

STARFINDER



DAWN OF FLAME

ADVENTURE PATH

SOLAR STRIKE

BY MARK MORELAND



PROTECTOR ACCORD

TIER 4

Small shuttle

Speed 10; **Maneuverability** perfect (turn 0)

AC 22; **TL** 22

HP 40; **DT** —; **CT** 8

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

Attack (Forward) light torpedo launcher (2d8), light torpedo launcher (2d8)

Attack (Turret) coilgun (4d4)

Attack (Turret) flak thrower (3d4)

Power Core Accord core (functions as Pulse Black; 120 PCU); **Drift Engine** none; **Systems** advanced short-range sensors, chariot joining, crew quarters (common), mk 2 tetranode computer (tier 2), mk 3 armor, mk 3 defenses; **Security** antipersonnel weapons (varies), psiometric locks; **Expansion Bays** transmutable

Modifiers +2 any four checks per round, +4 Computers (sensors only), +2 Piloting; **Complement** 4 (minimum 1)

CREW

Pilots (4) Computers +21 (8 ranks), Diplomacy +21 (8 ranks), Engineering +21 (8 ranks), Gunnery +16, Piloting +23 (8 ranks)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Antipersonnel Weapons (Ex) Accords have antipersonnel weapons (item level 8 or lower) from their constituent Protector chariots.

Chariot Joining (Ex) An Accord is an amalgamation of four Protector chariots (see page 44). The chariots form this starship to include their parts. An Accord can split into its constituent chariots at any time.

Elite Crew (Ex) As shown in the crew section, an Accord has an elite crew of Protectors as pilots. These pilots can perform other crew actions based on their skills.

Psiometric Locks (Ex) An Accord opens and operates only for the four Protector crew members. These crew members can open the starship to allow other creatures inside, but creatures that are not Protectors cannot operate the vessel's systems.

Transmutable Expansions (Ex) An Accord can have up to two active expansion bays, which can include any combination of the following: brig (*Starfinder Pact Worlds* 153), cargo bay, escape pods, guest quarters, or passenger seating.

Intended as a defense against major threats to Kahlannal, the Protectors' Accord starships are versatile vessels. Comprising four chariots fused together into a seamless whole, an Accord has five distinct compartments. These compartments seem unconnected; however, the starship's fluid nature allows it to form chambers around crew members and passengers and shunt them safely between chambers where no apparent passageway exists, like a fluid airlock. A central chamber in the main body can be configured to serve various functions, from cargo holds to passenger compartments.

The Protector crew controls the Accord telepathically and physically. Each pilot occupies a cockpit, formed from a chariot upon the starship's formation. Any pilot can perform any function on the ship from their station. The telepathic link between the Protectors and the Accord gives the ship incredible maneuverability and makes it one of the most efficient small warships in the Pact Worlds system. Although the starship can accommodate a crew of four, and four are required to create an Accord, the vessel can function with only one pilot.

After the advent of solar-travel technology in the Pact Worlds, Protector Accords are fitted with a *solar shield channel* (see page 45). This new technology allows the Protectors to fly into the sun around Kahlannal to protect their city if the need arises.

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ON THE COVER



The solar dragon Nysteryx is ready to take on rebels of any kind in this cover by Matias Tapia.



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This book refers to several other Starfinder products using the following abbreviations, 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 sfrd.info.

Armory AR

Pact Worlds PW



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DAWN OF FLAME

ADVENTURE PATH

SOLAR STRIKE

PART 1: DESTINATION KAHLANNAL

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Upon receiving an urgent distress call from a deep culture facing an efreeti invasion force, the heroes must prepare for the journey, possibly taking DCI agents with them—but a mole is working to foil their plans.

PART 2: FLAME RESISTANCE

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The heroes arrive in Kahlannal and befriend the anassanoi resistance. Acting as an elite strike force, the heroes perform guerrilla missions to cripple the efreeti occupation forces and give the resistance a leg up.

PART 3: FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

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Having given the resistance several advantages, the heroes can now strike into the heart of the occupation leadership at Kahlannal's center. To end the occupation once and for all, they must defeat the dragon Nysteryx.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Solar Strike" is designed for four characters.

9

The PCs begin this adventure at 9th level.

10

The PCs should reach 10th level after approximately three strike-force missions.

11

The PCs should be 11th level by the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE
BACKGROUND

The anassanois are a peaceful species, isolated and protected by their location in the sun. Originally a highly advanced society of psychic beings that lived in an ancient star deep in the Vast, the anassanois were forced to send scores of generation ships to similar stars elsewhere in the galaxy when their own star went nova millennia ago. The ship *Kahlannal* was one such vessel. Upon arriving in the Pact Worlds system, *Kahlannal* plunged deep into the sun before awakening its sleeping population from psiostasis, the psychically induced process by which the anassanois suspended biological function for their long interstellar exodus. During the final descent, a terrible solar storm damaged the *Kahlannal*, preventing it from ever leaving its new home. For millennia since, the anassanois have lived in their isolated solar city, their technology diminished from its previous levels, telepathically observing the universe beyond their bubble as best they can. That process became much easier in the last century, when Pact Worlds inhabitants began settling the Burning Archipelago on the sun's surface.

Since arriving at their new home, the anassanois have contacted a few other inhabitants of the star, including the efreet of the Plane of Fire. When the first wave of General Khaim's forces arrived as the forward ranks of an invasion, the anassanois correctly guessed the efreet's intentions and began sending a psychic warning toward the Burning Archipelago in hopes that their neighbors wouldn't be caught unaware. Due to various forms of interference, including the bubble-prison of Ezorod the PCs explored in the last adventure, the lashuntas of Asanatown have perceived the anassanois' attempts at communication as a disturbing psychic resonance, unable to make out meaning beyond the paranoia-inducing sense of a constant, impending threat.

Even though the anassanoi government cleverly excluded elemental creatures, outsiders, and even their own people from their psychic message, General Khaim recently learned of the warning from his allies. Fearing the message would eventually be received, he armed a trusted lieutenant—a solar dragon named Nysteryx—with troops and warships to end the anassanoi meddling. The efreeti army's main force assaulted *Kahlannal* head-on, distracting the city's defenders and drawing them away from the city's center. Meanwhile, a small strike force of elite saboteurs, aided by inside collaborators, infiltrated and disabled key locations in *Kahlannal*'s core, the Spire, crippling the city's defenses from within. Among these captured facilities was the city's *psychic resonator*, an ancient anassanoi relic that extended the range and efficiency of their psychic powers, and through which the anassanoi were attempting to warn the lashuntas of Asanatown. The efreet discovered that the *psychic resonator*

could be reengineered to emit a telepathy-damping field instead of amplifying and linking the anassanois' telepathic reach, and immediately did so to further subjugate the anassanois and prevent them from easily coordinating their resistance.

This sabotage also impacted *Kahlannal*'s eight Protectors, traditional leaders and guardians who have a sacred connection to vehicles called chariots they telepathically control. Unable to easily utilize their primary means of defending the city, five Protectors died in the battle, and four of their chariots were likewise destroyed. Efreet captured one Protector and her chariot, and the location and status of the remaining two Protectors are known to only the anassanoi resistance.

Despite their need to adapt to non-telepathic communication, and the death or disappearance of most of the Protectors, the anassanois fight on. Without help, however, their resistance is doomed. The city's chances hinge on the actions of creatures from the sun's surface, whom the Protectors finally reached before their telepathic signal was silenced. As much a distress call as an alert to the impending invasion, the anassanois' warning called for whatever assistance surface-dwellers could muster, and even now an expedition from the Deep Cultures Institute in Stellacuna is gearing up to make contact with *Kahlannal* and bring aid to the newly discovered neighbors. Unbeknownst to the expedition members, however, a mole under General Khaim's thumb is working behind the scenes to ensure the venture fails, and Nysteryx plans to have more than just anassanoi prisoners to cast at her general's feet by the time this job is done.

PART 1:
DESTINATION
KAHLANNAL

At the end of "The Blind City," an anassanoi Protector named Faeffel pushed her psychic powers to their limit to transmit a distress call to anyone who could hear it. When she realized she had reached someone (the PCs), she requested aid in fighting off the invading efreet. Faeffel sent the PCs coordinates for *Kahlannal*, its name, and the name of her people (the anassanois), along with an algorithm to modulate starship shields so a vessel can pass through the city's bubble, but the party must return to the DCI to ensure the *Sun Diver* can make the 6-day trip to the besieged city.

When the PCs make it back to the DCI with the *solar inverter* they recovered from Ezorod in the previous adventure, Nib assigns specialists to analyze the device. These experts might include Lurian Straza, the inventor of the *Sun Diver* the PCs met in the "Sun Diver" adventure, and Taeress, Nib's lashunta ex-wife (and possibly more, depending on how their relationship has progressed in your campaign). While the PCs have been exploring, these people, among others, have been hard at work on adapting and improving the *Sun Diver*'s technology—but even so, the *solar inverter* is an unexpected breakthrough.

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In Stellacuna, the *Sun Diver* undergoes repair and speedy refitting. Meanwhile, Nib (possibly with Lurian and Taeress) once again takes the PCs to Nib's favorite restaurant, the White Rat, for a briefing over Akitonian cuisine. Read or paraphrase the following when Nib gets to the point of the meeting.

"Listen, crew, we—the DCI, I mean—want to send a team with you. We can upgrade the *Sun Diver* to accommodate the added personnel. You have final say in whether we go, but I'm hoping you'll agree."

Nib can explain further, according to the PCs' responses.

We're heading into a war zone. "I know, I know. But we can't pass up this opportunity. We might not get another."

You'll be in the way.

"Listen, we won't get in the way. We might even be able to help. We'll follow your orders in any conflict. The plan is that the DCI team remains in areas you've secured. Hopefully, we can find some friendlies to work with."

Why do you want to go? "This is it! I mean, it's a *real* deep culture, not a robot city or a bizarre prison. This is the real deal! Frankly, many of us would risk our lives for this chance."

Can we refuse? "Yes, of course. Nobody can force this on you."

How can you fit on the *Sun Diver*? "There's some extra room in engineering. We've looked into installing experimental stasis pods so my team can sleep the trip away. Better than bumping bums the whole time! You won't even know we're there."

Stasis pods? "Yep! Based on Azlanti tech smuggled out of Outpost Zed a while back. My bet is it'll be widely available in less than a year. Our engineers gave us the thumbs up for it, provided nobody stays in one for more than a month."

Who's going? "This fine rodent before you, and three others."

Nib is the team lead, xenoanthropologist, and head negotiator.

Jenan Mayevi (NG female damaya lashunta mechanic) is a focused, serious solar sciences specialist, although you can replace Jenan with **Taeress Suloro** (NG female korasha lashunta mechanic) if she and Nib are amicable. Taeress has the same skill set as Jenan. **Vessu Karimo** (N male human mechanic), with his drone, **Fixer**, is a xenotech specialist and a psychic intended to supplement the lashunta agent in telepathic communication. As a security specialist, the DCI assigns **Ilor** (LN agender android operative). Ilor's job is to look after the team in any combat situation, although they still take orders from Nib and the PCs. Ilor has an easygoing, witty demeanor, but they're a sharp operator in their appointed role. The PCs are indeed free to refuse the DCI team, but Nib does her best to convince them otherwise.



PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE

Whether the PCs take the DCI representatives or not, it takes about 3 days for the *Sun Diver* to be ready to depart. Allow the players to upgrade to a tier 9 vessel. The four DCI stasis pods take no significant space (32 of them occupy one expansion bay) and no Build Points from the budget—the DCI foots the bill. Placing creatures into stasis or removing them from stasis takes 1 hour. An unwilling creature can be placed in stasis only if it is unconscious. While in stasis, a creature is unconscious and doesn't need to breathe, drink, or eat.

Optionally, especially if Lurian is part of the DCI, the *solar inverter* allows a leap in technology. If you and the players wish, they can refit a larger ship, such as the *Breath of Embers* from "Fire Starters," with the *Sun Diver*'s tech. In that case, the DCI team won't need stasis pods. Such a ship still has the *Sun Diver*'s special abilities. In addition, any ship the PCs refit is also fitted, at no expense, with the shield modulation algorithm Faeffel transmitted at the end of "The Blind

City." This adventure assumes the PCs fly the *Sun Diver*, so starship-related material refers to that vessel.

Nib sends the PCs again to Beran, the DCI's ysoki supplier, for equipment requisitions. Beran greets the PCs like old buddies, having warmed up to them due to previous interactions and the PCs' successes. She takes gear orders, exchanging banter as she passes something between her cheek pouches, chewing occasionally. The group has a credit line of 30,000 credits with an item level limit of 10. Beran packs 300 UPBs for the *Sun Diver*'s mk 3 culinary synthesizer, and she orders 8 bulk of siccitate for repairs to the ship's siccitate matrix.

The DCI team takes a drone like the PCs had in *Starfinder Adventure Path #15: Sun Divers*. See page 20 of that adventure for details on this drone.

SYSTEMS CHECKS

PCs might wish to check the *Sun Diver* for anything unusual.

If the stasis pods were installed, a PC who carefully examines the related software and succeeds at a DC 28 Computers check finds a hidden subroutine designed to make any pod responsive to internal control. The affected pod would appear to function normally, but it would allow the occupant to enter, exit, and execute precisely timed stasis sleeps.

Whether the pods were installed or not, the life-support system has been modified. With a successful DC 33 Computers check (DC 28 if the canisters described below were already discovered), a PC uncovers a subroutine meant to activate something in the life-support system and disable the system's

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toxicity monitors 5 days into the sun passage. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Engineering check (DC 23 if the subroutine was discovered) while examining life support in the engineering area of the *Sun Diver* discovers canisters of pressurized gas have been installed. It takes a successful DC 19 Engineering, Life Science, or Physical Science check to analyze the contents, which is freoqual gas—a colorless, odorless, tasteless component of starship coolant with strong psychotropic effects when inhaled. If the crew has members immune to poison, the canisters also contain invasive hybrid nanites that affect these creatures in the same way as the gas. These nanites can be detected with spells such as *detect magic* and *arcane sight*, and they have an aura of necromancy. Someone who scans the canisters can also identify the nanites with a successful DC 25 Engineering or Mysticism check. For the gas and nanites, activating environmental protections after exposure only prevents further exposure.

The implication of these canisters is clear: someone intends to knock the crew out for a long time. The gas and nanites induce delirium followed by long-term unconsciousness—the gas's presence in a starship's internal atmosphere normally indicates a coolant leak—a red herring in this case. Removing the canisters requires a successful DC 20 Engineering check. If the check fails by 5 or more, the character removing the canisters—and anyone on the engineering deck—is exposed to the canisters' contents.

FREOQUAL

Type poison (inhaled); **Save** Fortitude DC 19

Track Wisdom (special); **Onset** 1 minute; **Frequency** 1/round for 10 rounds

Effect progression track is Healthy—Weakened—Impaired—Confused—Comatose—Comatose. The second comatose is the end state.

Cure 2 consecutive saves

In addition, any PC who examines the *Sun Diver*'s communications system and related software can make a few discoveries. First, with a successful DC 28 Computers check, a PC finds an encrypted packet hidden in the communication protocols. The packet is time-triggered, much like the gas canisters, and it can also be triggered via a control console or wireless signal, sending it on a tight beam deeper into the sun. Analyzing the trajectory requires a DC 22 Computers or Piloting check, and success reveals the beam is headed toward Kahlannal. Decrypting the packet requires a successful DC 28 Computer check. It's a message, in Ignan, saying, "*Sun Diver* acquired, targets in custody, en route to hostage exchange coordinates." Erasing the whole packet so it can't be activated takes a successful DC 28 Computers check. Failure by 5 or more indicates the PC doesn't realize the packet replicated itself as the original was erased. Searching for it anew can uncover the copy, but each copy tries to replicate itself.

A navigational protocol linked to this communications packet is programmed to activate along with the message. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Piloting check realizes these

coordinates must be redirecting the ship to a specific section of Kahlannal.

PCs are also free to interview the DCI team members. If they do, they might, at your discretion, have a chance of uncovering Vessu Karimo's duplicity. He has no reason to reveal his role, but if the PCs ask pointed questions, such as about specific aspects of the scheme they've uncovered, Vessu's reactions or growing anxiety might give him away (Sense Motive DC 21). It takes a successful DC 27 Diplomacy check or a successful DC 22 Intimidate check to convince Vessu to talk. A PC who confronts Vessu with evidence (including his nervous reactions), but who reassures him that coming clean involves little personal risk, lowers the Diplomacy DC to 22. (Nib scolds PCs who use bullying or force, but she won't stop them.)

The DCI team members are all genuinely dedicated to their roles, but Vessu has an additional motive for joining the team: General Khaim's forces took Vessu's fraternal twin brother, Leirol, hostage. Vessu has been working as a mole within the DCI ever since, funneling information to the efreet and sabotaging DCI efforts that might lead to the discovery of the invasion force within the depths of the sun. At first, he tried to destroy the *Sun Diver* during the events of the "Sun Divers" adventure. When that failed, he received instructions to wait and report on the PCs' progress, which is how the efreet knew to intercept the *Sun Diver* on the way to Ezorod in "The Blind City." After analyzing his information, and aware of the PCs' receipt of Faefel's message, Vessu's handlers asked him to capture the PCs, the *Sun Diver*, and key personnel in the DCI. Vessu was a major proponent of bringing a DCI contingent on this mission so he could capture Nib along with Jenan or Taeress. In exchange, the efreet promised to release Leirol unharmed from Kahlannal once General Khaim's invasion is fully underway.

If forced to admit to his duplicity, Vessu surrenders to the consequences, asking only that the PCs attempt to free his brother, who must be on Kahlannal now. If the PCs discover Vessu before departing the Burning Archipelago, they can replace him on the mission (or decide to take no DCI representatives). If they replace him, the new xenotech specialist is a young, enthusiastic scientist named **Kym Hoss** (N female half-orc technomancer), the daughter of mercenaries who escaped from Apostae. She's the first of her family to be born free of drow oppression, and she has made good on that freedom.

EVENT 1: SUN PASSAGE (CR 9)

When the expedition is ready to depart, a small crowd of DCI employees gathers to see the explorers off on their historic journey. The 6-day trip is initially uneventful, and if Vessu's sabotage was discovered and undone, it remains so.

If Vessu's sabotage is in place, whether DCI agents are aboard or not, the freoqual gas enters the *Sun Diver*'s atmosphere late on the fifth day. A minute after its release, the PCs must begin attempting saving throws against the poison (or nanites). At that point, someone can scan the atmosphere to discover the gas, identifying it with a successful DC 19 Engineering, Life Science,

or Physical Science check. Engineers believe the gas is from a coolant leak in the power core, but anyone who examines the life support system might find the canisters, as described in Systems Checks, earlier. A PC who tries to find a coolant leak and succeeds at a DC 20 Engineering check becomes sure no such leak exists, and success by 5 or more leads them to intuit the problem is in life support.

After 2 minutes, if Vessu is in stasis, he emerges with his environmental protections active. At the nearest computer console, he makes sure the automated encrypted communication occurred, alerting his contact, Gorchak (see page 34). PCs who are awake see the ship's comm unit indicate the message being sent. Halting the transmission requires a successful DC 23 Computers check, but Vessu can reactivate it unless the PC succeeds by 5 or more. Getting rid of the comm data is described in Systems Checks. If the packet isn't erased, Vessu can reactivate it.



VESSU KARIMO

Conscious PCs also notice that the *Sun Diver's* astrogation system becomes momentarily active. Since the automated replotting of the course still takes the *Sun Diver* to Kahlannal, a successful DC 25 Piloting check is required to realize the course has changed. Replotting to the original course is a trivial task, but Vessu only has to reactivate the communications packet to reset the course to the implanted one.

Creatures: If the countermeasures Vessu put in place failed to knock out everyone on the *Sun Diver*, he tries to subdue them and take control of the ship.

VESSU KARIMO

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male human mechanic (phrenic adept)

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** phrenic senses; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

HP 80 RP 4

EAC 18; **KAC** 19

Fort +8; **Ref** +9; **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities phrenic defense

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee medium sap +13 (1d6+6 B nonlethal)

Ranged static arc pistol +13 (1d6+6 E; critical arc 2)

Offensive Abilities overload (DC 16)

Technomancer Spells Known (CL 6th)

1st (2/day)—*comprehend languages*

0 (at will)—*psychokinetic hand*, *telepathic message*

TACTICS

Before Combat Vessu has activated the environmental protections of his armor.

During Combat Vessu has no desire to kill anyone, and his instructions are only to capture the *Sun Diver* crew and passengers. He has nonlethal weapons, and he uses them to subdue foes. Fixer interposes itself between would-be melee combatants and its master and has also been instructed to use nonlethal force.

Morale Vessu isn't prepared for combat against multiple enemies, especially if they have their full faculties about them. If outmatched, he surrenders. Otherwise, he does his best to subdue conscious foes, and surrenders only once he has fewer than 30 Hit Points remaining.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +3; **Con** +2; **Int** +5; **Wis** -1; **Cha** +1

Skills Bluff +13, Computers +18, Engineering +18, Mysticism +13, Stealth +13

Feats Technomantic Dabbler

Languages Common, Shirren; limited telepathy 30 ft. (Castrovelian, Ignan)

Other Abilities artificial intelligence (drone), custom rig (armor upgrade), remote hack (DC 16)

Gear lashunta tempweave, medium sap^{AR}, static arc pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each), *empathic depiction* (portrait), datapad^{AR}

FIXER

Stealth drone

N Small construct (technological)

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

Perception +11

DEFENSE

HP 50

EAC 18; **KAC** 19

Fort +5; **Ref** +9; **Will** +5

Immunities construct immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee slam +12 (1d6+6 B)

Ranged static arc pistol +12 (1d6+6 E; critical arc 2)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Engineering +11, Stealth +11

Other Abilities mods (climbing claws, reactive camouflage, tool arm [engineering tool kit], weapon mount), reduced actions (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 138), unliving

Gear static arc pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each)

Development: If the PCs capture Vessu aboard the *Sun Diver*, he cooperates. He has failed in his mission, and he's distraught at the thought of what the efreet might do to his brother. Unlike if they interrogate him before departure, the PCs needn't press him for information about his plan, his motivations, or his history of sabotage regarding the *Sun Diver*. Vessu is apologetic about the potentially deadly sabotage that occurred during the "Sun Divers" adventure, admitting he acted rashly. He points out that he can't be perceived as helping the PCs, or his brother is at risk, and thus Vessu refuses to do more than tell his story unless the PCs promise to rescue his twin.

The *empathic portrait* Vessu carries is of Leirol, created after Leirol was captured. It shows a bearded man with a family resemblance to Vessu. Leirol's face is bruised, his hair singed. The feeling from the memento is one of severe distress, and some of the pain from blunt trauma and burns has imprinted on the image. Anyone trained in Culture knows these psychically imprinted images are hard to fake, and a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check (DC 16 if the PC has limited telepathy or better) allows a PC to verify the empathic information as genuine and from the person depicted. No better way exists to determine the authenticity of the portrait. The device also stores a recording of a gruff voice, saying, "Deliver the enemy or Leirol burns."

Vessu reveals that the voice is that of his contact, a salamander named Gorchak. If the PCs agree to rescue Leirol, Vessu helps deactivate all the sabotage. He recommends allowing the encrypted communications to continue to play—it should fool the efreet into allowing the *Sun Diver* to approach Kahlannal without any trouble from defensive artillery or patrol craft. Once they figure out the ship isn't heading for the correct landing coordinates, it should be too late for them to react with big guns. However, the PCs should land as quickly as possible to avoid aerial assault.

Some of the information Vessu could impart is also stored on his datapad. The PCs can extract that data by hacking into the datapad with a successful DC 17 Computers check. They can learn from these logs that leaving the encrypted signal active might make it easier to get into Kahlannal.

If the entire party is defeated, they are taken captive. The PCs awaken in cells: see the Captured sidebar on page 25.

Story Award: When the PCs deal with the sabotage situation, no matter the outcome, they gain 6,400 XP. They gain no additional XP for fighting Vessu.

EVENT 2: KAHLANNAL APPROACH (CR 9)

Near the end of the sixth day, the PCs approach within 1 hour of Kahlannal. When they do, read the following:

"I'll be—there's a big structure ahead, y'all!" says the *Sun Diver's* computer in its gravelly voice. "Looks like our destination."

Scanners show a massive series of force bubbles connected by tunnels of similar energy.

The *Sun Diver* announces its intent to begin waking any DCI agents still in stasis. Awakening them now allows them to be fully active when the *Sun Diver* arrives in Kahlannal.

As the PCs close in on the bubble city, the scanners pick up four Pyre Overwatches, efreeti patrol craft like the *Breath of Embers* from the adventure "Fire Starters," guarding the area around Kahlannal. The vessels are no match for the *Sun Diver* individually, but it's easy to see that these ships could pose a threat if they gang up on the PCs. Efreeti craft ignore the approaching *Sun Diver* if the PCs continued to broadcast the encrypted communications Vessu installed. The PCs can also try approaching by stealth; to do so, a PC must attempt a DC 25 Computers check to foil enemy sensors, and the pilot must fly an evasive course, attempting a DC 25 Piloting check. Other PCs can aid either check. If both checks succeed, or one succeeds by 5 or more, the efreeti vessels fail to notice the *Sun Diver*.

Starship Combat: For each failed check, assuming no check succeeds by 5 or more, two enemy vessels move to intercept the *Sun Diver*, starting with the two closest to it. The *Sun Diver* begins 22 hexes from Kahlannal. The closest enemy starships are 20 hexes away from the *Sun Diver* and on opposite sides of it. If the PCs alerted all the enemies in the area, the other two foes show up on the edges of the map on round 2 of starship combat, in front of the *Sun Diver* but still 20 hexes away. Otherwise, these extra ships show up at the start of round 5, alerted by the prolonged battle.

PYRE OVERWATCHES (4)

TIER 3

Medium transport

Speed 8; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2); **Drift** 1

AC 16; **TL** 16

HP 70; **DT** –; **CT** 14

Shields basic shields 40 (forward 10, port 10, starboard 10, aft 10)

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Attack (Forward) particle beam (8d6)

Attack (Aft) flak thrower (3d4)

Power Core Arcus Heavy (130 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal

Basic; **Systems** basic computer, basic medium-range sensors, crew quarters (good), mk 3 armor, mk 3 defenses;

Expansion Bays cargo bay (split into two parts), medical bay, recreation suite, specialized escape pod/brig, tech workshop

Modifiers Computers +2 (sensors only); **Complement** 5 (minimum 2, maximum 6)

CREW

Captain Computers +13 (3 ranks), gunnery +7, Intimidate +13 (3 ranks), Piloting +13 (3 ranks)

Pilot Computers +13 (3 ranks), gunnery +8, Piloting +13 (3 ranks)

Gunner gunnery +8

Engineer Computers +13 (3 ranks), gunnery +6, Engineering +13 (3 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +13 (3 ranks), gunnery +6

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fire Affinity (Su) A Pyre Overwatch is immune to the environmental conditions of the Plane of Fire and similar fiery environments. It takes only half damage from starship laser weapons.

Flak Thrower The flak thrower's physical ammunition burns up in stellar plasma after the second range increment (10 hexes). Therefore, in combat inside a star, the flak thrower can hit nothing beyond that range.

Solar Channel (Su) Because the shield system channels destructive solar forces around and through the vessel, a Pyre Overwatch is considered to have only half its normal shields while within a star. The starship's shields take only half damage from gravity, laser, and plasma weapons. These shields also block the irradiate weapon special property. Conversely, the vessel can't fire gravity, laser, or plasma weapons through its own shields. The Overwatch's shields also block the EMP and irradiate weapon special properties of any non-tracking weapon the vessel fires.

Losing shields in the sun is extremely hazardous. At the end of a round in which a starship's shields are reduced to 0 remaining Shield Points, that vessel takes 5 damage from exposure to solar forces. The ship takes 10 damage at the end of each subsequent round it remains at 0 Shield Points. Creatures inside an affected ship are exposed to extreme heat (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 403) with 1 starship combat round equal to 1 minute. The inside of such a ship is also bathed in low radiation (*Core Rulebook* 403).

If the efreet manage to disable the *Sun Diver*, they have no way to capture the PCs inside the sun. They instead attempt to destroy the *Sun Diver* each round.

Entering Kahlannal: Faeffel's algorithm allows the *Sun Diver* to fly right through Kahlannal's protective bubble. If the *Sun Diver* does so without having attracted the attention of the patrol ships, the PCs fly without incident to the landing site.

If the *Sun Diver* instead enters Kahlannal during starship combat, the enemy vessels break off pursuit, as they lack the algorithm to easily enter Kahlannal. However, in this case, the occupying forces know the PCs are coming. Particle beam emplacements on the ground fire on the *Sun Diver*, requiring the pilot to attempt two DC 23 Piloting checks. For each check that succeeds, the *Sun Diver* evades ground fire. On a failure, the *Sun Diver* takes 8d6 damage to its forward quadrant, but the damage is doubled if the check fails by 5 or more. Once the second check's results are accounted for, the *Sun Diver* can land.

