

STARFINDER[®]



FLY FREE OR DIE
ADVENTURE PATH

**WE'RE NO
HEROES**

BY BJ HENSLEY



BD514

TIER 1

Evgeniya-Jaimisson Company Transport

Small Light Freighter

Speed 8; **Maneuverability** good (turn 1); **Drift** 1

AC 16; **TL** 15

HP 40; **DT** —; **CT** 8

Shields Basic 40 (forward 10, port 10, starboard 10, aft 10)

Power Core Micron Ultra (80 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** basic medium-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 1 trinode, mk 3 defenses, mk 4 armor; **Expansion Bays** cargo hold (2), smuggler compartment

Modifiers +1 to any 3 checks per round, +2 Computers (sensors only), +1 Piloting; **Complement** 4 (minimum 1, maximum 6)

CREW

Captain Bluff +5 (1 rank), Computers +5 (1 rank), Diplomacy +5 (1 rank), Engineering +5 (1 rank), Piloting +5 (1 rank), Sense Motive +10 (1 rank)

Engineer Engineering +5 (1 rank)

Pilot Piloting +5 (1 rank)

Science Officer Computers +5 (1 rank)

Starships from the BD series are EJ Corp's smallest cargo haulers, and *BD514* is a typical example; the Company has manufactured thousands of these identical ships, each marked with the ubiquitous Evgeniya-Jaimisson logo. These vessels are crewed by salaried employees who don't own their own ships, but rather lease them from the Company to fulfill shipping contracts throughout the Pact Worlds, Near Space, and the Vast. BD-series ships are built for ease of use, utility, and endurance, rather than comfort; all crew accommodations are shared, and it's virtually impossible to be alone while aboard. The single large common area is used for cooking, dining, and relaxation. A tour of the engineering room for a BD-series ship usually reveals patches and replacement parts several years old, and the interiors of these ships are notoriously noisy. On the other hand, the ship's computer is surprisingly advanced, and the controls are so straightforward that a few minutes of instruction is enough for a rookie pilot to get one off the ground. The ship is managed by TARN (Technical Automated Resource Network), an AI modeled on an idealized, paternal version of Tarn Jaimisson, the mysterious Company founder.

Each BD is issued a six-wheeled A4-series Company rig and two hovercarts for cargo-handling purposes (page 6). A "secure storage compartment" below the main deck is officially intended for overflow cargo, but the shape of the hull—combined with electronic countermeasures and shield diffraction patterns—creates a blind spot in this compartment where sensors can't easily reach; Company employees use this space to hide cargo that law enforcement might confiscate, such as hyperleaf and other drugs.

BD514 is unarmed. EJ Corp employees know weapons cost more than the Company is willing to pay, and both starship and crew are cheap, expendable, and easily replaced. Some crews who work together on the same BD-series transport for an extended period might make clandestine modifications, however, installing a turret-mounted particle beam in the secure storage area beneath the main deck. This substantially weakens the ship's armor and shield integrity, however, and increases its heat signature. For ships that have been customized in this way, reduce the AC by 2 and TL by 1, reduce shields to Basic 30 (forward 8, port 7, starboard 7, aft 8), remove the smuggler compartment, and add a light particle beam in a turret. Give the pilot and captain a gunnery bonus of +5 (1st level).

STARFINDER

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This book refers to 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 paizo.com/sfrd.

<i>Alien Archive 2</i>	AA2	<i>Character Operations Manual</i>	COM
<i>Armory</i>	AR	<i>Pact Worlds</i>	PW



ON THE COVER

Lord Sinjin's bodyguard and assassin, Deminda, looks on as Iseph and Quig liberate a Gideron Authority prison in this cover by Tomasz Chistowski.



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DO THE JOB, GET PAID

Fly Free or Die is the story of a crew of scoundrels, rogues, and misfits trying to survive in a galaxy where everyone has a price. This isn't an Adventure Path about saving the galaxy; the heroes of Fly Free or Die work for a living. Honestly, they'd never call themselves heroes, and their integrity is constantly tested. This is the story of a starship crew that goes from rags to riches... but then to ruin and revenge.

In the first half of the Adventure Path, the player characters are just trying to make it day to day. They begin as employees of Evgeniya-Jaimisson Corporation—aka EJ (pronounced “edge”) Corp, or just “the Company”—a massive corporation that cares about profit, its stock price, and little else. When a series of jobs go bad, the PCs become vulnerable to the manipulation of a Golden League crime boss named Lord Sinjin, eager to use this leverage (and the PCs' connection with EJ Corp) to his personal advantage. Sinjin hires them to steal the *Oliphaunt*, a starship equipped with a massive breakthrough in hybrid technology: *null-space cargo holds* that are actually bigger on the inside. This technology has the potential to transform trade in the Pact Worlds and alleviate many other problems, from reducing homelessness and overcrowding to adequately supplying colony worlds and medical rescues. But Sinjin is no humanitarian; he wants the *Oliphaunt* so he can smuggle any cargo anywhere he likes. After the PCs steal the *Oliphaunt* for Sinjin, he betrays them—so they keep the ship and start running.

For a time, the PCs do jobs wherever they can be found, pursued both by Sinjin and by Eline Reisora, an executive vice president of EJ Corp, the *Oliphaunt*'s manufacturer (and the PCs' former employer). Eline has kept the theft of the null-space technology quiet, buying herself time to recover the starship. As a follower of the Prophecies of Kalistrade, Eline believes that securing wealth and fortune are the keys to achieving her immortality; when the PCs steal the *Oliphaunt*, they put both her career and her soul on the line. The PCs must stay one step ahead of corporate assassins and Golden League contract killers, all while still earning enough credits to pay their bills.

In their travels, the crew of the *Oliphaunt* have many opportunities to make connections and build relationships with those they've met along the way. Some of these individuals are working-class people much like the PCs, just trying to make it through life in a galaxy that doesn't much care about them. They're good people that need help, but they barely have enough to eat every day, let alone reward

CAMPAIGN OUTLINE

SPOILER ALERT!

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

the PCs with a shower of credits or high-tech gear. When the players are confronted with these people in need, they're faced with choices: to do what's right, or to do what's easy. The path they choose doesn't just determine the way these NPCs react to the PCs in the future, it determines the kind of people the PCs want to be. Are they grim cutthroats who are

only in this for the money? Or are they perhaps more heroic than they thought, willing to put their lives and livelihood on the line for total strangers who, in the end, aren't much different from the PCs themselves?

Eventually, the PCs get an opportunity for a big score: a single job that will make them rich for the rest of their lives. The PCs must steal one of the Kalistocracy's legendary golden commerce barges, an unparalleled prize filled with mysterious, glorious cargo. But the PCs' successful theft prompts Sinjin and Eline to ally against them. Before they even know what's happening, the PCs have lost everything, including the *Oliphaunt*. With no starship, how can they possibly escape their enemies, let alone rebuild their lives?

The PCs have experienced a meteoric rise, and then lost it all. Now, it's time for revenge. The final volumes of the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path follow the crew as they struggle to reclaim the *Oliphaunt* and punish the people who've done them wrong. Throughout the Adventure Path, the PCs have been faced with difficult moral and ethical choices, moments when they're forced to consider how they treat other people, both friend and foe. The ramifications of those decisions now manifest: in the final chapters, those the PCs have alienated come back to haunt them, while those they've treated fairly become crucial allies. In the end, the PCs must grapple with the same choices they've always faced: to take life, to give it, or to walk away—to fly free or die.

WE'RE NO HEROES

By BJ Hensley

Starfinder Adventure Path #34, Levels 1–2

The PCs serve as the hired crew of a starship owned by the Evgeniya-Jaimisson Corporation, hauling cargo from one planet to another. Their current job goes south, however, when the buyer is eliminated by a rival before the PCs can deliver the cargo. This leaves the crew in hot water with the Company and brings them to the attention of Lord Sinjin. Sinjin hires them to carry a shipload of weapons to Vohxa, a planet in Near Space, where the hobgoblin Gideron Authority is conquering a world of peaceful miners. On Vohxa, the crew

come face to face with the brutal conditions of a hobgoblin labor camp, and they must choose to carry out the job as planned or give the local resistance a chance to fight off the Authority. When this job fails to please their Company paymasters, the PCs can see termination looming—but Sinjin offers them a chance to go independent. If they steal the *Oliphaunt* for him from EJ Corp's Horse Eye Orbital Plate, a starship construction facility in orbit around Aballon, he'll pay them enough to buy a ship of their own or retire to a life of ease. But in reality, Sinjin considers the PCs to be loose ends, and when they deliver the starship, he tries to have them killed. If they survive, they claim the *Oliphaunt* and steer their own course to the stars.

MERCHANTS OF THE VOID

By Leo Glass

Starfinder Adventure Path #35, Levels 3–4

The PCs are on their own now, but they do have a little help: Tarika, their former Company dispatcher, has also gone independent and lines them up with new work in the Veskarium. But the *Oliphaunt* isn't the only ship eager for this job; the PCs meet Captain Niva Rovo and the crew of *Wintermourn*, rival free traders who will haunt their steps throughout the Adventure Path. As the PCs haul cargo from world to world in the Veskarium—herding dangerous defrexes from Vesk-3 and stormrunning the turbulent atmosphere of Vesk-5—they are targeted by an agent hired by Eline Reisor. A brief turn as bounty hunters tracing a fugitive from vesk justice eventually leads the PCs to a prison in the Marixah Republic, but the PCs aren't the only crew planning a jailbreak here, as Captain Rovo has some of her own team in the same facility. Will the PCs ally with their rivals, or go their own way and risk failure?

PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

By Joe Pasini

Starfinder Adventure Path #36, Levels 5–6

Tarika has been a loyal friend, helping the PCs get by when they were Company employees and finding them jobs now that they've gone solo. She calls in her chips and asks the PCs to do her a favor: travel to Entha, a largely aquatic world in the Vast, where her daughter Shan is employed in a Company terraforming project. Shan has discovered that there's more to Entha than EJ Corp wants anyone to know, but her efforts to raise the alarm have been quashed by Company managers. By the time the PCs find her, the terraforming facility she works in is collapsing under the pressure of a million tons of seawater, and only the PCs can save the workers there. Once they do, they learn the true extent of EJ Corp's exploitation of Entha, and they meet the sapient creatures threatened by the terraforming effort. The PCs have a chance to sabotage the Company's foothold on Entha and save an entire population,

but the local Company manager is a dragon, and she's not going down without a fight.

THE WHITE GLOVE AFFAIR

By Kendra Leigh Speedling

Starfinder Adventure Path #37, Levels 7–8

When the PCs stole the *Oliphaunt*, they caught a glimpse of one of the golden commerce barges built by followers of the Prophecies of Kalistrade. Tarika has found a way to board this vessel, enabling the PCs to steal it and its precious cargo. If they pull it off, they'll be rich for life! But once the PCs are safely aboard and the ship underway, they find that the barge is empty and bound for a secret station in the Drift, where Kalistocrats bid on the right to reap endless profits in the Vast. Masquerading as Kalistocrats themselves, the PCs must somehow accumulate enough credits and favors to win this auction and board another commerce barge before their cover is blown. That's going to be hard, considering Eline herself is on the station!

CRASH AND BURN

By Christopher Wasko

Starfinder Adventure Path #38, Levels 9–10

After stealing the commerce barge, the PCs are rich beyond all dreams of avarice. But Sinjin and Eline have joined forces, and everything comes crashing down. Soon, the PCs are stranded on Absalom Station with nothing but the clothes on their backs and the guns in their manipulators. It's time to call in favors and get a junker starship running well enough to not only catch the mercenaries who stole the *Oliphaunt*, but to survive the encounter, too. If they can reach Eline's floating palace, they can shoot their way to the *Oliphaunt* and enact revenge on one of their most hated enemies. But what form will that vengeance take? Is killing Eline really the most hurtful punishment they can inflict?

