next turn. You can add this fusion only to melee weapons.

IOMEDAEAN CRUSADER HELM

Originally created before the Gap for holy champions of Iomedae crusading in the Worldwound—a demon-haunted wasteland created by an Abyssal incursion on Golarion—*Iomedaeen crusader helms* have been in constant production by the church of Iomedae for thousands of years. While only ancient pre-Gap helmets are considered relics, the magical properties of modern *Iomedaeen crusader helms* match their archaic precursors. An *Iomedaeen crusader helm* replaces a suit of armor's normal helmet (if any) and is incorporated into the armor's normal environmental protections; these protections do not function if the helm is removed. If the armor has an available upgrade slot, an *Iomedaeen crusader helm* takes up one upgrade slot; otherwise, the helm counts as one of your two worn magic items.

While wearing an *Iomedaeen crusader helm*, the first time each day that you attempt a saving throw against an enchantment or illusion effect created by an evil outsider, roll the saving throw twice and take the best result. You cannot gain the effects of more than one *Iomedaeen crusader helm* each day.

MASK OF THE MANTIS

Once the traditional headgear for an ancient cabal of Golarion assassins called the Red Mantis, the *mask of the mantis* is now a relic sought by scholars of the missing planet, especially those seeking evidence that the Swarm visited Golarion at some time in the distant past. A *mask of the mantis* is a helmet that fully covers the head and face and has the appearance of a red insectile head with large compound eyes and long, backward-curving antennae. A *mask of the mantis* replaces a suit of armor's normal helmet (if any) and is incorporated into the armor's normal environmental protections; these protections do not function if the helm is removed. If the armor has an available upgrade slot, a *mask of the mantis* takes up one upgrade slot; otherwise, the mask counts as one of your two worn magic items.

While wearing a *mask of the mantis*, you gain darkvision with a range of 60 feet. In addition, a *mask of the mantis* has 2 daily charges. As a standard action, you can expend 1 charge to gain either the effects of *see invisibility* (as per the spell) for 30 minutes or a +3 insight bonus to Perception checks for 30 minutes. Both of these effects can be active simultaneously, and each charge is replenished 24 hours after being used.

THRUNEBLADE

It is thought that *Throneblades* were originally created in the Golarion nation of Cheliox sometime before the Gap, but no records of their creation or what they were originally called have been found, even in pre-Gap sources. Scholars believe that these weapons were widely distributed to agents of Cheliox's ruling House of Thrune; *Throneblades* bear the heraldry of House Thrune as well as the name "Throne" etched on each blade, whence the weapons derive their



modern name. Relic *Thrunblades* from pre-Gap Golarion are invariably bladed melee weapons, with swords being most prevalent. The common characteristic of all *Thrunblades* is their *spellbane* critical hit effect, though many such weapons have additional magic abilities, such as the *unholy* weapon fusion. Modern scholars have successfully reengineered the *spellbane* fusion for use with modern weapons (see below). The *Thrunblade* presented in the table on page 50 is a sintered longsword with the *spellbane* fusion. This weapon is one of the most commonly available *Thrunblades*, and the price includes both the weapon and the fusion.

SPELLBANE WEAPON FUSION

LEVEL 6

A weapon with the *spellbane* fusion gains the *spellbane* critical hit effect. A target affected by the *spellbane* critical hit effect must succeed at a Will save (DC as normal for a weapon of the given item level; see page 181 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*) or be unable to cast spells or use spell-like abilities for 1d4 rounds. If the weapon already has a critical hit effect, you can choose to apply either the weapon's normal critical hit effect or the *spellbane* effect when you score a critical hit.

If a *spellbane* weapon also has a fusion that allows it to bypass damage reduction of a specific alignment (such as an *unholy* weapon's ability to bypass DR/evil), its *spellbane* critical hit effect works only against creatures with the diametrically opposed alignment (for example, good creatures in the case of a *spellbane unholy* weapon), but the save DC of the *spellbane* critical hit effect increases by 2.

UNGARATO

Ungarato is one of the most powerful known relics of lost Golarion, though even greater artifacts have occasionally appeared throughout Absalom Station's history. *Ungarato*, also called the *All-Consuming Killer* or the *Gun of Gluttony*, is known to be one of the *Alara'hai*, seven weapons of nearly divine magical power that were also referred to as the *Seven Blades of Conviction* or the *Seven Swords of Sin*. Although the fates of the other six *Alara'hai* remain unknown, these epithets imply that *Ungarato* was once a sword of some kind, though when, how, and why this blade was reforged into a powerful machine gun with a bayonet is one of the relic's greatest mysteries.