Regardless of the circumstances, when the *Sun Diver* enters Kahlannal, read the following:

"I'm receiving landing coordinates, y'all, and an encrypted message. Same encryption as the shield modulation algorithm. The message says, 'Avoid invaders. They plan your capture. Overwhelming force. Anassanoi designation Zhyffor.' The place is nearby," says the computer. "Shall we go?"

As the PCs fly over the city, read or paraphrase the following.

The city below is a combination of practical buildings of silvery metal and more organic structures with rounded, iridescent shapes. Smooth streets and walkways, channels for water, and what must be trenched tracks for trains of some sort divide these structures. The ruin of war is apparent among the elegant edifices, and active firefights are still taking place.

As the *Sun Diver* approaches the landing zone, go to Part 2.

Story Award: The PCs receive 6,400 XP no matter how they enter Kahlannal and receive no additional XP for fighting the efreeti starships.

PART 2: FLAME RESISTANCE

Upon their arrival in Kahlannal, the PCs find themselves thrust into an ongoing conflict for control of the city. Although the efreet have taken much of the city, pockets of resistance still fight to take back occupied territory and protect areas still under anassanoi control. For more on the city of Kahlannal, see the gazetteer, starting on page 38.

A. DOCKING BAYS

As the *Sun Diver* approaches, read or paraphrase the following:

The *Sun Diver* descends, heading toward a half-destroyed structure fifteen feet high, with a central tower forty feet tall. In the wreckage of the building is a crashed efreeti shuttle that looks like a smaller version of the patrol craft that guarded the city. Shut but transparent hangar doors form the roof of

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two bays, one of which has also suffered some damage. To the northwest is an area large enough for the *Sun Diver* to land.

"We landing, y'all?" asks the *Sun Diver*.

Seconds later, another encrypted message arrives. After running through the anassanoi algorithm, it reads, "Welcome to Kahlannal. Rendezvous team en route to your location. Arrival in approximately ten minutes. Designation Zhyffor."

If the PCs hesitate to land in this spot, a character using the scanners or a comm unit can easily see that alerts have started to go out about the *Sun Diver*'s intrusion and air defenses are mobilizing. If the *Sun Diver* continues to fly past this landing zone, it comes under anti-aircraft fire like that described in **Event 2**. Using another landing zone requires the *Sun Diver*'s pilot to attempt three more Piloting checks against ground-to-air fire.

Docking ports such as this one can be found throughout Kahlannal, housing the vehicles used to travel the city without relying on magtrains. If the PCs don't land here, they're directed to a similar structure elsewhere, which is likely to have four intact bays. Restructure the encounters in this section to fit the new site. The following encounters use the map on page 13.

A1. LANDING SITE (CR 10)

DCI agents prefer to remain aboard while the PCs secure the area. When the PCs disembark, read or paraphrase the following.

Occasional explosions and reports of small arms echo farther off in the city. Smoke drifts through the streets. From here, it's

obvious the ruined shuttle's cargo bay was weakened in the crash, then breached from the inside. Whatever broke out of the shuttle must have been huge.

Creature: As the PCs consider this observation, a nyssholora from the Plane of Fire, drawn by the noise of the *Sun Diver*'s landing, emerges from area **A4**, roars, and attacks. The creature is injured, angry, and hungry. (It's normally CR 11, but its current state has weakened it, making it CR 10.) Anyone who identifies the creature recognizes that its abilities make it a perfect siege beast against telepathic species.

FIERY NYSSHOLORA

CR 10

XP 9,600

Variant nyssholora adult (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 86)

N Huge magical beast (extraplanar, fire)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, telepathy sense 60 ft.; **Perception** +20

DEFENSE

HP 138 (normally 180)

EAC 24; **KAC** 26

Fort +15; **Ref** +10; **Will** +13

Immunities fire; **Resistances** electricity 10, sonic 10

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +24 (4d6+19 F & P plus swallow whole) or phasic claws +24 (2d8+19 So; critical wound [DC 18]) or tail scourge +24 (2d8+19 F & E)

TELEPATHY DAMPING

The occupying forces have used the *psychic resonator* in Kahlannal's Spire, usually a telepathic amplifier, to hinder telepathy and the typically nonverbal anassanois. Telepathic species feel this damping as a mildly annoying "thickness" to thoughts. While the field is active, the range of any telepathy in Kahlannal is halved, and no form of telepathic communication can leave the city. Using telepathy to interface with devices deals the user 1d6 nonlethal damage every 10 minutes, and this damage doubles if the device is a weapon or has weapons, such as Protector chariots. Those taking this damage also take a -2 penalty to Piloting checks and attack rolls related to the vehicle. In addition, normal comm units can't send signals outside Kahlannal.

Multiattack bite +18 (4d6+19 F&P plus swallow whole), phasic claws +18 (2d8+19 So; critical wound [DC 18]), tail scourge +18 (2d8+19 E&F)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Offensive Abilities breath weapon (30-ft. cone, 11d6 F&S [see text], Reflex DC 18 half, usable every 1d6 rounds), swallow whole (4d6+19 B&F, EAC 24, KAC 22, 45 HP)

TACTICS

During Combat The nyssholora tries to eat as many PCs as it can, using multiattack when possible.

Morale If it drops 25 Hit Points or fewer, the nyssholora flees.

STATISTICS

Str +8; **Dex** +0; **Con** +5; **Int** -4; **Wis** +3; **Cha** -2

Skills Athletics +25

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) A creature that fails its saving throw against the breath weapon is also staggered for 1 round. This breath weapon ignores an object's hardness. A nyssholora can't use its breath weapon if it has a creature grappled in its mouth or for at least 1 round after successfully swallowing a creature.

Phasic Claws (Su) A nyssholora's claws ignore half an object's hardness.

Telepathy Sense (Su) A nyssholora can sense any creature within 60 feet that has telepathy, limited telepathy, or a similar ability, such as from a mystic's telepathic bond. This sense works through walls or other obstacles, functioning like blindsense (vibration) and sense through (vibration).

Treasure: Phasic claws of a nyssholora are valuable. The ones on this creature can be sold for 3,000 credits total.

EVENT 3: OCCUPIERS ATTACK (CR 10)

A few minutes after the PCs finish the nyssholora, occupation forces that saw the *Sun Diver* land come to investigate. They use nearby buildings for cover. When they spot the PCs, the

soldiers sneak closer, while the sniper climbs a ruined wall for an elevated perch. PCs who fail a DC 33 Perception check are surprised when the sniper opens fire and the soldiers attack.

OCCUPATION SNIPER

CR 9

XP 6,400

Azer operative (*Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 55)
LN Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +18

DEFENSE

HP 135

EAC 22; **KAC** 23

Fort +11; **Ref** +12; **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immunities** fire; **SR** 20

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.

Melee incapacitator +20 (3d4+12 B nonlethal or 3d4+12 B&F; critical staggered [DC 18])

Ranged phantom assassin rifle +20 (3d6+9 P; critical burn 2d4) or
refraction perforator pistol +20 (2d6+9 So; critical bleed 1d6)

Offensive Abilities debilitating trick, elemental fire, trick attack +5d8, triple attack

TACTICS

During Combat The sniper snipes for 1 round, using his jetpack to reposition if necessary. He then switches to closer combat with his pistol and incapacitator.

Morale If he drops to 30 Hit Points or fewer, the sniper calls a retreat.

STATISTICS

Str +3; **Dex** +6; **Con** +4; **Int** +2; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +1

Skills Acrobatics +23, Athletics +23, Bluff +18, Culture +18, Stealth +23

Languages Akitionian, Common, Drow, Dwarven, Ignan

Other Abilities operative exploits (bleeding shot [9 bleed], debilitating sniper, versatile movement), specialization (daredevil)

Gear d-suit III (jetpack), phantom assassin rifle^{AR} with 10 sniper rounds, refraction perforator pistol^{AR} with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), incapacitator with 1 battery (20 charges), level 2 (steel) clearance card

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) Azers can cause any weapon they wield to deal half its damage as fire damage, also making them neither archaic nor nonlethal. If the weapon already deals two damage types, this effect replaces one with fire. In addition, azers can grant weapons they wield the burn critical hit effect (1d4, 2d4 at CR 6, 3d4 at CR 11, and 4d4 at CR 16+). If the weapon has any other critical hit effects, the azer chooses only one to apply on a critical hit.

AZER OCCUPATION SOLDIERS (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Azer soldier (*Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 55)

LN Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE **HP 70 EACH**

EAC 17; **KAC** 19

Fort +7; **Ref** +5; **Will** +6

Immunities fire; **SR** 16

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical maul +14 (1d8+12 B; critical knockdown)

Ranged liquidator disintegrator rifle +11 (1d20+5 A; critical corrode 1d6) or

incendiary grenade II +11 (explode [10 ft., 2d6 F, burn 1d6, DC 13])

Offensive Abilities elemental fire, fighting style (hit-and-run), nimble fusillade

TACTICS

During Combat The soldiers wait for the sniper to start shooting, then attack from the sniper's angle to prevent the PCs from approaching that position. They engage in melee to tie up other melee combatants or spellcasters. These soldiers are likely to drop their incendiary grenades at their own feet if doing so is advantageous.

Morale The soldiers fight to the death to protect the sniper, but they disengage when he orders a retreat, hanging back to cover his withdrawal.

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +2; **Con** +3; **Int** +0; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0

Skills Athletics +16, Engineering +11, Intimidate +11

Feats Opening Volley

Languages Common, Ignan

Gear d-suit I (jump jets), liquidator disintegrator rifle^{AR} with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), tactical maul^{AR}, incendiary grenade II

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) See page 10 (critical burn 1d4).

Development: Anassanoi resistance fighters arrive just as the azers begin their withdrawal. The anassanois cut the azers off from easy retreat, forcing the occupiers to make a last stand. The sniper is loyal enough to the ground forces to make that stand with them. Allow players to make attack rolls for the resistance fighters, and perhaps even to maneuver them with your guidance. The azers focus on the PCs first, rather than the anassanois. Alternatively, if the azers had no chance to flee, the anassanois arrive just after the PCs have defeated the occupiers.

ZHYFFOR **CR 8**

XP 4,800

Male anassanoi envoy (see page 55)

LG Medium humanoid (anassanoi)

Init +6; **Perception** +16

Senses blindsense (thought) 30 ft.

OCCUPIER GEAR AND CARDS

Occupation forces in this adventure are described as having conventional armor and weapons, but the gear these soldiers wear is styled in a recognizable way, creating a uniform look among the occupiers. Their armor is black with brass and red accents, including a crimson emblem of a six-pointed star with a circle in the center and six smaller and curved arms between the points. This insignia, which the PCs saw in the "Fire Starters" adventure aboard the *Breath of Embers* starship, is the Malikah's symbol. The occupiers' other gear is styled to match the armor.

Many of the occupiers also have security clearance cards. These cards are metal encasing circuitry. Each has a level, from 1 to 4; level 1 is black iron, level 2 is steel, level 3 is brass, and level 4 (the highest) is copper. The efreeti forces placed locks on some facilities in Kahlannal. These locks require occupier clearance cards to unlock. A higher-level card opens any lock a card of a lower level can open.

DEFENSE **HP 115 RP 4**

EAC 20; **KAC** 21

Fort +7; **Ref** +8; **Will** +11

Weaknesses low-light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical knife +16 (2d4+9 S)

Ranged fighter handcoil +16 (1d10+8 E; critical arc 1d10)

Offensive Abilities debilitating trick, trick attack +3d8

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +4; **Con** +1; **Int** +1; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +6

Skills Acrobatics +16, Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, Piloting +21, Sense Motive +21, Stealth +16

Languages Anassan, Ignan; telepathy 30 ft.

Other Abilities envoy improvisations (improved get 'em, inspiring boost [22 SP], quick inspiring boost [14 SP], sustained determination)

Gear freebooter armor II (jump jets), fighter handcoil^{AR} with 2 batteries (20 charges each), tactical knife

ANASSANOI OPERATIVES (2) **CR 5**

HP 65 each (see page 55)

Treasure: The sniper isn't supposed to have his level 2 (steel) clearance card with him, but he does.

Development: Once the fighting ends, Zhyffor and his operatives approach cautiously. Zhyffor closes to 15 feet and uses his damped telepathy to addresses the PCs.

"I have the designation Zhyffor." The anassanoi gives a slight bow. Excitement, trepidation, and genuine humility accompany his telepathic words along with—somehow—a vague sense of

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his gender and lineage tied to his name. "Apologies for arriving too late to fully assist in thwarting the invaders' attack."

When he spots the defeated nyssholora, Zhyffor compliments the PCs for their prowess, then asks for their help in making the hangar and tower operational again (see areas **A2** through **A5**). During this time, several more anassanois arrive.

Once the team fixes up the hangar, Zhyffor recommends parking the *Sun Diver* in **A4** with no concern for damage to the structure. He and four other anassanois take vehicles from **A3**, with Zhyffor ushering both PCs and the DCI team into his hover truck, while the other anassanois remain behind to disguise the *Sun Diver* with holoprojectors and *antipathy units* (see page 44). When everyone is aboard, he takes the controls and drives them away to meet with the resistance—see *Joining the Cause* on page 14.



A2. CRASH SITE

Based on the debris, the efreeti shuttle that crashed here must have destroyed several smaller aircraft.

A PC trained in Engineering can tell the scorched and twisted shuttle and other wrecked vehicles are beyond repair. The shuttle's open hold contains the remains of another nyssholora, still bound tightly. Broken bindings lie adjacent to it.

Treasure: In addition to the phasic claws of the dead nyssholora (also worth 3,000 credits), the scorched cargo hold contains several lockers. Most of the gear within these containers has been destroyed, but one locker contains a cracked case holding three intact *spell amps of tongues* and three broken ones.

A3. BAY 3

The hangar doors on the roof and the double door leading into this bay—both transparent—are on lockdown. Rewiring the controls in the hall outside the double door requires a successful DC 25 Engineering check. The lockdown can also be deactivated in area **A5**, making both open at a touch of the controls.

This garage contains several sleek, silvery vehicles marked with a symmetrical, eight-pointed star that glows with white light. One is a large transport, while the others are smaller vehicles fit for various uses.

Parked here is a hover truck (*Starfinder Armory* 138) that has no wheels, only a hover mode, and passenger seating for 16 in its expansion bay. Four all-terrain transports (*Core Rulebook* 229)

also parked here have antigrav tech similar to the truck, so they also hover rather than roll. All these vehicles require telepathic control with biometric starters limited to a few authorized anassanois. Hot-wiring the biometrics requires a successful DC 25 Engineering check. Controlling the vehicle without telepathy is impossible, and a PC who has telepathy takes a –4 penalty to Piloting checks with this unfamiliar tech.

The bay contains controls for double door and hangar doors. Controls for the double door are on the wall just north of those doors. Roof door controls are on the wall northeast of the hover truck. Both these control consoles can be rewired in a way similar to the outer door controls.

A4. BAY 4

This bay is like area **A3**, including the lockdown. This area contains only a small amount of rubble from the broken northeastern wall.

A5. TRAFFIC TOWER

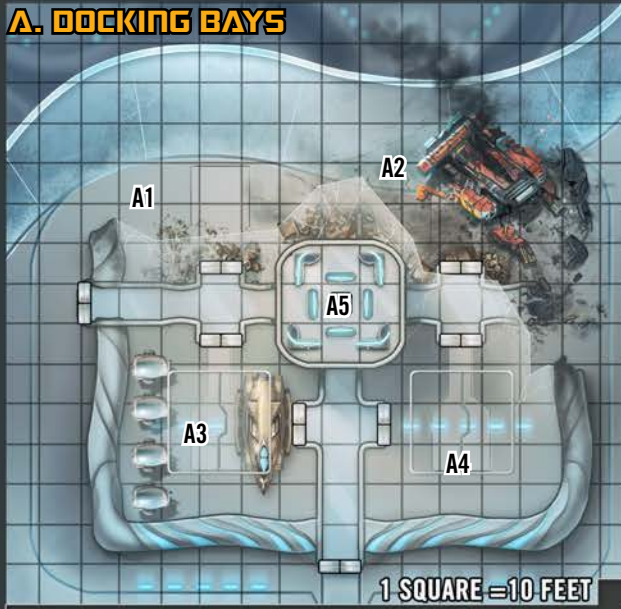
The hallways in this damaged single-story structure lead to a central tower, holding only an illuminated pad. Any PC trained in Engineering or Mysticism can tell the pad is a lift that uses hybrid technology. Normally, this pad responds to mental commands, carrying those who stand on it to the tower's upper area or down again, but the lockdown prevents it from functioning, and it has no controls on the ground level. Fortunately for the PCs, the tube to the upper tower also has a simple ladder built into its side. The ladder's bottom portion is currently retracted to about 10 feet above the floor, but it is obvious and can be pulled down easily by anyone who can reach it.

When the PCs enter the upper level, another 20 feet up the tube, read or paraphrase the following.

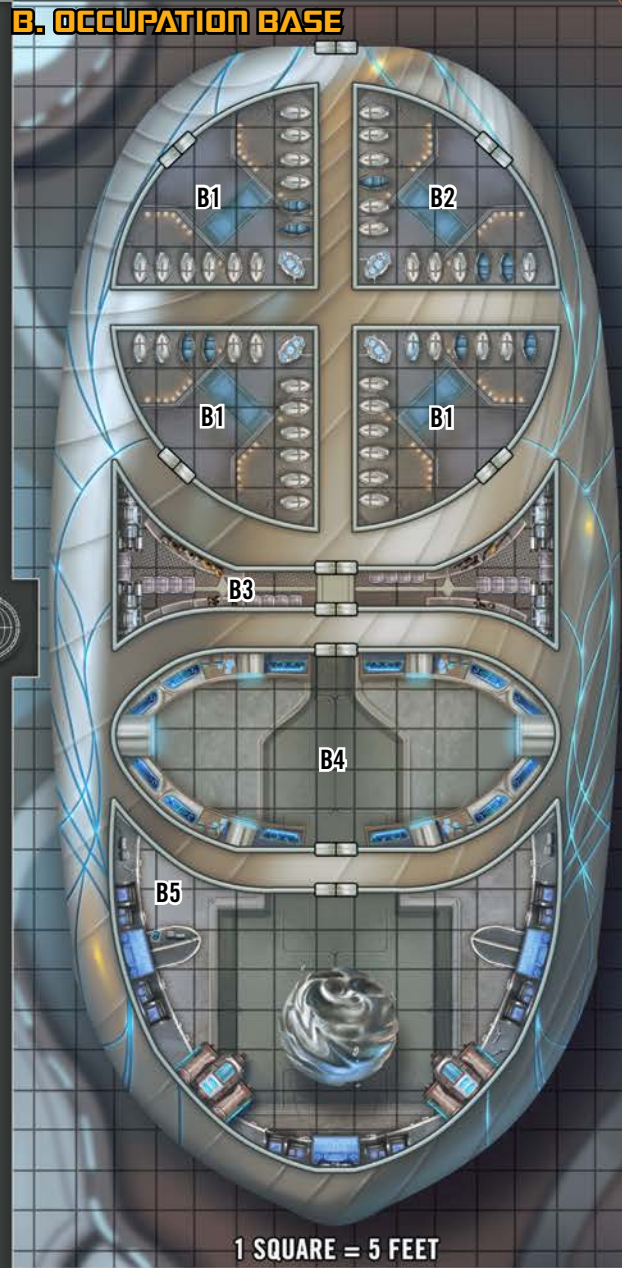
This roughly octagonal control room overlooks the building from about thirty feet up, its walls, ceiling, and even part of the floor made of transparent material. On the north side, the transparent material has cracks and a few breaks. Most of the controls are dark, but one panel flashes with silvery light.

The flashing controls lock this facility down. They can be deactivated with a successful DC 30 Computers check. A PC who has limited telepathy or telepathy gains a +2 circumstance bonus to this check, though using telepathy to link to the computer causes a mild headache. Once the lockdown is deactivated, the controls are intuitive and can be used to open any doors in area **A**. The tube lift also becomes operational, and someone can guess how it works with a successful DC 17 Engineering or Mysticism check.

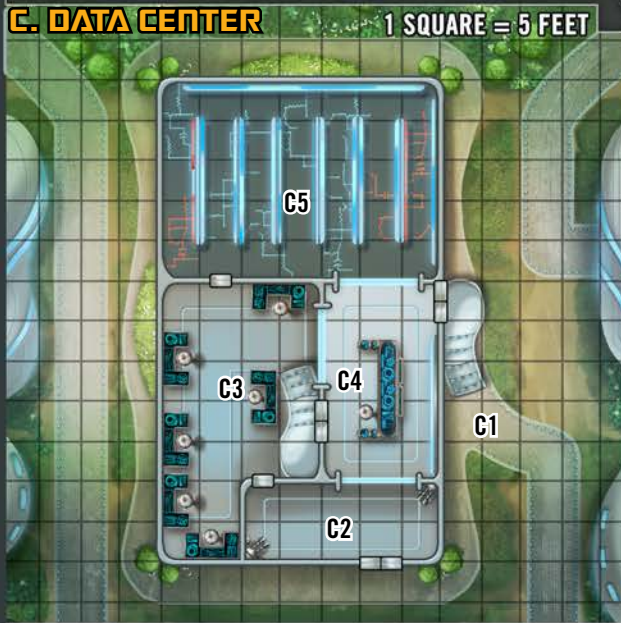
A. DOCKING BAYS



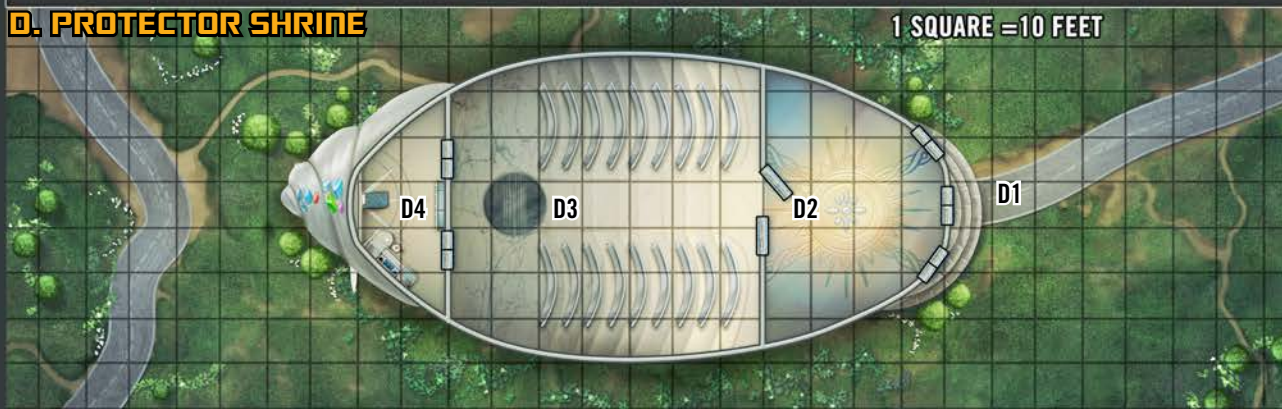
B. OCCUPATION BASE



C. DATA CENTER



D. PROTECTOR SHRINE



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JOINING THE CAUSE

As Zhyffor drives, read or paraphrase the following.

Zhyffor drives along narrow roads and magtrain trenches—a route that has a lot of cover. The other vehicles shadow his truck on the same road or on parallel side streets.

Along the way, Zhyffor is willing to answer questions. He volunteers that the resistance sent the PCs to that specific landing site so the anassanois could retrieve the vehicles there. The truck was useful in extracting the PCs and DCI agents, and it should prove useful in transporting anassanoi insurgents. Other possible questions—which curious DCI members might ask on behalf of the PCs—follow, along with their answers.

Where are we going? “To the headquarters of the resistance. Although we have been beaten thus far, the dragon has not defeated us. We hope you will help us.” Zhyffor’s telepathy imparts grim determination and hope.

Dragon? “Yes. A great dragon of fire and light named Nysteryx commands the forces here. She is mighty, but she serves the efreet and their commander, General Khaim.” The PCs feel Zhyffor’s internal shudder as he thinks of the dragon.

Why did they attack Kahlannal? “We suppose they attacked us because they discovered we have been trying to warn those of you who dwell in the darkness between.” An image of outer space accompanies the telepathic message.

How do you know about us? “We developed technology to see into the darkness beyond the enveloping fire some cycles ago, when I was still a youth. Had there been time, I am sure we would have met soon and under better circumstances.” Warmth and wistfulness accompany the answer.

How many anassanois are in the resistance? “Not enough. The dragon’s army is strong, and we have always been a people of peace. I think isolation in the fire and light made us too complacent. The efreet showed us our folly.” Zhyffor’s fear of extinction is apparent in his telepathy.

Where is Faeffel? “Protector Faeffel sleeps a dreamless sleep. The strain of crying for help into the bright void rendered her spirit dormant. She stayed awake long enough to tell us of you, and she yet lives, but we do not know if she will awaken.” Grief supplements this message. Zhyffor clearly cares for Faeffel the way a student might care for a dear mentor.

What is a Protector? “We have always relied on the capable to protect us. The Protectors in their chariots are our guardians. They are wise, just, and strong. Eight there were, but only three remain. Among them, Faeffel sleeps, and Mehrren was taken by the invaders. Only Nyralaen endures to lead us.” Zhyffor’s emotions swell with reverence then descend into grief and fear. The word “chariot” seems abstract in its concept, eliciting the image of a silvery sphere.

What is a chariot? “A chariot... is the vehicle of a Protector. The two are bonded. A chariot shapes itself to the will of the Protector. Up to four Protectors can join their chariots together to form the Accord, a conglomerate vessel capable

of even greater feats. However, the invaders hindered the link between Protectors and their chariots.” Zhyffor’s mind becomes analytical. An image of the starship on the inside front cover accompanies the abstract word “Accord” in his message.

How are the Protectors cut off? “When Nysteryx took the Spire at the center of Kahlannal, she took control of our *psychic resonator*, a device we have long used to amplify our telepathy. Somehow, the invaders reversed this amplification, damping telepathy in Kahlannal. That hindered the Protectors’ control of the chariots, so the two could not easily act as one. That is one reason they beat us.” An image of the spire in the center of Kahlannal attends this message.

ARRIVAL AT RESISTANCE HQ

Once the PCs are done talking with Zhyffor, the trip soon comes to a close, as follows.

Zhyffor drives the hover truck into the sublevels of a partially wrecked structure on a heavily foliated boulevard. Despite being underground, the area is brightly lit, seemingly from outside light channeled inside. Zhyffor and the other anassanoi drivers park the vehicles and lead the party into a narrow, clean access tunnel that runs perpendicular to the street, Zhyffor telepathically indicates this is a maintenance passage for workers to move personnel and materials throughout the city without disrupting daily life. After walking for several minutes, the group arrives in a cistern with a secure door on the far side. Zhyffor moves around the cistern to the door, which has a biometric lock. The lock scans Zhyffor, then the door opens.

The PCs notice two other elements. It’s clear to anyone trained in Engineering that most of the security here is brand new. With a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check, any member of a telepathic species notes the lock had a minor psychic element, which Zhyffor responded to with some pain. If no PC notices, a telepathic DCI agent such as Jenan or Vessu might point out this detail. Additionally, any character who succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check notices that a dark, domelike module above the door is a sentry gun and camera.

As the PCs pass through the door, continue:

Beyond the door is a large chamber, like a municipal control center, filled with dozens of anassanois. Most of these people are planning, looking over holographic maps, or working at computers. Others tend wounded, repair equipment, or usher civilians into adjacent chambers. Few avert their gaze from the now-open door, but fewer still stop their work.

At the room’s far end, a regally dressed anassanoi of impressive stature stands from a high-backed chair and strides over.

“I greet you!” the anassanoi projects telepathically, the true warmth of the greeting flowing along with the words. “I have the designation Nyralaen, Protector.” Once again, the sense of gender—this time female—accompanies

her naming. Nearby anassanois bow their heads at this mental announcement, a feeling of reverence filling the air.

"Protector Faeffel was true!" continues Nyralaen. "She sent the message in time. Her sleep is a high price, but Protectors pay so the people do not."

At the mention of Faeffel, the reverence in the air becomes tinged with melancholy. This sense points attention to an anassanoi unconscious in a bed among the wounded.

Nyralaen continues, "Come and sit here with Zhyffor and me. We shall discuss."

Several anassanois set out seats in a semicircle around Nyralaen, offering food and drink, and six of them, including Zhyffor, join the group. Nyralaen first asks the PCs to recount their story and how they became involved with the invaders from the Plane of Fire, trying to assess what twist of fate brought them here. Nyralaen can provide answers like those on page 14 to various questions, as well as anything it's reasonable for her to know from the adventure background, including the telepathic warning concerning General Khaim's amassing forces and the efreeti attack when the warning was discovered. Zhyffor reports on his observations of the PCs, including their defeat of the nyssholora.