THE GILDED CAGE

By Jessica Catalan

Starfinder Adventure Path #39, Levels 11–12

The hour of reckoning has come. If they are ever to be truly free and not just fugitives, the PCs must settle their score with Lord Sinjin. But Sinjin is a Golden League crime boss surrounded by Xun assassins, unassailable in his lair. The only chance the crew has is to lure him from his headquarters. This plan culminates on the Smuggler's Moon, a remote planetoid frequented by the galaxy's most illustrious criminals. First, the PCs must seize control of the moon while keeping their presence there a secret. Then, they'll need to lay a trail of breadcrumbs and rumors that Sinjin won't be able to resist. But the drow crime lord hasn't risen to the top of the Golden League by being a gullible rube; he's prepared for duplicity, and the PCs quickly discover that even while on the hunt, they've become the prey.

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WE'RE NO HEROES

PART 1: PUNCHING THE CLOCK 6

The player characters, piloting the transport vessel *BD514*, are the spacefaring equivalent of truck drivers working for EJ Corp, on the clock with perishable cargo. Unfortunately, thieves, scavengers, and corporate warfar ensure nothing goes as planned.

PART 2: THE GIDERON JOB 16

The crew of *BD514* are desperate to get their careers back on track. Fortunately, their dispatcher—an old friend—has a job for them: running guns for a Golden League crime lord named Sinjin. Although distasteful, this job could get them back in the green.

PART 3: GOING ROGUE 28

Lord Sinjin has a proposal for the crew: since they're about to lose their EJ Corp jobs and starship, why not steal a cutting-edge cargo vessel for him? If they succeed, they'll have enough credits to go independent, or maybe even retire in style. What could go wrong?

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"We're No Heroes" is designed for four characters.



The PCs begin this adventure at 1st level.



The PCs should reach 2nd level by the time they arrive on Vohxa.



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

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Pact Worlds are home to countless corporations, and those corporations thrive by exploiting labor. The Evgeniya-Jaimisson Corporation—officially known as EJ Corp, but referred to by its employees as “the Company”—is one of the worst. Known for its never-ending mission to industrialize space, the Company sends endless fleets of ships to mine valuable resources, transport cargo from one planet or system to another, and terraform planets from inhospitable hells into private paradises bought and sold by the galaxy’s elite. EJ Corp manufactures everything from starships and mining equipment to space suits and ration packs. In fact, it’s rare for an expedition to depart from the Pact Worlds without some kind of EJ Corp technology aboard.

Tarn Jaimisson founded the corporation that bore his name 50 years ago, but he was eventually bought out by the Evgeniya Corporation based on Vesk Prime. The new conglomerate doubled its focus on profit and expansion, vigorously stretching its tendrils beyond the Pact Worlds, throughout Near Space and deep into the Vast. The Company employs hundreds of thousands of people with little regard for their welfare. To them, they’re just faceless numbers, piloting nameless spacecraft—and if one of them can’t fulfill Company metrics, there’s always someone else willing to step in and take their place.

The Company pays below-subsistence wages, relying on Pact Worlds charity and social safety nets to pick up the slack. Despite this, the Company still attracts workers through the empty promise of stock options and bonuses; not only do these never fully materialize, but attempting to cash in those bonuses incurs so many fees and taxes that anything leftover is a pittance. Sapient come to EJ Corp looking for honest work and an honest day’s pay, but they get caught in a bureaucratic nightmare from which they can’t escape. They might curse the Company, but they can’t afford to quit.

While EJ Corp has a plethora of lucrative deals, one of the most valuable is its contract with the Kalistocracy to manufacture the faction’s golden commerce barges that depart each month from Aballon’s Horse Eye Orbital Plate, an immense, high-orbit starship factory.

Enormous, slow, and known for carrying valuable cargo, these barges regularly attract piracy. In recent years, crafty thieves have made off with untold quantities of precious cargo from these vessels, besetting them before they can even enter the Drift. Worried that these troublesome thefts might cost the Company its extremely lucrative Kalistocracy contract, Eline Reisora—an executive vice president at EJ Corp and a Kalistocrat herself—has spearheaded a top-secret project to provide secure transportation for valuable cargo.

But Eline’s team succeeded beyond her wildest dreams, discovering a true innovation that starship engineers have tried to crack for years: *null-space cargo holds* that are actually bigger on the inside. A humble transport equipped with these hybrid holds can carry as much as the largest bulk freighter. The technology could revolutionize everything from medical resupply to overcrowding—but naturally, Eline and EJ Corp intend to keep it a Company secret. Yes, pirates may continue to pillage the golden commerce barges, and the Company might lose the Kalistocracy contract, but the strategic and financial value of discreetly doubling its shipping capacity using nothing more than small, unobtrusive cargo haulers far outweighs any single contract. The new cargo holds have been installed on a test vehicle called the *Oliphaunt*, recently constructed on the Horse Eye Orbital Plate and currently awaiting field testing.

Despite the Company’s mandate to keep its new technology secret, word has, naturally, leaked. The self-appointed Golden League crime boss Lord Sinjin, a male drow, has accumulated great wealth by overcoming several challenges on Apostae. After leaving his home planet’s matriarchal culture years ago to join the Golden League as a Xun assassin, he rose through the ranks and has now established his own crime family with which to plague the galaxy. His far-reaching spy network has informed him of the *null-space cargo holds* and the newly completed *Oliphaunt*. Sinjin has decided to steal the *Oliphaunt* and sell it on the black market—after building his own, even better version of the ship, of course. But stealing the *Oliphaunt* won’t be easy; only employees and shareholders of the corporations that rent facilities on the Horse Eye Orbital Plate are allowed access—Sinjin needs thieves who are both Company employees and highly expendable.

That’s where the player characters come in.

ASSEMBLING THE CREW

The PCs compose the crew of *BD514*, a light freighter manufactured, owned, and operated by EJ Corp. Your players can use “Working for a Living” on pages 40–49 of this volume to help create their characters. That article has advice and resources for your players, including relevant themes, gear, starship roles, and many other details. “Working for a Living” also includes eight brief backgrounds; each player should choose one of these backgrounds for their character. These backgrounds detail a specific incident in a PC’s past; this incident connects the player character to one of the recurring characters in the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path: Eline Reisora, Lord Sinjin, Tarika, her daughter Shan, or one of the crew members of the *Wintermourn*, a rival merchant ship in *Starfinder Adventure Path #35: Merchants of the Void*.

Regardless of the PCs’ past, all of them are currently employed by the Company. Although they serve *BD514*’s crew, they don’t own the ship, instead leasing it and receiving payment based on completion of each job. The PCs get most of jobs from their Company dispatcher, Tarika. Though every job offers lousy pay, each also has the potential for a bonus, calculated based on cargo condition and travel time.

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PART I: PUNCHING THE CLOCK

The adventure begins on the lush world of Castrovel, where the PCs must pick up a shipment of Yaro berries, a tangy fruit that grows only on the banks of the Yaro River. This seasonal, sizable purple berry is relatively commonplace in the markets of Qabarat, but it's considered a delicacy on other worlds. Tarika asks the PCs to pick up 50 tons of Yaro berries from a local establishment called Prat's Produce and transport them to Hivemarket on Akiton—where such a delicacy can go for 10 credits a bowl. The PCs must deliver the fruit before it spoils, in 6 days. If the PCs manage to shave a day or two off the trip, Tarika assures them that they'll likely earn a bonus. From Tarika's perspective, this should be a routine job.

When the PCs land in Qabarat, read or paraphrase the following.

Rain pours down on the small freighter, BD514, over dark ocean toward the city of Qabarat, which grows rapidly on the horizon. Though known as the Jewel of the Western Sea, little of the city sparkles in this weather. Qabarat lines the mouth of the Yaro River, which stretches past the city, into the foothills of the Stormshield Mountains beyond. Navigation beacons and the city's traffic control AI direct BD514 to a landing pad at Ship's End, the city's bustling starport.

To land the starship safely despite the harsh weather and poor visibility, a PC must succeed at a DC 15 Piloting check. If the PC fails this check, the landing is rough enough to jostle crew members around the cockpit and knock several personal items loose, but the bumpy descent doesn't damage the ship.

Prat's Produce can be found a few miles from the starport, on Sprik Street. Fortunately, BD514 contains a vehicle called a cargo rig and a couple of hovercarts to help transport the goods.

CARGO RIG

LEVEL 1

Price 5,000

Huge land vehicle (10 ft. wide, 20 ft. long, 10 ft. high)

Speed 10 ft., full 450 ft., 50 mph (hover)

EAC 13; **KAC** 16; **Cover** improved cover

HP 40 (20); **Hardness** 6

Attack (Collision) 6d4 B (DC 10)

Modifiers -1 Piloting, -2 attack (-4 attack at full speed)

Systems hover trailer, planetary comm unit; **Passengers** 4

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hover Trailer (Ex) Every Company rig has a hover trailer stowed in a specialized compartment between the floorboards and the hover jets. One person can take 10

minutes to unpack this trailer, attach it to the back of the vehicle, and extend it up to 80 feet. A hover trailer can carry up to 50 tons, but any cargo must be carefully secured, as the trailer has no roof or walls and provides no cover. When a Company rig has a hover trailer attached, double the vehicle's Piloting and attack modifiers.

DESCRIPTION

EJ Corp manufactures these vehicles for freighter crews to transport cargo to and from their ships. The cab seats four and is decorated with the EJ Corp logo and slogan: "Take it to the EJ!"

HOVERCART

LEVEL 1

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM	PRICE 250	BULK 1
CAPACITY 20		USAGE 1/HOUR

EJ Corp produces hovercarts and issues them to transport crews. The hovercart looks like a small metal briefcase with a handle but is operated via a wireless key fob. At the press of a button, the case unfolds and reshapes itself into a disk 3 feet in diameter that floats up to 3 feet off the ground. The disk can support up to 50 bulk and can be set to follow the key fob at a distance of up to 5 feet (Speed 30 ft.).

PRAT'S PRODUCE

Prat's Produce is a large, family-owned grocery and distribution center specializing in off-world trade. The manager, **Runo Prat** (NG male korasha lashunta), deals fairly with those who deal fairly with him; his prices are reasonable, and he prides himself on having a clean store and environmentally responsible products sourced from local growers. The company has been in the Prat family for four generations.

When the PCs reach their destination, read or paraphrase the following.

The inside of the grocery exudes a cleanliness that is minimalistic, but not sterile. Rows of shelves and friendly aisle displays present a wide variety of well-organized foodstuffs for purchase. Dozens of people—mostly lashuntas—go about their daily errands, selecting food and making (sometimes telepathic) conversation. Small, bright screens scattered about the store use flashy ads to announce the day's best deals and upcoming specials. To the right of the entrance, automated check-out lines supervised by a middle-aged lashunta woman, tally up customer purchases.

If the PCs approach the check-out supervisor, **Needa Prat** (NG female korasha lashunta), she points the PCs to the general manager's office in the rear of the building.

RUNO'S OFFICE

An older, stocky lashunta wearing blue coveralls sits behind a wooden desk covered in papers. He taps furiously on

a datapad while grumbling to himself. His most notable feature is a missing left antenna and a thin scar that begins at his forehead and zigzags back along his scalp. He looks up, tosses the tablet aside, and asks in a polite but agitated voice, "What can I do for you?"

Runo Prat didn't want to be a grocer. As a young man, he enlisted in the military to fight against formians. But when he was discharged shortly after the peace treaties were signed, there was little else to do besides return to the family business. After many years running the place, he's content with his lot and ready to retire. The cargo the PCs are about to pick up represents many years of planning and investment, and a successful sale on Akiton will secure his financial future as he passes the business on to his daughter Needa.

But Runo is struggling with his tech. He doesn't know it yet, but his datapad has been hacked remotely by a gang of talented space goblins looking for plunder. He can't get the datapad to work no matter what he does. The PCs can help him, but they'll also want to introduce themselves and inquire about the shipment of Yaro berries. Runo responds well to military veterans, especially lashuntas or anyone with apparent injuries or prosthetics.