Much of *Ungarato*'s history is lost, though scholars have shown that the weapon was created in its original form thousands of years before the Gap. The Arcanamirium's

most learned esotericists agree that *Ungarato*'s origin lies in ancient Thassilon, an empire ruled by spellcasting tyrants called *runelords*, which collapsed at the beginning of the period of Golarion's history known as the Age of Darkness. It is also generally agreed that the weapon's intended wielder was the *Runelord of Gluttony*, but a ferocious warrior stole the blade before it ever reached the *runelord*'s hands. This barbarian warlord later became the champion of the *runelord*'s successor, and it is believed that *Ungarato* took its name from this champion. Nothing definitive is known of *Ungarato*'s fate after the fall of Thassilon.

Ungarato has a distinct appearance that is unlike any other specific model of longarm. It has a misty, spectral quality, but the weapon is as solid as any other. *Ungarato* functions as a paragon X-gen gun, and its bayonet is a molecular rift dueling sword, both of which have the *ghost killer* fusion. Two hands are required to wield *Ungarato*, and proficiency with basic melee weapons and heavy weapons is necessary to use the weapon without penalty for melee and ranged attacks, respectively.

Ungarato glows with a bright, sickly green color whenever there is a creature of the undead type within 50 feet of its wielder, though the weapon gives no indication of the direction or number of undead within that range. Each time its wielder suffers the full effects of a critical hit (when damage reduction, energy resistance, or some other effect does not reduce the damage dealt or prevent any critical hit effect), *Ungarato* gains 1 point of viciousness. Whenever *Ungarato* scores a critical hit, it automatically spends 1 point of viciousness (if it has any) and adds the severe wound critical hit effect to the critical damage dealt. Any unused points of viciousness fade at the rate of 1 per hour. *Ungarato* also restores 10 Hit Points to its wielder (functioning as per *mystic cure*) each time it scores a critical hit (whether or not it has any points of viciousness).

Ungarato is a unique artifact of extreme power and legendary reputation; as such, the weapon is effectively priceless and cannot simply be purchased. Indeed, its current owner and whereabouts are unknown, though *Ungarato* is widely believed to have resurfaced recently somewhere on Absalom Station. Legend claims that *Ungarato* was once sentient and held great powers that only functioned in the hands of a Thassilonian *runelord*, but there's no modern evidence to support either claim. Similarly, it is believed that only the rightful *Runelord of Gluttony* can break the weapon; *Ungarato* is otherwise impervious to damage or destruction.

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ALIEN ARCHIVES

The galaxy is an enormous place and hosts a multitude of strange, and sometimes very dangerous, life-forms.

UNIVERSAL CREATURE RULES

The following rules apply to multiple creatures.

Undead Immunities (Ex): Undead are immune to bleed, death effects, disease, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, sleep, and stunning. They are also immune to ability damage, ability drain, exhaustion, fatigue, negative levels, and nonlethal damage. They are immune to effects that require Fortitude saves (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless).

Unliving (Ex): A construct or undead has no Constitution modifier and is immediately destroyed when it reaches 0 Hit Points. An unliving creature doesn't recover from damage naturally, but a construct can be repaired with the right tools. Spells such as *make whole* can heal constructs, and negative energy can heal undead. An unliving creature with fast healing benefits from that ability. Unliving creatures don't breathe, eat, or sleep. They can't be raised or resurrected.



COMBATANT



EXPERT



SPELLCASTER

Vulnerability (Ex): A creature with a vulnerability takes half again as much damage (+50%) from a specific energy type, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed or whether the save is a success or a failure.

TEMPLATE GRAFTS

Some creatures on the following pages feature a template graft that allows GMs to create similar creatures of almost any CR. The rules explaining how to use template grafts are presented in *Starfinder Alien Archive*.

AKATA

CR
1

XP
400



N Medium aberration

Init +6; **Senses** blindsense (lfe 10 ft., scent 60 ft.), darkvision 120 ft.; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE

EAC 12; **KAC** 13

Fort +3; **Ref** +3; **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities no breath; **Immunities** cold, disease, poison, starvation; **Resistances** fire 5

Weaknesses susceptible to salt water

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d6+2 P plus void bite)

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +2; **Con** +4; **Int** -4; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +5, Stealth +10

Other Abilities deaf, hibernation

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, pack (3-11), or colony (12-30)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deaf (Ex) Akatas cannot attempt Perception checks to listen and are immune to effects that rely on hearing to function.