After this discussion, Nyralaen makes the following proposal.

"We are diminished, friends, and our numbers are few. Despite this, we remain strong and shall retake our city from the invaders. This home, this great burning home," she motions outward, referring to the entire sun, "you share this home with us. We shall not let them have it.

"We have much to do, but you are not so weakened by the invaders' tricks. They do not know you. Please—join us!"

Nyralaen believes the PCs can help by acting as a strike force, taking out occupier assets and recapturing resources. Meanwhile, resistance fighters can keep the invaders' attention with calculated attacks. This strategy should force the enemy to spread out, eventually leaving the Spire vulnerable to assault. Then, resistance soldiers can attack occupiers near the Spire while the PCs infiltrate it to restore the *psychic resonator*. Their strength restored, the anassanois can then drive the invaders out.

Zhyffor and Nyralaen are adamant that while the Spire is the ultimate goal, strike-force assignments are crucial. Assaulting the Spire before placing the occupiers at a disadvantage is reckless. If the PCs do so, place any encounters they've skipped in their way, since the occupiers still have those resources.

STRIKE FORCE MISSIONS

Zhyffor hands the PCs a datapad containing a map of the city with several marked locations. Zooming in on any of these marks reveals a mission the resistance needs the PCs to complete. The area maps assigned to each mission describe

buildings and facilities that could be located anywhere in the city; place these missions wherever you wish, using the

"Kahlannal" article starting on page 38 for guidance. Zhyffor can provide the PCs with schematics of all the areas except **E**, which is an occupier-erected structure.

The resistance has a timetable for only the prisoner liberation mission, hoping to rescue Protector Mehrren as soon as possible, but that desire doesn't mean the PCs must accomplish this mission first. They can undertake these tasks in any order they find logical. While the anassanois are anxious to move forward, it's fine if the PCs want to be cautious and deal with only one mission per day, resting fully between them.

Before the PCs depart on their first mission, Zhyffor warns them about occupier fireteam patrols. If the PCs encounter a fireteam, the goal should be to evade rather than engage. The resistance has learned the hard way that such fireteams can easily call reinforcements to a stationary fight. The five missions are as follows:

Chariot Recovery: Take out an occupation base and recover Protector Mehrren's chariot, allowing the anassanois to eventually use it in resistance operations. Use area **B** on page 16.

Comm Infiltration: Retake a data center to allow the anassanois to tap into occupation communications and surveillance, while taking out some occupier hackers. Use area **C** on page 19.

Object Retrieval: Obtain relics for Nyralaen from a shrine to a fallen Protector. She plans on using the relics to induct a new Protector, repair the damaged chariot the PCs can retrieve from area **B**, and awaken Faeffel. Use area **D** on page 21.

Prisoner Liberation: Free prisoners, including Protector Mehrren, from an occupation detention center. If the PCs ask about Vessu's brother Leirol, Nyralaen suggests that such a prisoner might be kept there. (Vessu or his datapad, if either is available, can counter that Leirol might instead be kept in the Spire, in the clutches of the salamander Gorchak.) Use area **E** on page 24.

Supply-Line Sabotage: Disrupt part of the magtrain system leading to the Spire. Doing so hinders occupation supply lines and makes passage to the Spire easier. Use area **F** on page 28.



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DCI AGENTS

The DCI agents remain with the resistance, learning what they can about the anassanois, their culture, and this struggle. They aid the resistance, but they take no role in direct conflict alongside the PCs.

Helping Faeffel Any PC who examines Faeffel and succeeds at a DC 15 Medicine check learns she is in a deep coma. On a success by 5 or more, the PC realizes her brain activity is well below expected norms even for a coma, suggesting a supernatural affliction. *Detect affliction* can confirm this diagnosis. Someone who uses that spell and then succeeds at a DC 25 Mysticism check can determine severe telepathic feedback has harmed Faeffel, and she is at the end stage of an affliction that has induced the coma. It takes a *restoration* spell or stronger magic, such as *psychic surgery*, to cure her. However, she is alive and likely to remain so under her current care regimen. Nyralaen believes she can cure Faeffel with the help of the other surviving Protectors and the relics from the Protector Shrine.

MOVING IN THE CITY

Use the “Kahlannal” article to add detail to the PCs’ movement through the city. Thanks to the resistance’s knowledge of the geography, the PCs can use maintenance passages, emerging onto street level only when close to their destination. In addition, resistance fighters attack any sector the PCs are infiltrating, distracting ground forces there from the PCs’ movements.

During missions, despite having comm units, the resistance maintains radio silence. They don’t know if the efreet can detect or triangulate such signals, and they’re unwilling to take the risk. In the field, the PCs are on their own.

Creatures: The PCs must still move stealthily to avoid notice. When you wish to add some tension and test the PCs’ infiltration skills, ask each PC to attempt a DC 21 Stealth check. A character who succeeds by 10 or more eliminates another PC’s failure. If half or more of the PCs succeed, they avoid occupation notice. Otherwise, on the first two instances of such a group failure, the PCs run afoul of an occupation fireteam of four occupation soldiers made up of azers (see page 10) and ifrits (see page 17). If you wish, you can replace two soldiers with one occupation tech (see page 18). You can also use such an encounter to spice up the conclusion of a mission the PCs dealt with handily.

Even if the PCs run into a fireteam, the encounter starts with enough distance between enemies that the PCs can attempt to evade the occupiers by using the buildings and byways of Kahlannal to stealthily retreat. If the PCs fight without withdrawing, another fireteam might, at your discretion, come to reinforce the first at the start of the fourth round.

Story Award: The adventure assumes the PCs face two fireteams. Award the PCs 12,800 XP—as if they had defeated those fireteams—once they’ve successfully returned from all the mission areas, regardless of how they achieved it. They gain no extra XP for fighting occupier reinforcements.

B. OCCUPATION BASE

Occupation forces converted this stasis facility into a barracks.

When the PCs take on this mission, Zhyffor briefs them on the chariot with holograms from his datapad, which depict a sphere that looks like mercury. (Protector chariots are detailed further on page 44.) He also gives them two devices. One is a crystalline memory stick, which the PCs should use to retrieve any field data they find during the operation. The resistance plans to use this data to improve their distraction tactics and better aid the PCs. The other is a transponder intended to allow Nyralaen to remotely call the chariot to the resistance HQ. All the PCs need to do is attach this hybrid device to the chariot.

When the PCs can see the outside of the facility, read or paraphrase the following.

This smooth building has a silver color, gleaming iridescently in the bright sunlight. The door—a silver panel—has a device of black metal with brass accents connected to it.

The door device is an efreeti-manufactured electronic lock with a card reader. Opening the lock without a level 1 or higher clearance card requires a successful DC 25 Engineering check to rewire the lock, or a DC 25 Computers check to hack it. Failing either check by 5 or more sets off a silent alarm in areas **B1** and **B4**. Soldiers from the barracks gather in the hallways to repel intruders (a CR 10 encounter). Those in the command center prepare in place to face intruders that make it past the soldiers.

Within each room, the ceiling is vaulted, sweeping up to 25 feet at the center. Hallways have 15-foot ceilings. Light comes through the structure, bathing everything in bright illumination. The other locks in the facility match the one on the entrance and can be opened in similar ways, although some require a different clearance level.

B1. BARRACKS (CR 7 to 10)

A card reader like that on the front door locks each room.

Rows of egg-shaped beds line the walls of this chamber, each with an open lid. Storage containers accompany the beds.

From the doorway, any PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Perception check identifies an array of sensors monitoring the room. A PC who succeeds at a subsequent DC 23 Engineering check can guess the sensors could detect them as intruders if they enter. The control console for these sensors is in the right-angled corner of each room. Disabling the sensors via the console requires a successful DC 28 Computers check to hack it, but since entering the room brings the hacker into view of the sensors, the PCS might want to find another way to disable the sensors.

Any character who succeeds at a DC 23 Engineering check recognizes the probable function of the pods, although these are long inactive. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, or if a PC has time to examine the pods and succeeds at a DC 23 Mysticism

check, the PC realizes the pods have special hybrid elements that function on a psychic level, and so completely understands their function as psiostasis pods (see page 45).

Creatures: Two occupation soldiers relax in each of these barracks—half these soldiers are ifrits, and the other half are azers. If the PCs engage a group inside one of these areas, any significant noise alerts all the other soldiers, who come to investigate in waves of two per round. They keep coming until all six soldiers have arrived.

AZER OCCUPATION SOLDIERS (3) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 70 each (see page 10)

TACTICS

During Combat Azers hurl grenades before moving into melee.

Morale The soldiers might try to fall back deeper into the facility, but they don't surrender.

STATISTICS

Gear level 1 (black iron) clearance card

IFRIT OCCUPATION SOLDIERS (3) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Ifrit soldier (*Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 60)

N Medium outsider (native)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE

HP 70 EACH

EAC 17; **KAC** 19

Fort +5; **Ref** +7; **Will** +6

Resistances fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee rhyolite magma blade +12 (1d8+8 F & S; critical wound)

Ranged corona serpent laser +15 (2d6+5 F; critical burn 2d4) or incendiary grenade II +14 (explode [10 ft., 2d6 F, burn 1d6, DC 13])

Offensive Abilities fighting styles (sharpshoot), fire affinity, focus fire, sniper's aim

Ifrit Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th)

1/day—overheat (DC 12)

TACTICS

During Combat Ifrits stay back and shoot or throw grenades.

Morale As the azers, above.

STATISTICS

Str +3; **Dex** +5; **Con** +2; **Int** +0; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +11, Intimidate +11

Languages Common, Ignan

Gear d-suit III (jump jets), corona serpent laser^{AR} with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), rhyolite magma blade^{AR} with 1 battery (20 charges), incendiary grenade II, level 1 (black iron) clearance card

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fire Affinity (Su) Once per day, an ifrit making an attack that deals fire damage can roll a single attack roll twice and use the higher result.

PRISONERS AND INFORMATION

Occupiers might surrender to the PCs during these missions, but the resistance has no resources for keeping such prisoners. Although anassanois are a compassionate people, they are unwilling to risk infiltration by housing invaders, and thus they leave the PCs to handle any prisoners. The PCs might note the occupiers lack *allegiance collars* (*Starfinder Adventure Path #13* 16). All know they serve General Khaim, and their leaders (those with level 3 clearance or higher) know the general's aim is conquest of the sun, including the Burning Archipelago. If questioned, the occupiers are casual about what they know, convinced the PCs can't stop the plan, given the timetable and the strength of the general's forces. However, only the forces in the Spire know about the general's command base, the Crucible, deeper in the sun.

Treasure: The containers hold personal effects, food (field rations and R2Es), and minor intoxicants. Within separate beds, the PCs can find five level 1 clearance cards and one level 2 clearance card.

B2. MALFUNCTIONING PSIOSTASIS CENTER (CR 9)

This room is like the barracks, but the door is unlocked and opens when someone nears it. The psiostasis pods here are malfunctioning. The occupiers left this hazard in place.

Hazard: Malfunctioning psiostasis pods blanket the room in an uncontrolled field 2 rounds after creatures enter. Those in the room then painfully feel autonomic functions and motor control shutting down. Disabling the pods requires moving to the sensor console in the corner. After 10 rounds, however, the sensors glitch and reboot the pods, ending the stasis effect.

MALFUNCTIONING PSIOSTASIS CENTER CR 9

XP 6,400

Type hybrid; **Perception** DC 33; **Disable** Engineering DC 28 (disable the pods)

Trigger location; **Duration** 10 rounds; **Reset** 10 minutes

Effect overwhelming psiostasis (3d8 B plus staggered);

Fortitude DC 18 halves damage and negates the condition; multiple targets (all targets within the room)

B3. ARMORY

The doors are locked, requiring a level 2 or higher clearance card or a successful DC 27 Computers or Engineering check to open.

This long room flares on either end into a wider, triangular space. Shelves, racks, and cabinets hold all sorts of gear.

Most of the stock here consist of mundane analog and technological items and supplies of level 5 and lower, all of

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which the occupiers brought with them. The PCs could find just about any device here, but the higher the item's level, the less likely it is to be here. This is a great place to allow the PCs to restock ammunition and any lower-level items you want them to have. Few batteries are stored here, however, since the room includes four rapid recharging stations (*Core Rulebook* 234).

Treasure: With a 1-minute search and a successful DC 28 Perception check, the PCs find a scorched but functional spider harness and advanced iridishell with occupier colors. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the PCs also find a *continuous heavy sonic bolter* (*Starfinder Armory* 23, 63).

B4. COMMAND CENTER (CR 10)

The doors are locked, requiring either a level 3 clearance card or a successful DC 29 Computers or Engineering check to open.

This ovular room is full of computer consoles and vidscreens displaying views of the stasis chambers, close-ups of individual beds, and data streams.

Clearly once the control room for the facility, this area now serves as the command center for the occupation base.

Creatures: This occupation force's shaitan commander, Mekvok, and three of her lieutenants are stationed here, issuing orders to field units and overseeing operations in the base. They are likely alerted to the PCs' approach and prepare for battle accordingly. If caught unawares, however, they huddle around a computer console going over field reports.

MEKVOK CR 7

XP 3,200

Female shaitan (see page 58)

HP 105

DEFENSE

Resistances sonic 5

OFFENSE

Melee sentinel staff +18 (1d10+12 B; critical knockdown)

Ranged integrated impulse charge emitter +14 (3d4+7 E; critical staggered)

TACTICS

Before Combat If Mekvok is aware of imminent conflict, she casts *reflecting armor* on herself. If she hears intruders trying to enter, she casts *grease* near the doorway.

During Combat Mekvok remains at range, using her spells to control the battlefield and hinder her foes. She uses *dust cloud* to cover herself while remaining able to pinpoint foes using her blindsight. If she feels bold, she uses *wall of stone* to cut off escape, but she otherwise uses that ability to create cover and divide foes.

Morale Mekvok is a mercenary, and she isn't willing to die to keep Kahlannal under Nysteryx's wings. Once the shaitan has fewer than 25 Hit Points, she burrows away to escape, merging with the metal of the floor and walls and gliding away without leaving a tunnel behind her.

STATISTICS

Gear d-suit III (integrated weapon^{AR}, purple force field, sonic dampener), impulse charge emitter^{AR} with 2 batteries (20 charges each), sentinel staff with 1 battery (20 charges), level 3 (titanium) clearance card, shaitan jewelry (worth 2,000 credits)

OCCUPATION TECH

CR 7

XP 3,200

Ifrit technomancer (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #13 60)

N Medium outsider (native)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +10

DEFENSES

HP 90 RP 4

EAC 18; **KAC** 19

Fort +6; **Ref** +6; **Will** +10

Resist fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee hook knife +11 (1d8+7 S; critical bleed 1d6)

Ranged advanced semi-auto pistol +13 (2d6+4 P)

Offensive Abilities fire affinity

Technomancer Spells Known (CL 7th; melee +11)

3rd (3/day)—*arcing surge* (DC 20), *haste*

2nd (6/day)—*flight*, *invisibility*, *make whole*, *microbot assault*

1st (at will)—*jolting surge*, *magic missile*

Ifrit Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

1/day—*overheat* (DC 18)

TACTICS

Before Combat If the tech is aware of intruders, he casts

haste on all his allies here when the PCs are near or at the door, followed by *invisibility* on himself.

During Combat The tech uses *invisibility* to maneuver into a position where *arcing surge* can be most effective. He recasts *invisibility* to allow him to easily reposition.

Morale The tech surrenders only after Mekvok does.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +4; **Con** +1; **Int** +5; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +0

Skills Computers +19, Engineering +19, Mysticism +14

Other Abilities magic hack (countertech, magic negation), spell cache (datapad)

Languages Common, Ignan, Terran

Gear d-suit II, advanced semi-auto pistol with 24 small arm rounds, hook knife^{AR}, datapad^{AR}, level 2 (steel) clearance card

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fire Affinity (Su) See page 17.

OCCUPATION SOLDIERS (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 70 each (azer see page 10; ifrit see page 17)

TACTICS

During Combat These soldiers are guards, and interpose themselves between hostiles and the senior staff.

Morale The soldiers don't surrender until Mekvok and the occupation tech do.

Treasure: With Mekvok's card, it's easy to access the computers the occupation forces are using to issue orders and compile reports. Downloading this material for Zhyffor is a trivial Computers task that takes only 1 minute.

B5. WORKSHOP (CR 9)

The door is locked, requiring a level 2 or higher clearance card or a successful DC 27 Computers or Engineering check to open.

Myriad tools and pieces of diagnostic equipment are scattered around this enormous chamber, surrounding a platform in the center. There, a metallic sphere fifteen feet in diameter hovers just above the floor, giving off a soft hum. Its surface occasionally ripples like liquid.

The sphere matches the holograms of the chariot. The other machines and tools here are efreeti devices.

Creatures: An occupation tech works here with two azer assistants. They've all but given up on understanding the chariot, much less making it work again, and are therefore taking an extended break. They're unlikely to be aware of the PCs unless loud noises have occurred elsewhere in the facility, but once the PCs enter, the tech team welcomes the opportunity to take their frustration out on the intruders.

OCCUPATION TECH CR 7

XP 3,200

HP 90 (see page 18)

TACTICS

Morale This tech believes he'll face dire consequences if he surrenders or loses, so he makes a stand here.

AZER OCCUPATION SOLDIERS (2) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 70 each (see page 10)

TACTICS

During Combat The azers protect the occupation tech.

Morale Neither soldier surrenders until the occupation tech does, unaware that he plans to fight to the death.

Development: Once the PCs have secured the facility, they can attach the transponder to the chariot. A few moments after they do, the vehicle rolls through the facility, compressing to move through the halls. It stops only if a locked door prevents it from moving. Once the chariot leaves the base, it rolls into the utility tunnels and proceeds to the resistance HQ at top speed.

C. DATA CENTER

When Nysteryx's forces invaded, they took control of as many data centers as they could, gaining access to intelligence that could accelerate their conquest, hinder the defenders' ability to coordinate, and grant easier control over occupied districts. Zhyffor explains all this to the PCs as he directs them to one of these facilities. The anassanois have information

suggesting the target contains two major occupiers: an efreeti specialist named Zar and his accomplice, a hacker devil. This intelligence also suggests that anassanoi techs work inside as unwilling conscripts.

The PCs, Zhyffor hopes, can send the devil back to Hell. Anassanoi hackers have determined the fiend returns to the center's mainframe code walls (area **C5**) when at rest. As part of this assault, these hackers plan on isolating the data center from the wider network. The devil should be unable to escape, but the PCs must still flush it out of the system to confront it.

The data center's walls channel light, so all interior rooms are brightly lit. In rooms other than **C4**, the ceiling is 25 feet high.



MEKVOK

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C1. EXTERIOR (CR 8)

The data center is a practical, two-story rectangular building of silvery material squatting among taller city structures.

From the schematics or observation, the PCs can tell the data center has two possible entrances. The main entrance is in the south, leading to **C2**. A set of stairs leads up to a side entrance that opens into the center's control room (area **C4**).

Each door has an efreeti electronic lock with a card reader. The southern lock requires a level 3 or higher clearance card, while the side entrance requires Overseer Zar's card. Bypassing either lock requires a successful DC 29 Engineering or Computers check. However, the side door also has an antitampering countermeasure. Failing by 5 or more on a check to open a lock, using the wrong card more than three times, or otherwise setting off the trap triggers a silent alarm that alerts Overseer Zar in area **C4**. See his tactics for his reactions.

Trap: Discovering the door trap requires careful examination of the electronic lock or its software. The trap goes off under the same conditions that trigger the silent alarm, as well as if the lock opens for any reason other than the use of Zar's card before the trap is disabled. The PCs can bypass the countermeasure by using a level 3 clearance card and spoofing Zar's code.

ANTITAMPERING COUNTERMEASURE CR 8 XP 4,800

Type technological; **Perception** Computers or Engineering DC 32; **Disable** Computers or Engineering DC 27 (rewrite security protocol or reroute power)

Trigger special (see text); **Reset** immediate; **Bypass** clearance card spoof (level 3 clearance card and Computers DC 25)

Effect initial electrical discharge, creatures within 10 feet stunned 1 round, Fortitude DC 18 negates; second and subsequent electrical discharges within 1 minute, creatures within 10 feet 8d6 E and stunned 1 round, Fortitude DC 18 halves the damage and negates stunned condition

C2. SECURITY CHECKPOINT

To the northeast, a window into an upper room overlooks this foyer from fifteen feet up. A heavy door stands to the north.

The window is transparent aluminum (*Core Rulebook* 408).

C3. CONTROL ROOM

This room has several sleek computer consoles. Similar heavy doors stand in the northern and southern walls. A staircase to the east ascends to a double door and a window fifteen feet above the floor.

The computers have an adaptive telepathic interface that allows anyone who understands a language to operate them

like conventional devices, albeit with some minor pain while the telepathic damping is at work. A character trained in Culture can guess the anassanoi had no reason to place countermeasures against other creatures benefiting from this advancement.

A lightweight door under **C4** leads to a small break area with a table and several chairs, as well as storage for food and beverages. A unisex lavatory takes up the rest of the space.

Creatures: Three anassanoi techs work here. They are weary and frightened. When the PCs enter, the techs speak to them telepathically, informing the PCs that Overseer Zar is in **C4**. Zar has assigned the techs to help counter a resistance hack attempting to cut this data center off from the wider network. The techs know Zar is working on the same problem. If combat occurs, the anassanoi take shelter in the break room.

C4. SUPERVISOR'S STATION (CR 9)

Windows look out from three walls of this raised office. The only opaque wall is a viewscreen. In the room's center stands a desk covered in holographic displays and computer panels.

This room stands 12 feet above the rest of the facility. The windows provide a view of areas other than the break room adjoining **C3**. From the desk console, a user can unlock any facility door and observe work done on any console in area **C3**.

Creature: Zar, an efreeti monitoring this data center, is trying to unravel the anassanoi resistance's interference. He becomes aware of the PCs if they enter here, trigger the silent alarm, or cause a loud disturbance. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Stealth check before entering this area can surprise Zar, who has changed his size to Medium to more easily work in this area.

ZAR CR 9 XP 6,400

Male efreeti mechanic (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #13 59)
LE Medium (normally Large) outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +17

DEFENSE HP 135
EAC 22; **KAC** 23

Fort +10; **Ref** +12; **Will** +10

Immunities fire; **Resistances** cold 5

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (Su, perfect)
Melee microerrated longsword +17 (2d10+11 S; critical bleed 2d6) or

slam +17 (3d4+11 B; critical burn 2d4)

Ranged bombast handcannon +19 (2d10+11 P; critical knockdown)

Offensive Abilities elemental fire, overload (DC 18), target tracking

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th, ranged +19)

1/day—*explosive blast* (DC 16), *holographic image* (4th level, DC 17)

3/day—*invisibility*, *wall of fire*, *wish* (for non-genies only)
At will—*detect magic*, *energy ray* (fire only), *overheat* (DC 14), *plane shift* (willing targets to Elemental Planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane only)

TACTICS

Before Combat If alerted to the PCs' presence, Zar locks down the facility, resetting the exterior locks and trap. He creates a *holographic image* of himself working at his desk. Zar then casts *invisibility* on himself and awaits intruders, moving to **C3** only if PCs stay there for a long time.

During Combat Zar uses *explosive blast* to harm as many PCs as possible, then uses *wall of fire* to control how the PCs can safely approach him. He prefers to remain at range but doesn't shy from melee.

Morale Because of the anassanoi hackers' work, Zar can't use the network here to call for help. However, when reduced to 25 Hit Points or fewer, he uses *invisibility* to retreat to area **C5**, where he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str +3; **Dex** +4; **Con** +3; **Int** +6; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +1

Skills Bluff +17, Computers +22, Engineering +22, Intimidate +22, Sense Motive +17

Languages Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Common, Ignan, Infernal, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities artificial intelligence (exocortex), change shape (humanoid), custom rig (armor upgrade), mechanic tricks (energy shield [11 HP], neural shunt), remote hack (DC 18), wireless hack

Gear d-suit III (custom rig, mk 1 thermal capacitor), bombast handcannon^{AR} with 16 shells, microerrated longsword, level 3 (titanium) clearance card, efreeti jewelry (worth 4,000 credits)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) See page 10.

C5. MAINFRAME (CR 10)

Holographic computer code walls stand in rows, creating a translucent maze of images and alien symbols. Bolts of dark energy pulse along the surface of these walls, briefly forming sinister images and runes before crackling off to other points.

Creature: A hacker devil named Ferys resides in the code walls here, bound by contract to efreet in general and Zar in particular. Anassanoi hackers have isolated the lislaroth here. If Zar retreats to this area, he orders Ferys to emerge and help him. Otherwise, the PCs must find the devil and force him from the system; see page 57 for more on how the PCs might do this. If they've defeated Zar, they have plenty of time.

FERYS

CR 10

XP 9,600

Hacker devil (see page 57)

HP 140

TACTICS

Before Combat If it seems the PCs are likely to force him from the system, Ferys emerges on his own terms. PCs attempting to isolate him must succeed at a DC 34 Computers check to notice his movement before he does so. If they don't, the devil surprises the PCs.

During Combat When Ferys appears, he opens with *synaptic pulse* (even if Zar is present), then summons allies. (Ferys can't harm Zar, but stunning doesn't count in the devil's mind.) He uses *rewire flesh* on the toughest-looking foe. He then repeats *synaptic pulse* to keep his foes at bay, using *inject nanobots* as his default attack.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points, Ferys uses *instant virus* on any PCs who seem susceptible to it, mocking them. He then tries to possess the computer again, not so much to escape as to vex his opponents.

Development: Once the PCs defeat Ferys, the anassanois use their access to implant code that gives them more freedom in the city's network. They can reroute communications or issue false reports, spy on troop assignments, hinder occupation technical operations, and redirect supplies. The anassanois can better keep occupation fireteams off the PCs, diverting such forces into resistance ambushes. These advantages grant the PCs a +4 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks to move unnoticed in the city and delay fireteam reinforcement responses by 2 rounds (see page 16).

D. PROTECTOR SHRINE

Kahlannal contains several shrines to its elite Protectors. Nyralaen informs the PCs that Protector Jheghal, erstwhile resident of this shrine, was able to activate the place's defenses before he was killed, protecting the sacred items inside, including his chariot. Nyralaen wants the PCs to acquire these relics.

She tells the PCs the chariot is the command center for the shrine's security; accessing it is essential to acquiring the objects Jheghal managed to seal away inside an ancient reliquary in his chambers. Once they've established contact with the chariot, the PCs can telepathically ask it to unlock the doors in the shrine, and then send the chariot to the resistance by visualizing where it needs to go. The chariot is within a protective dome in the shrine, which Jheghal's touch is required to open, along with a telepathic command with the key word-concept "peace." If the PCs lack someone who has telepathy (spells such as *mindlink* and *telepathic message* work), the anassanois provide them with three empowered crystals (*spell gems of telepathic message*).

Protector Nyralaen warns the PCs that one of Nysteryx's trusted lieutenants, a sun giant named Vellera, has been attempting to crack the magical seals on the shrine. With Jheghal's body, Vellera has the key and needs only learn to use it.

For this mission to be a success, the PCs must recover Jheghal's chariot and the relics. Nyralaen plans to use the objects to induct a new Protector and bond them to the chariot. She also believes she can use the relics to heal Faefel.

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PART 3:
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KAHLANNAL

DEEP
CULTURES

ALIEN
ARCHIVES

CODEX OF
WORLDS

D1. EXTERIOR (CR 10)

A swirling spire rises from this oblong, pearlescent building that looks like a natural, dome-shaped shell. Thin windows in dazzling colors cover the angled front, surrounding three giant doors, the centermost of which has a large hole melted through it. The area beyond is brightly lit.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check realizes the light beyond the doorway flickers and moves—fiery creatures linger there. The hole in the central door is 8 feet wide and 12 feet tall, big enough for Large creatures to fit through.

Above the melted doorway are etched characters in Anassan. These words have telepathic encoding that attracts attention and automatically translates for anyone within 20 feet who

understands language. The passage says, "All blessings are imparted to those with peace in their hearts."

In examining the damaged door, the PCs can make a few discoveries. First, any PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Engineering check can tell all the doors are mechanically sealed with solid metallic bars, like an airlock (*Core Rulebook* 408), but a PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Mysticism check can tell the seal is augmented with *security seal*. The undamaged doors have a break DC of 45, and opening the physical locks requires three successful DC 45 Engineering checks. (*Knock* must be successfully cast twice to open a door.)

Creatures: Vellera's pets, three plasma elementals, guard area D2. If they notice the PCs, the creatures attack.