"It's good you're here," the old man says, "but you'd better hurry. There's a lot to move, and those Yaro berries will spoil before too long. You've no idea how much this shipment means to me. I'm retiring after this. Thirty years running this place. Now it's Needa's turn. This shipment is my retirement plan, so please, be careful, okay?"

If the PCs notice his struggle with the datapad and ask about it, he tells them what he knows.

"It was working fine for inventory last night, but now it's a mess. I need to file the change of ownership paperwork, but I can't get the damn thing to work!" He gestures helplessly at the tablet on the desk.

Runo's datapad (*Starfinder Armory* 100) is a tier 1 computer with a lockout countermeasure, secured with a thumbprint and password. Unfortunately, space goblin hackers have changed Runo's password, and after his repeated attempts to access the datapad, the lockout countermeasure has activated. A PC with a hacking kit can try to fix Runo's datapad problems by hacking the computer and overcoming the security measures put in by the space goblins. Runo doesn't have any hacking kits in his store, but a PC could acquire one in the city and return.

Hacking the Computer: The DC to hack this datapad is 17, but Runo can provide his thumbprint, partially bypassing some of the datapad's security. This gives any PC who tries to help him a +5 bonus to their Computers check (using Runo's password, however, is no help). Alternatively, a PC can use Engineering to open the datapad's casing and physically access its components (though PCs without an engineering kit take a -2 penalty to any Engineering check). A successful DC 17 Engineering check bypasses the lockout, but Runo's thumbprint is not useful with this method. A PC who succeeds at either of these checks gains access and quickly notices that the hackers have installed a firewall to prevent Runo's password from being reset; a successful DC 15 Perception check reveals that the algorithms and firewall utilize classic space goblin coding techniques. Getting past this firewall requires a successful DC 19 Computers check; the bonus from Runo's thumbprint applies to this check. If the PC can succeed at this second check, they can reset the

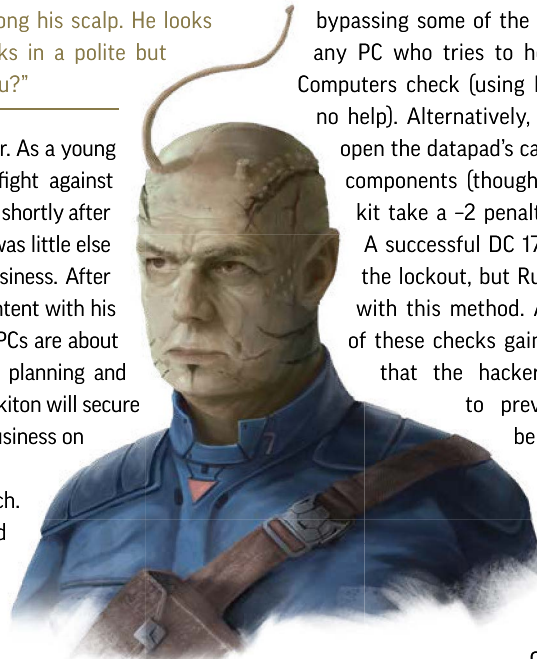
password and clear the hackers out of the datapad.

Runo is grateful to anyone who helps him with his datapad. "Keep your eye out on your way back to Ship's End," he tells them. "I'd heard some people talk of goblins out there, but I didn't think much of it. If you're right, and they're the ones who hacked my files, well, I don't know what they're up to, but it's criminal, that's for sure."

Runo won't be paid for this delivery until the PCs complete the sale on Akiton. As soon as the PCs sign to confirm that they've taken possession of the Yaro berries, they can load the cargo onto their cargo rig. There are 50 tons of Yaro berries packed into 50-lb. sealed crates in the back of the distribution center, and the PCs can load them onto their Company rig using their hovercarts. This task takes 16 hours of labor, but with two hovercarts, the PCs can cut this time in half. PCs might be able to further reduce this time by, for example, casting *hoverdisk* (*Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 136) or similar magic to move additional cargo, counting as a third worker and reducing the overall time to 5 hours.

Runo meets briefly with the PCs before they depart. "Siski will give you a fair price for this shipment," he tells them. "She runs Ka Imports in Hivemarket. You tell her I sent you! We go way back."

Treasure: If the PCs helped Runo with his datapad, he slides another crate of Yaro berries their way from the store shelves. "Ship rations can get pretty stale on a long Drift," he says with a smile. "Courtesy of Prat's Produce." The berries are worth 500 credits on the Akiton market,



RUNO PRAT

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EVENT 1: IT FELL OFF THE BACK OF A TRUCK

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

NORTH

but the PCs might prefer to eat them. The PCs have only a short drive back to their ship, but that journey is destined to be interrupted.

Story Award: If the PCs help Runo Prat fix his datapad, award them 400 XP.

EVENT 1: IT FELL OFF THE BACK OF A TRUCK (CR 2)

While violent crime is rare in Qabarat-lashuntas being a highly communicative telepathic species—but starports boast a highly mobile population who might not have as much at stake. A gang of space goblins has set up operations in the dock districts near Ship's End. After hacking Runo Prat's datapad, they've been waiting to ambush the Yaro berry shipment. Using a junkbot decoy disguised as a civilian, the goblins intend to distract the PCs long enough to make off with as many crates as their junkcycles can carry.

As the PCs near the spaceport, read or paraphrase the following.

The city is a constant buzz. Spacecraft hum in nearby docking facilities and zoom overhead while merchants and crowds of tourists chatter; the rumbling engine of the cargo rig below merges seamlessly into the urban symphony. As the spaceport comes back into view, up ahead, an old woman pushing a cart across the street yelps in alarm as

her cart tips over and rusty tanks of petrol tumble out, scattering in every direction. Traffic stops and drivers in nearby vehicles shout, but the old woman ignores them. Instead, she walks slowly to one of the rolling tanks, picks it up, and carefully cradles it in her arms as she returns to the fallen cart.

Creatures: The old woman is the goblins' junkbot decoy. A PC can try to penetrate the junkbot decoy's disguise with a successful DC 10 Perception check (adjusted because the junkbot is disguised as a different creature type than its own). A PC who remembers Runo's warning or identifies the junkbot may suspect the space goblins.

From hiding spots behind parked vehicles, three space goblins pilot junkcycles to the back of the hover trailer and begin unloading crates of Yaro berries. Each junkcycle is equipped with saddle bags and a rack behind the seat that allow the vehicle to carry three crates total; each goblin can transfer one crate every round as a full action. Once per round, a PC who can see the back of the trailer can attempt a Perception check to spot the thieves; the DC for this check begins at 17 but decreases by 2 every round. If the space goblins are undisturbed for 4 rounds (1 round to drive to the trailer and 3 rounds to steal the crates), they drive off on the 5th round, scattering in different directions and taking narrow side streets that the PCs' cargo rig can't navigate.

JUNKBOT DECOY

CR 1

XP 400

N Medium construct (technological)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;
Perception +5

DEFENSE

HP 20

EAC 11; **KAC** 13

Fort +1; **Ref** +1; **Will** -1

Immunities construct immunities

Weakness unstable

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee slam +9 (1d6+5 B)

Offensive Abilities breath weapon (DC 10)

TACTICS

Combat The junkbot waits until one or more PCs get close, then attacks with a slam or tries to catch multiple PCs in its breath weapon, heedless of any civilians nearby. This reveals its disguise if the PCs haven't yet penetrated it.

Morale The junkbot fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Bluff +5, Disguise +10, Intimidate +5

Other Abilities disguised, unliving

Languages Common, Goblin (can't speak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Ex) The junkbot has been modified with a petrol tank in its chest and igniters in its mouth. As a full action, it can breathe fire in a 15-foot cone, dealing 2d8 fire damage (Reflex DC 10 half). The junkbot can use its breath weapon four times before its internal petrol tank is emptied.

Disguised (Ex) The junkbot wears hooded clothing and a cheap wig to give it the appearance of a humanoid. Its voice box allows it to make noises in a vaguely feminine voice, but it can't form actual words. Anyone inspecting the junkbot can penetrate its disguise with a successful DC 10 Perception check.

Unstable (Ex) If the junkbot is critically hit while it has any uses of its breath weapon remaining, it explodes, destroying itself immediately and dealing 2d8 fire damage to all creatures within 15 feet (Reflex DC 10 half).

SPACE GOBLIN SNEEKTHEEFS (3)

CR 1/3

XP 135

CE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.;
Perception +3

DEFENSE

HP 6

EAC 11; **KAC** 12

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

OFFENSE

Speed 35 ft.

Melee dogslicer +0 (1d4 S)

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

Offensive Abilities backstab, tinker

TACTICS

Combat If the space goblin sneektheefs are spotted, one of them attacks with their semi-auto pistol while the others continue loading their junkcycles with Yaro-berry crates. As soon as one space goblin sneektheef has fully loaded their cycle, they flee, and the others to follow.

Morale If two of the space goblins are defeated, the third attempts to flee.

STATISTICS

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

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

Languages Common, Goblin

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Backstab (Ex) If the space goblin sneektheef successfully attacks an enemy while an ally is adjacent to that enemy, the sneektheef inflicts +1d4 additional damage.

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

Gear tattered flight suit, dogslicer, tactical semi-auto pistol with 9 small arms rounds, goblin junkcycle, credstick with 50 credits

Hazard: The street around the junkbot decoy is littered with petrol tanks. Randomly place six of the tanks in squares within 20



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DOWNTIME IN THE DRIFT

Starship crews spend many days in the Drift, traveling from one planet to another. That means a lot of downtime, which has both roleplaying and mechanical aspects. Your players can use this as an opportunity to introduce themselves and get to know everyone's characters, perhaps with communal meals around the dining table, by playing games together, or just watching vids. Even if the characters have been working together for a long time, they're all new to the players themselves, and one recent addition to the crew—such as a PC with the New Hire background from the “Working for a Living” article in this volume (page 40–43)—serves as a good opportunity for everyone to reintroduce themselves.

The PCs can also fill their time with downtime activities (*Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 150–155). In particular, the pilot can try reducing travel time with the manage course activity. Other PCs might convalesce, lounge, retrain, maintain readiness, or work out. A captain might get the whole crew together to coordinate or drill. If the PCs acquire a ship with the proper facilities, they can maintain their equipment. Once they've landed on a planet, they might carouse, hunt bargains, refit their starship, or plan their next route. Finding buyers and sellers for cargo are also downtime activities; see “Galactic Trade” on pages 50–55.

Ask the PCs to determine a watch schedule, as someone has to fly the ship, and not everyone can remain awake at all times. If you have 4 PCs, each PC might take a 6-hour watch on the bridge every 24-hour period. When events happen in the Drift, you can choose which PC is on watch, or roll randomly. When not on watch, crew members can sleep, relax, or perform a downtime activity.

feet of the junkbot (some of them might have rolled underneath vehicles). The tanks are old and fragile, and if they take any damage (including from area attacks like the junkbot's breath weapon), they explode, inflicting 1d6 fire damage in a 5-foot radius (Reflex half DC 11). The tanks are AC 10 and have a +1 modifier for all saving throws; they can be picked up and thrown

as improvised weapons, targeting either a creature or a grid intersection.

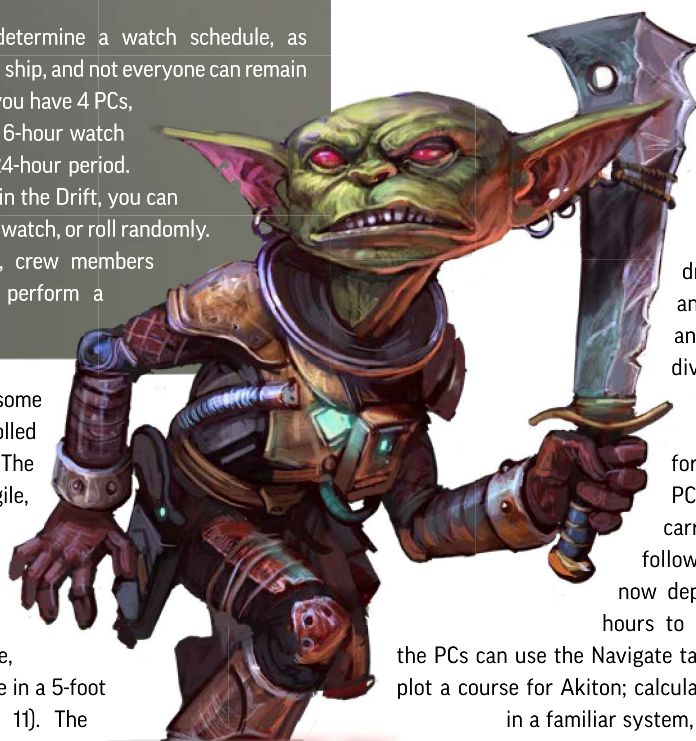
Story Award: The space goblins can steal up to nine crates of Yaro berries; for every crate the PCs prevent them from stealing, award the PCs 100 XP.