Hibernation (Ex) Akatas can enter a state of hibernation for an indefinite period of time when food is scarce. After 3 or more days without eating, an akata can secrete a fibrous material that hardens into a dense cocoon of the starmetal called noqual (see the sidebar on page 26). The cocoon has hardness 30 and 30 Hit Points, and it is immune to bludgeoning and fire damage. As long as the cocoon remains intact, the akata within remains unharmed. The akata remains in a state of hibernation until it is exposed to extreme heat or senses a living creature with its blindsense, at which point it claws itself free of its cocoon in 1d4 minutes, leaving the fragments of its cocoon behind.

No Breath (Ex) Akatas don't breathe and are immune to effects that require breathing.

Susceptible to Salt Water (Ex) A splash of salt water deals 1d6 damage to an akata, and full immersion in salt water deals 4d6 damage per round.

Void Bite (Ex) Akatas hold hundreds of microscopic larval young within their mouths, spreading their parasitic offspring to hosts through their bite. Only humanoids make suitable hosts for akata young—all other creature types are immune to this parasitic infection. This affliction is known as void death.

Track physical; **Frequency** 1/day

Effect No latent/carrier state; an infected creature that dies rises as a void zombie (see page 61) 2d4 hours later.

Cure 2 consecutive saves

Terrifying predators that dwell in the vast void of space, akatas make their homes on asteroids, comets, and dying planets, hibernating in cocoons for countless centuries. When a meteorite carrying an akata colony crashes onto a planet or another astronomical object that can support life, the akatas awake from their cocoons to seek out suitable hosts for their young. A typical akata stands 3-1/2 feet tall and weighs 400 pounds.

Akatas reproduce by implanting their parasitic larval offspring in humanoid hosts; this infection they cause, known as void death, functions as a disease and transforms its victims into undead void zombies (see page 61).

The cocoon an akata can create around itself is composed primarily of the starmetal noqual (see the sidebar on page 26). One bulk of noqual worth 500 credits can be harvested from the remnants of an akata cocoon.



VOID DEATH

Type disease (injury); **Save** Fortitude DC 10

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BONE TROOPER

CR
3

XP
800



Female elebrian technomancer

LE Medium undead

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +8

DEFENSE

EAC 13; **KAC** 14

Fort +2; **Ref** +2; **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities magic hack (countertech);

DR 5/—; **Immunities** cold, undead immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical dueling sword +5 (1d6+4 S) or
claw +5 (1d4+4 S)

Ranged tactical semi-auto pistol +9
(1d6+3 P)

Offensive Abilities spell cache (mk 1
ring of resistance)

Technomancer Spells Known

(CL 3rd; ranged +7)

1st (3/day)—*magic missile*,
supercharge weapon

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 15),
energy ray

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +3; **Con** —;

Int +4; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +1

Skills Computers +13, Mysticism +8,
Piloting +13

Languages Common, Eoxian

Other Abilities unliving

Gear graphite carbon skin,
tactical dueling sword,
tactical semi-auto pistol
with 30 rounds, *mk 1 ring
of resistance*

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Eox)

Organization solitary, pair, or
platoon (3–12)

Using magic rituals, technomantic experiments, and sometimes both, some powerful spellcasters can animate the bones of the dead with necromantic energy. Although many of these undead skeletons are mindless and easily controlled by their masters, others preserve their intellects, memories, and personalities, and thus they are able to continue a semblance of their former lives for the rest of eternity. Called

skeletal champions in previous ages, these undead creatures are now more commonly known as bone troopers due to their association with the feared Corpse Fleet of Eox. A bone trooper looks like a fleshless humanoid skeleton but with a cold, cunning light burning in its

otherwise empty eye sockets. Bone troopers usually wear normal clothing or armor, and they wield modern weapons.

Bone troopers keep all of their old abilities, class features, and skills, and they can benefit from class grafts. Almost any race or sentient species (provided that it has a skeleton) can become a bone trooper, but most bone troopers that are encountered in the Pact Worlds are elebrians from the dead planet Eox; they are recognizable by their elongated craniums. The Corpse Fleet makes substantial use of elebrian bone troopers, and as a result, the elebrians far outnumber all other types of undead in the exiled navy's ranks. The majority of these creations are soldiers, unsurprisingly, though many specialize as operatives, technomancers, or even the occasional mindbreaker mystic.

BONE TROOPER TEMPLATE GRAFT (CR 2+)

The animated skeleton of a dead creature, a bone trooper retains the Intelligence score, skills, and abilities it had when it was alive, making it a more formidable combatant than a typical undead.

Required Creature Type: Undead.

Suggested Array: Combatant or spellcaster.

Traits: DR 5/—; immunity to cold; gains the benefits of the Improved Initiative feat; ranged weapon attack bonuses increase by 2.

Suggested Ability Modifiers: *Combatant*—Dexterity, Strength; *spellcaster*—Dexterity, Intelligence.