PLASMA ELEMENTALS (3)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

Variant fiery lightning elementals (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #13: *Fire Starters* 57)

N Large outsiders (air, elemental, extraplanar, fire)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSES

HP 105 EACH

EAC 19; **KAC** 21

Fort +9; **Ref** +11; **Will** +6

DR 5/–; **Immunities** electricity, elemental immunities, fire

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 100 ft. (Su, perfect)

Melee slam +18 (2d6+12 E & F; critical wound)

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

TACTICS

During Combat Ordered to keep intruders out, the elementals remain between their foes and the shrine entrance.

Morale The elementals fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str +4; **Dex** +5; **Con** +2; **Int** –3; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +14 (+22 to fly), Athletics +14

Feats Mobility, Spring Attack

Languages Auran, Ignan

Other Abilities solar adaptation

Development: Battle here or in D2 alerts Vellera and her troops in area D3. See her tactics for more information.

D2. ENTRANCE HALL

The ceiling is a rounded vault, starting at fifteen feet at the east and rising to thirty feet to the west. Light shines through the ceiling, walls, and colored windows, throwing illumination of various hues across the western wall. All the walls show signs of recent fighting. In the western wall, a double door crackles with energy, one of the doors standing slightly ajar.

Creatures: If the PCs approached undetected, the plasma elementals might be found here.



VELLERA

D3. GATHERING CHAMBER (CR 11)

Light shines from every wall and the ceiling in this sloping room. The ceiling soars to forty feet, full of ornate decorations, while the floor slopes from its high point in the east down to the west. A middle aisle separates steplike tiers to the north and south. Two silvery doors lead out to the west. Near them stands a dais with a dull silver metal dome in its center. This hemisphere is perfectly round, with a seam running across its center. Smears of dark liquid mar the dome's uniformity.

This public gathering area is currently on lockdown. The western doors are sealed in the same way as the undamaged front doors. In addition, the dome on the dais houses a quiescent chariot, but it's closed and made of adamantite (as any PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Engineering or Mysticism check can tell).

Creatures: Vellera and four occupation soldiers are here, two azers assisting her and two ifrits keeping watch. If unaware of the PCs, Vellera rubs Jheghal's corpse on the dome, having learned from Mehrren in area **E** that opening the lock requires his physiology. The Protectors choose their own telepathic keys, however, so Mehrren couldn't impart Jheghal's. Otherwise, Jheghal's broken body is sprawled in front of the dome, his arm and hand still resting against it.

VELLERA

CR 9

XP 6,400

Female sun giant mystic (see page 59)

CE Huge humanoid (giant)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +17**Aura** solar aura (60 ft.)

DEFENSE

HP 120 RP 4

EAC 21; **KAC** 22**Fort** +10; **Ref** +8; **Will** +12**Defensive Abilities** share pain (DC 18); **Immunities** blindness, dazzled, fire, radiation; **Resistances** cold 10, electricity 10

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.**Melee** sentinel spear +17 (2d6+15 P) or slam +17 (3d4+15 B)**Ranged** sentinel spear +15 (2d6+15 P) or hurl debris (2d6+15 B plus 10-ft.-radius area of difficult terrain around the spot where the debris hit)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Mystic Spells Known** (CL 7th; ranged +15)3rd (3/day)—*mind thrust* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 20)2nd (6/day)—*inflict pain* (DC 19), *hurl forcedisk*, *mystic cure*, *spider climb*1st (at will)—*command* (DC 18), *lesser confusion* (DC 18), *mindlink***Connection** mindbreaker**Offensive Abilities** backlash (7 damage), crush (3d4+15 B), sow doubt (DC 18, 7 rounds)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

TACTICS

Before Combat Forewarned, Vellera stows her spear, casts *spider climb* on herself, and ascends to the ceiling. She's too large and luminous to escape notice, but she can cast spells from her perch or break and hurl ceiling embellishments.

During Combat Vellera attacks with the intent to cause suffering and capture at least one PC. If climbing, she might use this movement mode to outflank the PCs.

Morale Vellera is too proud and hateful to allow herself to fail here. She remains defiant until she perishes.

STATISTICS

Str +6; **Dex** +2; **Con** +4; **Int** +1; **Wis** +6; **Cha** +3**Skills** Bluff +17, Intimidate +22, Mysticism +22**Languages** Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran**Other Abilities** solar adaptation**Gear** d-suit III, sentinel spear, jewelry (worth 10,000 credits)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hurl Debris (Ex) Vellera can break off parts of her environment and hurl this debris at a target with a range increment of 30 feet. The debris creates difficult terrain in a 10-foot radius around where it hits.

Solar Aura (Su) Light within 60 feet of Vellera is bright light and can't be reduced by magical darkness. Sighted creatures within the aura are dazzled.

Sun Dart (Ex) As a swift action, Vellera can empower the next piece of physical ammunition she fires from a ranged weapon with solar energy. If this attack hits, the attack deals 9 extra fire damage and the target becomes off-target until the end of Vellera's next turn.

OCCUPATION SOLDIERS (4)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 70 each (azer see page 10; ifrit see page 17)

TACTICS

Before Combat Azers take up positions close to the entry to facilitate entering melee. Ifrits take cover near the adamantite dome and prepare to snipe at interlopers.

During Combat Seeing the PCs aren't fire creatures, the soldiers use their grenades, the ifrits including their azer allies in the explosions. After an opening volley, the azers maintain melee, while the ifrits hang back and shoot.

Morale If losing the battle, these soldiers try to withdraw, considering surrender only after Vellera falls.

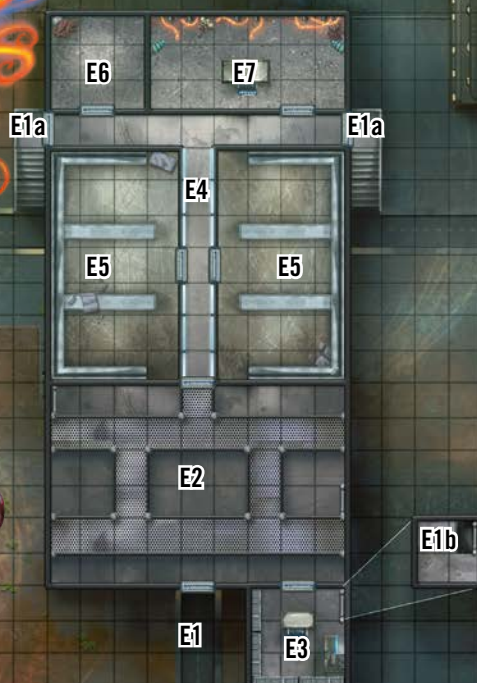
Development: Provided Protector Jheghal's skin touches the adamantite dome, it is primed to "listen" for the correct telepathic key word-concept. If the PCs project "peace" telepathically at the dome while it listens, the dome bisects neatly (revealing it's 3 inches thick), its two halves sliding into the floor as the chariot rises from under it. The vehicle is undamaged and responds to commands to unlock the shrine doors and return to the resistance HQ. Once commanded to depart, it rolls into the maintenance byways of the city and reaches the resistance without further incident.

SOLAR
STRIKEPART 1:
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KAHLANNALPART 2:
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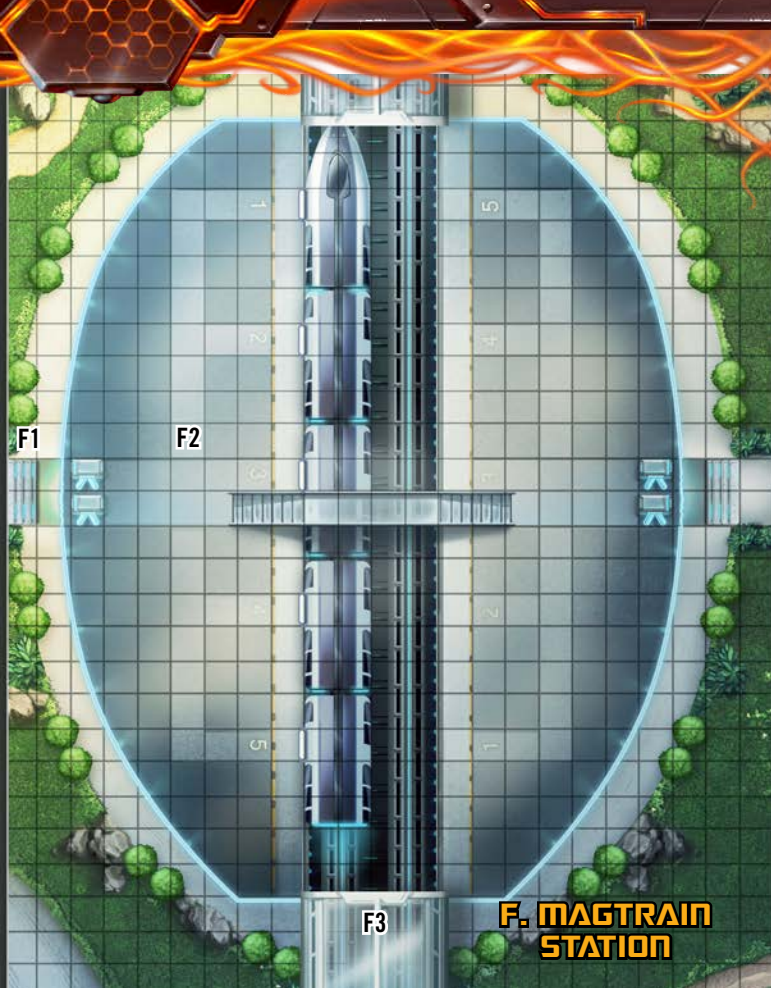
KAHLANNAL

DEEP
CULTURESALIEN
ARCHIVESCODEX OF
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E. DETENTION CENTER



1 SQUARE
= 5 FEET



F. MAGTRAIN STATION

D4. LIVING CHAMBERS

This well-appointed but simple living space has a sleeping area, sitting area, dining area, and bathing area. A narrow horizontal window of colored glass runs along the western wall just below the ceiling, casting colors on the eastern wall and doors. Closets and drawers line the wall between the two exits, and in their center stands an additional ornate double door embossed with abstract designs.

Within the double door is an ornate reliquary of the same materials the building is made of, along with a panel of metal that looks like mercury. This chest is 3 feet long and 2 feet deep, weighing 1 bulk. If capable of limited telepathy or telepathy, a PC can open this casket with a successful DC 35 Mysticism check and a projection of the "peace" key word-concept. Within are fine robes and other finery, three crystals, and an idol that is a perfect depiction of Jheghal (in a happy, healthy state).

E. DETENTION CENTER

Anassanois lack jails typical of other galactic civilizations. Occupation forces built this austere center and a few others like it to hold troublemakers. Zhyffor directs the PCs to a center where the resistance knows Mehrren, a Protector the occupiers captured, is being held. (The PCs acquire Mehrren's damaged chariot in area **B**.) The mission takes place in the middle of a guard shift, when reinforcements are unlikely. The resistance plans a simultaneous attack nearby as a distraction.

Zhyffor telepathically gives the PCs a good memory image of Mehrren, but the PCs' anassanoi datapad also contains her picture, along with the location and holograms of the detention center. Releasing other anassanois held there is a secondary priority. Any liberated prisoners who wish to join the resistance can do so by reporting to a rallying point. For security reasons, Zhyffor asks the PCs to return to HQ only with Mehrren.

E1. EXTERIOR (CR 9)

A two-story building of brass and black steel squats out of place in a small green space. The rear is raised on pylons, and two stairways lead up to doors into it. The front has a secure door at ground level. Rising above that door, in the building's southeast corner, is a fifty-foot-tall sniper's tower.

The exterior doors are steel (*Core Rulebook* 408), and the lock on the ground level opens with a level 1 or higher clearance card. The rear doors (**E1a**) require a level 3 clearance card. Without such cards, opening a lock requires a successful Engineering check to rewire the lock, or a Computers check to hack it—the DC is 25 for the ground door and 29 for the rear ones. Failing a check by 5 or more sets off a silent alarm on a datapad belonging to the nuar in **E3**.

Fitted plates make up the whole building (Athletics DC 25 to climb). It's a 48-foot climb to get to the top of the tower (**E1b**) and over the 3-foot guard wall around the edge of the platform. On the eastern side, a hatch opens to a steel ladder that descends

along the interior tower wall from the sniper platform to area **E3**. Other parts of the building are 25 feet tall, although the rear has only the stairways and steel pillars touching the ground—the floor starts 12 feet off the ground.

Creatures: An occupation sniper stands atop the tower in plain view, her gaze sweeping the area.

OCCUPATION SNIPER

CR 9

XP 6,400

HP 135 (see page 10)

TACTICS

During Combat The sniper keeps the high ground, shooting at any PCs she spots approaching the building.

Morale Once reduced 60 Hit Points or fewer, the sniper retreats to **E3**. She joins the soldiers on the catwalks in **E2**.

STATISTICS

Gear This sniper has no jetpack or clearance card. She has 10 additional sniper rounds.

Development: If the sniper escapes, an audible alarm (from the panic button in **E2**) rises in the facility.

E2. CHECKPOINT (CR 8 or 10)

This room, dimly lit from narrow skylights above, has only an expanse of dying lawn for a floor. Ladders on either side, one to the northwest and one to the southeast, lead up to a series of catwalks twelve feet overhead. A door in the southeast, near the ladder, leads into an area under the sniper tower. Another door leading north is easily accessible only from the catwalk.

The upper door to area **E4** requires a level 2 or higher clearance card to open, or a successful DC 27 Computers or Engineering check. Area **E3**'s door has no lock.

A panic button is located on the wall next to the door to **E4**. Anyone can activate it as a move action. When it goes off, it sounds an intermittent klaxon throughout the facility. A card reader is located beneath the button, and the alarm can be deactivated with a level 2 or higher clearance card, or a successful DC 27 Computers or Engineering check.

Creatures: Three occupation soldiers—two ifrits and one azer—pace along the catwalks, keeping watch. If the facility is on alert, Grunph is here, too, perhaps with the sniper from **E1**.

OCCUPATION SOLDIERS (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 70 each (azer see page 10; ifrit see page 17)

TACTICS

Before Combat If forewarned, the soldiers take up positions separate from each other to repel foes from the expected point of entrance. An ifrit remains near the panic button.

During Combat These soldiers keep the high ground and focus on anyone climbing a ladder. The azer might descend to the ground level to aid Grunph.

CAPTURED

If Vessu succeeded at his plan, the PCs find themselves in one block of area **E5** when they awaken. The DCI agents are in the opposite block. All have been stripped of their gear, though PCs who had hidden equipment can attempt a DC 26 Sleight of Hand check. If the check is successful, such gear escaped notice despite the PCs' state.

The PCs have a few options. They can overpower the two soldiers in their cell and start a fighting escape. Alternatively, other prisoners can tell the PCs they will eventually be brought to Grunph in **E3** for entrance interviews. A PC who notices the nuar's Akitonian accent might be able to influence Grunph. See area **E3**.

If the PCs have a tough time, Zhyffor and the resistance attack the detention center. Vessu Karimo is with them. Vessu's escorts fell to a resistance attack before he could reach the Spire, and in a redeeming moment, he pointed the anassanois to this facility.

Once Zhyffor makes his initial foray into the facility, you can use the encounters here to make a counterattack from the occupiers—the resistance fighters handle the bulk of the fighting, with Zhyffor asking the PCs to rescue Mehrren while his people hold the line. After the escape, Zhyffor takes the PCs in, and one of the strike force missions now includes securing area **A** to claim the vehicles there, while the resistance stages an attack nearby to distract enemy forces.

Morale Knowing the punishment for failure is severe, the soldiers fight to the end unless Grunph orders them to stand down. Even then, they warn him of efreeti reprisal.

E3. FIELD OFFICE (CR 0 or 8)

The interior of this tower is an office. Several austere stools, a desk, a few crates, and a small booth with a portable sonic latrine and shower stand on a browning lawn. Light panels on the wall illuminate the ground area but not the ceiling high overhead. On the eastern wall, a ladder leads up into shadow.

Creature: The guard commander, a nuar of fiery descent named Grunph, works here. He's from Akiton and once worked in detention there, so he barks orders and threats with an Akitonian accent. Unlike other forces here, Grunph is a mercenary unaware of General Khaim's plans to conquer the sun. If the PCs talk to him, he can be convinced to listen, temporarily ceasing hostilities, with a successful DC 37 Diplomacy check (DC 32 if not in combat). A subsequent successful DC 37 (or DC 32) check causes Grunph to offer to take the PCs to see Nurleth, the efreeti commander of this center, to confirm their claim. He takes two occupation soldiers with him. If this situation occurs, it changes how events play out in area **E7**.

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**CODEX OF
WORLDS**

GRUNPH

CR 8

XP 4,800

Ifrit nuar specialist (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #13 60, *Alien Archive* 86)

HP 117

OFFENSE

Offensive Abilities fire affinity

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

2/day—overheat (DC 18)

TACTICS

Before Combat If alert,

Grunph prepares at the door that seems most likely, taking soldiers from nearby but leaving others in place. For example, if the eastern door sends an alarm, Grunph leaves soldiers in **E2** and orders those in areas **E5** to the hall near the east door.

During Combat Grunph leads

from the front in melee, switching to ranged attacks only if unable to engage in melee. If in **E2**, he fights on the ground level, keeping PCs away from the ladders.

Morale Although loyal to his employers, Grunph is no fanatic.

If it's clear he and his soldiers are going to perish, he orders a fighting withdrawal. Failing that, he asks for surrender terms, requesting his subordinates receive fair treatment.

STATISTICS

Languages Akitonian, Common, Ignan, Ysoki

Gear advanced lashunta tempweave (black force field, jump jets), maze-core aphelion laser pistol and buzzblade dueling sword with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), frag grenades III (2), datapad^{AR} (tier 2 computer), level 2 (steel) clearance card

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fire Affinity (Su) See page 17.

Treasure: The three crates, one of which is half empty, contain enough field rations to feed twenty people for a few weeks.

E4. CORRIDOR (CR 9)

This transparent aluminum hall bisects the detention blocks (areas **E5**). A heavy door leads into each block. Walls beyond the T-shaped intersection are black steel. Narrow skylights provide only dim light here. Reflective material lines the transparent walls inside **E5**, so the prisoners can't see into this area.

A panic button next to each door into **E5** functions like the one in **E2**. Opening any door in this hall requires a level 2 card or a successful DC 27 Computers or Engineering check.

Creatures: Four occupation soldiers—two azers and two ifrits—guard this hallway, one stationed by each door.

OCCUPATION SOLDIERS (4)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 70 each (azer see page 10; ifrit see page 17)

TACTICS

Before Combat If an alarm sounds, the guards gather to repel intruders.

During Combat Azers take the front; ifrits shoot from the rear.

Morale See guards in **E2**.

E5. DETENTION BLOCKS

Steel benches line the black steel walls of this austere room, with perpendicular benches projecting from the outer wall. Narrow skylights allow only dim light. Where the wall lines the outside corridor, black steel gives way to a mirrored expanse reflecting the contents of this cell. Some of the benches have been converted to makeshift beds. Two portable sonic latrines are tucked under the benches.

The fifteen anassanoi prisoners have been divided between the two detention blocks. Most are citizens who ran afoul of the occupiers' curfew or movement restrictions. However, three are resistance fighters like those in Zhyffor's group. All are fatigued. In addition, the dim light here is darkness to them, so the normal citizens are easily frightened. The anassanoi's condition doesn't improve until they rest in more comfortable surroundings with better sustenance for at least 8 hours.

All these anassanoi know the layout of the detention center. They also know Protector Mehrren came here in bad physical condition. Two efreet—a man and woman—arrived soon afterward. They took Mehrren down the hall, and she never came back. The male efreeti has left and returned a few times. This description allows PCs to recognize Commissar Yushiev when they meet him later in area **G2**. A few prisoners report seeing this efreeti claiming anassanoi corpses.

E6. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

This dark room has no built-in lights. A stained blanket lies crumpled on the floor near a crusty, dark splotch.

This room housed Protector Mehrren. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Life Science check can identify the stains on the blanket and floor as anassanoi blood.



E7. INTERROGATION ROOM (CR 10)

The metallic smell of blood hangs heavy in this room, which contains three uncomfortable-looking chairs and a metal table, all of which have been pushed against a wall to clear a large space at the north end of the chamber. A rack holds a wide array of torture implements, all crafted from brass and some glowing with intense heat. At the rack's front, hanging from brass chains, is a set of spiked manacles designed to hold a victim suspended off the ground.

Creatures: Nurleth, an efreeti interrogator, has been extracting information from Mehrren here with occasional aid from Commissar Yushiev. They learned little, so they implanted Mehrren with a genetically modified version of a Damoritosh's arm symbiend. Nurleth plans to use the "turned" Mehrren to demoralize the resistance.

Mehrren, a muscular anassanoi woman, starts this encounter unconscious. She has only a few bruises, but any PC who closely examines her can find signs of the symbiend—bulging blood vessels, swollen eyes, and elevated autonomic function—with a successful DC 27 Medicine check. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the PC locates the symbiend under the skin of Mehrren's neck. A PC trained in Medicine knows removing an unwilling symbiend requires hours of surgery. However, such close examination causes Nurleth, who might be in disguise (see her tactics), to decide to eliminate the PCs. Magical healing doesn't cause Mehrren to awaken, although it eliminates her bruises.

Only if they come accompanying Grunph, or otherwise arrive without triggering alarms or engaging in loud combat, do the PCs find Nurleth here in efreeti form (albeit Medium rather than Large). In this case, Nurleth is busy examining Mehrren's neck where the symbiend implanted, focusing so closely that she takes a -4 penalty to notice a stealthy approach.

MEHRREN CR 8

XP 4,800

Female anassanoi soldier Damoritosh's arm host (see page 55, *Starfinder Alien Archive* 112)

CE (normally LG) Medium humanoid (anassanoi)

Init +7; **Senses** blindsense (thought) 30 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE HP 125 RP 4
EAC 21; **KAC** 23

Fort +10; **Ref** +8; **Will** +9 (+7 vs. emotion effects)

Weaknesses low-light blindness, open

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +19 (1d6+19 B)

Multiattack (while raging only) 3 slams +15 (1d6+19 B)

Offensive Abilities charge attack, fighting styles (blitz), frothing rage, gear boost (anchoring arcana)

STATISTICS

Str +5 (normally +3); **Dex** +3; **Con** +1 (normally +3); **Int** +1; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +1 (normally +2)

Skills Athletics +26, Diplomacy +14, Piloting +16, Sense Motive +16

Languages Anassan; telepathy 30 ft.

Gear business stationwear

TACTICS

During Combat With the symbiend in her, Mehrren is a brutal melee fighter. She attacks the PCs recklessly.

Morale Mehrren fights until she drops to 0 Hit Points. If she did so due to lethal damage, she begins dying instead of being killed instantly. When she falls, if she has 1 or more Resolve Points left, she stabilizes on her turn but remains unconscious. (The symbiend doesn't want to die with her and doesn't risk reviving even if Mehrren has more RP to expend.) Otherwise, it's up to the PCs to save her.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Advanced Frothing Rage (Ex) Once per day as a swift action, Mehrren gains 16 temporary Hit Points and can use multiattack. The rage lasts 8 rounds, after which Mehrren is fatigued for 10 minutes. When not fatigued, Mehrren can spend 1 Resolve Point to rage again.

Low-Light Blindness (Ex) See page 55.

Open (Ex) See page 55.

NURLETH

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female efreeti (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #13 59)

OFFENSE

Ranged gelid ice carbine +17 (3d8+8 C & P)

TACTICS

Before Combat If aware of intruders, Nurleth changes her shape into that of another wounded anassanoi prisoner, with apparent injuries to her mouth and jaw that prevent speech (necessary to disguise the fact that she can't speak Anassan). She conceals her weapons and armor with a *holographic image*. Then, she sits in one of the chairs. When PCs arrive, she telepathically claims to be a resistance fighter and begs the PCs to take her and Mehrren back to the resistance HQ. Nurleth doesn't know where the HQ is, but she deflects this ignorance by claiming the resistance has multiple cells. She bluffs anassanoi openness in her telepathy, but doing so is enough of an effort that a PC who focuses on that aspect of her communication gains a +4 bonus to Sense Motive checks against her. If the PCs offer to "heal" Nurleth's mouth, she encourages them to use their powers on Mehrren instead. If Nurleth feels her ruse is failing or decides to kill the PCs, she says in Ignan, "Awaken!" When she does so, the symbiend takes control of Mehrren's body, and the Protector attacks. Nurleth drops her pretense and joins in.

During Combat Nurleth avoids using area attacks because she doesn't want to kill Mehrren. Instead, she stays back from the fighting and shoots with her carbine, resorting to melee combat if the PCs force her to do so. If she can divide the enemy party with *wall of fire*, she does.

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Morale Nurlleth isn't willing to die, but she won't surrender.

Instead, when reduced to 25 or fewer Hit Points, she casts *plane shift*, not to be seen again in this adventure.

STATISTICS

Gear gelid ice carbine^{AR} with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), level 3 (titanium) clearance card

Development: If the PCs take Mehrren to the resistance alive, Nyralaen insists the symbiend be removed. A PC trained in Medicine can use the treat deadly wounds task of the skill to remove the symbiend. Each attempt takes 6 hours and requires a successful DC 27 Medicine check on which the surgeon cannot take 20. An envoy who has the surgeon expertise talent gains a +4 circumstance bonus to the check. Each failure deals 1d4 Constitution damage to Mehrren. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the surgery takes half the time. Once the symbiend is removed, Mehrren's Strength returns to normal and her ability damage—both from the surgery and as indicated by her lower ability bonuses—begins to heal. If the PCs can't perform the surgery, the anassanois do so, but it takes them 12 hours and Mehrren takes 3 Constitution damage. Mehrren, normally a person of grace and honor, is deeply grateful to PCs who help her in this way.

Mehrren's death here might affect how the anassanois see the PCs, especially if the anassanois learn the PCs killed the Protector. Mehrren's death also means more anassanoi resistance fighters die in the final conflict with the occupiers.

F. MAGTRAIN STATION

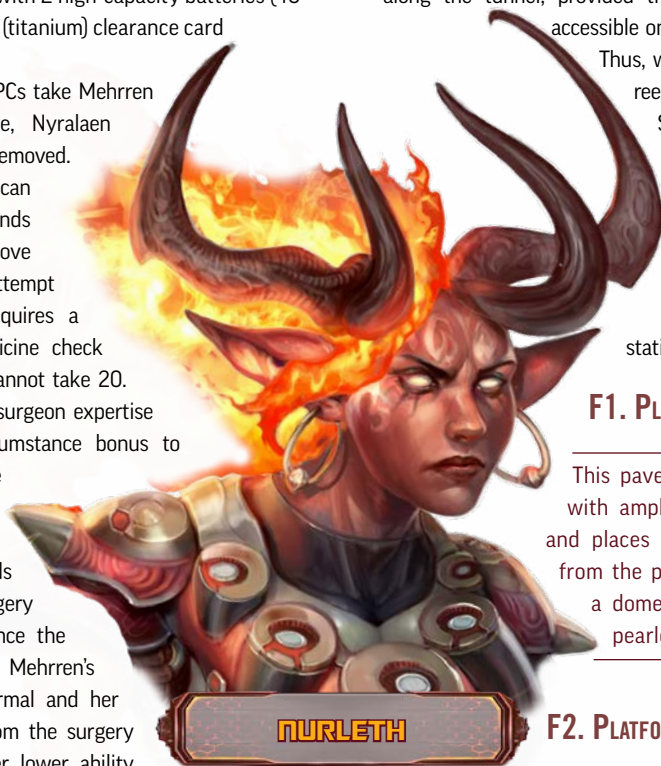
General Khaim's forces knew about Kahlannal before attacking the city due to the efreeti enclave in the city's Fair (see page 43). As such, the invaders brought few vehicles in their assault, knowing they could use Kahlannal's magtrains. When Nysteryx secured the city, the occupiers commandeered the trains to move goods and personnel. As preparation for a final assault on the Spire, Zhyffor asks the PCs to sabotage one of the trains serving as the tower's supply line. Though the sabotage is meant to seem like just another case of the resistance sowing chaos, in fact the out-of-service tunnel will be useful in infiltrating the Spire when the time comes.

To facilitate the sabotage, Zhyffor describes the train and tunnel, which has maintenance hatches along its length. He gives the party three demolition charges, each with its own

remote detonator. The PCs need to place one at either end of a train while it's in the station. The third goes in the tunnel leading toward the Spire to ensure the passage sees no further use before the final assault. The PCs can place the charge anywhere along the tunnel, provided they leave at least one hatch accessible on the Spire side of the collapse.

Thus, when the time comes, they can reenter the tunnel and travel to the Spire on foot.

The PCs can enter from the plaza outside or from the tunnel via a maintenance hatch. Zhyffor has planned an attack nearby, so he suspects any opposition at the station will be light.



F1. PLAZA

This paved plaza is a beautiful space with ample greenery, a small stream, and places to sit. A stairway leads up from the plaza through a gateway into a domed magtrain station made of pearlescent material.