Development: Once the junkbot has been destroyed and the space goblins have fled or been defeated, the wail of sirens clashes discordant with the other sounds of the city. Lashunta police are on their way; if the PCs wish to avoid them, a successful DC 15 Piloting check can get the Company rig around parked or stalled vehicles and down a side street before the authorities arrive. Otherwise, the police take any surviving space goblin sneektheefs into custody, question the PCs, and ask them to file a report. All of this takes considerable time, which the PCs can cut short with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check. If the PCs injured or killed any bystanders, their situation is more dire; police impound the cargo rig and detain the PCs for 24 hours while investigating the incident. In either case, law enforcement takes the PCs' names and ship identification, and warns them their presence may be required at a future court date. This threat is hollow, however; the police at Ship's End are too overworked to follow up, though if the PCs get in future trouble with Pact Worlds law enforcement, their records might include this incident. If you need statistics for the police officers, use the Security Guard stat block on page 176 of *Starfinder Pact Worlds*, adding lashunta racial traits.

Eventually, the PCs can return to *BD514* and transfer the

crates of Yaro berries from the cargo rig to the ship's cargo hold. (The cargo hold is not large enough to accommodate the entire extended trailer, so the PCs can't just drive the rig into the hold and park it.) This requires another 16 hours of labor, divided between characters who have access to hovercarts; that makes for a long workday for the PCs, who may decide to carry the task over to the following day. The PCs can now depart. It takes *BD514* 1d2 hours to reach orbit. From there,

the PCs can use the Navigate task of the Piloting skill to plot a course for Akiton; calculating a course to a planet in a familiar system, such as the Pact Worlds, is a DC 10 Piloting check. The journey itself takes 1d6 days through the Drift, or 1d6+2 days using conventional thrusters. This is a



**GOBLIN
SNEEKTHEEF**

summary of the complete rules for space travel, which you can find on pages 290–291 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*.

AKITON

From orbit, Akiton is an uninspiring image of red rock and desert sands; it's easy to wonder if there's any life there at all. Appearances can be deceiving, however; despite the scorched surface of this dying planet, life indeed thrives below. As soon as the PCs emerge from the Drift, the ship's comm unit lights up with a waiting transmission from their Company dispatcher, **Tarika** (NG female brenneri). When they accept the transmission, read or paraphrase the following.

A brenneri with sleek brown fur appears on-screen, wearing an olive-green flight suit emblazoned with the EJ Corp logo and fidgeting with a worn wrench. You recognize her immediately as Tarika, your Company dispatcher and, for some of you, an old friend. She's based on Absalom Station, so this transmission must have been sent days ago.

Tarika looks anxious, and her image is barely visible before she blurts out, "Howdy team! I'm just checkin' in on y'all. If you're receivin' this, you must have arrived at Akiton. Your drop-off site is in Hivemarket. Now, you can't miss that place—just look for the biggest damn mountain on the entire planet. That'll be Ka, the Pillar of the Sky, and Hivemarket is around its bottom. There's a business there called Ka Imports, and Siski, the manager, is your contact. You can collect payment from her and maybe get a nice little bonus for rapid delivery.

"Be careful on that dust bowl of a world, though; there's no real law on Akiton, and the desert is no place to go explorin'. I'm lookin' for your next job, and I'll send a transmission when I have somethin' for ya. If you haven't heard from me by the time you're done on Akiton, come on in to Absalom Station."

Tarika is an important recurring character in the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path; see the sidebar for more information on her. In this communication with the PCs, Tarika mostly reiterates key information the players may find helpful, but some of the characters may have selected backgrounds that involve Tarika or her daughter, Shan; if so, Tarika might speak to them directly in her recorded transmission before signing off, or send them private messages to check on their welfare.



TARIKA

TARIKA

Tarika, a brenneri (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 3 8) employee of EJ Corp, works as a dispatcher, sending starship crews on pickup and delivery jobs. A tinkerer by nature, she prefers to spend her time fixing or crafting equipment, but after the death of her wife left her a single parent, she had to find work where she could, and the Company seemed as good a place as any. Now that Tarika's daughter Shan is on her own working construction on the distant world of Entha, Tarika is suffering from a touch of empty nest syndrome and has taken the PCs under her wing. She looks out for them as best she can, finding them contracts and often giving the crew extra information that might be helpful on jobs. Despite her current position as a dispatcher, Tarika has never given up her love of fixing things. She most often appears in an olive-green flight suit and, like most brenneri, keeps a favored object to calm her emotions and help her focus; Tarika's favored object is an old wrench.

Tarika is a compassionate ally who looks out for the PCs; use her introduction to establish her in this helpful role.

Instantaneous communication over interplanetary distances is very rare in the *Starfinder* Roleplaying Game; most messages—including Tarika's—move only as fast as Drift travel. Throughout "We're No Heroes," Tarika is based out of EJ Corp offices in Absalom Station. It takes 1d6 days for any transmission to reach her and 1d6 days for any transmission she sends to reach anywhere in the Pact Worlds. The transmission the PCs just heard was sent days ago. The PCs can communicate with Tarika and even ask her questions, but they'll have to wait awhile for any answer.

The PCs have 50 tons of Yaro berries to sell (maybe a bit less, if the goblins got away with some of it), they have a buyer (Siski, manager of Ka Imports), and they know where to go (Hivemarket). Players may wonder how much their characters know about Akiton and Hivemarket, and they can research this topic using the planet's infosphere or the library data aboard *BD514*'s computer. PCs can use the Culture skill to recall knowledge concerning Akiton and Hivemarket. They can even take 20 on that skill check by spending 2 minutes investigating the topic. The higher the result of their skill check, the more information you can give them:

- **Less than 10:** Akiton is a desert world with thin atmosphere and low gravity. Its economy was based on

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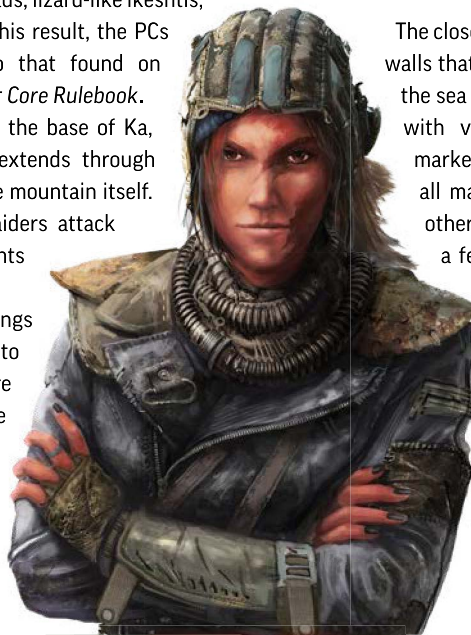
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thasteron, a fuel used in sub-light space travel; when the Drift was discovered, Akiton's economy crashed.

- **10-14:** Akiton is home to red-skinned humans known as Hylki, ysokis, four-armed shobhads, lizard-like ikeshtis, and many other species. With this result, the PCs have knowledge equivalent to that found on pages 442-443 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*.
- **15-19:** Hivemarket is located at the base of Ka, Pillar of the Sky, but it also extends through subterranean lava tubes into the mountain itself. When dust storms strike or raiders attack the city, the market's merchants take cover in these tunnels.
- **20-24:** Khulans, the spectral beings who patrol Hivemarket, appear to be ghosts but are in fact a rare kind of fey; they do not interfere in legitimate business dealings in the bazaar but protect the market and enact justice on those who break the rules.
- **25+:** Khulans are believed to be a slowly dying species. Sometimes, they gather deep under Ka, where volcanic temperatures are too extreme for unprotected sapient beings to travel.



**AINSLEY
THE HUNTER**

With a clear destination and a warning from Tarika to avoid exploring a planet as dangerous as Akiton, the PCs can pilot *BD514* to Hivemarket and look for a spot to land. There is no traffic control or other bureaucratic to challenge the PCs—or even ask for their identification—as they enter Akiton's atmosphere.

HIVEMARKET

Hivemarket is a permanent marketplace that has developed along the southwest side of the Pillar of the Sky, where the underground lava tunnels that snake through the mountain lead out into the desert. Hivemarket isn't large enough to be a city, or even much of a town, but its status as the mercantile center of largely lawless Akiton makes it a perfect place for traders and caravans to acquire and unload cargo. Most of Hivemarket's population is transient, but various corporations and other merchant interests have permanent buildings here, and, between them, they settle disputes, maintain order, and provide some basic services. The most distinctive feature of Hivemarket is the khulans—floating incorporeal beings who enforce the law in Hivemarket but do not interfere in legal transactions, no matter how immoral.

HIVEMARKET

LN marketplace

Population 12,480 (27% Hylki, 16% ysoki, 5% ikeshti, 54% other)

Government council (business interests)

Qualities financial center, notorious

Maximum Item Level 18th

The closer the PCs get to the massive sandstone walls that mark off Hivemarket proper, the more the sea of sand beneath them becomes littered with visiting starships. Beyond the walls, market stalls of every imaginable color, with all manner of strange symbols, crowd each other along haphazard pedestrian paths and a few narrow roads. Amid all the colorful chaos stand dozens of permanent buildings, most made of the same sandstone as the settlement's walls. There are no official landing facilities; the PCs just need to claim a piece of desert outside the walls. Once they have landed, they can walk or drive into Hivemarket, or try to follow up on their contract from the ship.

KA IMPORTS

Attempts to contact Ka Imports on a personal or planetary comm unit fail; a recorded message informs the caller

that the number is temporarily out of service. The trip into the market is about 2 miles, and the PCs can drive in the rig, hire a taxi (1 credit will cover a round-trip journey), or walk there. Consulting the infosphere gets the PCs a map of the settlement, the location of Ka Imports, and the quickest route. The PCs will need to load their cargo onto the cargo rig for delivery, though they can decide to visit Ka Imports first; loading the cargo onto the rig will take the same 16 hours of labor as it did before, divided between two PCs using hovercarts.

The PCs initially had 6 days to do this job; loading and unloading times have probably consumed at least a day, and up to 6 days were spent in the Drift. It's possible the cargo is already late, but if the PCs got lucky, they may still have a few days left. Unfortunately, they're in for a surprise when they arrive at the destination: while they were flying from Castrovel to Akiton, Ka Imports was bought out by an interplanetary corporation, and Siski—the former manager and the PCs' contact—is dead. Ichihara Holdings, a corporation based on Akiton and tied to the Golden League crime syndicate, has taken over this business to use as a front for money-laundering and other criminal enterprises. The company's representative, a Hylki named **Ainsley the Hunter** (NE female human), oversees Ichihara Holdings's operations in the facility.

Ka Imports is a large, square, three-story building (made of local sandstone) with oval windows. There's a wide double

door up front and a loading door in the rear, away from the main street. The building's metal parts long ago rusted over, and as the PCs arrive, a handful of Hylki construction workers lower to the ground a neon blue sign that reads "Ka Imports." A new sign that reads, "Ichihara Imports" leans against the building, ready to take the original's place. The business is currently closed, and most of the interior is dark. The construction workers aren't employed by the business and know nothing about its operations but suggest the PCs knock on the front door or try the loading door. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Culture check identifies Ichihara Holdings as a well-known corporation in the Pact Worlds; a character who succeeds at this check by 5 or more also knows Ichihara is based on Akiton and has ties to the Golden League, a prominent crime syndicate.