DRIFTDEAD

CR
2

XP
600



NE Medium undead (extraplanar)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +7

Aura confusion (30 feet, DC 11)

DEFENSE

HP 22

EAC 13; **KAC** 15

Fort +4; **Ref** +4; **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities spatial incorporeality; **Immunities** undead immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee claw or incorporeal claw +10 (1d6+4 S)

Ranged Drift rip +7 (1d4+2)

STATISTICS

Str +2; **Dex** +4; **Con** –; **Int** –4; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +7, Stealth +12

Languages Common

Other Abilities unliving

ECOLOGY

Environment any (the Drift)

Organization solitary

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Confusion Aura (Su) Any creature that comes within 30 feet of a driftdead must succeed at a DC 11 Will save or be confused for 2 rounds. Once a creature has attempted this save, whether successful or not, it can't be affected again by the same driftdead's aura for 24 hours.

Drift Rip (Su) Just as the Drift tears away chunks of planar material, a driftdead can pull apart the molecular bonds of matter, ripping open the flesh of nearby creatures. This is a ranged attack against EAC that has a range of 30 feet.

Spatial Incorporeality (Ex) Within the Drift, a driftdead has a physical body, but if removed from that plane, its physical body phases out of normal reality. On the Material Plane or otherwise outside the Drift, a driftdead becomes incorporeal. This does not change any of the driftdead's statistics, but it gains all of the other benefits of the incorporeal special ability (see page 264 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*). If returned to the Drift, a driftdead immediately loses the incorporeal special ability as its physical body returns.

When a mortal humanoid dies within the Drift while consumed with a strong negative emotion, it can become a driftdead, a restless undead spirit bound to that plane, unable to escape the confines of the Drift and reach its final judgment. What's left of a driftdead's warped mind is filled with insanity, rage, and a hatred for the living. So overwhelming is this flux of emotions

that a driftdead psychically broadcasts its confusion, affecting all who venture too close.

A driftdead leaves its mortal remains behind and forms a new undead body out of the mingled planar energies of the Drift—just as the Drift contains material snatched from countless planes. This physical body, however, is inextricably linked to the Drift. If a driftdead ever travels to the Material Plane (or any other plane), its planar body remains within the Drift, and the driftdead becomes an incorporeal spirit. The driftdead recreates its corporeal form as soon as it returns to the Drift.

DRIFTDEAD TEMPLATE GRAFT (CR 1+)

When a creature dies in anguish while in the Drift, its tormented spirit forms a new body from that plane's energies, becoming an undead creature called a driftdead.

Required Creature Type: Undead.

Required Subtypes: Extraplanar.

Suggested Array: Combatant.

Traits: Confusion aura, Drift rip, spatial incorporeality; fly 60 ft. (average).

Suggested Ability Modifiers: Dexterity, Strength.



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GARAGGAKAL

CR
5

XP
1,600



CE Medium outsider (extraplanar)

Init +5; **Senses** blindsight (emotion) 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., sense through (emotion) 60 ft.; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE HP 75 RP 4

EAC 17; **KAC** 19

Fort +7; **Ref** +7; **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities no breath; **Immunities** radiation

Weaknesses vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee bite +12 (2d6+9 P)

Offensive Abilities leech life (DC 13)

STATISTICS

Str +2; **Dex** +5; **Con** +3; **Int** +1; **Wis** +2; **Cha** -2

Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +11, Stealth +16, Survival +11

Languages Garaggakal (can't speak); telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities phase through

ECOLOGY

Environment any (the Drift)

Organization solitary

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Leech Life (Su) As a standard action, a garaggakal can spend 1 Resolve Point to leech health from one target within 30 feet. This deals 5d6 damage (Fortitude DC 13 half), and the garaggakal gains temporary Hit Points equal to the amount of damage dealt.

No Breath (Ex) Garaggakals don't breathe and are immune to effects that require breathing.

Phase Through (Su) A garaggakal can momentarily shift out of phase with reality. As a full action, a garaggakal can spend 1 Resolve Point to move through up to 15 feet of solid matter. If it attempts to phase through something that is too thick, the attempt fails, but the action and Resolve Points are still expended. A garaggakal can't phase through force effects such as force fields.

Vulnerable to Electricity (Ex) A garaggakal takes half again as much damage (+50%) from electricity, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed or whether the save result is a success or failure.

The Drift very much remains a mystery to explorers and scholars in the Pact Worlds. While life exists there—usually dragged along when the piece of the plane it happened to be occupying was pulled into the Drift by a traveling starship—scientists have only recently begun to recognize that the Drift also contains native life. One of these creatures is the garaggakal, sometimes called a “Drift wraith” by those spacefarers fortunate enough to have survived an encounter with one.