F2. PLATFORM (CR 10)

Beyond the gateway, a trench with a sleek magtrain parked in it runs through the center of the station, separating identical platforms on either side. An arched footbridge spans the trench under the thirty-foot-high domed ceiling.

Creatures: A few occupation soldiers inspect the train to make sure it's safe to continue to the Spire. Two azers examine the train while an ifrit looks the train over from the footbridge. Inside the train are 6 dead anassanoi who have been animated and placed under electronic control. PCs must succeed at a DC 27 Perception check to notice the anassanois are undead.

OCCUPATION SOLDIERS (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 70 each (azer see page 10; ifrit see page 17)

TACTICS

Before Combat These soldiers are distracted and expect no opposition this close to the Spire. The PCs can surprise them by succeeding at DC 19 Stealth checks.

During Combat An azer opens the train doors, releasing the reanimated anassanois. The azers then close to melee with their foes, while the ifrit stays on high ground to shoot.

Morale The soldiers make a fighting withdrawal when the fight turns against them.

REANIMATED ANASSANOIS (6)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Variant cybernetic zombie (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 114)

HP 40 each

OFFENSE

Melee slam +10 (1d6+15 B)

Ranged integrated azimuth laser pistol +10 (1d6+3 F; critical burn 1d4)

TACTICS

During Combat These zombies have cybernetic controls that identify the occupiers as allies. They attack the PCs.

Morale The undead fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str +3; Dex +3; Con –; Int –; Wis +1; Cha –2

Development: With the soldiers and undead taken care of, the PCs can place and prime the demolition charges without interference. They can also examine the anassanois, discovering the cybernetic controls and a brand on each corpse. The brand depicts the symbol of the occupiers, a crimson sun.

F3. SPIRE TUNNEL

A curving tunnel runs out of sight toward the city's center. The translucent material of the tunnel allows natural light to pass through, brightly illuminating the passage, the rails along the floor of the tunnel, and a walkway on one side that leads to a hatch into the maintenance passages.

The PCs should plant one charge here. When the group moves away and sets off the charges, the blast destroys the train, the station, and a large section of tunnel. If the PCs have not yet encountered two fireteams, one is likely to show up to investigate.

PROTECTOR AWAKENING

When the PCs have completed all the strike force missions, Nyralaen calls them back to resistance HQ to witness the ritual to induct a new Protector and bond him to one of the recovered chariots. Mehrren and Nyralaen, both dressed in scintillating robes, flank the reliquary recovered from Protector Jheghal's shrine. A Protector can open the reliquary without a check, so the container is open. Behind each Protector floats her chariot, humming in harmony. A third chariot, now repaired, sits behind the reliquary. The women call forth Zhyffor, who emerges bedecked in finery similar to theirs.

The ritual lasts an hour, with much chanting and the passing of telepathically charged crystals among the three participants, as well as the idol that starts out resembling Jheghal but becomes less distinct as the ritual continues. The Protectors struggle at times to use their telepathy, pushing through with strained expressions and, as the ritual wanes, noticeable fatigue.

At the conclusion, Zhyffor rises and approaches the central chariot. His outstretched hands touch the sphere, which melts

open before him, allowing him to pass through its surface as though stepping into a metallic bubble. After a long moment, he emerges. No physical change has taken place, but he has the air of someone profoundly altered. The idol now resembles him.

The ritual complete, the Protectors see to Faeffel, if she is still in a coma. The trio takes a crystal from the reliquary and moves to Faeffel's bedside. Each places a hand on her head, and with the crystal and their combined power, they heal her psychic damage. She opens her eyes and nods weakly. Gazing around, Faeffel spots the PCs, bursting with sudden telepathic joy so infectious that even some of the DCI agents share her tears.

PART 3: FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

After the Protectors invest Zhyffor and Faeffel has some time to recover, they and the resistance are ready to retake the city from the efreet. General Khaim's forces are weakened, disoriented, and far more vulnerable than they have been since taking the city, while the people of Kahlannal are inspired to full revolt.

The Protectors take to their chariots and lead assaults in various sectors, while the rest of the resistance stages simultaneous attacks on several key occupation bases. As these battles build, and the return of the Protectors becomes apparent, anassanois throughout the city take to the streets in solidarity, not in violent rioting but in crowds that inundate security checkpoints, obscure sight lines, and slow troop and resource movements. Many occupiers are unwilling to murder these civilians, and arresting them all becomes unmanageable.

With the occupiers' attention directed toward the chaos, the Spire's defenses are at their weakest. Zhyffor organizes a major assault near the magtrain station the PCs sabotaged, hoping this distraction gives the PCs a chance to infiltrate the Spire. Their goal is twofold. First, they need to reactivate the Spire's *psychic resonator*, or free it from whatever is inhibiting it, ending the telepathy-damping field. Accomplishing this task should allow the anassanois to send a message all the way to the Burning Archipelago. Second, the PCs have a chance to take out senior leaders—perhaps even Nysteryx herself—and deal a major blow to General Khaim's forces here. Hopefully, doing so also causes the rank-and-file occupiers to surrender or withdraw.

Using the magtrain tunnel they sabotaged earlier, the PCs can covertly access the Spire. Although they could approach from outside by flying or climbing, Zhyffor recommends against doing so. Outside, war will rage, and the battle is likely to attract Nysteryx's attention. Both situations make climbing or flying PCs easy targets. The battered structure is also a risky arrival location for spells such as *dimension door*. The resistance has no intelligence on the Spire's current state, so the anassanois have no way to predict what might thwart PCs trying to enter the titanic building in an unusual fashion.

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G. THE SPIRE

G. THE SPIRE

Rising like a glistening corkscrew from the center of the city, the Spire houses most of Kahlannal's defensive infrastructure. That fact made it the invaders' primary target. The structure took heavy fire during the invasion, and one of the Protectors' two Accord starships crashed into the Spire's side. The resulting damage left parts of the tower in ruins, with much of its structure unusable. The PCs can travel to only a few areas in the Spire, but the occupiers are also limited to those areas.

FEATURES

Rooms in the Spire show signs of fighting and some of its systems are nonfunctional or on auxiliary power. Because the walls channel light, illumination is bright unless otherwise noted. Efreeti security is functional, so doors are locked, requiring a level 3 clearance card (or a DC 29 Computers or Engineering check) to open.

The only means of traversing the spiraling floors, many of which are broken or blocked from one another, is a cluster of transparent antigrav lifts that run up the core of the spiral. Doors to these lifts are locked. Operating a lift requires pressing a button within the tube, which raises or lowers a platform using antigrav technology. No tube connects the lowest to the highest level, however, and many floors between are gone or damaged. As the PCs travel past these floors, they can see the devastation that befell the building, visible through the transparent shafts.

The ceiling in most areas is 15 feet high.

LEIROL KARIMO

Vessu Karimo suggests that his brother, Leirol, is still a captive of the salamander Gorchak and likely held in the Spire. If Vessu is absent and the PCs have forgotten about Leirol, you can remind them with Vessu's datapad or the *empathic portrait*. If Vessu is around, he gladly hands over the portrait to help the PCs identify Leirol.

G1. LOADING DOCK (CR 10)

A magtrain trench loops around a central platform in this vaultlike chamber, natural lighting coming from above through its pearlescent walls. Transparent tube-shaped lifts rise along a thick shaft from the platform's center into the ceiling forty feet above. Containers crowd the ground near the tracks on the platform.

The efreets use this platform for shipping. The only exits are two functional lifts in the southern section of the Spire's base.

Creatures: Several anassanoi collaborators inventory the supplies that have languished here, unused, since the PCs collapsed the magtrain tunnel leading to this dock.

REHLJAER

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male anassanoi envoy (use statistics for Zhyffor on page 11)
NE Medium humanoid (anassanoi)

TACTICS

Before Combat Rehljaer tries to put the PCs at ease. If he can bluff them into believing the anassanois are harmless conscripts, Rehljaer and his allies can attack with surprise.

During Combat Rehljaer aids his allies from the rear. He tries to capture the PCs but is willing to kill them.

Morale Once reduced to 20 Hit Points or otherwise clearly on the losing side, Rehljaer surrenders.

STATISTICS

Gear level 3 (titanium) clearance card

ANASSANOIS (3)**CR 5**

XP 1,600 each

HP 65 each (see page 55)

Development: Rehljaer is willing to talk. The collaborator (and the Amiants, see page 41) believes the efreet can lead the anassanois from backward traditionalism to a new golden age. He saw the influx of efreeti visitors as a sign that it was finally time for the anassanoi to end their seclusion in favor of more open communication, travel, and trade not only with the denizens of the Plane of Fire, but also with the people of the Pact Worlds. Efreeti spies who had infiltrated the Fair enclave turned him to Khaim's side before the general's forces attacked, and he was among the handful of Kahlannal's citizens who helped the efreet formulate a plan of attack and undermine the city's defenses. He still hopes the invasion will rid Kahlannal of its traditionalist leadership and integrate the anassanois into a larger civilization. Rehljaer can describe what the PCs might face as they ascend the Spire, and the collaborator dislikes Commissar Yushiev. Even unprompted, Rehljaer tells the PCs of the commissar and what to expect of the necromancer.

Once the PCs have dealt with the loading dock's defenders, they can access the antigrav lifts in the center of the platform without interference. While the lifts originally connected this lower level to all higher levels through the spire's core, the damage sustained during the efreeti invasion has left the tubes fractured and blocked partway up. From this level, the PCs can access the level containing area **G2**.

G2. MORGUE (CR 10)

The antigrav lift travels rapidly through its transparent tube, past floors of devastation and a hole ripped in the Spire that looks out over Kahlannal. The tube itself is cracked there. Moments later, the lift grinds to a halt, slightly crooked in its tube. As the door opens, the odor of decay flows inside.

Stone slabs line the walls of this semicircular room, each glowing with the light the Spire transmits through its pearlescent walls. Corpses—anassanois, azers, ifrits, and even a giant—lie on the slabs or on the floor under them.

It's clear to any PC trained in Medicine or a related profession—such as a mortician, coroner, or anyone else who deals with the

dead—that this room is a morgue. Along the walls, this area is packed with the bodies of those killed in the war. The PCs might even find some of their fallen foes here.

The lift the PCs arrived in goes no higher in the Spire. Another set of lifts around the corner can take them up to area **G3**.

Creatures: Commissar Yushiev, one of the highest-ranking efreeti officers among Nysteryx's forces, does most of his necromantic tinkering here, among corpses from both sides of the conflict. After the lift doors open, he can be heard saying, in Common, "Ah, the visitors I have foreseen are finally here. How to begin?"

Yushiev is prescient, and thus aware that the PCs might come. He prepared by animating five corpses to aid him, but he might animate more during the encounter. These undead rise to their feet in the area between the commissar at the northern end of the room and the PCs to the south.

COMMISSAR YUSHIEV**CR 10**

XP 9,600

Male efreeti mystic (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #13 59)

LE Large outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE**HP 140 RP 5**

EAC 22; **KAC** 23

Fort +11; **Ref** +9; **Will** +13

Immunities fire; **Resistances** cold 5

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

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

Melee slam +19 (3d4+13 B; critical burn 2d4)

Ranged elite semi-auto pistol +17 (3d6+10 P)

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

Offensive Abilities elemental fire

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th, ranged +16)

1/day—*explosive blast* (DC 21), *holographic image* (4th level, DC 22)

3/day—*invisibility*, *wall of fire*, *wish* (for non-genies only)

10/day—*mind probe* (DC 22)

At will—*detect magic*, *energy ray* (fire only), *mindlink*, *overheat* (DC 19), *plane shift* (willing targets to Elemental Planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane only)

Mystic Spells Known (CL 10th; ranged +19)

4th (3/day)—*animate dead*, *divination*, *enervation*

3rd (6/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 21), *dispel magic*, *psychokinetic strangulation* (DC 21), *slow* (DC 21), *tongues*

2nd (at will)—*augury*, *command undead* (DC 20), *inflict pain* (DC 20)

Connection Akashic

TACTICS

Before Combat Yushiev used his peer into the future connection power to foresee this confrontation. He calls upon its +4 insight bonus to improve his initiative roll or a later saving throw.

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During Combat Yushiev puts a wall of fire between him and his foes and activates his grenade scrambler, then muddles his foes with *slow*. He uses *invisibility* combined with *holographic image* to make it appear as if he is elsewhere in the room, and he can also animate more undead to hinder the PCs. Yushiev is cruel—although he does use *explosive blast* on clustered enemies, ignoring the harm he does to his minions, he prefers to inflict suffering with spells such as *enervation*, commenting loudly on the effects. If any PC dies, Yushiev tries to animate the corpse.

Morale Yushiev is fanatically devoted to General Khaim's cause. Instead of fleeing or surrendering, he uses what he believes to be his final actions to cast *bestow curse* on one or more of the PCs.



COMMISSAR YUSHIEV

STATISTICS

Str +3; **Dex** +2; **Con** +5; **Int** +1; **Wis** +6; **Cha** +2

Skills Bluff +19, Culture +19, Medicine +19, Mysticism +24

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Draconic, Eoxian, Ignan, Infernal, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities access Akashic record, change shape (humanoid), peer into the future

Gear d-suit III (mk 1 thermal capacitor), elite semi-auto pistol with 24 small arm rounds, mk 3 grenade scrambler^{AR} with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), level 4 (copper) clearance card

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) See page 10.

ANIMATED CORPSES (5+)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Occult undead (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 114)

HP 24 each

Treasure: In a case of black iron, Commissar Yushiev keeps valuable reagents to facilitate casting *animate dead*, as well as materials that are the equivalent of an advanced medkit, along with a subdermal extractor (*Armory* 108) and an unlocked datapad (*Armory* 100) containing macabre observations and notes on prophetic visions. Anyone trained in Mysticism recognizes the reagents, which are worth 30,000 credits and weigh 5 bulk.

Development: Zhyffor risks contacting the PCs as they ascend from this chamber. He informs them that Nysteryx has joined the fighting near the Spire and is inflicting heavy losses. He and Nyralaen believe the PCs can draw the dragon back to the Spire by shutting down the *psychic resonator*.

G3. MERCENARY BARRACKS (CR 10)

After passing more devastation, the lift grinds to a halt and the doors open.

Panels divide this room into smaller areas, each with a single bunk and storage facilities. The room looks like it was once a well-appointed hostel or something similar, but many of the beds are in tatters, furniture has been piled haphazardly in some areas, and rubble and bloodstains cover the floor and walls. Several cubicles remain intact, set up for efficiency and larger creatures.

Five cubicles are in use. Unwanted furnishings and rubble have been tossed into the adjoining cubicles, leaving only the beds in the occupied areas. The walls here are opaque and luminous, but someone who touches a wall realizes its panels can be mentally commanded to become transparent, providing a view of Kahlannal and the fighting far below or against the dragon in the sky.

From this level, the PCs can take an antigrav lift down to area **G2** or up to either areas **G4** or **G5**.

Creatures: Bulssar, a shaitan, is a recruiter for General Khaim's mercenary forces (see Development). He is here with several new recruits, shobhads from Akiton and their warleader. Bulssar orders the mercenaries to repel the invaders as a test of their prowess and loyalty.

BULSSAR **CR 7**

XP 3,200

Male shaitan envoy (see page 58)

HP 100

OFFENSE

Melee slam +18 (2d6+11 B)

Ranged advanced semi-auto pistol +15 (2d6+7 P)

TACTICS

During Combat Bulssar is a recruiter first and a rather mercenary soldier second. He leads from the rear, using his spells and envoy abilities. The shaitan sees the shobhads as expendable, and so he casually puts them in harm's way to minimize his own risk.

Morale Proudful enough to believe his talents are too valuable to risk in a skirmish such as this one, Bulssar uses *plane shift* to flee if reduced to 30 or fewer Hit Points.

STATISTICS

Str +4; **Dex** +1; **Con** +2; **Int** +2; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +5

Skills Bluff +19, Culture +14, Diplomacy +19, Mysticism +14, Sense Motive +19

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities envoy improvisations (get 'em, inspiring boost [19 SP], not in the face [DC 17], quick inspiring boost [12 SP])

Gear shaitan armor (as d-suit II), advanced semi-auto pistol with 24 small arm rounds

MURPHEK **CR 7**

XP 3,200

Female shobhad warleader (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 104)

HP 105

TACTICS

During Combat A true shobhad warrior, Murphek leads from the front in melee combat.

Morale Murphek believes a *wish* awaits her if she leads her squad to victory. She fights on until Bulssar abandons her and her team. Then, angered at the "tuskless betrayal," she offers to surrender (see Development). If the PCs continue to attack, seeing no escape, Murphek shrugs and attempts to take as many of the PCs with her as possible before dying; she uses coup de grace attacks to show her foes their folly.

SHOBHAD MERCENARIES (3) **CR 4**

XP 1,200 each

Shobhad (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 104)

HP 50 each

TACTICS

During Combat The shobhads open up with automatic fire if they can hit a few PCs without hitting one another. They then prefer melee combat.

Morale These mercenaries are loyal to Murphek. They follow her lead in all things, including surrender and killing downed foes. They are ready to die alongside her.

Development: If Murphek surrenders, she's willing to talk to the PCs. She claims, truthfully, that Bulssar recruited her on Absalom Station to be part of an auxiliary force for the efreeti invasion. Murphek doesn't know where that invasion will be, but she didn't care at the time. Bulssar, she, and her team arrived only a few days ago, and they had yet to be deployed. Murphek laments that she has not only lost the chance to gain a *wish* from the genies, but also the pay her contract would have brought in.

On that note, she makes the PCs an offer. She's willing to join the PCs and the anassanoi if they can guarantee her some pay and, eventually, a way out of the sun. Murphek asks for 1,500 credits for her and 750 for each merc. If the PCs refuse, she shrugs and agrees to stay out of further fighting unless a better offer comes along. PCs might suggest that the reward she seeks could come later, from the victorious anassanoi resistance—a successful DC 25 Bluff or Diplomacy check convinces Murphek to work "on spec," and take her team to the streets to join the anassanoi. Mentioning that the shobhads might be able to force a *wish* from a defeated genie grants the PCs a +2 circumstance bonus to this check. If the PCs are successful, Murphek relishes the chance to further test herself and her team in the war for Kahlannal. She claps the PCs on the shoulders before descending the Spire.

G4. ADMINISTRATOR'S QUARTERS (CR 11)

The PCs go upward for quite some time. They again bypass devastation and ominous damage to the lift tubes.

This opulently adorned chamber seems to have taken no damage during the invasion. Plush furniture has been tastefully placed, and strange art decorates the walls. The outer wall is a massive window overlooking the city, which appears peaceful from this height—right up until a dragon with scintillating scales like solar plasma dives past, chasing a Protector chariot. A curving staircase set between transparent walls leads up to the west.

If the PCs arrive on the lift from **G3**, they are unable to see the doors to the side chambers from their initial vantage.

Creature: Commander Gorchak is in the southern section of the room, looking out the window, monitoring the battles in the city on his personal comm unit, and issuing orders. He doesn't initially notice the arrival of the lift, and stealthy PCs might be able to surprise him. If he notices intruders, he attacks.

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COMMANDER GORCHAK

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male salamander solarian (*Starfinder Adventure Path #14: Soldiers of Brass* 60)

NE Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +20

DEFENSE

HP 180 RP 5

EAC 25; **KAC** 25

Fort +13; **Ref** +11; **Will** +14

DR 10/magic; **Immunities** fire

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee solar spear +24 (4d6+19 P; critical severe wound) or tail slap +24 (4d6+19 B & F plus grab; critical burn 2d4)

Ranged pilot handcoil +21 (2d8+11 E; critical arc 2d8)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail)

Offensive Abilities elemental fire, flashing strikes, stellar revelations [corona [2d6 F, cold resistance 10], soul furnace, supernova [15-ft. radius, 13d6 F, DC 18]], zenith revelation (ray of light)

TACTICS

During Combat Gorchak activates his corona revelation and stays mobile, using his feats and ray of light. He prefers melee combat and seeks to be among as many of his foes as he can to maximize use of his supernova revelation.

Morale Gorchak is proud, but if alone and convinced he's going to lose, he retreats to **G5** to join the giants when reduced to 90 Hit Points or fewer. If already with the giants, Gorchak flees when reduced to 45 Hit Points or fewer. This secondary flight is only temporary. Ultimately, knowing the price he'll pay if he fails, Gorchak returns and attacks the PCs after their battle with Nysteryx. Gorchak would love to see her eliminated to make way for his rise to command, but he still fights to the death rather than let the PCs leave the Spire victorious.

STATISTICS

Str +8; **Dex** +5; **Con** +2; **Int** +0; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +3

Skills Athletics +20, Intimidate +25, Mysticism +20

Feats Mobility, Spring Attack

Languages Common, Ignan

Other Abilities solar manifestation (solar weapon), stellar alignment (photon)

Gear vesk brigandine IV^{AR}, pilot handcoil^{AR} with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), *minor gluon crystal*, level 4 (copper) clearance card, personal comm unit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) See page 10.

Development: In the westernmost of the antechambers off the main room, the PCs locate Vessu's brother, Leirol. He's still bound to a chair, but he's dead. It's clear he died of severe burns.

The PCs could sneak into area **G5** via the stairs. If so, Gorchak joins the fighting in **G5** during the third round.

G5. COMMAND CENTER (CR 10)

At the top of the Spire, this hemispherical room's transparent walls look out into an odd-shaped observation bubble overlooking the city. The center of the domed ceiling is open to that observation bubble, the forty-foot ceiling of which surmounts this area's twelve-foot walls. Computer terminals and holographic code walls are arrayed in two semicircles around a central device, which is covered in dark crystals that pulse with a violet glow. A door on either side of the room leads out to the observation bubble, the outside of each doorway flanked by strange trees. In the west, a stairway starts level with the floor and curves downward.

A central operations hub for the city, this command center served as the bridge of the *Kahlannal* before it expanded into its current form. The device in the center is the *psychic resonator* (see page 44), the heart of the city, a hybrid object linked to the anassanois' history and their telepathic abilities. The invaders corrupted it to dampen telepathy, and undoing that tampering is the PCs' primary goal within the Spire.

Creature: Young fire giant twins, Sortar and Schlega, guard this area in their powered armor. Only Gorchak, Nysteryx, and the twins are allowed to be here, and thus the giants attack anyone who arrives on the lift. Both can hurl debris, but due to the sensitive nature of the machinery here, they don't risk breaking anything here—this ability has thus been removed from their statistics.

SORTAR

CR 8
XP 4,800

Male fire giant soldier (see page 59)

LE Large humanoid (fire, giant)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

HP 125

EAC 20; **KAC** 22

Fort +10; **Ref** +8; **Will** +9; +2 vs. explosions

Immunities fire

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee tactical plasma sword +19 (2d8+19 E & F plus 8 F; critical severe wound) or slam +19 (3d6+19 B plus 8 F)

Ranged 15-notch plasma fork +16 (1d10+8 E & F; critical knockdown) or incendiary grenade III +16 (explode [10 ft., 3d6 F, burn 1d6, DC 16])

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

Offensive Abilities charge attack, crush (3d4+14 B), fighting style (blitz), gear boost (plasma immolation [1d8])

TACTICS

During Combat Sortar charges into battle with the toughest-looking enemy. Until reduced to 60 Hit Points or fewer, he's willing to risk attacks of opportunity to charge into better tactical positions or hurt someone who hurt him.

Morale Sortar won't retreat while Schlega lives, and if she falls, he spends his last breath avenging his sister.

STATISTICS

Str +6; **Dex** +2; **Con** +4; **Int** +0; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +1

Skills Athletics +21, Engineering +16, Intimidate +16

Languages Common, Ignan

Gear brawler frame^{AR} (15-notch plasma fork^{AR} with 2 batteries [20 charges each], squad NIL grenade launcher with 3 incendiary grenades III, tactical plasma sword with 1 battery [20 charges], explosive defense unit^{AR}, juggernaut boosters^{AR}, phase shield)

SCHLEGA

CR 8
XP 4,800

Female fire giant soldier (see page 59)

LE Large humanoid (fire, giant)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

HP 125 RP 4

EAC 20; **KAC** 22

Fort +10; **Ref** +9; **Will** +8

DR 5/-; **Immunities** fire

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee *advancing andesite magma blade* +19 (2d8+14 F & S plus 8 F; critical wound) or slam +19 (3d6+19 B plus 8 F)

Ranged advanced arc emitter +17 (2d4+12 E) or incendiary grenade III +17 (explode [10 ft., 3d6 F, burn 1d6, DC 16])

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

Offensive Abilities crush (3d4+14 B), fighting style (hit-and-run), gear boost (anchoring arcana, brutal blast), nimble fusillade

TACTICS

During Combat Schlega alternates between ranged combat and melee. She regularly switches targets, using anchoring arcana with her magma blade to immobilize her foes.

Morale Schlega is loyal to her brother. She fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str +6; **Dex** +4; **Con** +2; **Int** +1; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +21, Athletics +16, Engineering +16

Feats Mobility, Opening Volley

Languages Common, Ignan

Gear brawler frame^{AR} (advanced arc emitter with 2 high-capacity batteries [40 charges each], *advancing andesite magma blade*^{AR} with 1 high-capacity battery [40 charges], deflective reinforcement, juggernaut boosters^{AR}, phase shield), incendiary grenades III (3)

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Development: With no distractions, the PCs can examine the *psychic resonator* and take several minutes to undo the efreeti tampering. At your discretion, Nysteryx might attack during the PCs' meddling, remaining in **G6** and using her abilities over the walls into this area.

Any PC who spends 1 minute of work and succeeds at a DC 25 Engineering or Mysticism check finds three of the crystals have been inverted and encased in filaments of copper. In turn, they are connected to a violet phrenic scrambler that is wired to the resonator's power and subverting the resonator's normal effects. Disconnecting the device requires an additional 1 minute of work and a successful DC 25 Engineering or Mysticism check. The crystals must then be unwrapped and properly installed, requiring 1 minute and a successful DC 31 Engineering or Mysticism check for each crystal. If all the enemies in the Spire have been defeated, the PCs have time to take 10 or 20 on these checks. Once the PCs disable the tampering, the *psychic resonator* slowly inverts, returning to its normal function an hour later.

Treasure: Once removed from the *psychic resonator*, the violet phrenic scrambler (*Armory* 106) can be safely claimed. However, because it was wired to the resonator's power source, it has no battery.

G6. OBSERVATION PLATFORM (CR 13)

The city of Kahlannal stretches out underneath this platform, its domed districts shimmering within the solar plasma. Signs of combat are apparent in the streets below, as anassanoi resistance fighters make their final stand against the efreeti occupying their city.

If the PCs look for her, the dragon is nowhere to be seen. This platform has two bay doors that allow vehicles to enter the deck. These doors can be opened from the controls inside (or by comm unit with the proper codes, which the PCs lack). Rewiring or hacking the controls requires a successful DC 22 Engineering or Computers check. They can be hacked remotely from outside.

Creature: Nysteryx might notice the PCs as they face the fire giants. The dragon certainly notices when the *psychic resonator* starts to invert again. When she senses a disturbance here, she might take a few rounds to withdraw from the battle outside and cast some preparatory spells, returning when you decide. She enters through one of the bay doors and attacks the PCs either here or as they meddle with the *psychic resonator*.

NYSTERYX

CR 13

XP 25,600

Female adult solar dragon (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 42)

LE Huge dragon (fire)

Init +0; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, see in darkness; **Perception** +23

Aura alien presence (190 ft., DC 19, blinded 2d4 rounds)

DEFENSE

HP 225

EAC 27; **KAC** 29

Fort +17; **Ref** +17; **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities void adaptation; **DR** 10/magic; **Immunities**

fire, paralysis, sleep; **SR** 24

Weakness vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (Su, clumsy)

Melee bite +27 (3d12+21 P)

Multiattack bite +21 (2d8+21 P), 2 claws +21 (2d8+21 S), tail slap +21 (2d8+21 B)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Offensive Abilities breath weapon (90-ft. line, 14d10 F, Reflex DC 19 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), crush (8d6+21 B)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th)

1/day—*call cosmos*, *greater dispel magic*

3/day—*confusion* (DC 19), *cosmic eddy* (DC 19), *greater invisibility*, *resistant armor*

At will—*haste*, *invisibility*, *tongues*

TACTICS

Before Combat Nysteryx joins combat under an *invisibility* spell and with *resistant armor* providing her acid, cold, and electricity resistance 10. If she can predict the start of battle, she casts *haste* just before that moment.

During Combat The dragon avoids attacks that might damage the *psychic resonator* and tries to draw the PCs into area **G6** (or keep them there). She can use her *teleportation pucks* to move around the battlefield unpredictably. When at half her total Hit Points or fewer, she uses her channel life ability up to two times.