There's no response at the front door. Anyone who knocks at the loading door attracts the attention of one of Ainsley's shobhad enforcers, who opens the door and asks, "What?" in Common. The massive shobhad is armed and armored and speaks around two huge tusks. If the PCs ask to see Siski or someone in charge, or if they ask too many questions, the shobhad leads them into the darkened building. Ainsley is in the manager's office, trying to understand Siski's accounting and inventory systems.

As the PCs enter the building, read or paraphrase the following.

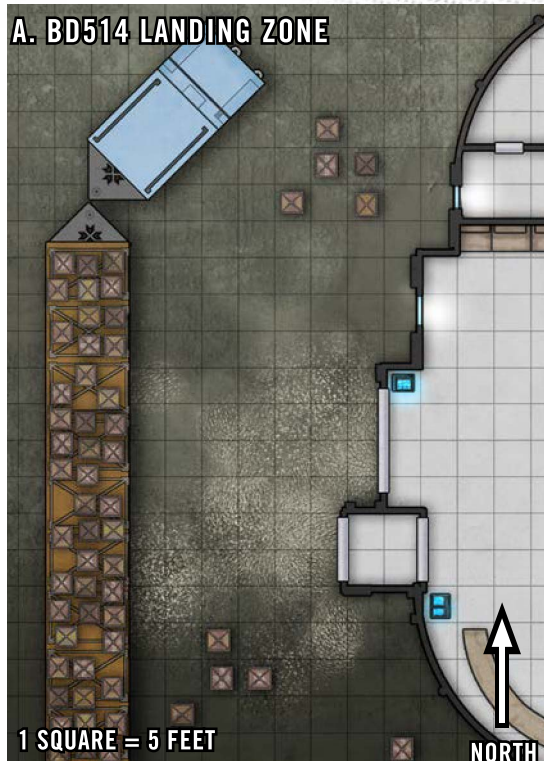
The rear of the darkened Ka Imports warehouse is filled with crates and boxes stacked over ten feet high. The shobhad leads you to a rear office, its large windows the only source of light in the whole building. A second shobhad stands outside the door, glowering and brandishing his twelve-foot pike.

"Miss Ainsley," says the first shobhad, "These people are asking about you."

Inside the office, a crimson-skinned human woman reclines in a chair with her boots perched on the edge of a large desk cluttered with stacks of paper, unopened mail, and some empty coffee mugs. She looks up from a printed spreadsheet and exhales an exaggerated sigh of relief. "Thank you, Grandmother! I am bored out of my mind and could use a distraction. What is it?"

The PCs probably have a lot of questions for Ainsley and hope to get her to honor the Yaro berries contract. Ainsley happily informs them that Siski is gone and that Ichihara Holdings has acquired Ka Imports. She also has no intention of honoring the deal. A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Culture check can identify Ainsley's exclamation of "Thank you, Grandmother!" as an invocation of Lao Shu Po, goddess of assassins, rats, spies, and thieves, known also as Grandmother Rat. Some specific questions the PCs might ask Ainsley follow.

Where's Siski? "Gone. Left town. Family emergency, I heard." A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Sense Motive check detects that Ainsley is lying.



Is this Ka Imports? "It was. But as of three days ago, it's a fully owned franchise of Ichihara Holdings. We'll have the doors back open soon."

We have a delivery. "For Siski, maybe. But not for me. I don't need any more inventory."

We had a deal! "All of Ka Import's outstanding contracts were canceled when the change of ownership occurred. I could say I'm sorry, but honestly, I really just don't care."

The PCs can try to persuade Ainsley to buy the Yaro berries anyway, but she won't give them more than 50% of the original price. This is the best deal the PCs can get, and the PCs can secure it with a DC 16 Diplomacy check. Alternatively, they can use Bluff to trick her or Intimidate to bully her, but she is more resistant to these tactics, and the DC increases to 21. Regardless of the skill attempted, raise the DC by 5 if the Yaros have already expired. If the PCs fail this check, Ainsley settles on 30%; the PCs can take that offer or leave it.

This is not the outcome the PCs were hoping for. Even 50% is only enough to pay Runo Prat or cover the Company's expenses and expected profit margin, but not both. If the PCs try to force the issue through violence, Ainsley is a noncombatant. She conducts all her crime through proxies and hired muscle. If attacked, she has EAC and KAC 11, a +1 modifier to all saving throws, and 6 hit points. She is, however, protected by her two shobhad enforcers.

SHOBHAD ENFORCERS (2) CR 1

XP 400

N Large monstrous humanoid (*Alien Archive* 104)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

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DEFENSE

EAC 11; KAC 13

Fort +3; Ref +5; Will +3

Defensive Abilities ferocity; Resistances cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee tactical pike +9 (1d8+5 P)

Ranged light reaction cannon +6 (1d10+1 P)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. (15 ft. with tactical pike)

TACTICS

During Combat The enforcers focus their attacks on whoever has injured or threatened Ainsley. They prefer to attack the same target, hoping to reduce the PCs' number and force a retreat.

Morale Accustomed to competing with others for the spoils

HP 20

of the desert, the shobhad remain overconfident and refuse to flee until it's too late.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Intimidate +10, Stealth +5, Survival +5

Languages Common, Shobhad

Gear recruit shobhad harness^{AR}, tactical pike, light reaction cannon with 6 heavy rounds, credstick with 100 credits

If the PCs sell to Ainsley, they receive the reduced payment and can unload their crates of Yaro berries here. If they choose not to sell, see **Event 2**, below. The PCs might try to find a new buyer in Hivemarket; use the find a buyer downtime activity on page 54. Ichihara Holdings is working against them, however, using their influence to poison the market. If the PCs succeed at the Diplomacy check to find a buyer, that buyer offers them 30% of the cargo's value. For every 5 by which they succeed, increase this percentage by 5, to a maximum of 50%. For every 5 by which they fail, reduce the percentage by 5. Track the number of days the PCs spend trying to sell the Yaro berries; on the seventh day after picking the cargo up on Castrovel, the berries go bad—raise the DC to find a buyer by 5.

The PCs may also investigate Siski's disappearance and Ainsley's involvement. With a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information, a PC learns that Ichihara Holdings has been pressuring various businesses in Hivemarket to sell, though no one knows why. If a PC succeeds at this check by 5, **Kajimi** (N male ikeshti)—who operates a moon-bread stall in the bazaar—confides that Ichihara Holdings is one of the ways the Golden League launders its money. Siski rebuffed Ainsley's threats, then suddenly vanished. A day later, the sale of Ka Imports to Ichihara Holdings was complete.

The PCs won't have concrete evidence that Ainsley ordered her enforcers to murder Siski and leave her corpse rotting in the desert miles outside the city—but they can probably see the broad outline of events.

EVENT 2: PRESSURE TO SELL (CR 3)

Creatures: If the PCs do not sell to Ainsley at the reduced price she is offering, she sends her two shobhad enforcers the next day to intimidate them into changing their minds. After all, she may not need the inventory, but she senses opportunity. The shobhads seek the PCs in the desert where BD514 has landed (as indicated on the map on page 13). If the PCs aren't around, the enforcers find comfortable spots nearby to wait.

When they are close enough to talk to the PCs, the shobhads inform them why they came. "Miss Ainsley says she'll buy yer fruit," one of them says, "But the price has gone down."

"And will continue to go down," says the other. "The longer you make her wait."



SHOBHAD
ENFORCER

The shobhads are looking for an excuse to attack, and unless the PCs immediately agree to sell the cargo for Ainsley's offered price, the enforcers start shooting.

SHOBHAD ENFORCERS (2)

CR 1

XP 400

HP 20 (page 13)

TACTICS

During Combat The enforcers shoot distant enemies with their light reaction cannons, resorting to their pikes once a PC closes into melee range. If the PCs take cover, a shobhad charges with their pike.

Morale If one of the enforcers is killed, the other tries to withdraw.

EVENT 3: KHULAN JUSTICE (CR 3)

Mysterious, ghostly fey known as khulans patrol Hivemarket for reasons that remain unclear; see *Starfinder Alien Archive 4* for complete details on these enigmatic creatures. The Hivemarket khulans are already investigating the disappearance of Siski. If the PCs attack or kill Ainsley herself, they attract the khulans' attention; the fey divine the nature of the assault and send a khulan subordinate to enact vengeance. The khulans do not, however, get involved if the PCs only defend themselves against shobhad enforcers.

Creature: Khulans drain heat by touch; just one of them would be a terrifying foe for the PCs at their current level. However, a khulan that has acutely suffered the slow decay of their species is known as a khulan subordinate; about a day after any physical confrontation with Ainsley, one of these subordinates is dispatched to seek the PCs at their ship. Use the map on page 13 if the khulan subordinate finds the PCs outside their vessel, or the map of *BD514* on the inside cover if the khulan passes through the exterior walls and enters the ship.

If the PCs injured Ainsley and left her alive, the khulan subordinate is content to issue a warning, rising from the ground near one of the PCs and attacking with leeching touch. As soon as one of the PCs takes damage, the khulan intones, "Thus is justice delivered. Unless you wish to suffer further, set aside your petty quarrels and obey the laws of this city." Having delivered their warning, the khulan descends into the ground and leaves.

If the PCs killed Ainsley, the khulan subordinate tries to kill a single PC, retreating only after they have done so.

KHULAN SUBORDINATE

CR 3

XP 800

LN Medium fey (fire, incorporeal) (*Alien Archive 4* 60)

Init +4; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (vibration), *detect radiation*, low-light vision; **Perception** +8

DEFENSE

HP 35

EAC 14; KAC 15

Fort +2; **Ref** +2; **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities geomagnetic field, incorporeal; **Immunities** fire, radiation

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (Su, perfect)

Melee leeching touch +7 (2d4 C; see below) or claw +9 (1d4+3 S)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)

1/day—*overheat* (DC 14)

Constant—*detect radiation*

TACTICS

During Combat The khulan subordinate is incorporeal (*Core Rulebook* 264). If a PC demonstrates the use of a force effect (*magic missile*, for example), the khulan avoids that character if possible and, if not, focuses their attacks on that PC.

Morale See above. The khulan retreats after injuring or slaying one PC, but otherwise fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

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



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Skills Acrobatics +13 (+21 to fly), Intimidate +13, Physical Science +8, Sense Motive +13, Stealth +8, Survival +8
Languages Akitionian, Common, Ignan, Terran

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Geomagnetic Field (Su) As a move action while on a planet with at least thin atmosphere and a mass at least 1/50 that of lost Golarion, a khulan subordinate can generate a 10-foot-radius protective field that grants resistance to cold, electricity, and fire damage to creatures within the emanation. If the planet's atmosphere is thin, this resistance value is 1, and the resistance increases to 3 or 5 if the atmosphere is normal or thick, respectively. A khulan's attacks ignore any energy resistance granted by any khulan's geomagnetic field ability. The barrier also grants creatures in its area a +2 circumstance bonus to saves against radiation. The barrier is an emanation that is centered on and moves with the khulan, and the field persists until the khulan is incapacitated or they dismiss the field; this doesn't require an action.

Leeching Touch (Su) As a standard action, a khulan subordinate can strike with their incorporeal limbs, making an attack against EAC. On a hit against a living creature, this attack deals 2d6 cold damage and the khulan subordinate regains a number of Hit Points equal to half the damage dealt.

SOMEONE'S NOT GETTING PAID

The PCs have two competing obligations and have received, at best, half their expected payment. Runo Prat was depending on this sale to pay for his retirement as he hands his business to his daughter; he's expecting half the credits of the sale. EJ Corp has profit goals and also expects half the credits. The PCs can use the reduced payment to pay Runo, or they can send it to the Company, knowing EJ Corp will keep every credit and Runo will be left with nothing. Even if the PCs successfully negotiated with Ainsley, they won't have enough credits to pay either Runo or the Company in full.