Many xenobiologists believe garaggakals can absorb and subsist on the planar energies of the Drift and don't actually need to feed on living creatures, even though they hunt. A garaggakal will make a temporary lair on a floating chunk of terrain, using it as a base from which to mount hunting forays into the plane nearby. Inevitably, however, the garaggakal abandons its lair in search of better hunting grounds.

Highly intelligent, garaggakals display intense curiosity about other creatures, but their extremely alien mindset makes peaceful interaction difficult, if not impossible. Garaggakals seem to divide all life into two categories: predators (such as itself) and prey (everything else). To a garaggakal, the best way to learn more about a new alien species is to kill, dissect, and eat it—and not necessarily always in that order.



RAUZHANT

CR
6

XP
2,400



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WORLD5

N Large dragon

Init +3; **Senses** blindsight (scent) 120 ft.; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

HP 92

EAC 18; **KAC** 20

Fort +10; **Ref** +10; **Will** +7

Immunities paralysis, sight-based attacks, sleep effects, visual effects and illusions; **Weaknesses** atmosphere dependent, blindsight dependent

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee bite +17 (1d8+11 P plus clutch)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Offensive Abilities rake (2 claws +14, 1d4+11 S)

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +3; **Con** +2; **Int** -2; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +18, Intimidate +13, Survival +13

Languages Brethedan

ECOLOGY

Environment any air (Liavara)

Organization solitary, pair, or flight (3-6)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Atmosphere Dependent (Ex) A rauhant

depends on an atmosphere rich in hydrogen and helium for its flight. In any other kind of atmosphere, it must hold its breath and its fly speed is reduced to 30 feet (clumsy maneuverability).

Blindsight Dependent (Ex) A rauhant that loses its blindsight ability gains the blinded condition.

Clutch (Ex) A rauhant that hits with a bite attack automatically initiates a grapple combat maneuver against its target (this does not take an action). If successful, the rauhant remains attached to the target until the end of the dragon's next turn, unless it succeeds at another grapple combat maneuver (with a +4 bonus) during its next turn. The target can break the clutch with a successful DC 30 Acrobatics check to escape. The rauhant can't use its bite attack while it is clutching a target, and the target can't regain Stamina Points while a rauhant is clutching it.

Rake (Ex) When a rauhant succeeds at a grapple combat maneuver while clutching a target, it can make two claw attacks against that target as a move action.

Sometimes inaccurately referred to as clutch wyverns by offworlders, rauhants soar through the orange-white seas of gas

that make up Liavara's atmosphere. Much less intelligent than chromatic and metallic dragons, rauhants can still carry on a conversation, but they spend most of their hours hunting for meals. When a rauhant finds suitable prey, it fastens onto its target with the series of long fangs around its mouth and folds its wings, usually causing both predator and prey to plummet deeper into the planet's atmosphere. As they both fall, the rauhant rakes its victim with its hook-shaped claws until the creature is a shredded mass of flesh and bone. The rauhant then takes flight again, feasting on its victim's corpse as it gains altitude.

A rauhant has no eyes, but its skin acts as an olfactory organ able to detect the faintest smell in the swirling gases that make up its home environment. Instead of collecting physical trinkets like other dragons do, a rauhant accumulates "tastes," with the flavor of each new species it eats cataloged within its extensive memory.

A rauhant is about 14 feet long from mouth to tail and weighs an average of 2,500 pounds.



VRACINEA

CR
4

XP
1,200



N Large plant

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +10

Aura paralyzing scent (15 ft., DC 13)

DEFENSE

EAC 16; **KAC** 18

Fort +8; **Ref** +6; **Will** +3

Immunities plant immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft.

Melee bite +12 (1d6+9 P)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Offensive Abilities lure (DC 13)

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +3; **Con** +1; **Int** -4; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Athletics +10, Stealth +15, Survival +10

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate and warm forests (Castrovel)

Organization solitary

HP 51

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Lure (Su) Any living creature within 120 feet of a vracinea that can see its violet blossoms must succeed at a DC 13 Will save each round at the beginning of its turn or be drawn toward the plant. An affected target must use 2 move actions each round to move directly toward the vracinea at its full speed, and it can't move in such a way that it loses line of sight to the vracinea. If the only path to the vracinea passes through terrain that could harm the target (such as a river of lava or a bed of sharp thorns), the target can attempt an additional saving throw to shake off the effect before moving into the dangerous area. An affected creature within 5 feet of the vracinea can take no actions and offers no resistance to the vracinea's attacks. Once a creature successfully saves against this effect, it is immune to the same vracinea's lure ability for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting, sense-dependent effect.