Morale If losing the battle and reduced to only one use of channel life, Nysteryx calls for parley and bluffs, claiming her forces have orders to destroy Kahlannal and wipe out the anassanoi if she dies. She uses this time to recharge her breath weapon, but she tries to withdraw from the observation bubble rather than face death or imprisonment. If she escapes, sensing the occupiers' defeat, she leaves Kahlannal for the solar fires.

SORTAR AND SCHLEGA

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STATISTICS

Str +8; **Dex** +0; **Con** +6; **Int** +4; **Wis** +4; **Cha** +4

Skills Acrobatics +23 (+15 to fly), Bluff +23, Intimidate +23, Mysticism +28

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Infernal

Other Abilities channel life (7/day [3 left], 10d8), solar adaptation, spaceflight (Mysticism)

Gear teleportation pucks^{AR} (4), personal comm unit

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the efreeti forces defeated and leaderless, remaining invaders surrender to the resistance as soon as word of Nysteryx's downfall spreads through their ranks. The efreeti vessels remaining near Kahlannal flee to join the armada at the Crucible. Although Nyralaen perished fighting Nysteryx in the sky near the Spire, the remaining Protectors reestablish order in the city, prioritizing the restoration of medical and other public services restricted or shut down during the occupation. Despite the scope of the resistance's final push to free the city from the invaders' grasp, the loss of anassanoi life was less than expected, in no small part due to the PCs' efforts during and prior to the final assault.

The anassanois' telepathic abilities return to normal as the *psychic resonator* powers up. They use their communication to implement the Protectors' directives and contact the Burning Archipelago directly, through the lashuntas of Asanatown. Transmissions to the Burning Archipelago, either by comm unit or the *psychic resonator*, require 1d6–1 hours to arrive

(*Core Rulebook* 430). Arrested occupiers are imprisoned in efreeti detention centers until a method can be found to extradite them to the Pact Worlds government. With the Pact Worlds now warned of General Khaim's pending invasion, Nib fears the efreet will decide to push forward their timeline and strike the Burning Archipelago immediately. Interrogated occupiers support this theory. Fortunately for the PCs, the anassanois know the location of the Crucible, thanks to their interactions with efreet in the Fair and the knowledge of surviving collaborators.

Representatives from the Deep Cultures Institute make plans to stay in Kahlannal. They want to help rebuild, learn what they can about the anassanois, and establish a relationship between the isolated city and the wider galaxy. Nib is particularly interested in reopening the Darkdwellers Museum (see page 43), which she finds endlessly fascinating for its parallelism to the DCI.

However, forces on the Burning Archipelago have no means to reach the Crucible, and neither do the anassanois. Nib and the surviving Protectors suggest the PCs, a proven strike team, might be able to take out the efreeti base from within. With Kahlannal once again in the capable hands of the Protectors, the PCs have but one task before them—reach the Crucible and stop General Khaim before he can claim the Burning Archipelago and pull the Pact Worlds into a war that could span the Great Beyond. The PCs might do just that in *Starfinder Adventure Path #18: Assault on the Crucible*, the next and final adventure in the Dawn of Flame Adventure Path!



KAHLANNAL

"I must say, the people of Kahlannal are warm and open beyond what's easy for most of us to imagine. To someone who's never experienced telepathic communication with an anassanoi, this assertion is difficult to justify, I know. Observed without psychic contact, they can appear reserved, even cold or aloof. But you gotta remember that their society is rooted in telepathy, and anassanoi interaction relies on that subtler form of communication. An anassanoi can speak mentally, express feeling, give context—heck, even allow a sense of who she is—in a way I've never known, despite being intimate with a lashunta. Honestly, the galaxy might be a better place if more of us were like the anassanois."

—Nib, DCI xenoanthropologist

A civilization hidden in the Pact Worlds' sun, the city of Kahlannal is home to the peaceful telepathic people known as anassanois. These refugees from a distant, dying star are now trapped far from others of their kind and, due to their location, isolated from the nearby cultures and planets. Originally an interstellar generation ship, Kahlannal was designed to transport its passengers across the galaxy and then serve as a new home for them. Despite being secluded from nearly all contact with outside cultures since before the Gap, the anassanois maintain a highly functioning society, with a thriving culture and unique technological innovations.

KAHLANNAL

LN solar bubble city

Population 35,000 (100% anassanois)

Government theocracy (octet of Protectors)

Qualities bureaucratic, devout, insular

Maximum Item Level 14th

HISTORY

Uncounted years ago, the spherical generation ship named the *Kahlannal*, along with numerous others like it, set forth from Anassan, a dying star deep in the Vast. Aboard were 10,000 passengers in stasis and 200 crew meant to take decades-long shifts running the vessel's operations. The *Kahlannal*'s mission was to safely transport its living cargo to a distant star, not unlike its home sun, so that they could establish a new settlement and carry on the anassanois culture after its native system's destruction.

Anassanois had always mixed magic and technology, as dictated by their deity, a mutable entity of secrets and knowledge who they call Raethu. Their very existence inside their star was a mystery, their hybrid technology channeling positive energy to maintain material objects and life in the forbidding solar conditions. The *Kahlannal* and its sister ships were an extension of this tech—marvels of magic and technology potentially unique in the galaxy.

The *Kahlannal* carried out its function perfectly, eventually arriving in the system that became the Pact Worlds. Yet, as the super-colossal starship plunged into the heart of the star that would be its home, it was caught in a massive solar storm. The vessel's crew and aging defenses could not fully withstand the effects, and the ship took damage, the most extensive of which was to various electronic components—losses that some modern anassanois believe to have been the will of Raethu. The anassanois made it through the storm safely, but as the first of the sleeping passengers awakened and the *Kahlannal* began to expand itself into a settlement rather than a starship, they discovered that the damage ran deeper than any had expected. They would never again be unable to leave the sun, nor communicate with anassanois vessels elsewhere in the galaxy. Indeed, it appeared that the anassanois could communicate with no one outside their new colony.

Over the centuries that followed, the *Kahlannal* slowly transitioned from a spacefaring vessel to Kahlannal, the city it is today. The sleeping passengers awakened in waves, the bays that once held them in psychic stasis repurposed into dwellings, places of business, and civic institutions in the newly extended district bubbles connected to the city's central core. The crew members who had seen the *Kahlannal* safely through the solar storm were lauded as heroes—the protectors of the helpless passengers—and took on the earliest leadership positions within the burgeoning city. Over time, they became more than civic leaders—something akin to saints, venerated and bestowed with ever more responsibility and power. Anassanois religion portrayed the Protectors as direct agents of Raethu, embodiments of the exploration of internal potential and openers of such paths for other anassanois. In this role, the Protectors gained responsibility for all governance in the city, and eventually, even the worship of Raethu faded behind the veneration of the Protectors and their chosen replacements.

Since the Gap, which deepened the mystery of their existence, the psychic anassanois have taken an interest in the increased activity of sapient species elsewhere in the sun. Their first contact was with efreet and mysterious beings called the jyoti. More recently, they became aware of other locations, such as Ezorod and the Burning Archipelago. Having finally contacted other cultures, the anassanois have been building toward an expedition toward the sun's surface to reveal themselves to their neighbors. Recent events have precipitated drastic changes to these plans.

SOCIETY

Despite its isolation, Kahlannal has fostered a robust and stable culture. Most of Kahlannal's citizens are peaceful and community-minded, placing the good of the collective above personal ambitions. Other than the status divide between Protectors and their subjects, anassanois society has few social strata. The people use their natural abilities, skills, magic, and technology to recycle resources and distribute them fairly, while Protectors use their influence to ensure equity in resource allocation.

Anassanois value introspection and honesty. To them, the greatest mystery is the internal truth each being represents, and knowing one's fellow beings as well as possible is a pursuit both sacred and pleasurable. They value meditative practices, learning, and social bonds and gatherings, living generally peaceful lives. Open and empathetic, they freely display their emotions—at least on a telepathic level—and value authentic behavior. Close mental connection, honesty, and reverence for individual differences lead to diversity in anassanois mating practices and child rearing. Anassanois believe that one person can love many, and children can have major mentors and guides other than their biological parents. Heredity doesn't determine one's interests and aims, and family groups vary depending on the desires and needs of their members, with child fostering a common practice. Individuals move

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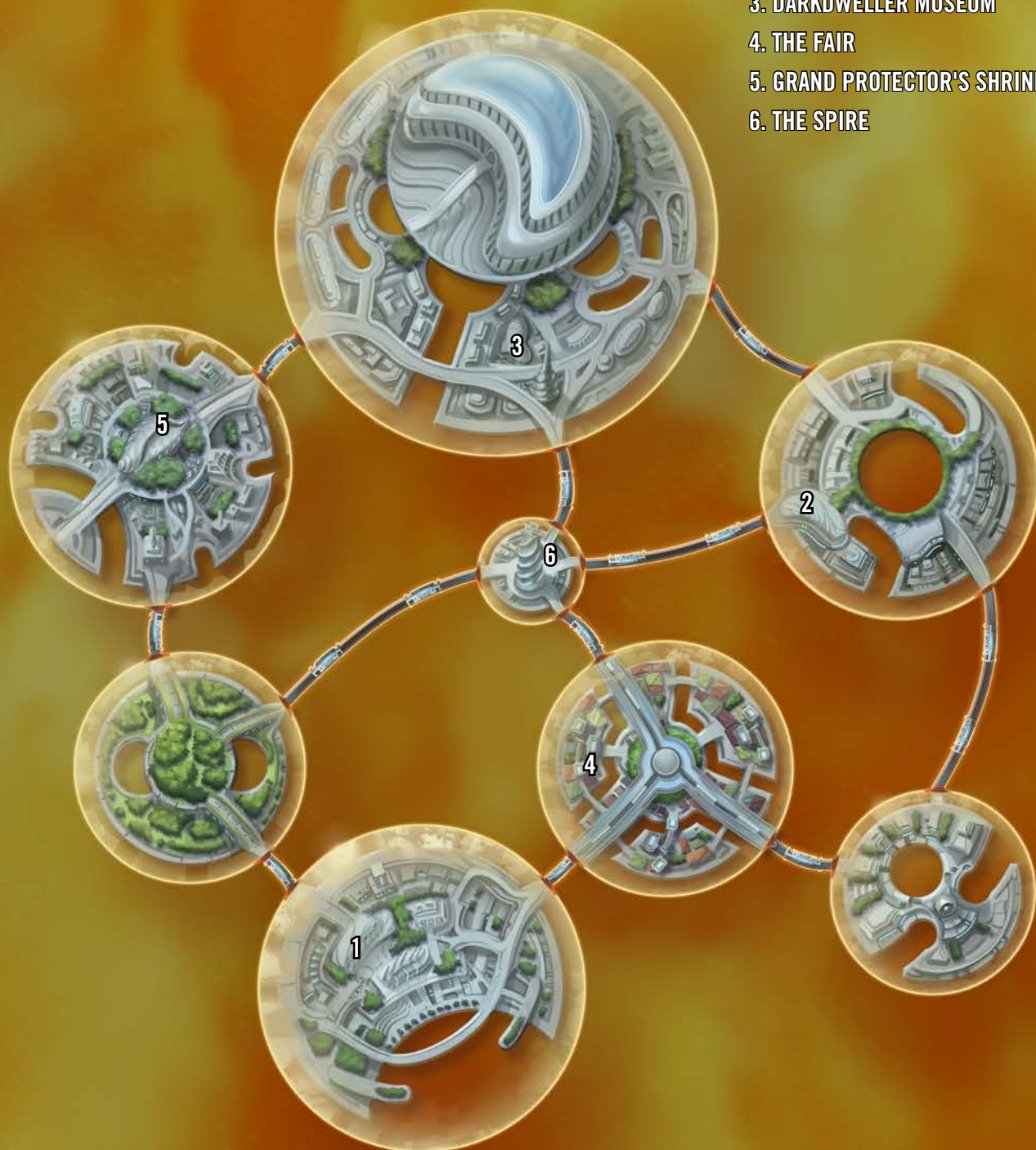
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2. ANASSAN STADIUM
3. DARKDWELLER MUSEUM
4. THE FAIR
5. GRAND PROTECTOR'S SHRINE
6. THE SPIRE



NOT TO SCALE

through relationships not only to form bonds and enjoy support, but also as a path to self-knowledge.

Although anassanois see this social order as utopian, their society is not without conflict. Anassanois have philosophical and political disagreements, but they endeavor to uncover the truth despite differences of opinion. Those who do wrong are encouraged to atone to anyone harmed, to reflect on the difficulty they caused, and to learn a better way. Protectors and their aides oversee and enforce this retraining, which usually has positive outcomes. Few conflicts escalate into feuds, and fewer still involve violence or long-lasting animosity. Although they do have retraining facilities to house those having a difficult time with Protector-prescribed changes to behavior, anassanois lack what other galactic citizens might call prisons.

Tranquility has prevailed in Kahlannal, but some anassanois have grown to resent the tradition of Protector rule. These proto-revolutionaries think the theocracy holds anassanois back. Most of these radicals have the long-term interests of their people and city at heart. A few, however—especially those fallen under the influence of efreeti traders—want the power or wealth that the traditional order denies them.

RESOURCES

The *Kahlannal* was intended to be a self-sustaining vehicle and Kahlannal a self-sustaining colony. It's possible, even likely, that the vessel had a means of expansion for use inside a new star. However, if this is so, that means was lost when the *Kahlannal* was damaged entering the sun, along with other forgotten valuables. The city has yet to develop industries or resources beyond those needed to sustain it indefinitely. In the wake of first contact with the Pact Worlds, however, new markets are available to both parties, most notably cultural, intellectual, and magical exchanges.

Anassanois have yet to develop Drift technology, and acquiring it might be a priority. They also lack a great array of armaments, technology, pharmaceuticals, and magic items Pact Worlders can offer. The anassanois, for their part, have technologies passed down from their ancestors or developed within the sun that are as yet unheard of in the Pact Worlds. These include the Protectors' chariots and Accord starships, psiostasis, the *psychic resonator*, and more. With some study of the *Sun Diver* and the *solar inverter* (*Starfinder Adventure Path #16: The Blind City* 36), combined with anassanoi knowledge of tech that can channel overwhelming positive energy into life-sustaining fields, the anassanois can help create an array of sun-delving vessels.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

The largest threat facing Kahlannal is the efreeti invasion and occupation detailed in the "Solar Strike" adventure. If the anassanoi resistance fails to liberate the city, Nysteryx and her forces tighten their grip on the besieged anassanois. They drain the city of its resources as they use it as a staging ground for their ongoing assault on the Burning Archipelago.

OTHER ANASSANOIS

Although the anassanoi residents of Mataras, the Pact Worlds' sun, have lost vast portions of their history, they are but one of many generation ships sent into space from Anassan. The anassanois were once an extremely advanced but peaceful terrestrial species. At some point in their history, their home world faced a terrible external threat the anassanois couldn't hope to win against: war machines from elsewhere in the galaxy, launched by a malevolent species. Rather than face annihilation, the anassanois used their technomagic mastery to flee into their system's star, where their attackers couldn't follow. The anassanois of Kahlannal remember none of this history, and their culture has changed drastically from its origins as a result. Their counterparts in other parts of space, if any survived, might well retain records of this history and have a culture unlike Kahlannal's anassanois.

It's possible the anassanois perish entirely in the ongoing abuse of their city.

Internally, the anassanois have two factions who disagree over the direction for the anassanois' future. This opposition becomes starker in the aftermath of the efreeti invasion; traditionalists feel strongly that anassanois have not only survived in isolation but thrived because of it. These citizens have long opposed the practices of the Amiants, whose progressive philosophy pushes for interaction, trade, and diplomacy with civilizations beyond Kahlannal. The Protectors were split between these two factions, maintaining a balance within the society. However, most of the Traditionalist Protectors died in the conflict. Of the three Protectors alive after the city's liberation, Faeffel and Zhyffor are Amiants, as was Nyralaen. Mehrren is Traditionalist, and her ordeal hasn't softened her position, despite her admiration for her rescuers. The selection of new Protectors has the potential to cause unrest among Traditionalists, who fear their position might be underrepresented among the new Protectors. Given the role "dark dwellers"—short for "dwellers in the darkness between [the stars]"—played in liberating Kahlannal, however, many Traditionalists have changed their minds about non-anassanois. The factions might not be so evenly represented among the population as they once were.

Traditionalist concerns have a basis, however. The arrival of more aliens on Kahlannal brings with it new influences on society, from commercial to religious to scientific. New philosophies could threaten the Protectors' position. Traders and researchers could have ulterior motives and allegiances to entities beyond the anassanois' limited experience. Those more liberal Traditionalists willing to compromise suggest the anassanois take integration slowly, governing visitors to Kahlannal carefully. They point to the efreeti traders, some

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of whom were spies for General Khaim, as examples of the danger posed by outsiders. Fortunately for the Traditionalists, they have technology on their side, as it might be years, if not longer, before relatively easy travel to Kahlannal is available.

Amiants lost political points during the conflict inside Kahlannal, as well. The majority of anassanois who collaborated with the efreeti invaders were Amiants. Although some of this misbehavior can be chalked up to misguided motivations, from personal ambition to protecting others, many anassanois won't soon forget who helped the efreet.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Kahlannal is a city of few shadows. Most of the structures are of a pearlescent material or silvery metal, both of which channel light.

The metropolis is divided into seven outer districts, each a distinct disk connected to the others by conduits. These conduits contain tunnels through which magtrains travel, as well as maintenance passages for foot traffic and smaller vehicles. Each district was designed to be self-sufficient in case some of the disks were damaged or destroyed during the long journey to the ship's destination. As such, they contain redundancies the anassanois have used to increase efficiency within the city. All seven districts have basic features such as

data centers, education campuses, government offices, green spaces that double as farms, medical services, public utilities, and security facilities. Each district also has a unique Protector shrine, such as the one detailed on page 21. Additional unique locations are spread throughout the city, as detailed below.

Anassan Archive: Ancient anassanois, knowing any of their exodus ships could contain the last of their people, placed within each an archive of cultural and historical knowledge. They hoped the archive would allow their civilization to endure and serve as a touchstone between disparate anassanoi communities. Portions of this data, however, were lost during the solar storm that doomed the city to its millennia of isolation inside the sun. The anassanois awoke from hibernation to find much of the cultural information stored in the Anassan Archive erased or damaged beyond legibility. What was intended to be a lively museum and library instead became a tomb of the anassanois' lost heritage. The first Protectors, fearing the loss of such information could negatively affect morale, sealed the archive to all but themselves. They have closely guarded the secrets within ever since, using *antipathy units* (page 44) to keep all others out. The Gap reinforced these losses, and Kahlannal's society has diverged from its roots further than it might have without such massive disruptions in knowledge. Good intentions aside, were word of this great deception ever to reach the people of Kahlannal, it could call the Protectors' motives and trustworthiness into question, jeopardizing their entire society.

If outsiders were ever to find their way into the archive, they would find one clue to the anassanois' past and a step toward solving a galactic mystery. The disjointed archive contains an intact runic symbol—if someone examines the iconography of the Protectors closely, this symbol can be found incorporated in some form. It is the fifth of Eloritu's sacred runes, and the archive still contains cryptic information that could be useful in deciphering this sigil's meaning. The leap to equating the anassanoi deity, Raethu, with the god of secrets is a short one.

Anassan Stadium: The primary center of large-scale public entertainment in the city, Anassan Stadium is home to daily athletic competitions, concerts, theatrical performances, and similar events. These spectacles are dedicated to the memory (such as it is) of the anassanois' home star, from which the *Kahlannal* generation ship embarked so long ago. Anassanois are particularly fond of competitions of mental or physical prowess.

A common traditional sport is called gravitoss, in which three teams of eight players compete on a triangular field to score in a central goal. Each team has its own orb, which generates an oscillating gravitational field, either attracting other orbs and players to it or repelling them away. Players must master the timing not only of their orb's gravitational cycles, but also the interactions between their orb and the other teams'



orbs and tactics. Anassanoi solarians are especially fond of the game, but the rules limit how a member of any team can manipulate the field, the orbs, or other players.

Darkdweller Museum: Just as the Deep Cultures Institute looked into the sun for signs of hidden societies, so too did the inhabitants of Kahlannal look outward to learn what they could of their possible neighbors. The Darkdweller Museum is a center of xenoanthropological research and an educational facility, sharing the scientists' findings with the anassanoi population at large. The museum's lead researcher and curator is the aged **Phaelghek** (NG male anassanoi) who first developed the technique of long-range psychic observation via the *psychic resonator* (page 44) a little more than two decades ago. Since that time, despite interference from Ezorod, researchers here have amassed a library of vague data about the cultures and peoples of the Burning Archipelago. Because they are limited only to hazy and remote observation and have, until the efreeti invasion, never interacted with the subjects of their study, many of their theories about the Pact Worlds are flawed to varying degrees. However, the name of the museum shows that the anassanois understand that the people of the Burning Archipelago have origins outside the sun. In the wake of Kahlannal's liberation, the museum contains exhibits on the occupation and the city's liberators. The museum serves as a primary vector by which the anassanois and representatives from the Pact Worlds share information and foster a relationship of mutual curiosity.

The Fair: The commercial heart of Kahlannal, the Fair takes up almost an entire district, surrounding the other civic and residential buildings with a bustling array of vendors. Kahlannal provides for the needs of all its citizens, so trade in basic services and necessities is unheard of. However, anassanois who create unusual items or experiences they wish to trade come here to do so. Craftspersons, entertainers, mages, and technicians sell specialized wares in the Fair. Anassanois use representative currency, like credits, but are much more likely to barter one specialized or artistic item for rights to another similar item. High-end and artistic goods, along with unique experiences, are available in the Fair. Few of these items are mass-produced, although popular media and similar entertainment styles come close. Civic security forces are more numerous in the Fair to help adjudicate trading disputes.

These forces are even more numerous in an enclave given to efreeti traders, who have visited the Fair for many years. It is in this enclave that General Khaim planted spies to manipulate the anassanois, who were, perhaps in eagerness for outside contact, too trusting of their fiery visitors. It's likely that the efreeti enclave is closed after the events of the "Solar Strike" adventure. As a relationship develops between the anassanois and the wider galaxy, this enclave might reopen, dedicated to allowing alien traders their shot at enjoying the Fair.

Grand Protectors' Shrine: The Protectors are equal in power and influence, each with their own dedicated shrine in different districts of the city. The Grand Protectors' Shrine

serves as a center for veneration of Protectors past and present as a pantheon of holy ancestors. This temple and museum is larger and more ornate than the individual shrines and is unique in its employment of a large staff. The Protectors employ aides in their individual shrines, where they facilitate social gatherings, but use no intermediaries between themselves and the people. In the Grand Protectors' Shrine, however, clerics, scholars, and mystics keep detailed records of the Protectors and the law, and coordinate activities among the eight personal shrines. These anassanois also conduct tasks the Protectors have little time for, including mystical healing, organization of community events, carrying out the Protectors' directives, and other administrative duties. The shrine's senior cleric is High Minister **Yehriffa** (LN female anassanoi mystic).

All seven outer districts have horticultural and agricultural facilities that allow them to feed the population, but none compare to Argent Gardens, the sprawling green space surrounding the Grand Shrine. Lined with soaring silver arches, Argent Gardens also has workspaces for the city's most skilled bioengineers, who work to improve Kahlannal's agrarian output and perfect new forms of edible decorative flora. Among the many innovations of Argent Gardens' technicians is faeffel, a species of flowering plant whose coloration has subtleties visible only to those with telepathic abilities—the first known psychic color in the Pact Worlds.

The Spire: The heart of Kahlannal, the tower of the Spire is the tallest and most prominent structure in the entire city. When the *Kahlannal* was a massive spherical starship, this portion of it remained active and fully staffed. From here, the ship's captain could monitor the entire population, hibernating and awake, and see to it they were provided with all the life-ensuring power, sustenance, and protection they needed. Now, under the auspices of the Protectors, the city's civic leadership performs similar duties from this hub. With more than 100 gently sloping circular floors housing civic and bureaucratic facilities, from the magtrain station at the base to the control center and observation bubble at the top, the Spire is a city unto itself. The unofficial ninth district of Kahlannal, this massive building serves as the nerve center of the city's operations, housing the security, infrastructure, and bureaucratic hubs for all the districts.

Low in the Spire is the eighth Protector shrine. The Protector who resides here has proximity to and familiarity with the city's most influential movers and shakers, making the Spire's Protector a natural link between Kahlannal's civilian government and its religious rulers. Civic authorities are elected every few years on a merit-based system, reviewed by the Protectors and the clerics of the Grand Protectors' Shrine. Such jobs are often difficult, with compensation not significantly higher than what the common populace receives. The staff here rotates, too, ensuring that no one becomes too entrenched or comfortable in one position and that multiple people can perform a given function.

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The Spire, the site of Part 3 of the "Solar Strike" adventure, was heavily damaged in the efreeti assault, and rebuilding and restaffing it is top priority after the liberation of the city. In addition to a new administrator and other key personnel, a new Protector must be appointed. Unrest could result if the Protectors and the citizens are unable to fill the vacancies and keep the city running smoothly.

ANASSANOI EQUIPMENT

Though isolated, Kahlannal's anassanois are a technologically advanced civilization. They have built upon the technologies that came with them on the *Kahlannal* when it made its generations-long journey to the Pact Worlds. The efreeti occupation and subsequent first contact with the peoples of the Pact Worlds brings an influx of new technologies for the anassanois to incorporate into their equipment, including the ability to revolutionize solar travel.

HYBRID ITEMS

The anassanois have a couple unique items based on their telepathic abilities and history.

ANTIPATHY UNIT

LEVEL 10

HYBRID ITEM	PRICE 20,000	BULK 5
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An *antipathy unit* is a large device designed to telepathically repel intruders with a mind-affecting compulsion. When activated, the unit broadcasts a signal that most beings find subtly repulsive without being able to discern why the repulsion is occurring. The field affects an area with a radius of up to 100 feet, which you set. Upon entering the field, a creature feels the urge to leave—to remain in the area, the creature must attempt a DC 19 Will saving throw. On a failure, the creature cannot willingly return to the area for 24 hours or until the *antipathy unit* deactivates. Even if the save succeeds, creatures in the area are uncomfortable, taking a -1 penalty to attack rolls and Perception checks while they remain within it. You can use the biometric parameters on an *antipathy unit*'s controls to exclude creatures from the effect, but unless you have available biometric data that you can input into the unit for specific absent creatures, excluded creatures must be present when the unit is activated. An *antipathy unit* functions for 24 hours before needing to be recharged for 24 hours. The activation need not be continuous, but any activation consumes 1 hour of the unit's power.

PSYCHIC RESONATOR

LEVEL 12

HYBRID ITEM	PRICE 40,000	BULK 100
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A *psychic resonator* amplifies telepathy, allowing long-distance telepathic communication. The resonator doubles the range of limited telepathy and telepathy, affecting creatures on a planetary scale. If you have limited telepathy or telepathy, you can operate the *psychic resonator* as if it were a comm unit with a system-wide range to send a message to a creature you know. Otherwise, the resonator can send a

telepathic broadcast at a much shorter range, such as from the depths of a star to that star's surface (as the anassanois did with their broadcast in this Adventure Path). In any case, if your telepathy is language-dependent, you must still share a language with your target for that target to understand the message. In addition, sources of psychic interference can hamper or block messages sent through a *psychic resonator*, changing the message's content, feeling, or both, as well as making the results affect only certain creatures. (Ezorod and its prisoner, from *Starfinder Adventure Path #16: The Blind City*, interfered with the anassanois' broadcast in this way.)

VEHICLE

A *Protector chariot* is a hybrid vehicle with a virtual intelligence. In its neutral form, the vehicle is a dense, 10-foot-diameter sphere of mercury-like metal. This malleable form can reshape to replicate almost any vehicle of similar size. However, only someone who has the Protector of Kahlannal feat can pilot one of these chariots. When chariots are adjacent to one another, the pilots can command the vehicles to combine and form a larger vehicle. Four chariots in proximity can combine to form a vessel of starship scale, called an Accord (see the inside covers).

When a pilot wishes to enter a chariot, they touch the surface and telepathically command the vehicle to allow them inside. The chariot surface envelops the pilot, pulling them within. When the vehicle reconfigures, it moves the pilot into a new position suited to piloting the chariot's new form.

Once the anassanois integrate with Pact Worlds societies, vehicles similar to chariots might appear on the open market. However, such knockoffs don't come from the anassanois, who would see such replicas as bordering on sacrilegious.

PROTECTOR CHARIOT

LEVEL 12

PRICE 120,000

Large land, air, and water vehicle (10 ft. wide, 10 ft. long, 10 ft. high)

Speed 30 ft., full 550 ft., 65 mph (hover and fly)

KAC 27; **EAC** 27; **Cover** total cover

HP 140 (70); **Hardness** 10

Attack (Collision) 11d10 (DC 19)

Modifiers +2 Piloting, -1 attack (-3 at full speed)

Systems autopilot (Piloting +22), mounted weapons, psiometric lock, transforming matrix; **Passengers** 3

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mounted Weapons (Ex) Chariots often have mounted longarms or heavy weapons. These weapons usually have an item level of 8 or lower.