Outline the dilemma the crew faces, and then let the PCs decide what to do. They might hope to acquire more money somehow, enough to pay both Runo and their own corporate masters, but the amount of money at stake is simply too high for the PCs to recoup. If they were that rich, they wouldn't need to work at all.

If the PCs pay Runo, he hands his company off to his daughter and enjoys a well-earned retirement, surrounded by his children and grandchildren. The Company, however, is not happy. EJ Corp issues the PCs a formal statement of disciplinary action, warns them that failure to reach performance goals will result in termination, and curtly informs them that they have forfeited their bonuses.

If the PCs pay the Company, EJ Corp is initially satisfied. Runo Prat has lost his life's savings, however. With a cold rage, he calls in favors throughout the Pact Worlds, musters his union contacts, and leverages his respected position in the merchant

community, calling for an embargo of the Company. This has only a very minor effect on EJ Corp, but any impact on profit is a capital offense. Naturally, EJ Corp takes this out on the PCs, blaming them for everything. EJ Corp issues the PCs a formal statement of disciplinary action, warns them that failure to reach performance goals will result in termination, and curtly informs them that they have forfeited their bonuses.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to sell the cargo for 50% of its value (the best possible price), award them 400 XP. Reduce this XP award by half if the PCs sell the cargo but for less than the best price. If they give whatever money they make to Runo Pratt, award them an additional 400 XP.

The PCs might linger in Hivemarket after selling, especially if they have unanswered questions or credits to spend. Soon after the PCs complete their business with Ainsley, khulans find and execute her for extortion and murder. This is no inconvenience to Ichihara Holdings, however, which reopens Ichihara Imports a few days later under new management. Like the PCs, Ainsley the Hunter was expendable, and the corporation always wins.

The PCs have not yet heard from Tarika; per her initial instructions, they should go to Absalom Station, where they can communicate in real time and get their next job. Drift travel to Absalom Station requires 1d6 days, but the journey doesn't go smoothly!



EVENT 4: DRIFT LEECHES! (CR 3)

Creatures: As the crew travels through the Drift back to Absalom Station, *BD514* becomes plagued by odd occurrences: computer panels flicker, overhead lights blink on and off, and the power core experiences strange fluctuations. A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Engineering check identifies the source of the strange fluctuations as something on the outside of the starship that is draining its power. A character who uses the science officer station on the ship and succeeds at a DC 16 Computers check can identify a half dozen small creatures attached to the hull. Once the science officer relays this information, a PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Life Science check realizes the creatures are likely Drift leeches, small magical beasts that can absorb power and disrupt technological systems. They will feed on the starship's power core until it is drained of all power.

Despite their name, drift leeches can survive in normal space as well as the Drift and can't be simply shaken off; to remove them from the ship, the PCs will need to get onto the hull and drive them off with force. Use the map of *BD514* provided on the inside cover. The PCs must exit through the airlock and

traverse the hull of the ship to confront the leeches, which are scattered around the top of the vessel. The armor worn by the PCs includes boots that allow them to anchor themselves to the ship's hull in zero-gravity, and the armor's environmental protections will keep them temporarily safe from the vacuum of space. See pages 196–199 of the *Core Rulebook* for more information on environmental protections granted by armor, and track the charges expended as the PCs fight the leeches inside the creatures' aura.

DRIFT LEECHES (6)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

HP 6 each (page 59)

TACTICS

During Combat The leeches get close enough to ensure the PCs are within their auras, then lob balls of energy-infused mucus at them. If a leech is injured but not slain, it heals itself.

Morale Drift leeches are nearly mindless and defend themselves aggressively until slain.

Once the PCs arrive at Absalom Station, they can hail Tarika. The Brenneri dispatcher answers their call from a Company workstation in an office cubicle buried somewhere deep in Bluerise Tower. Tarika welcomes the PCs home—if anywhere can be said to be their home—and asks for an update on the Yaro berry job. Tarika sympathizes with the hardships and bad luck the PCs endured and resents the way the Company has blamed them for the loss of profits.

"Corporations are expandin' so fast," Tarika says with a weary sigh. "By the time y'all went from Castrovel to Akiton, your local buyer had already been bought out by an interstellar conglomerate! Guess there's no room for family businesses anymore. Not in the Pact Worlds, at least."

She shakes her head and taps a few buttons on her datapad. "But let's focus on what matters: gettin' y'all a high-payin' gig to put ya back in the Company's good graces. I got just the thing. Came in not long ago, in fact, and it's... well, not perfect, but it'll do the trick. A drow callin' himself Lord Sinjin is shippin' guns from Apostae to a planet in Near Space. I guess the Gideron Authority is tryin' to settle a world called Vohxa, and the local miners are turnin' into more of a problem than anyone figured they'd be.

"So the job is simple: go to Apostae and meet with Sinjin's agent, Tause Jarzeed, at a place called Lamashtu's Lair, where you'll pick up the cargo. Take it to a Gideron military outpost on Vohxa and collect payment. Oh, and no questions asked. You know the type." Tarika rolls her eyes as she sends over the last of the job details.

The PCs probably have questions, and Tarika will do her best to answer them; she likes the PCs and may have personal connections to one or more of them already. Use the

LORD SINJIN

A self-appointed lord within the Golden League crime syndicate, **Sinjin** (NE male drow operative) is roughly 150 years old. As a motivated young elf, he moved up swiftly in his house before his career stalled indefinitely. Hungry for power and resentful of the drow women who led his house, Sinjin left to join the Golden League and train as a Xun assassin. He proved himself to be an invaluable asset and a resourceful killer, and as his reputation grew, he gathered followers. Eventually, Sinjin obtained enough power to become a Golden League crime boss and start his own family. Naturally, this unchecked authority has allowed his festering fear of powerful women to run rampant. Driven by insecurity and paranoia, he has allowed only men to rise to high rank within his organization—though despite this, of course, many of his soldiers and personal guard are women.

Sinjin is one of the primary antagonists of the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path. One of the PCs may already have a connection to him (page 43), but he learned of their crew through their tussle with Ichihara Holdings on Akiton. Realizing that the PCs might be perfect for his scheme to steal the *Oliphaunt*, Sinjin hires them for the Gideron job to test their ethics. If the PCs sell the weapons to the Authority prison camp as ordered, Sinjin knows the PCs are, first and foremost, mercenaries who don't let morals get in the way of getting paid. If they sell or give the weapons to the resistance instead, Sinjin knows they're principled individuals who want to do the right thing. Either way, he learns how to manipulate them into stealing the *Oliphaunt*.

questions and answers below to flesh out the conversation with Tarika.

What is the Gideron Authority? "A hobgoblin empire in Near Space. It's gotten pretty aggressive lately, expandin' to nearby worlds hobgoblins used to inhabit. I guess there's old hobgoblin ruins on those worlds. Fascinatin', huh?"

We're running guns now? Is that legal? "Pretty much everything's legal somewhere, these days. Apostae's economy is built on the weapons trade—makin' and sellin' weapons is what drow houses do. So, the short answer is... yep."

What do you know about Lord Sinjin? "Not a lot. Only women can rise to positions of authority in a drow house, so whatever Sinjin is 'lord' of, it must be somethin' else. Anyways, he's not on Apostae. Not sure where he is, actually; that's why you're meetin' with Tause Jarzeed instead."

What about Vohxa? "It's rich in siccattite and other resources. There've been human, dwarf, and shirren miners workin' there for years. The local mining guild ran things until recently, but now that the Authority's shown up, we can count on hobgoblins takin' over. Hobgoblins don't mess around. I'm surprised they need a weapons shipment at

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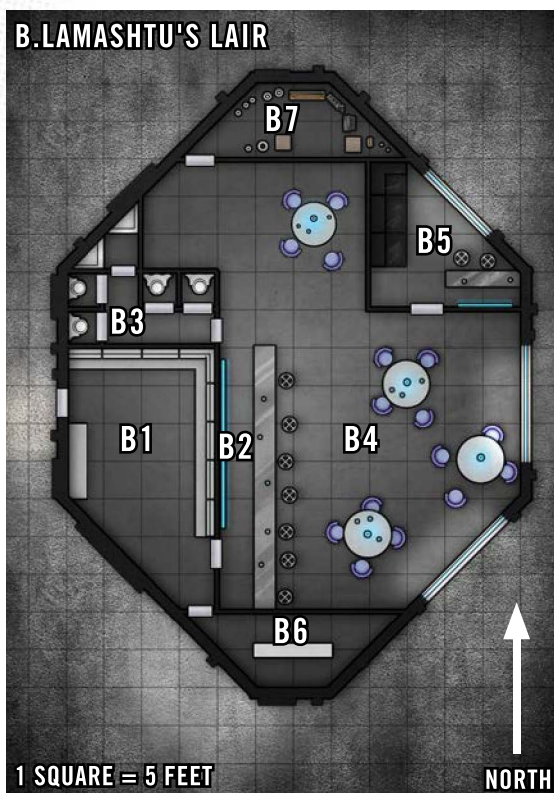
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all. You'd think they'd have brought guns for, y'know, their planetary invasion."

Something about this job stinks. "Every job stinks, don't it? But this one's got a fat paycheck, and that's what we need to get y'all off the Company's hit list. Uh, figuratively speakin'. I mean, they haven't hired assassins to kill you yet. I mean, as far as I know. Ha ha!"

The PCs may have personal business on Absalom Station, but they can depart for Apostae whenever they wish. The trip takes 1d6 days of Drift travel, and the journey goes smoothly.

APOSTAE

From space, Apostae looks more like an abandoned moon than an inhabited planet. With no natural atmosphere, water, or greenery—and no light emanating from its few settlements—the planet's surface remains wreathed in a cloak of darkness. But as soon as *BD514* emerges from the Drift, the ship is hailed by a Nightarch traffic-control AI that demands to know their business on Apostae. Once the PCs give their reason for visiting the planet, they are given a landing bay assignment and told to wait there for a security inspection.

As the PCs descend, the nightshade towers of Nightarch jut into view, surrounded by great halls, smaller domes, and other enclosed buildings. Soon after they land, the PCs are met by a group of four drow enforcers (*Alien Archive* 42), who do a brief inspection of *BD514*'s interior. The drow are looking for smugglers, a constant problem on a world that depends on the arms trade; if the PCs cooperate with the inspection and aren't trying to sneak cargo onto Apostae, the drow leave them in

peace. The enforcers are uninterested in any otherwise-illegal possessions the PCs might have or display, such as drugs or poisons; there's not much that's illegal on Apostae.

As soon as the PCs emerge from *BD514*, they each receive an automated transmission from Nightarch Air and Water, a utility company run by House Zeizerer. This message alerts the PCs that they have now become customers of NAW, and are accumulating a bill for all air, water, and other materials necessary for life support. This bill is displayed in the lower corner of each PC's personal comm or helmet display, slowly ticking up in fractions of a credit. If left to accumulate, the life-support bill for living in Nightarch amounts to approximately 1 credit per day, per individual. PCs can avoid this bill by living off the environmental protections of their armor, which they can recharge from *BD514*'s power supply. If a PC turns off these environmental protections, or if they fail for even a single round, this life-support bill begins to tally again. The amount of this bill is so low, and the duration of the PCs' visit so brief, that it is unlikely to be a significant sum—but it's a reminder that everyone in Nightarch is forced to pay a corporation for the right to breath, drink, and live.

The PCs can look up Lamashtu's Lair in the city infosphere; it's a cheap bar in one of the commercial domes nestled between the city's purple towers. It's 10 miles from the landing bay, and the PCs can hire a robo-taxi to take them there for 1 credit. There's no listing for Tause Jarzeed, however.

LAMASHTU'S LAIR

Lamashtu's Lair is a seedy dive bar with a VIP Lounge popular among individuals seeking privacy from House Zeizerer's omnipresent surveillance network. When the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following.