Paralyzing Scent (Ex) A vracinea constantly exudes a sweet odor to a radius of 15 feet. Any living creature with a sense of smell that enters or starts its turn in this area of effect must succeed at a DC 13 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1 round. Once a creature successfully saves against this effect, it is immune to the same vracinea's paralyzing scent for 24 hours. This is an inhaled poison effect.

Plant Immunities (Ex) A vracinea is immune to mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, and stunning.

The vracinea is one of many plant predators that evolved in the lush jungles of Castrovel. Standing almost 12 feet tall, a typical vracinea weighs 2,000 pounds.

Usually, a vracinea lies motionless in wait for its next meal, covering itself with vines and leaving only its blossom lures visible.

Once its mesmerized prey has gotten close, the vracinea bursts forth from its camouflage. If a victim manages to shake off the effects of the vracinea's paralyzing scent and escape, the vracinea pursues it for only a short time.

Vracineas are solitary and territorial creatures. When two vracineas see one another, they often charge at each other, quickly becoming locked in a struggle of gnashing teeth until one falls dead or retreats to nurse its wounds.

Botanists aren't sure of the mechanisms behind a vracinea's blossom lures. Some believe the flowers vibrate at a subatomic level, stimulating a target's subconscious desires.



ZOMBIE, VOID

CR
1

XP
400



NE Medium undead

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE

EAC 11; **KAC** 15

Fort +3; **Ref** +3; **Will** +3

Immunities undead immunities

Weaknesses susceptible to salt water

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee slam +8 (1d6+5 B) or

feeding tendril +8 (1d6+5 P plus blood drain)

STATISTICS

Str +4; **Dex** +2; **Con** –; **Int** –; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Athletics +10

Other Abilities mindless, unliving

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization any

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Drain (Ex) If a void zombie hits a living creature with its feeding tendrils, it drains that creature's blood, dealing 2 Strength damage before the tendrils detach.

Mindless (Ex) A void zombie has no Intelligence score and is immune to mind-affecting effects. Any DCs or other statistics that rely on an Intelligence score are calculated as if the creature had an ability modifier of +0.

Susceptible to Salt Water (Ex) Salt water acts as a strong acid to void zombies. A splash of salt water deals 1d6 damage to a void zombie, and full immersion in salt water deals 4d6 damage per round.

A humanoid that faces akatas (see page 55) might become infested with those creatures' microscopic larvae and suffer the ravages of void death. Those who perish from void death become void zombies. A void zombie looks like a walking rotting corpse, often with a bloated blue-gray "tongue"—the fanged tail of the parasitic larva inside—dangling from its broken skull where its lower jaw once was.

After a humanoid host dies from void death, the strongest of the akata larvae infesting the corpse worms its way to the host's brain and undergoes a swift gestation within 2d4 hours. This accelerated growth causes the feeler-covered head of the oversized, tadpole-shaped parasite to latch on to the base of its victim's brain and reenergize the dying organ, taking total control and turning the host into a void zombie.

Akata larvae require 1d4 weeks to gestate before undergoing the transformation into adult akatas. A void zombie bearing an akata larva ready to emerge seeks

out a secluded area and vomits the akata's offspring into a shallow hole or crevice. The void zombie then "dies," toppling over the disgorged larva. A scant 2d6 hours later, a full-grown akata emerges, usually taking the rotting corpse of its former host as its first meal.

VOID ZOMBIE TEMPLATE GRAFT (CR 1+)

A humanoid that dies from void death contracted from the void bite of an akata (see page 55) becomes a mindless undead host for the akata's larval offspring.

Required Creature Type: Undead.

Suggested Array: Combatant.

Traits: Blood drain, mindless, susceptible to salt water; land speed increases by 10 feet; Int changes to –; gains Athletics as a master skill.

Suggested Ability Modifiers: Strength.



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HEICORON IV

Ocean planet with floating arcologies and underwater cities

Diameter: $\times 2$; **Mass:** $\times 1/2$

Gravity: $\times 1/2$

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 7 days; **Year:** 7-1/2 years

Heicoron IV is a sapphire jewel in an otherwise barren and lifeless Near Space system. A planet whose surface is 98% water, Heicoron is home to a humanoid species called woiokos. Over billions of years in the untold past, these individuals evolved from an aquatic race into amphibious land-dwellers—pre-Gap records show vast archipelagos and a civilization approaching global unity. Sometime during the Gap, however, Heicoron's sun expanded, warming the planet considerably. Ice caps melted, sea levels rose, and most of Heicoron's islands were drowned in the deluge. With their great population centers in ruins and the fabric of their society ripped to shreds, the woiokos began to engage in genetic tinkering. The race subsequently split into two subspecies: the Deepborn, who returned to their ancestral home beneath the ocean, and the Floatborn, who rode the waves in crude, sprawling raft-cities.