Psiometric Locks (Ex) A chariot opens and operates only for its dedicated anassanoi Protector.

Transforming Matrix (Ex) As a full action, the pilot (or autopilot) can command the chariot to reshape itself into another vehicle of up to Huge size and of its level or lower. At Huge size, the chariot has an AC of 24, a +0 modifier to

Piloting, and a -2 penalty to attack (-4 at full speed). This ability can instead be used to join three other chariots to become a larger vehicle or Accord starship.

STARSHIP EQUIPMENT

The following starship equipment is available once anassanois integrate with galactic society. The first such equipment comes from anassanoi ventures, but once the tech is on the market, other firms produce similar tech.

PSIOSTASIS PODS

When the anassanois embarked upon their journey from Anassan, they filled portions of their starship with hibernation chambers containing psiostasis pods. Upon arriving in the Pact Worlds' sun and awakening, the anassanois converted many of these hibernation facilities to serve other functions, but some remained, allowing this technology to be studied and duplicated.

The pods' hybrid tech suppresses higher mental function and places the body in a vibrational null state, rendering it inactive and unaging, without the need to breathe, drink, or eat. Placing a creature into or taking a creature out of psiostasis takes 3 hours, although the creature being placed in such suspension becomes unconscious after only 1 hour. An unwilling creature can't be placed in psiostasis; the unit can telepathically detect if an unconscious creature would consent. One set of pods, taking up one starship expansion bay, can hold 32 Medium or smaller creatures in stasis indefinitely. However, psiostasis doesn't work in the Drift, so any creature in a *psiostasis pod* comes out of stasis during Drift travel.

One set of psiostasis pods consumes 15 PCU and costs 10 Build Points.

SOLAR SHIELD CHANNEL

A bleeding-edge hybrid system, a *solar shield channel* augments starship shields and power. (A starship must have shields to include a solar channel.) This system emerged from a joint venture between the research labs of the Deep Cultures Institute and the anassanois of Kahlannal, based on experimental technology used in the first DCI expeditions into the sun. A solar channel allows a starship to travel into a star by channeling solar forces through a magically augmented siccate matrix that filters positive energy from the solar plasma and uses it to reinforce the matrix.

The system channels destructive solar forces around and through the vessel, but a ship with a *solar shield channel* is considered to have only half its normal shields while within a star. The starship's shields take half damage from starship gravity, laser, and plasma weapons. These shields also block the irradiate special weapon property. Conversely, a vessel with a

BECOMING A PROTECTOR

Although it involves a complex telepathic ritual passed down from one generation of Protectors to the next, the game-mechanical effect of becoming a Protector is gaining a bonus feat, presented here. This feat allows an anassanoi PC to become a Protector if your campaign calls for it. Beyond this feat, a Protector's dedication, resolve, and sacrifices are what set them apart from other anassanois.

PROTECTOR OF KAHLANNAL

You are one of the eight ordained Protectors of the anassanoi people of Kahlannal. You have a unique psychic bond with your own Protector chariot.

Prerequisites: Anassanoi, any non-chaotic and non-evil alignment

Benefits: You form a psychic bond with a Protector chariot, which allows you to pilot the vehicle. As a standard action, you can summon your chariot from a distance of up to 1 mile. If you do so, the vehicle moves toward you on autopilot as quickly as it can, unless an insurmountable obstacle stands between you. If you become chaotic or evil, you lose access to this feat while you have such an alignment.

solar shield channel can't fire gravity, laser, or plasma weapons through its own shields. The shields also block the EMP and irradiate special weapon properties of any non-tracking weapon the starship fires.

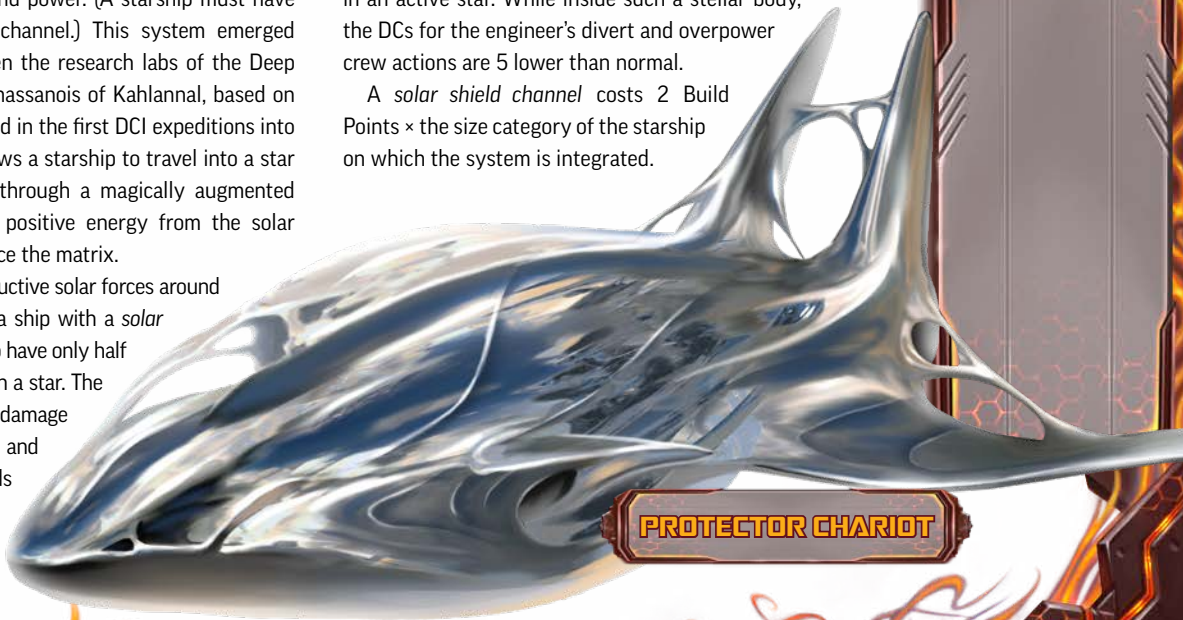
A starship that has a *solar shield channel* is designed to draw power from the energies channeled through its shields and power core, so it becomes much easier to distribute that power to various systems while the vessel is fully immersed in an active star. While inside such a stellar body, the DCs for the engineer's divert and overpower crew actions are 5 lower than normal.

A *solar shield channel* costs 2 Build Points × the size category of the starship on which the system is integrated.

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PROTECTOR CHARIOT



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"I couldn't believe my eyes when we first got the images. Something was causing the unusual solar flares, but we had no idea what our probe was about to show: enormous fire creatures the size of islands! But these weren't aggressive monsters flexing their power; they were just leaping and twirling around each other as though they were children playing. I have no idea how we'll communicate with them, but we have to get them to settle down, or the solar flares will continue to have a dramatic—dare I say fatal—impact on our planet."

—Dr. Siltrea Astrint, Chief Scientist of
Probellis Observatory

From the solitary plantlike lantanarians of the Pact Worlds' sun to the playful behemoths of Tarrinette to the warlike species of Taru Seco, the creatures that live within stars share little in common outside the ability to withstand intense heat and radiation, whether through unusual anatomy or exceedingly durable structures. Force bubbles within the Pact Worlds' sun contain the cities of Noma and Kahlannal, where members of ancient civilizations continue to thrive, though they have almost no contact with their "neighbors" in the Burning Archipelago. Deep within other stars around the galaxy, bizarre creatures evolved in these inhospitable environments, developing strange forms. Others migrated into suns, bringing carefully crafted protection to their new homes. Those who choose to live in suns sometimes seek refuge from war and sometimes seek to perpetuate it. As a whole, these creatures and civilizations are referred to as "Deep Cultures," and specialized scholars risk their lives to understand them.

ARKENALS

Location Aristia, the Azlanti Star Empire, the Vast

The enormous arachnoid constructs that dwell within the sun of the original Azlanti colony of New Thespera were apparently created before or during the Gap, for a purpose unknown to anyone contemporary. Made of a magically hardened metal able to withstand the blistering heat without melting, these creatures, known as arkenals, spin intricate webs of the same metal, which they create through the fusion of the sun's superheated hydrogen and helium. These elaborate webs stretch for thousands and thousands of miles throughout the star, indicating that the arkenals have been working at their mysterious task for a very long time. The center of the webbing, which lies almost at the center of the star, is a mile-wide metallic cocoon holding unknown contents. Most suspect that the arkenals were built to protect whatever lies within, though no one has approached close enough to test this theory.

The gargantuan robotic spiders are each 50 feet tall and weigh more than 150 tons. They appear to be intelligent, but they are uncommunicative, either unable or unwilling to speak. They travel through Aristia via plasma-based propulsion, guiding their "flight" by spinning thinner threads and attaching them to the network of webs. Most scientists believe the arkenals are powered by nuclear reactions fueled by the energy of the sun, meaning they will be able to continue their work for as long as Aristia burns. A damaged arkenal is quickly repaired by its fellows unless it is irreparably broken (a rare occurrence), at which point the others swarm around it, dismantling any usable pieces and working the rest into the fabric of the web. Soon after, the core of a new arkenal buds from the central cocoon and the others spin it a set of legs. Surveys from space indicate the number of arkenals holds steady at 2,222, though the significance of this number is unknown.

About 15 years ago, Azlanti engineers and soldiers succeeded in capturing an arkenal and transporting it to New Thespera. When removed from the sun, the creature stopped functioning and its limbs retracted into its body, leaving only a large metallic orb of immense hardness. Although roboticists have been working hard since then to reverse-engineer a way to create the nearly impenetrable metal of the arkenal's frame, such efforts have proven fruitless. So too have endeavors to reawaken the construct, which may be fortunate—many Azlanti nobles believe it would be a mistake to rouse such a possibly destructive force at the heart of the empire.

One research facility working with a small sample of arkenal webbing recently claimed to have made a groundbreaking discovery. Examining the material on a subatomic level, these scientists discovered that the webbing is held together by a series of magical micro-force fields that bear some resemblance to early Azlanti magitech. They are now convinced that arkenals were designed by ancient Azlanti engineers, and even though no records of the robots' creation exist anywhere with the Star Empire, the facility's managers are searching for funding for an expedition to the center of Aristia to learn more.

DILNEFAS

Location Tarrinette, Songbird Nebula, Near Space

Enormous creatures called dilnefas, each one several miles long, swim within the fires of the star Tarrinette. Mostly cylindrical with eight massive fins along their bodies, long snouts, and four-flippered tails, dilnefas are believed to be distant cousins of fire whales (*Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 58) that evolved within the sun, demonstrating that life can develop even in the harshest of settings. Dilnefas appear playful despite their mind-boggling size, and they spend most of their lives deep within Tarrinette, traveling in groups and frolicking with each other. Xenobiologists posit dilnefas' routes are tied to their mating cycles, as new dilnefas are always born at the sun's surface approximately every 20 years. Unfortunately, this migration has dire consequences for the creatures living on the planets in this system, as dilnefas' movement to the surface of the sun causes massive solar flares.

The residents of the closest occupied planet, Probellis, have developed large, remote-operated drones to try to lure the dilnefas to areas of the sun where the solar flares caused by their migration will shoot off harmlessly into space. These drones emit flashing lights and pulses of radiation that researchers found—through trial and error—attract dilnefas' attention. While not perfectly effective, this solution substantially reduces the dangers to Probellis, but any changes to the dilnefas' mating cycle have yet to be recorded.

Beings from the Plane of Fire consider Tarrinette to be a tourist destination, and resort-like developments along key

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points of the dilnefas' migration path feature elegant food, entertainment, relaxing activities, and stunning views of the passing creatures. Some brave souls even go on dives to swim with the dilnefas. The enormous beasts aren't aggressive toward outsiders, as long as any such visitors avoid going near their young, but they sometimes become interested in vehicles or equipment. Unfortunately, dilnefas are so large that they can injure smaller beings—and even damage submersibles—without even realizing it.

The efforts of Probellis's scientists to redirect the dilnefas' migratory path have affected business for some of these resorts, and in retaliation, more unscrupulous proprietors sometimes sabotage the drones. The residents of Probellis, in response, are developing more substantial drones, not realizing the origin of this interference. Efreeti xenobiologists who specialize in solar creatures of the Material Plane have voiced concerns over the impact of such escalation

on the dilnefas, which the outsiders consider a unique and peaceful species. A few researchers have begun to involve the Xenodruids in this matter, a rumor that makes all parties involved nervous.

Of course, the dilnefas are oblivious to political turmoil. The nature of these deep sun-dwelling creatures makes them hard to study, but brave or fireproof biologists have made some headway. Dilnefas stay in family units that span generations, all traveling together. They are not generally aggressive with one another, but they sometimes fight over territory, particularly as families migrate from one place in the sun to another. Their perception of what constitutes prime territory seems tied to the amount of radiation in the area, implying that they can absorb such radiation as a source of nourishment. Their natural lifespan is about 400 years, and they clearly mourn their dead. Due to their size, no one has tried to remove a dilnefa from Tarrinette, and most agree that removal from the sun's fire would likely be a death sentence.

ESTONARS

Location Cynosure, the Vast

Every system that worships Desna is familiar with Cynosure, once also known as Lost Golarion's pole star. The brightest star visible in the Pact Worlds' skies, Cynosure is also a gateway to the demiplane that serves as the Song of the Spheres' realm, which holds a transcendent and constantly shifting palace for the deity.

In addition to this metaphysical realm, Cynosure is also home to the worshippers of Desna called estonars, who sometimes act as emissaries between mortals, the star-walking tritidair azatas (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 14), and the mysterious beings living in the heart of the star simply called Spheres. Estonars are elegant, silvery beings standing 10 feet tall, with delicate crystalline wings. They seem quite comfortable in the intense heat of the star and claim to have lived in Cynosure as long as Desna has attached her realm to it. Though they aren't outsiders themselves, estonars sometimes make repeated trips to Desna's palace to learn from those that regularly inhabit it, returning with newer and more elaborate designs for their already sophisticated crystalline homes within Cynosure. Estonars live for thousands of years, and their wings grow increasingly large and intricate over time. The long-lived species weren't spared from the memory-altering circumstances of the Gap, but some suggest that the estonars know something about that period of galactic amnesia due to their proximity to a deity. Estonars are quick to dispute these claims, realizing that if such rumors take hold, their homes would likely be hounded by strangers.

Estonars enjoy travel and particularly like to visit other stars and are quite curious about the lives of other species. They build large, shining starships for their voyages, and stop often to aid those in distress. These gossamer vessels are solar powered and sometimes linger near other stars



ESTONAR

to bask in their light. Estonars enjoy meeting other people who live inside stars, considered sacred to their patron goddess, and they particularly like seeing how other star-dwelling societies build structures that hold up to the unique challenges of stars. Travelers who spot an estonar starship generally consider it a sign of good fortune, and miniature models of estonar starships often adorn the small Desnan shrines that frequently populate starships. Estonars' travels are always temporary, ending with their return home to Cynosure. As far as anyone knows, no other estonar settlements exist.

Though generally peaceful, estonars, like all of Desna's subjects, are occasionally called upon to defend Cynosure. Their starships are outfitted with weapons that shoot burning starlight, and they have also built powerful cannons fueled by solar energy, allowing them to be used continuously while in Cynosure without needing batteries. Estonars keep their weapon stock well hidden during times of peace, fearful of others getting hold of the advanced and deadly weaponry. Their engineering aptitude extends to others types of technology, however, and they are happy to share their designs for nonweapon technology.

GLEERICKS

Location Ixo, Tabori Cluster, the Vast

The tiny gleeericks have extremely short lifespans, living for only a few hours, but they managed to be the only species in the Tabori system that survived the collapse of the red supergiant Bori. The gleeericks had only just launched their very first starship when Bori collapsed, and the ship's crew flew straight for the safest spot they could think of: their sun, Ixo. The plan worked—Ixo protected them from the worst of the nebula's damaging electric field. Sadly the gleeericks left behind on their home world perished, along with all the other species in the system. Thanks to their short lifespans, the gleeericks on board the starship quickly evolved, adapting to their new surroundings, and they are now resistant to both Bori's electric field and Ixo's heat and radiation. Over the last 6,000 years, the gleeericks modified that original starship into a full colony, making ample use of the siccitate deposited by Bori's explosion. The extended city holds hundreds of thousands of gleeericks, but it is only half a mile in diameter.

Gleeericks are about an eighth of an inch tall and somewhat insectile in appearance, with glossy green exoskeletons, four pairs of arms, segmented legs, and mouth pincers. Though extremely short-lived, the creatures are surprisingly technologically advanced, as they can transmit knowledge between each other in a fraction of a second. Thus, each new generation can build on advances made by the previous generation, resulting in an extremely fast-paced research and development cycle. Unfortunately, it is difficult for other species with longer perceptions of time to communicate with gleeericks. Those who attempt it typically use computerized

messages, knowing that different gleeericks will respond each time. Complicated trade negotiations are nigh impossible, so most of the few settlers of the Tabori cluster don't even bother. However, some are keen to learn what the strange little creatures, capable of so much in their short lives, could bring to a partnership. In particular, gleeericks' ability to mine siccitate from their sun makes the concept of trade enticing, if anyone can figure it out. Those who think they can simply take what they want from gleeericks are quite mistaken, though. The gleeerick city in Ixo is quite well defended, and their response time is incredibly fast by the standards of most spacefaring peoples. Their weaponry is predictably small but designed to pierce even the strongest of ship exteriors and then explode, wreaking havoc on any vessel carrying opponents who thought gleeericks would be easily defeated. Tiny satellites created by gleeericks orbit Ixo, providing valuable scientific information, watching for unusual activity from Bori, and scanning for approaching enemies.

LANTANIRIANS

Location Mataras, Pact Worlds

Deep inside the Pact Worlds' sun—deeper even than the cities of Noma, Ezorod, and Kahlannal—is the bubble-city of Lantanir. While the residents there have no contact with the Burning Archipelago, they occasionally speak with the anassanois and are sometimes willing to speak with creatures from the Plane of Fire who plumb the depths of the star. Lantanirians are plantlike and use photosynthesis for energy, negating the need to grow food in their bubble-city. They have green skin, which sometimes sprouts flowers, and five identical limbs, which can function as either arms or legs as needed. The species is incredibly old, and the general construction of their bubble-city matches that of Kahlannal. The anassanois suspect that lantanirians were contemporaries of the First Ones, but the plant people have never confirmed this. The very center of their bubble-city holds a gate that lantanirians say leads to a linked city in a sun on the other side of the universe, but they insist it is to be used only in dire emergencies. Some wonder if the linked city could be related to the First Ones; cryptic language on the gate seems to support this, but lantanirians are silent on this topic, as they are on so many others.

Lantanirians rely on magic, and every member of the species is capable of casting spells. However, lantanirians also take study of the physical science quite seriously. The creatures spend most of their time analyzing the sun in which they live. Their understanding of stellar fusion is second to none, but they seem to have no interest in converting such knowledge into weapon technology—in fact, lantanirians do not use weapons of any kind. They keep careful records of their experiments and results, but given how few creatures ever visit Lantanir, they contribute very little to the greater scientific community. They are devoutly religious, praying multiple times a day to a god they refer

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to as the Keeper of Knowledge. It's not clear if this is another name for a well-known deity like Triune or Oras, or if their god is known only to them, and perhaps long ago to the First Ones. Lantanirians can withstand much higher temperatures than most Pact Worlds races, so Lantanir is at best uncomfortably warm and perhaps dangerously hot for most visitors. However, lantanirians aren't immune to fire and can't exit their bubble. They don't build vehicles to travel to other cities within the sun, but they never seem anxious or claustrophobic about being trapped in a bubble in the middle of the sun. When asked if they worry about the bubble failing, they simply answer "Not yet." Lantanir has a large spacedock, giving the impression that the city once received a lot more visitors, but lantanirians currently have very limited interactions with anyone outside their bubble.

PLISTARNS

Location Vose 303, the Vast

With a quick scan, visitors approaching Vose 303 can easily spot several large cities within its depths: buildings constructed upon solid masses deep inside the star. These structures are home to the humanoid-shaped plistarns, who are likely descended from creatures of the Plane of Fire and have a form more like plasma. They are immune to both fire and radiation and live quite comfortably inside the sun, building a civilization in this unlikely place. Plistarns have developed their own Drift-capable starships and hope to become players in intergalactic politics, though it's difficult for them to interact directly with other species, as they emit a great deal of light and radiation themselves. Nevertheless, they have constructed a large dock just outside Vose 303's corona for other spaceships to land on, and when there, they wear environmental armor—not to protect themselves, but to protect their guests. Since plistarns can mine for rare elements from Vose 303, they have valuable trade goods that make it worthwhile for other species to risk attempting trade with them.

Plistarns are concentrated along one side of Vose 303, maintaining four major cities and about a dozen smaller ones. Only their largest city, Voskorme, is capable of housing creatures without immunity to fire and radiation, though such visitors sometimes venture out to the other cities in heavy environmental gear. Plistarns both radiate and can see in a large swath of the electromagnetic spectrum; creatures who can see x-ray wavelengths have the easiest time telling individual plistarns apart. Plistarns have a rich arts culture, particularly around dance, and those who visit Voskorme say that seeing plistarns dancing is one of the greatest sights in the galaxy.

AbadarCorp is hard at work converting the barren planet of Jedarat, in orbit around Vose 303, into a vacation world. The plistarns stake no claim on Jedarat, and they hope that having neighbors in their solar system will lead to increased opportunities for trade and diplomacy. AbadarCorp is in

discussion with several of their suppliers and contractors for the machinery and materials necessary for the terraforming process, and work is slated to begin within the next decade. Business insiders speculate that the planned resort will offer regular excursions to Voskorme run by friendly AbadarCorp guides.

SELDRINS

Location Nenturo 775, Near Space

Seldrins—who appear as iridescent blurs of energy—are slightly out of phase with reality. As their colors change, a distinct physical feature—an arm, a wing, or a tail—can be spotted within the haze, but never twice in the same bodily location, suggesting that their real forms are malleable and ever shifting. As natural telepaths, seldrins are easy to talk to, though difficult to actually communicate with, as they don't seem to understand that they don't quite exist in the same reality as most Material Plane creatures. Conversations with them often circle back to them complaining about being cold, despite the fact that they live just below the surface of a sun; some xenoanthropologists posit that only the temperature within a star is high enough to reach the seldrins in whatever dimension their physical bodies happen to be.

The rest of the time, seldrins speak with a sense of urgency, claiming that they need to finish their work quickly or the universe is doomed. Very occasionally, another creature is able to explain to a seldrin that they are out of phase with reality. The shocked seldrin then tries to figure out what happened to cause them to lose their connection to the Material Plane, but their attention usually wanders after a few minutes. Those who have had extended conversations with seldrins believe that they were working on some kind of scientific research in the face of a major impending war and that a terrible accident caused their current state of being. The exact details of the supposed war and the seldrins' research are still unknown.

The presence of the seldrins makes it difficult for anyone else to reside near Nenturo 775. Even those who could withstand the heat and radiation of the star's surface are quickly frustrated by the constant telepathic chatter. Crews of vessels that enter or exit the Drift near Nenturo 775 have described seeing a peculiar burst of color at the moment of the jump, though such reports are difficult to substantiate, especially given the unusual nature of the Drift. Hyperspace scientists have been unable to re-create this scenario with any regularity, but their studies have led to minor improvements in Drift engines that have yet to reach the marketplace.

While seldrins have trouble manipulating objects on the Material Plane, matter sometimes floats along with them as they move in and out of Nenturo 775. While most of this detritus burns up in the sun, a thin ring of rocks, small satellites, and other space debris orbits the star. Confident

or desperate treasure hunters sometimes brave the star's heat and seldrins' psychic palaver to recover objects of value from this bizarre collection. One such hunter reports finding a large abandoned scientific facility after following a trail of indestructible fragments into the heart of the sun, though she didn't recover any records or equipment. No one else has found this laboratory, though many wonder if it relates to the seldrins' collective phase shift.

TARUMENS AND SECORANS

Location Taru Major and Minor, Taru Seco, Near Space

The warlike creatures who still inhabit the Taru Seco system have fought each other for millennia. While they once inhabited a few of the planets orbiting the binary star system, each has established an elaborate fortress in one of the suns. The origin of the animosity between the two species is unknown, and at this point irrelevant, as both sides have committed enough offenses against the other to maintain the war indefinitely. Tarumens are the more technologically advanced, thanks to having richer raw materials on their original planet, and their weapons development has always stayed ahead of their enemies. Tarumens were also the first to come up with the idea of moving to a fortress in a star, for both better defense against their enemy and the ability to make strategic covert strikes. Secorans, whose home world is a crucible in which they grew large and strong, are physically stronger and seemed certain to win the war when it could still be fought by hand. They are experts on espionage and learned of the tarumens' sun fortress plans with enough time to develop their own. The arms race continues, with ever more terrible weapons. Both species' original planets are now uninhabitable after mass bombings, and the survivors hunker in their sun bases.

If asked about the ruins of other cultures on the surrounding planets, both tarumens and secorans provide stories about the other beings who once inhabited their system, but both say that these creatures simply left long ago. A popular theory is that this civilization may have vacated voluntarily with the advent of spaceflight technology in order to avoid being casualties in the ever-increasing war between their neighbors. Indeed, some of these abandoned planets were used as temporary bases by tarumens and secorans, and so hold a mix of newer (though now outdated) technology and ancient archaic structures, but nearly all of it has now been reduced to rubble.

Tarumens are about 5 feet tall, with four arms, four legs, and six eyes spaced evenly on rectangular heads. They are covered in light gray fur, except on their abdomens, which they generally keep covered. Secorans are about 7 feet tall and very broad, with avian wings and elongated mouths. They are covered with purple and blue feathers. The two species' cultures developed in parallel and at one point formed a united civilization with a single shared language. After centuries of separation and conflict, each species'

dialect now has its own idioms and slang. Currently, much of each society's art focuses on hatred of the other, and each species' books, plays, and movies almost always feature members of the other species as irredeemable villains. Anyone who tries to preach pacifism or peace is charged with treason, and even the most experienced peace negotiators of Hylax and Sarenrae consider Taru Seco a lost cause. Most political analysts believe the war will end only when one side is completely destroyed, but for now, the two seem evenly matched.

XULXEDES

Location Acromo, the Vast

The astrophysicists who have been studying the white dwarf they have called Acromo in a lifeless system in the Vast recently noted an unusual "shadow" near the center of the dense star's mass. Preliminary probes have recorded a



TARUMEN

SOLAR
STRIKE

PART 1:
DESTINATION
KAHLANNAL

PART 2:
FLAME
RESISTANCE


PART 3:
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EXTINGUISHERS

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noticeable cooling in Acromo's temperature near this dark spot, but any attempts to get more information have resulted in the equipment being destroyed by some unknown force. At the moment, the scientists are stymied as how to proceed, though if they knew the truth of the matter, they might long for a return to ignorance.

Acromo is now the site of a small, but possibly dangerous, incursion from Shadow Plane. A group of beings called xulxedes—undead shadow giants (*Starfinder Adventure Path #12: Heart of Night* 56) who have undergone significant technological augmentations and given their minds and souls to the Great Old One Mordiggian, a deity of darkness and death—opened a planar breach into the dying star's center and established a metropolis-sized base of operations on the Material Plane. This massive fortress, called the Shining Maw, protects several hundred xulxedes from Acromo's heat, pressure, and radiation while they study the star's remaining reactions.

These xulxedes believe that darkness and shadow are more than just the absence of light and that with the right scientific theorems and unholy paeans to Mordiggian, they can create "anti-photons" that would emanate darkness and absorb the energy of light. As luminescence is constantly muted on the Shadow Plane, these fanatics realized they would need to gain control of a Material Plane star to fully enact their experiments. Their research led them to Acromo. The xulxedes speculated this white dwarf was far enough from the prying eyes of other civilizations to grant them enough secrecy to perform the ritual needed to open a stable portal. While they have been successful enough to establish a beachhead, they didn't count on the curiosity of other systems and now must on constant guard against those who might stumble across their intrusion.

The Shining Maw is a maze of dark iron corridors and laboratories arrayed around a vast chamber that holds the gateway to the Shadow Plane. Unfortunately, the portal discharges a large amount of mystical energy each time it is used and since being nearly discovered, the xulxedes can only use the transport chamber infrequently, leading to a strict rationing of supplies. Though the undead xulxedes need very little to survive, they do engage in ghoulish ritualistic feeding rites, consuming the rotting flesh of other sapient creatures. For a brief period, this "food" was brought in from humanoid species killed on the Shadow Plane, but since the restrictions on transport began, the xulxedes have converted several laboratories into holding pens and abattoirs for their unfortunate victims.