Muted conversation and the stench of spilled alcohol permeate this place, and the light is quite low. Travelers of all species—though mostly the local majority drow, orcs, and half-orcs—sit at tables of thoroughly stained aluminum, nursing their drinks and keeping to themselves. Across the room, a pitted bar counter and black aluminum stools beckon those eager to drink their sorrows away. Behind the bar is a brusque-looking half-orc who eyes you curiously.

See the map above and descriptions below for details on Lamashtu's Lair, which has dim lighting throughout. Tause Jarzeed is waiting for the PCs in the VIP Lounge (area **B5**). Before the PCs enter that room, however, they should encounter Horizon, a solarian bounty hunter, at the bar (**Event 5**).

B1. Kitchen: The kitchen is the domain of the cook, **Nar** (N male orc). He's got his hands full cleaning dishes and glasses since the robotic dishwasher broke down three days ago. A thin and unlockable door on the east wall leads to the bar and dining area, while a much stronger one leads west, out of the building. This door is locked from the inside; it can be unlocked from the kitchen with a move action, picked from outside with

a successful DC 17 Engineering check, or broken open with a DC 22 Strength check.

B2. Bar: A long aluminum countertop, pitted and scarred, runs the length of the bar, and several black stools stand near the counter. A large vidscreen playing sports and popular programs dominates the wall behind; shelving to both sides holds liquors from across the galaxy. The bartender is **Kaden** (N female half-orc), and she knows Tause Jarzeed is waiting for the PCs in the VIP Lounge. Kaden moonlights as a fixer setting bounty hunters up with targets; one of her clients enters the bar right after the PCs do (see **Event 5**).

B3. Restrooms: Several toilet stalls and a row of silver metal basins line the walls of this room—the stall in the northwest corner is big enough for Large patrons.

B4. Dining Room: Cheap aluminum tables and purple bucket chairs that may have once been clean or comfortable clutter the concrete floors of the main dining space. The meals here are mediocre and cost 1–3 credits.

B5. VIP Lounge: The northeast wall of this room is a single large window made of one-way transparent aluminum. A black leather couch, a few metal chairs, and a coffee table fill most of the space. The entire room is protected by a signal jammer that blocks all electronic communications, but which does not extend beyond the room's walls. The door to the VIP Lounge can be locked or unlocked from the inside with a move action; it can be picked from the dining area with a successful DC 17 Engineering check or broken down with a successful DC 22 Strength check.

B6. Kitchen Storage: Shelves and refrigeration units line the walls, storing frozen and preserved food shipped to Apostae from other planets in the Pact Worlds.

B7. General Storage: This closet stores cleaning supplies, broken furniture, and the occasional patron hiding from the law.

EVENT 5: HUNTER AND PREY (CR 3)

Creatures: Before Kaden can direct the PCs to the VIP Lounge, the bar is interrupted by Horizon, a drow bounty hunter who currently has a mark in tow. Horizon has come to turn in his latest bounty to Kaden; the only trouble is, he's got the wrong gnome. Cicil Nightshade is a bit of a con artist, but they haven't been able to convince Horizon of the truth. The PCs are not obliged to get involved, but Cicil is willing to put strangers in danger if it means escape.

The doors to the bar clatter open and a drow enters, dragging a protesting gnome along behind him. The drow wears the distinctive armor of House Zeizerer and bears a long sword of pure black energy—motes of crackling power flow off it and pop in the dark air. The gnome, in contrast, has their wrists pinned together with binders. "I'm telling you," wails the gnome, "this is all a big mistake! A *huge* mistake!"

Without sparing a glance to his prey, the drow heaves the gnome up and deposits them on top of

the bar. "Here's your bounty, Kaden, as promised," he says. The half-orc behind the bar gives the gnome a glance and takes out her personal comm unit.

It takes Kaden a few rounds to pull up the file for this bounty; in that time, Cicil appeals to the PCs for help. "I'm not... whoever he's looking for," Cicil says in a wheedling plea. "I just lost my comm unit! Please, you look like reasonable—not to mention well-armed—individuals. Give a gnome a hand?" They gesture toward the PCs with their bound wrists. Horizon is, however, unconcerned, assuming the PCs will keep to their own business.

Kaden looks up from her comm and shows the image displayed there—a gnome similar in appearance to Cicil—to Horizon. "This isn't the mark," she says. A PC who succeeds at a DC 17 Perception check spots differences between the photo on the comm and Cicil; Kaden is right. Nevertheless, she and



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Horizon immediately fall into an argument, the bounty hunter insisting on being paid while Kaden stubbornly refuses.

A PC who wishes to help Cicil escape can sever their bonds with any weapon that inflicts slashing damage; to do so without being noticed, however, requires a successful DC 17 Sleight of Hand check. Reduce this DC by 5 if the weapon is a natural weapon or has the operative or concealable property; raise it by 5 if the weapon is two-handed.

If no PC assists Cicil, they slip out of their bonds with a successful Acrobatics check. Before they pull their hands free, however, they shout, "Thank you, strangers, for that timely rescue!" Horizon whirls around, mistakenly believing the PCs have freed his captive, and attacks them as Cicil slips off the bar.

Cicil doesn't try to flee out the front door. Instead, they use *disguise self* to take on the appearance of a drow woman, blending in with the bar patrons while looking for another exit. Anyone who attacks them is targeted with *daze*. Before making a run for the kitchen door behind the bar, they cast *holographic image* on the vidscreen in an attempt to distract the PCs, creating a soundless image of a news report that shows multiple police cruisers bearing down on Lamashtu's Lair at high speed, their lights flashing. All of this is unlikely to stop the PCs, but Horizon attacks them relentlessly. If Cicil gets to the kitchen, they can unlock the door out of the building and escape. While a stat block is provided for Cicil below, they aren't considered to be a significant threat to the PCs.

HORIZON

CR 3

XP 800

Male drow solarian

NE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision

60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +13

DEFENSE

HP 40

EAC 14; **KAC** 16

Fort +5; **Ref** +3; **Will** +4; +2 vs.

enchantment

Immunities sleep

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *soulfire solar sword* +8 (1d6+7 S plus 1d2 E)

Ranged pusher decoupler +11 (1d6+3 A; demoralize)

Offensive Abilities stellar revelations (black hole [20-ft. radius, pull 10 ft., DC 12], blade in the night^{COM}, supernova [10-ft. radius, 4d6 F, DC 12])

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)

At will—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*

TACTICS

During Combat Horizon enters graviton mode and uses blade in the night on a dangerous PC in melee range. Once he's

fully attuned, he uses black hole to pull Cicil close, and then tries to incapacitate them.

Morale If Cicil escapes the building, Horizon abandons pursuit. If brought below 20 HP, he surrenders.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +13, Mysticism +8, Stealth +8

Languages Common, Drow

Other Abilities solar manifestation (solar weapon), stellar alignment

Gear zeizerer diffractor I^{PW}, pusher decoupler^{AR} with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges), *soulfire electron crystal*, binders (4), *daywalker serum*, personal comm unit, travel clothing, credstick with 150 credits

CICIL NIGHTSHADE

CR 2

XP 600

Agender feychild gnome

CG Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +7

DEFENSE

HP 21

EAC 12; **KAC** 13

Fort +1; **Ref** +3; **Will** +5; +2 vs. fear and despair effects, +2 vs. illusion spells and effects

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), token spell

Spells Known (CL 2nd)

1st (3/day)—*disguise self*, *holographic image* (DC 15)
0 (at will)—*charming*, *veneer*^{COM}, *daze* (DC 14)

TACTICS

During Combat Cicil uses spells to defend themself; see above.

Morale If Cicil is brought below 10 HP, they surrender but continues to protest their innocence.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +7, Culture +12, Mysticism +7, Stealth +12

Languages Castrovelian, Common, Elven, Gnome

Feats Fleet, Kip Up

Other Abilities eternal hope, gnome magic

Gear freebooter armor I

Development: When all the excitement is over—with Cicil having either escaped or been incapacitated and Horizon defeated—Kaden stands



CICIL NIGHTSHADE

up from hiding behind the bar. "If you are all done wrecking my place," she says, pointing to the door leading to the VIP Lounge (area A5), "the guy you're looking for is in there." If Horizon is still conscious, Kaden goes back to persuading him he apprehended the wrong bounty. "Look at the picture," she explains. "This one's got blue eyes. That one's eyes are purple." Eventually, Horizon relents and departs disappointed; if Cicil hasn't already escaped, they are freed.

MEETING TAUSE JARZEED

Tause Jarzeed (NE male drow), an agent of Lord Sinjin's extended Golden League crime family, waits alone for the PCs in the VIP Lounge. He has been told nothing of Sinjin's larger plans concerning the PCs. He has been instructed to hire the PCs to transport 50 tons of weapons from Apostae to the planet Vohxa in Near Space. The cargo will be delivered to the PCs' starship in the hangar where they are currently landed, and delivery should be made to Commander Vash at Labor Camp 1120 on Vohxa's surface. Tause is a noncombatant, tall and handsome, and dressed in expensive casual clothing that would fit in at a party or rave.

Tause knows the names of the *BD514* crew and addresses the captain and any PC who has a prior connection to Sinjin before introducing himself. He lays out the details of the job and conceals nothing, noting that the compensation for this trip is exceptionally good. "Maybe there's an emergency on Vohxa that prompts this sudden delivery," he says, speculating. "Oh well, not for me to worry about. The Gideron Authority is paying the bills here. If you're willing to take the job, sign here, and I'll have the armaments delivered to your ship." He proffers a datapad with the shipping contract and expects the PCs to sign. If the PCs debate amongst themselves or consider their options, Tause asks them what they'd like to drink and orders it, delivered by Kaden.

The PCs might already be suspicious about this job, but even a successful Sense Motive check reveals nothing; Tause knows who the PCs are but not why they were hired. He can freely answer questions about the Gideron Authority, which is a reliable customer. "They're building more warships every day for their conflict with the Marixah Republic, and any other world unfortunate enough to have once had a hobgoblin population," Tause explains. "Those warships are filled with soldiers, soldiers need guns, and Lord Sinjin supplies those guns. With your help, of course."

If asked about Sinjin, Tause will gladly relate some of his employer's history. "My lord Sinjin was born here, on Apostae. But it's difficult for a man to really... show his merits in drow society. If one wants to rise socially, one really must be a woman or seek opportunity elsewhere. So Sinjin made a fortune on other Pact Worlds and chose never to return to Apostae.

While that means I have a job, I can't help but mourn his absence. For all its limitations, Apostae is still possessed of a certain... haunted charm, don't you think?"

Tause does not reveal that Sinjin is affiliated with the Golden League. However, if a PC has a prior connection to him, that PC already knows all about Sinjin's Golden League connections (and was affiliated with the League himself).

When the PCs are satisfied with the job, they can accept the contract and return to their ship. Soon after doing so, a truck driven by a crew of four orcs arrives with 50 tons of tactical infinity rifles^{AR} and mk 2 frag grenades, all carefully packed, tracked, and sealed. The orcs load the cargo onto *BD514* over the course of several hours, but loading goes faster if the PCs help; if you like, this can be a great roleplay opportunity to establish how the crew interact with other working stiffs like themselves. Once everything is carefully stowed aboard the starship, the PCs can depart Apostae peacefully, plot a course for Vohxa in Near Space, and enter the Drift.



TAUSE JARZEED

VOHXA

The journey to Vohxa (page 62) is uneventful, and the PCs soon arrive at a small world awash in snow and rock, its jutting mountain peaks competing with the lofty factory towers that clutter the planet's surface. As soon as *BD514* emerges from the Drift, the ship is detected by a fleet of Gideron Authority vessels patrolling the system. A *Sword*-class attack vessel (*Near Space* 116-117) approximately twice the size of *BD514* peels away from the hobgoblin fleet and pulls alongside the PCs' vessel, targeting it with weapons and broadcasting a warning in Common: "This is the Gideron Authority attack vessel *Falchion*. Identify yourselves and your mission."