Both groups of woiokos have smooth, eel-like skin usually patterned in two or more contrasting hues, but the similarities largely end there. Floatborn are more comfortable living above the water than beneath it. They have a deep love for the ocean and remain strong swimmers, but they have lost their ability to breathe underwater and require breathing apparatuses for extended trips beneath the surface. The Deepborn, in contrast, have regained many of their progenitors' aquatic traits, including gills. They retain lungs for breathing air but have an ingrained aversion to the surface and those who dwell there, so visits "airside" are rare.

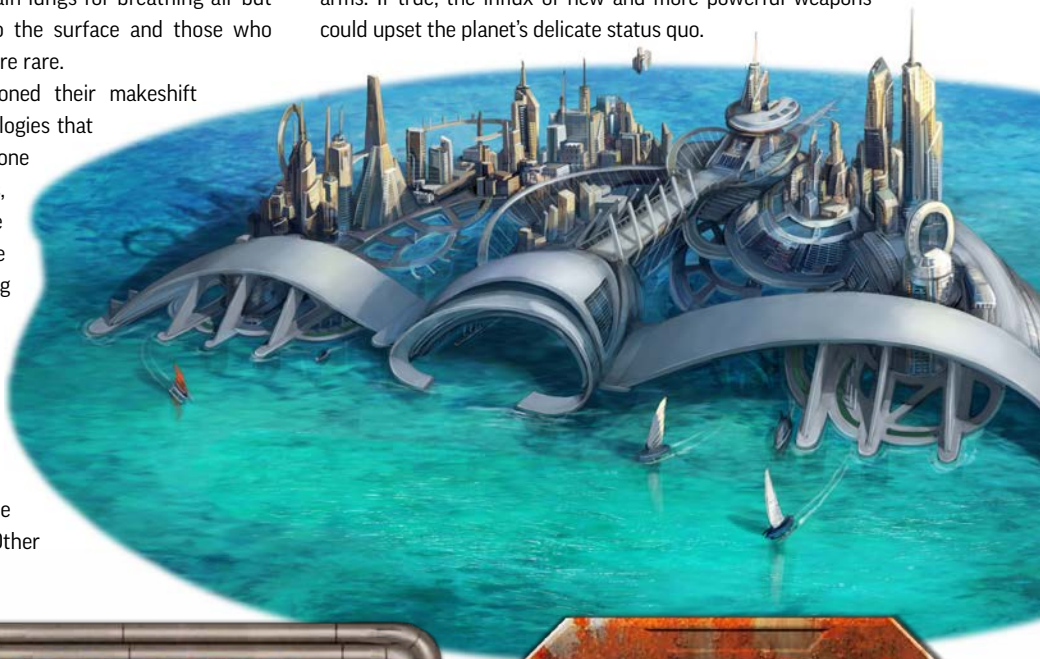
The Floatborn have abandoned their makeshift raft-cities for vast floating arcologies that drift with the currents; each one houses thousands of woiokos, who draw their sustenance from Heicoron's boundless blue ocean. These great wandering ship-cities make up dozens of autonomous nations, including various independent single-arcology freeholds, such as that of Clan Ibissa, as well as mighty multiarcology alliances and confederations, such as the mercantile Xeshaltic League. Other

notable Floatborn nations include the repressive federated city-states of the Dabanji Union and the corporate state of Mantara Industries, which controls Heicoron's first and only spaceport, Welcoming Sky. All Floatborn believe that Heicoron's few remaining islands are sacred parks that should be free for residents to enjoy and study, and these scattered atolls often serve as neutral meeting grounds between warring Floatborn nations or factions.

Beneath the surface, Deepborn society thrives in the flooded ruins of the woiokos' pre-Gap civilization, remade into sprawling, coral-festooned metropolises. This architectural splendor stands in contrast to the otherwise belligerent and militant nature of the Deepborn, who endlessly battle each other. These wars are often symbolic in nature, with shows of force but little loss of life, and fast-growing coral ensures that the scars of war never remain for long.

The Deepborn call their short-lived nations "domains," and these include Kalarasta, a mistrustful domain that has retained control of a strategic undersea volcano for five generations; the Grand Collective of Pojat, a new domain founded after a workers' revolt; and the Asawayo Paramountcy, an expansionist suzerainty currently sweeping up many of its neighbors.