ZILBREES

Location Ghavaniska, Veskarium, Near Space

Much to the shame of many of the more militant members of the Veskarium, zilbrees remain the only unconquered sapient species within the system, due to the fact that they live within a heavily fortified metal sphere deep within

Ghavaniska, the system's sun. The outside universe learned of zilbrees' existence only recently, when the reclusive species launched a large satellite into close orbit around the sun. In addition to docking facilities for three vessels, this platform features a large holographic chamber in which visitors can have "face-to-face" talks with the zilbrees. Since the communication facility has gone online, a multitude of vesk scientists, diplomats, and military experts have shared much with the zilbrees in long, in-depth conversations. Within the Veskarium, several infosphere personalities have gained quick fame by loudly speculating what has been learned during these talks.

While the Veskarium government has tried to keep information about the zilbrees away from those outside of the imperium (even their Pact Worlds allies), leaks have sprung up across several systems' infospheres, including images of the zilbrees' holographic representations. These sun dwellers are squat, armored beings with red-and-black tentacle-like limbs and beaked mouths. According to many reports coming out their talks with the vesk, zilbrees have lived within Ghavaniska since before the Gap. The zilbrees had developed advanced technology (including communication and monitoring devices that can break through the sun's electromagnetic radiation) but were afraid to reveal themselves during the vesk subjugation of the rest of the system. Now that they have seen the Veskarium work together with the Pact Worlds, zilbrees feel comfortable making themselves known.

Currently, the Veskarium is deep in negotiations with the zilbrees to have them officially become part of the vesk imperium, offering them the same protection extended to every other planet in the system in exchange for zilbree technology. Rumors within the Pact Worlds say that certain vesk generals are delaying the finalization of these peace talks long enough for the military to discover a way to create starships sturdy enough to reach and attack the zilbree home sphere; others note that zilbrees have nothing to gain from becoming another vesk protectorate. Skeptics around the galaxy are doubtful that zilbrees even exist, asserting that the only so-called proof is holographic images, which can be easily faked. When presented with scans of Ghavaniska that show a humongous metal mass deep within the plasma, the same nonbelievers claim such information can also be forged.

In the meantime, several espionage groups from across the galaxy have attempted to sneak aboard the zilbree satellite to contact the species themselves or, at the very least, learn if there is any truth to the leaked information. So far, all of them have been kept out by vesk security forces, as the Veskarium maintains a tight grip on the facility and the space surrounding it. Until the Veskarium brokers a deal with the zilbrees or the zilbrees decide to reach out to another civilization, knowledge about this secluded species will remain under vesk control.

DEEP CULTURES SPECIALIST (ARCHETYPE)

Some scholars devote their lives to understanding the rare and bizarre creatures and civilizations that reside within the stars, known to many as Deep Cultures. Such a pursuit requires not only academic devotion but also physical resilience, as any kind of field research involves traveling to some of the most dangerous places in the universe. Nevertheless, those who persevere discover amazing secrets about both these unusual creatures and the stars themselves, and they soon find themselves capable of withstanding the power of suns and even harnessing it for their own use.

Within the Pact Worlds system, Deep Cultures specialists are highly sought after by many organizations, notably including the Corona Artifact Divers, the Sun Atlas, and the Deep Cultures Institute.

The majority of Deep Cultures specialists are scholarly types—often envoys, mystics, or technomancers, though members of many other classes may follow this path. Solarians in particular can be drawn to the secrets of Deep Cultures, and other martially oriented types may seek to understand the raw power of suns and their peoples. Typically, Deep Cultures specialists have the scholar, solar disciple^{PW}, xenoarchaeologist^{PW}, xenoseeker, or similar themes.

READING THE ASHES (SU) 9th Level

To learn about Deep Cultures, you must frequently gather information from strange sources. You can use *identify* as a spell-like ability three times per day. At 16th level, you can also use *retrocognition* once per day as a spell-like ability, as long as the location you are attempting to gain information about is on or within a sun. Your caster level for these spell-like abilities is equal to your character level.

STELLAR FIRE (SU) 12th Level

You have spent so much time studying residents of various suns that you can add their often-fiery power to your and your allies' weaponry. One per day in a process that takes 10 minutes, you can temporarily add the *flaming* weapon fusion to up to four weapons of 5th level or higher that don't already deal fire damage. You must have access to these weapons during the entirety of the process, and the time doesn't count as a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points. This bonus fusion doesn't count toward the total level of fusions the weapon can have at once. In addition, a weapon with this bonus fusion gains the burn critical hit effect (dealing 1d4 fire damage for every 6 character levels you have); if the weapon already has one or more critical hit effects, the wielder must choose one of the critical hit effects to apply when scoring a critical hit. These bonus fusions last for 1 hour.

SOLAR PROTECTION (EX) 18th Level

You have spent so much of your life around stars that you've developed resistance to the worst of their effects. You gain fire resistance 20 and you always treat radiation as 1 step lower than it is for the purpose of saving throws and effects. When you take fire damage, you can lower your fire resistance as a reaction, such as to take advantage of the solar disciple's heat transfer ability; this lasts until the start of your next turn.



SOLAR STRIKE

PART 1:
DESTINATION
KAHLANNALPART 2:
FLAME
RESISTANCEPART 3:
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EXTINGUISHERS

KAHLANNAL

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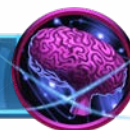


ALIEN ARCHIVES

"You ain't really lived until you've ridden an asteroid pushed by a group of sunchasers looking to plunge themselves into the burning heart of a star. So long as you steer clear of the ones protecting their kin, they don't seem to care much that they've got passengers on their final jaunt, and you get the thrill of rocketing toward a sun's corona without ruining an expensive starship. Just make sure you've got a way off that rock and out of the star's gravity well or you'll find out firsthand what millions of degrees of scorching-hot plasma feels like."

—Figgs, ysoki daredevil (deceased)

ANASSANOI

CR
5XP
1,600

Anassanoi operative

N Medium humanoid (anassanoi)

Init +6; **Senses** blindsense (thought) 30 ft.; **Perception** +12**DEFENSE** HP 65 RP 4**EAC** 17; **KAC** 18**Fort** +4; **Ref** +8; **Will** +7**Defensive Abilities** evasion**Weaknesses** low-light blindness, open**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** survival knife +12 (1d4+5 S)**Ranged** static arc pistol +12 (1d6+4 E; critical arc 2)**Offensive Abilities** debilitating trick, trick attack +3d8**STATISTICS****Str** +0; **Dex** +5; **Con** +0; **Int** +1; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +3**Skills** Culture +17, Diplomacy +12, Medicine +12, Sense Motive +17 (+21 to trick attack), Stealth +17**Languages** Anassan; telepathy 30 ft.**Other Abilities** operative exploits (field treatment, glimpse the truth, jack of all trades), specialization (detective)**Gear** business stationwear, static arc pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each), survival knife**ECOLOGY****Environment** any (Kahlannal)**Organization** solitary, pair, or team (3–6)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Low-Light Blindness (Ex)** Anassanois treat dim light as if it were darkness.**Open (Ex)** Other creatures receive a +6 bonus to Sense Motive checks against an anassanoi who is using telepathy to communicate with them. Anassanois gain a +2 bonus to Diplomacy checks when using telepathy to communicate.

Anassanois are native to a distant star, Anassan, which they left in a generation ship named the *Kahlannal*. For more on anassanoi culture and their city of Kahlannal, see pages 38–45.

The typical anassanoi is staunchly loyal, sympathetic, and effusive with friends. However, by human standards, anassanoi body language and facial expressions lack animation and emotion, despite the fact that an anassanoi has three eyes and two (vertical) mouths. Anassanois are natural telepaths and extremely open when communicating with telepathy, suffusing such exchanges with the feelings their physical gestures lack. This openness translates into emotional honesty, offering others a ready sense of who the speaking anassanoi is. An anassanoi who wants to avoid this openness can learn to suppress it by becoming practiced in deception, but few anassanois do so.

A typical anassanoi stands almost 8 feet tall but is slender, weighing around 200 pounds. They mature at about age 25 and live for around 150 years.

RACIAL TRAITS**Ability Adjustments:** +2 Wis, +2 Cha, –2 Con**Hit Points:** 4**Size and Type:** Anassanois are Medium humanoids with the anassanoi subtype.**Blindsense:** Anassanois can sense thinking creatures with a range of 30 feet. They cannot sense mindless creatures or those immune to mind-affecting magic with this awareness.**Low-Light Blindness:** See stat block.**Open:** See stat block.**Telepathy:** Anassanois have telepathy with a range of 30 feet.**Third Eye:** Anassanois gain a +2 racial bonus to Perception and Sense Motive checks.**SOLAR STRIKE****PART 1:
DESTINATION
KAHLANNAL****PART 2:
FLAME
RESISTANCE****PART 3:
FIRE
EXTINGUISHERS****KAHLANNAL****DEEP
CULTURES****ALIEN
ARCHIVES****CODEX OF
WORLDS**

CHOMURK

CR
8

XP
4,800



N Large magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +16

DEFENSE

EAC 19; **KAC** 23

Fort +12; **Ref** +12; **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities void adaptation; **Immunities** cold, fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; biothruster 200 ft.

Melee bite +20 (3d4+14 P)

Ranged flame jet +17 (2d6+8 F; critical knockdown)

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

STATISTICS

Str +6; **Dex** +2; **Con** +4; **Int** -3; **Wis** -1; **Cha** +1

Skills Athletics +21, Physical Science +16, Piloting +16

Other Abilities move worlds, spaceflight

ECOLOGY

Environment vacuum

Organization solitary, pair, or hive (12-64)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Biothruster (Ex) A chomurk can fly as a full action at the listed speed. It must move in a straight line while flying in this way, and it can use the Piloting skill instead of Acrobatics to fly in difficult or dangerous conditions.

Flame Jet (Ex) A chomurk can use its biothruster as a ranged weapon with the line and unwieldy weapon special properties and a total range of 40 feet. Though the jet of flame deals fire damage, it is also treated as having the force descriptor (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 269).

Move Worlds (Su) A hive of at least 32 chomurks can meld their bodies together in a unique metamorphosis that amplifies their natural thruster abilities. Chomurks combined in this manner dissolve and merge their limbs in a process that takes 1 hour, creating a pyramidal mound of bodies that acts as a single huge thruster capable of altering the orbit of the asteroid, space station, ship, or similarly sized astronomical body upon which it resides. Chomurks combined in this manner become a single entity, but are otherwise helpless and rely on nonmerged chomurks to defend them.

Sometimes called “sunchasers,” chomurks are known for their unique, dangerous life cycle. When a chomurk first lands on an asteroid, space station, or similarly small astronomical body, it immediately begins devouring anything it can find, preferring organic matter but eating metals or stone if necessary. If provided with sufficient material, it can reproduce asexually in a matter of hours, giving birth to a clone that grows to adult size in a day. The hive continues to mindlessly eat and reproduce, at which point some individuals begin melding their bodies together to create a “thruster-mound.” Guarded by nonmerged chomurks, the thruster-mound begins pushing the celestial object into a decaying orbit toward the nearest sun at exceptional speeds. As they approach the star, the nonmerged chomurks absorb solar radiation that both empowers and mutates them, creating genetic diversity. At the last minute, those chomurks launch themselves off their temporary home, scattering back out into space, where they hibernate until running across a new object and beginning the process again. Those chomurks incorporated into the thruster-mound are willingly sacrificed in the fires of the sun—along with any remaining residents of the hijacked celestial body.

Chomurks resemble 8-foot-long, 2,000-pound isopods, with colorful articulated shells and two sets of mandibles arranged in a cross shape.

A ridge running down their back ends at a cylindrical protrusion with a rear-facing orifice—this is their biothruster, capable of releasing astonishingly powerful blasts of focused flame and force. With little intelligence, chomurks instinctively organize toward a collective goal, willingly sacrificing themselves for the good of the hive.



DEVIL, HACKER (LISLAROTH)

CR
10XP
9,600

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; **Perception** +19**DEFENSE****HP** 140**EAC** 22; **KAC** 23**Fort** +11; **Ref** +9; **Will** +13**DR** 5/good; **Immunities** fire, poison; **Resistances** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 21**Weaknesses** technomagical susceptibility**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (Su, perfect)**Melee** claw +19 (2d8+11 S)**Ranged** electrical discharge +19 (3d4+10 E)**Offensive Abilities** overload (DC 19), override (DC 19)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th)1/day—*destruction protocol*, *rewire flesh* (DC 22), *soothing protocol*, *summon allies* (2 imps 60%)3/day—*instant virus* (DC 21), *synaptic pulse* (DC 21)At will—*implant data*, *inject nanobots* (DC 20), *security seal***STATISTICS****Str** +1; **Dex** +1; **Con** +3; **Int** +8; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +5**Skills** Bluff +19, Computers +24, Sense Motive +19**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.**Other Abilities** mechanic tricks (distracting hack, ghost intrusion), possess computer, remote hack (40 ft.; DC 19)**ECOLOGY****Environment** any (Hell)**Organization** solitary, pair, or packet (3–6)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Electrical Discharge (Ex)** A lislaroth can fire an electrical bolt as a ranged attack with a range increment of 40 feet.**Possess Computer (Su)** As a full action that provokes attacks of opportunity, a lislaroth can convert its body and gear into digital code and merge with a computer to which it has access. This ability fails if the devil is encumbered. While possessing a computer, the devil has total cover and is immune to any effect that requires it to have a body. A lislaroth can use the Computers skill on the possessed system. The devil firsts attempts to disable and impersonate any artificial personality the system has. If the computer is destroyed, the possession ends unless the devil can use a reaction to flee to a connected system.While possessing a computer, a lislaroth can be found and rooted out as though it were a module of a computer (tier = 1/2 the devil's CR) behind a fake shell and with feedback and firewall countermeasures. A revealed lislaroth can be forced out of a possessed computer with a successful DC 33 Computers check. A *dismissal* spell cast on the computer can force the lislaroth back to Hell, but if the spell would send the devil to a random plane, the devil is instead forced to end the possession. When the

possession ends, the devil appears in an unoccupied space as close to the computer as possible.

When it exits a computer, the lislaroth can take a reaction to leave behind a *software imp* (*Starfinder Armory* 124) of an item level equal to half the devil's CR.**Technomagical Susceptibility (Ex)** Any effect that works on a construct works on a lislaroth. An effect that works on a construct and an outsider has the worst possible effect.

Lislaroths are Hell's digital spies. They gain access to sensitive data, which they use or trade to corrupt mortal souls.

A lislaroth stands 6 feet tall and weighs 170 pounds.

SOLAR
STRIKEPART 1:
DESTINATION
KAHLANNALPART 2:
FLAME
RESISTANCEPART 3:
FIRE
EXTINGUISHERSPART 4:
DIGITAL
WARSIN
LIVESCODEX OF
WORLDS

GENIE, SHAITAN

CR
7

XP
3,200



LN Large outsider (earth, extraplanar)

Init +1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (ground vibration); darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

EAC 18; **KAC** 22

Fort +11; **Ref** +6; **Will** +9

Immunities electricity

HP 105

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 60 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee sintered longsword +18 (2d8+12 S) or
slam +18 (2d6+12 B)

Ranged tactical reaction cannon +14 (2d10+7 P)

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



WALL OF STONE

This 4th-level spell functions as *wall of steel*, but it has a range of close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels). Each 5-foot square of the wall has hardness 10 and 15 Hit Points per inch of thickness. A creature can breach the wall with a successful DC 25 Strength check.

Offensive Abilities earth mastery, metalmorph, stone curse

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; ranged +18)

1/day—*wall of stone* (see the sidebar), *slow* (DC 16)

3/day—*dust cloud* (as fog cloud), *hold person* (DC 15),
reflecting armor (DC 15)

At will—*disguise self*, *grease* (DC 14), *plane shift* (willing targets to elemental planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane only)

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +1; **Con** +4; **Int** +2; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +2

Skills Bluff +14, Engineering +19, Mysticism +14, Sense Motive +14

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran;
telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities metal glide

Gear shaitan armor (as d-suit II), sintered longsword, tactical reaction cannon with 12 heavy rounds

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Plane of Earth)

Organization solitary, pair, company (3–6), or band (7–12)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blindsight (Ex) A shaitan can pinpoint the location of a creature touching the same ground the shaitan is on or on a solid surface connected to that ground.

Earth Mastery (Ex) See page 47 of the *Starfinder Alien Archive*.

Metal Glide (Ex) As the earth glide universal creature rule, but the shaitan can also move through metal.

Metalmorph (Su) As a standard action, a shaitan can touch a single metal object of no more than 1 bulk and transform it into any other metal. The transformation lasts 1 day.

Stone Curse (Su) Any melee attack a shaitan makes against a foe adjacent to an earth, stone, or metal surface gains the entangle weapon special property as if from a weapon with an item level equal to the shaitan's CR. The surface does the entangling, rather than the weapon.

Shaitans are proud genies resembling giants carved from stone and gems. They hail from the Plane of Earth where they control vast corporations that vie for mineral-rich regions. They treat mortal sapient beings as, at best, valued employees. However, these genies reward industry and pay their debts.

A shaitan stands 11 feet tall and weighs 5,000 pounds.

GIANTS

CR
VARIESXP
VARIES

There are numerous varieties of species of the massive humanoids known as giants, and some are quite comfortable in high-temperature environments. The following template grafts can be used to create fire, slag, and sun giants.

FIRE GIANT TEMPLATE GRAFT

Fire giants live in the hottest portions of the galaxy. They are often thought of as the most rigid-thinking and militaristic of all the giant species, seemingly always preparing for a war that might never come.

Required Creature Type and Subtype: Humanoid (giant).

Suggested Alignment: Lawful evil.

Traits: Fire subtype; Large; low-light vision; immunity to fire; vulnerable to cold; melee attacks and attacks made with the hurl debris ability deal additional fire damage equal to CR; crush (CR 7+); hurl debris (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 62).

SLAG GIANT TEMPLATE GRAFT

Slag giants are nomadic, seeking out places where they can work with metals. They are aloof, preferring their work to personal interaction. Some scholars believe slag giants were created when fire and stone giants were crossbred using magic.

Required Creature Type and Subtype: Humanoid (giant).

Suggested Alignment: Lawful neutral.

Traits: Large; low-light vision; resistance to fire 5 (CR 3+; increase to 10 at CR 7, 20 at CR 11, 30 at CR 15); crush (CR 7+); hurl debris (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 62); shattering blow (see below).

Shattering Blow (Ex): A slag giant's melee attacks against metal or stone objects or structures deal double damage.

SUN GIANT TEMPLATE GRAFT

Sun giants seek to bring their light to the dark corners of space, either through benevolent exploration or selfish conquest. They hold particular animosity toward creatures from the Shadow Plane.

Required Creature Type and Subtype: Humanoid (giant).

Suggested Alignment: Chaotic good or chaotic evil.

Traits: Huge; low-light vision; solar aura (see below); solar adaptation; immunity to blinding, dazzling, fire, radiation; resistances cold 5 and electricity 5 (CR 3+; increase to 10 at CR 7, 20 at CR 11, 30 at CR 15); crush (CR 7+); hurl debris (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 62); sun dart (see below); spell-like abilities (CR 10+).

Solar Aura (Su): All light within 60 feet of a sun giant is bright light and can't be reduced by magical darkness. At CR 9+, sighted creatures within the aura become dazzled. At CR 15+, once per round as part of any other action, the

giant can target one sighted creature within the aura to be permanently blinded (Fortitude negates).

Sun Dart (Ex): As a swift action, a sun giant can empower the next piece of physical ammunition they fire from a ranged weapon (such as an arrow, dart, or round) with solar energy. If this attack hits, the giant deals an additional amount of fire damage equal to their CR and the target is off-target until the end of the sun giant's next turn.

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PLANAR SCION, OREAD

CR
1

XP
400



Oread soldier

LN Medium outsider (native)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE

EAC 13; **KAC** 15

Fort +3; **Ref** +1; **Will** +3

Resistances acid 5

OFFENSE

Speed 25 ft.

Melee assault hammer +8 (1d6+5 B)

Ranged utility scattergun +5 (1d4 P) or

HP 20

RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Str, +2 Wis, -2 Cha

Hit Points: 6

Size and Type: Oreads are Medium outsiders with the native subtype.

Acid Resistance: Oreads have acid resistance 5.

Darkvision: Oreads have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Earth Affinity: Whenever an oread deals acid damage (including with spells such as *energy ray*), the oread can change it to bludgeoning damage instead. This doesn't change anything else about the effect dealing the damage.

Spell-Like Ability: An oread can use *energy ray* as a spell-like ability at will but can deal only acid damage with the ray. The oread's caster level is equal to their level.

stickybomb grenade I +5 (explode [10 ft., entangle 2d4 rounds, DC 10])

Offensive Abilities earth affinity, fighting styles (guard)

Oread Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; ranged +5)

At will—*energy ray* (acid only)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +10, Intimidate +5, Survival +5

Languages Common, Terran

Other Abilities armor training

Gear lashunta ringwear I, assault hammer, utility scattergun with 8 shells, stickybomb grenades I (2)

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or team (3-5)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Earth Affinity (Su) See Racial Traits.



Oreads are humanoids whose bloodline is infused with power from the Plane of Earth, such as from a shaitan (see page 58). Oreads usually have skin of a dark neutral tone, and some have features that appear to be made of stone, crystal, or packed earth. Oreads are generally calm to the point of stoicism.

OREAD TEMPLATE GRAFT

An oread's ancestors have a connection to the Plane of Earth.

Required Creature Type and Subtype: Outsider (native).

Traits: Darkvision 60 ft.; acid resistance 5; earth affinity (see the Racial Traits sidebar), spell-like abilities (*energy ray* [acid only] at will).

Suggested Ability Score Modifiers: Strength, Wisdom.

XAXMELLIA

CR
17XP
102,400

N Colossal magical beast (colossus)

Init +5; **Senses** blindsense (thought) 120 ft., blindsight (sound) 60 ft.; **Perception** +29**Aura** destructive rain (30 ft., DC 22)**DEFENSE**

HP 340

EAC 31; **KAC** 33**Fort** +21; **Ref** +21; **Will** +15**Defensive Abilities** regeneration 15 (cold); **Immunities** acid, poison; **Resistances** fire 30, sonic 30**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold**OFFENSE****Speed** 50 ft., burrow 20 ft., fly 100 ft. (Ex, average), swim 100 ft.**Melee** bite +32 (3d12+25 A & P) or

claw +32 (3d12+25 S) or

tail +32 (3d10+25 P; critical knockdown)

Multiattack bite +29 (3d12+25 A & P), 2 claws +29 (3d12+25 S), tail +29 (3d10+25 P; critical knockdown)**Space** 50 ft.; **Reach** 50 ft.**Offensive Abilities** acidic breath weapon (120-ft. line, 17d6 A, DC 22, usable every 1d4 hours), demolish structures, sonic breath weapon (90-ft. cone, 17d6 So and deafened 1 minute, DC 22 for half and no deafened, usable every 1d4 rounds), wing buffet**STATISTICS****Str** +8; **Dex** +5; **Con** +11; **Int** -2; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +0**Skills** Acrobatics +29, Athletics +29, Intimidate +29, Survival +29**Languages** Ancient Daimalkan (can't speak any language)**Other Abilities** amphibious, massive**ECOLOGY****Environment** any (Daimalko)**Organization** solitary**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Demolish Structures (Ex)** See page 72 of the *Starfinder Alien Archive*.**Destructive Rain (Su)** While the xaxmellia has half its Hit Points or fewer or the bleeding condition, the acidic blood pouring and scales falling from its body create a rain of destruction within 30 feet of the creature. Those in this area take 3d12 acid and bludgeoning damage each round (Reflex DC 22 half).**Wing Buffet (Ex)** As a full action, a xaxmellia can flap its wings to slash at nearby

creatures and stir up a debris-filled wind. When using this ability, a xaxmellia can make two claw attacks, using its multiattack attack bonus. Additionally, each Huge or smaller creature within 120 feet of the xaxmellia must attempt a DC 22 Fortitude saving throw or be knocked prone and pushed 1d4 × 10 feet away from the xaxmellia. Dust obscures the area, so creatures within 5 feet of an attacker have concealment against that attacker, and creatures farther away from an attacker have total concealment against that attacker. The dust remains in the air until the end of the xaxmellia's next turn.

Xaxmellias are kaiju native to Daimalko (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 464). The first rose from an acidic lake in the caldera of a quiescent volcano, and the volcano erupted soon after. These colossi are capable of burrowing through soil and rubble in a bizarre corkscrew fashion, using this ability to hide and then ambushing prey, including rival kaiju.

The typical xaxmellia is 70 feet tall.

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CENTUS II

World of Towering Spires and Corporate Intrigue

Diameter: $\times 1$; **Mass:** $\times 3$

Gravity: $\times 3$

Location: Near Space

Atmosphere: Thick and toxic

Day: 17 hours; **Year:** 182 days

Centus II is the only marginally habitable planet of the 12 that make up the Centus system in Near Space. It was originally discovered by a group of shirren mercenaries under the employ of a consortium of corporations in search of areas into which they could expand. The planet's surface is a wealth of heavy metals and minerals, but the only water is found in a few large, poisonous lakes, and the atmosphere contains high levels of arsenic and dangerous metals in vapor form. However, the shirrens found that the air of the world's mesosphere, though below freezing, was tolerable with the use of rebreathers. Instead of low-orbit platforms, the shirrens decided to build structures that could withstand the excessive gravity on the surface at their bases but stretch miles up into the sky.

Each tower consists of a sturdy foundation several miles across and a core spire that tapers slightly as it rises, ending in large egg-shaped pods. Numbering slightly more than a dozen, each tower is a marvel of modern magical and structural engineering. Though they are identical on the outside, each tower is owned by a different corporation that furnishes the

inside in its own unique way. The employees that live and work in the pods are trained to operate in both the microgravity present at the mesosphere and the harsh gravitational pull of the planet's surface to harvest its resources. These shifts are usually rotated on a yearly basis.

While most of the metals and minerals extracted by each corporation are shipped off-planet, a sizable portion of them are used to maintain and repair the towers. The corporations make enough profit on their exports for this to be cost-effective for now, but some planetary forecasters are worried that Centus II will be completely stripped of resources within the next few decades. The mining rights for various areas on the surface are constantly in flux as the corporations trade with one another. In addition, occasional periods of fast-shifting tectonic plates might cause a rich vein of ore to move from one claim to another, creating a high demand for talented surveyors and seismologists. Many of the companies are not above underhanded dealings, faking deeds or sabotaging mining operations. Those skilled in corporate espionage or simple thuggery can easily find work on Centus II.

Complicating matters are the tales of creatures native to the planet. While no reputable person has actually reported seeing one of these so-called "Centus creeps," gruesome stories of missing employees and the aftermaths of these attacks run rampant through the towers. The current consensus is that a Centus creep is a slug-like creature approximately 9 feet long and made of solid muscle due to the high gravity.



NEXT MONTH

ASSAULT ON THE CRUCIBLE

By Jason Tondro

While the PCs recover in the newly freed city of Kahlannal, General Khaim launches his assault on the Burning Archipelago from within the sun. The PCs have advantages of position, knowledge, and surprise, giving them a unique opportunity. With the aid of the anassanois, the PCs can take the fight to the enemy base. Thwarting the efreeti plot requires returning the Far Portal to the surface of the sun. However, the fiery forces overseeing the base won't stand idle. In the end, General Khaim risks everything to carry out his plan to dominate the Burning Archipelago!

CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

By Tracy Barnett

The PCs have defeated General Khaim and ended his ambitions to take the Burning Archipelago by force. However, they have also thwarted the daughter of a demigoddess and a would-be divinity, the Malikah. If the PCs fail to deal with the Malikah, she just might burn them

in the end. Meanwhile, a servant of the mysterious Eshtayiv also seeks the heroes. Whether this encounter ends in weal or woe depends on whether the PCs are willing to accept a reward from an ancient evil.

PLANE OF FIRE

By Thurston Hillman

Both dazzling and deadly, the Plane of Fire is an infinite expanse of flames and lava under skies of smoke and cinders. Home to a variety of species who thrive within the blazing landscapes, the Plane of Fire offers treasures both material and spiritual to visitors who dare to brave the flames.

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SOLAR STRIKE

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PROTECTOR ACCORD

MAP KEY

1. Protector Station
2. Power Core
3. Transmutable Bay

↑
FORWARD



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



REBELS IN THE SUN

A cry for help from deep within the sun leads the heroes to dive in once more. Forces loyal to efreet from the Plane of Fire have conquered the deep-sun settlement of a peaceful species, threatening to destroy their way of life. The heroes must infiltrate the occupied city, find allies within, and defeat the fiery oppressors. The group acts as a strike team, assisting the rebels, taking out high-value targets, and helping to restore order. But even if they accomplish these missions, the heroes still have to face the enemy commanders—including a mighty solar dragon—and the discovery that this attack is merely a beachhead for a larger invasion that threatens the Pact Worlds' power on the sun!

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