Pact Worlds survey vessels discovered Heicoron only recently and have made contact just with the Floatborn. Bretheda has already volunteered to send a joint barathu-kalo diplomatic mission to Heicoron on behalf of the Pact Council to open peaceful relations with the Deepborn. However, whispers in the Plenara suggest that the weapons-trafficking drow houses of Apostae, with the rumored backing of the Aspiss Consortium, may have already begun selling the Deepborn arms. If true, the influx of new and more powerful weapons could upset the planet's delicate status quo.



NEXT MONTH

TEMPLE OF THE TWELVE

By John Compton

Now members of the Starfinder Society and piloting their very own ship, the heroes head to the planet Castrovel, home of some of the best universities in the Pact Worlds, to research the clues they found on the mysterious asteroid. Their findings point them toward an ancient elven temple-city called the Temple of the Twelve, lost deep in Castrovel's teeming jungles. But the heroes must contend with two other factions—the exiled Corpse Fleet of Eox and the Cult of the Devourer—who are also interested in the asteroid's secrets and have their own plans for the ancient alien superweapon, if they can find it first!

CASTROVEL

By John Compton and James L. Sutter

Brimming with all manner of life, the jungle planet of Castrovel boasts bustling lashunta city-states, formian hive-burrows, and isolationist elf enclaves in their ancestral homeland of Sovyrian. Visit never-before-detailed settlements on all four of the verdant world's continents, and learn how the different

societies govern their respective territories. See how a hard-won truce between lashuntas and formians has changed both cultures, and explore forgotten ruins ripe for study now that the endless war of civilizations has finally ceased.

CULT OF THE DEVOURER

By Owen K.C. Stephens

Worshippers of the god of destruction, the Cult of the Devourer wishes for nothing more than the annihilation of all civilizations and the death of all life-forms. Explore the disturbing facets of this nihilistic faith, from the barbaric wall breakers to the sociopathic hidden ones, and attempt to puzzle out the reason behind their ultimate goals!

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THE INVASION BEGINS!



STARFINDER

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Battle or befriend more than 80 bizarre life-forms in this 160-page, hardcover creature collection for the Starfinder Roleplaying Game! Every new world and space station comes with its own dangers, from strange new cultures to robotic killing machines to alien predators ready to devour unwary spacefarers. Inside this book, you'll find rules and ecologies for creatures from across the known multiverse, plus alien equipment and more. Best of all, a robust system for creating your own creatures ensures that your parties will never be without weird new aliens to interact with. Racial rules for many of these new organisms even let *you* be the alien, making the *Alien Archive* not just a collection of creatures to kill but a fascinating menu of creatures to *be*! Want to play a hyperevolved floating brain? A mighty dragonkin? A silicon-based crystalline slug? Explore the limits of your galaxy and your game with the *Starfinder Alien Archive*!

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SUNRISE MAIDEN

1 square = 5 feet

FORWARD



SUNRISE MAIDEN MAP KEY

1. Bridge
 - a. Pilot's station
 - b. Captain's station
 - c. Engineering station/auxiliary gunnery station
 - d. Science station/auxiliary gunnery station
2. Gunnery stations
3. Main airlock
4. Crew storage
5. Dorsal turret access
6. Captain's quarters
7. Maintenance access points
8. Crew quarters
9. Lavatories
10. Recreation suite
11. Escape pods
12. Port cargo hold
13. Starboard cargo hold
14. Galley
15. Crew lounge/dining room
16. Main engineering
17. Drift engine
18. Power core
19. Auxiliary airlock

A SHIP WITHOUT A CREW

When a brutal gang war breaks out on a docking bay in Absalom Station, the player characters are recruited by the Starfinder Society to investigate the unexpected bloodshed. Delving into the station's seedy Spike neighborhoods, the heroes confront the gangs and discover that both were paid to start the riot and that the true conflict is between two rival mining companies battling over a new arrival in orbit around the station: a mysteriously deserted ship and the strange asteroid it recovered from the Drift. To head off further violence, the heroes are asked to investigate the ship and discover what happened to its crew, as well as the nature of the asteroid it tows. But what the players find there will set in motion events that could threaten the entirety of the Pact Worlds and change the face of the galaxy forever...

This volume of Starfinder Adventure Path launches the Dead Suns Adventure Path and includes:

- "Incident at Absalom Station," a Starfinder adventure for 1st-level characters, by Robert G. McCreary.
- A gazetteer of Absalom Station, by James L. Sutter.
- Magical relics inspired by the lost planet Golarion, by Owen K.C. Stephens.
- An archive of new alien creatures, by Jason Keeley and Robert G. McCreary.
- Statistics and deck plans for a new starship designed just for the player characters, plus details on a new planet in the Codex of Worlds, by Robert G. McCreary.



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