The Gideron Authority believes in well-organized military might, but they have no reason to attack the PCs, provided the PCs provide identification, the nature of their cargo, and that cargo's destination. Meanwhile, the *Falchion*'s science officer scans *BD514* to verify the contents of its cargo bay. Completing the scan takes a few rounds, but eventually, the Gideron warship identifies the weapons in the cargo hold. This scan is detected by any PC science officer, who might want to use *BD514*'s sensors to scan the Gideron warship in return. This is a DC 12 Computers check, and the higher the result of the check, the more information the PCs gain (*Core Rulebook* 325).

As long as the PCs' explanation aligns with the contents of their cargo bay, the *Falchion* gives them permission to land at Labor Camp 1120, nestled at the base of a large mountain in the northern hemisphere. "Any deviation from this flight plan," they are told, "will be met with sustained anti-aircraft fire."

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LABOR CAMP 1120

As *BD514* descends through the clouds toward its destination, signs of war and conflict quickly become apparent. Blast craters and wrecked vehicles pockmark fractured highways, shattered stumps of smokestacks rise from shut-down factories, and the tracks of hobgoblin war machines crisscross the countryside. Labor Camp 1120 comes into sight: a large rectangular compound nestled against the foot of a mountain, surrounded by high walls and spiral wire, accessed by a single enormous gate and protected by multiple guard towers with gun emplacements. A flat landing area with several parked vehicles has room for *BD514*. A cavernous mine entrance leads into the mountain. The camp has several rugged, prefabricated buildings, including a barracks, mess, officer quarters, and storage depot, but also sports a large collection of plastic shelters that look like they provide little protection from the cold mountain air. Hobgoblin soldiers patrol or guard locations throughout the camp, but most of the population consists of dwarven, human, and shirren prisoners, including some children, all of whom are forced to work in the mine.

As the PCs land, a small squad of four hobgoblin troopers (*Alien Archive 2 76*) approaches, led by a Gideron officer with a datapad in her hand. This is Quartermaster **Siib** (LE female hobgoblin soldier). Siib is curt and brusque in her demeanor; the PCs are a gross imposition on her many duties, and her initial attitude toward them is unfriendly. If, however, a goblin, hobgoblin, or kanobo is among the PCs, she has an indifferent attitude toward them instead.

A female hobgoblin officer strides forward waving a datapad, a squad of troopers at her back. "What are you doing here? This camp is not cleared for civilian access!"

Even after the PCs reveal their mission and cargo, Siib is not mollified.

"You can't unload 50 tons of personal armaments here," the officer insists, gesturing around the camp. "Look around you! This is a prison labor camp! Do you think it's a wise idea to put laser rifles and frag grenades a few yards away from this desperate swarm of vermin?" She gestures toward the dwarven, human, and shirren prisoners in threadbare and sometimes tattered clothing, hiding inside cheap plastic shelters or shambling in and out of the mine entrance under the close eye of Gideron guards. Some eye the starship curiously while also

trying to avoid the attention of the soldiers. "We don't even have a place to store them!"

Eventually, Quartermaster Siib gives the PCs her name. She refuses to accept the cargo or allow the PCs to unload it, even as she acknowledges the PCs have been hired to deliver the weapons here. "I'm not signing off on this," she insists. "Not unless you take all this someplace safe. We have an armory just up the mountain, and a couple of trucks. I can spare some soldiers to drive one of them, but if you want your credits, you'll have to take the other."

The PCs have little choice but to agree, and Siib stomps off to the commandant's office to inform them of recent events, leaving the PCs to begin transferring their cargo onto two heavy hovertrucks waiting nearby. PCs who wish to explore the camp are watched closely by hobgoblin troopers but generally left to wander, so long as they don't enter any of the buildings. Quartermaster Siib remains the liaison between the PC crew and the labor camp; she responds to questions and other interruptions with curt efficiency.

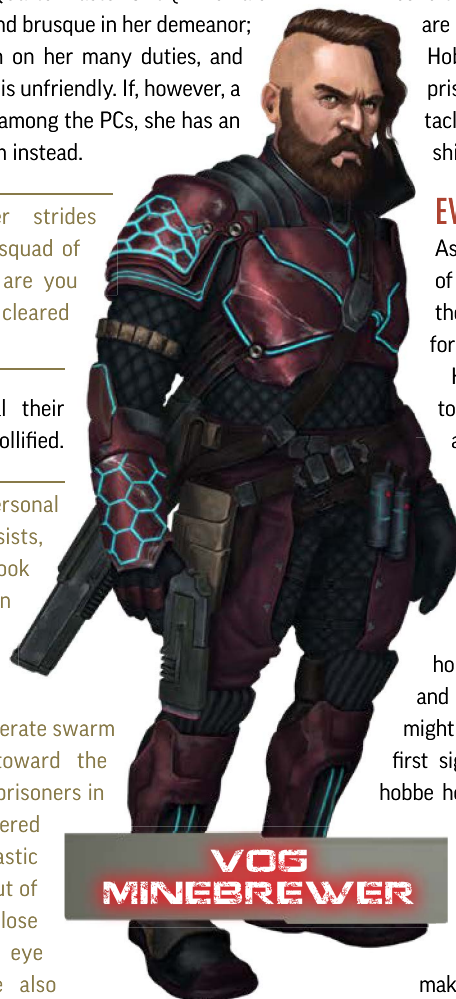
Should the PCs explore the camp or seek more information on the prisoners, use the opportunity to highlight the cruel conditions. Dwarf, human, and shirren prisoners are being slowly starved and worked to death. Hobgoblin guards routinely abuse the adult prisoners, sometimes whipping them with taclashes; these whippings have shredded the shirts of many of the prisoners.

EVENT 6: HOUNDED (CR 4)

As the PCs work to transfer their cargo onto each of the heavy hovertrucks, there's an incident in the hound pen. Use the map of area **A** on page 13 for this encounter.

Hobgoblin guards routinely force prisoners to feed the camp's hobbe hounds, dangerous animals bred for war. Because the hounds are aggressive and the prisoners defenseless, this often results in injury or death, which amuses the guards. Today, **Xoben** (N host shirren) has been forced into this dangerous task. They enter the hound pen with a large bucket filled with raw meat, but when the hobbe hounds threaten, Xoben loses confidence and flees the pen, pursued by the hounds. PCs might see the lead-up to the hound escape, but the first sign of the emergency is likely when several hobbe hounds bolt from the pen and begin attacking every living creature they see, including the PCs.

Creatures: Two hobbe hounds charge toward the PCs from the southwest, where the hound pens are located. More hounds are making havoc elsewhere in the camp, and guards



VOG
MINEBREWER

are seeing to those creatures, but no one will come to assist the PCs in this encounter. Xoben—who is a noncombatant with EAC 10, KAC 12, a +1 modifier on saving throws, and 6 HP—is fleeing ahead of the hounds and already on the map when the encounter begins.

HOBBE HOUND (2)

CR 2

XP 600 each

HP 24 each (page 61)

TACTICS

During Combat The hobbe hounds move to the nearest non-hound creature and attack in melee range, charging if necessary. If they successfully bite and grab a creature, they use their worry ability.

Morale The hobbe hounds fight until killed or incapacitated.

Development: As the PCs take down the last of the hobbe hounds, Gideron Authority troopers stroll onto the scene; they're in no hurry to help, but they intend to take Xoben into custody and punish them for their failure. Any PC who tries to protect or speak up for Xoben is chastened by the guards. "Don't waste your time showing pity on these pathetic specimens," the trooper says. "All they're good at is rushing out of their hidey holes when we least expect them, snatching what they're after, and disappearing again. We'll soon exterminate them." A PC can convince the guards to temporarily ignore Xoben with a successful DC 16 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check, or by passing the guards a 25-credit bribe. In this case, the guards simply shrug and wander back to their posts, confident that Xoben isn't going anywhere. Once the guards are gone, Xoben hurries away from the PCs and back to the prisoner housing, desperate to avoid further attention.

If Xoben has been killed, the guards show no remorse or regret, simply dragging the body into the hound pens for consumption.

EVENT 7: THE RESISTANCE OFFER

After the hobbe hound escape, the PCs continue to load the heavy hovertrucks. As they work, they're approached by what seems to be another of the camp's hobgoblin guards, who addresses them in Castrovelian, Dwarven, or Vesk (whichever they appear most likely to know). "Word is you all are transporting guns and grenades," he says in a casual tone. "It sure would be a shame if they ended up in the hands of the resistance."

This isn't a hobgoblin guard but rather Vog Minebrewer, a member of the resistance on Vohxa, wearing a holoskin disguise. He appeals to the PCs to sell their cargo of weaponry to the resistance rather than the hobgoblins, albeit at a lower price.

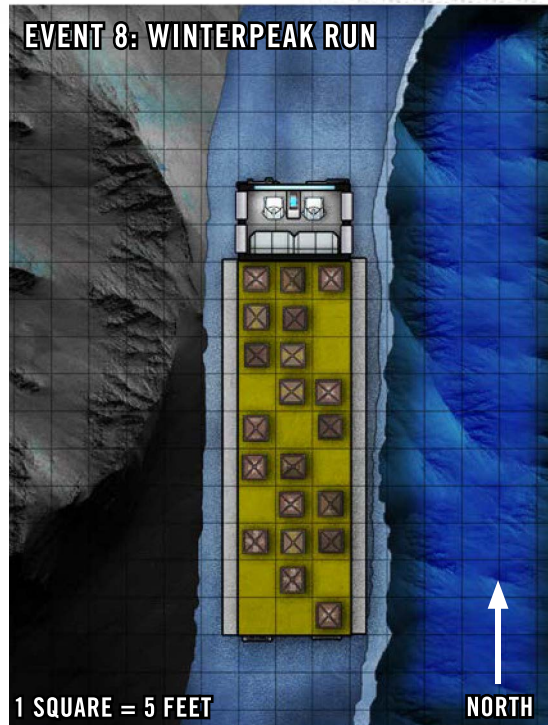
VOG MINEBREWER

CR 3

XP 800

Male dwarf operative

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf)



Init +4; **Perception** +9 (+11 to notice unusual stonework)

DEFENSE HP 35

EAC 14; **KAC** 15

Fort +2; **Ref** +5; **Will** +6; +2 against poisons, spells, and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical switchblade +7 (1d4+4 S)

Ranged explorer handcoil +9 (1d6+3 E; critical arc 1d6) or azimuth laser rifle +9 (1d8+3 F; critical burn 1d6)

Offensive Abilities trick attack +1d8

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +9, Bluff +14, Culture +9, Disguise +14, Engineering +9, Sense Motive +14, Stealth +9

Languages Castrovelian, Common, Dwarven, Vesk, Ysoki

Other Abilities operative exploits (quick disguise), slow but steady, specialization (spy), stonecunning, traditional enemies, weapon familiarity

Gear kasatha microcord I, azimuth laser rifle with 1 battery (20 charges), explorer handcoil^{AR} with 1 battery (20 charges), tactical switchblade^{AR}, holoskin

A PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Perception check is aware Vog has changed his appearance, but not aware he is a dwarf. A PC that succeeds at a DC 14 Sense Motive check realizes Vog is part of the resistance and is trying to make contact with the PCs. Once the PCs start talking to Vog, he switches back to Common and makes his request.

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"You can see what's going on here. Vohxa is a peaceful world of miners and their families. The Authority's come on some trumped up excuse, and they're not going to stop until we're all enslaved or dead. We want to fight back, but hunting rifles are no match for hovertrucks. But if one of these trucks ends up going to a resistance hideout instead of an Authority armory, we might have a chance. Now, we could make that happen. What do you say?"

Vog is a realist, and in a situation this dire, he doesn't expect anyone to do anything for free. He promises that the resistance can pay, but it's only half as much as the Authority is already paying for the cargo. This won't be enough to satisfy the PCs' Company paymasters, not to mention any additional fallout from the job going bad. But Vog can't offer more than that. "We're just working people," he says, "Not a star-spanning corporation or conquering empire." The PCs might want to help Vog but feel they must refuse because driving the hovertruck to a remote location would leave their ship in the Authority's clutches. "Don't worry about your ship," Vog tells them. "I've nicked vessels far more secure than yours. I'll get on board while you're making the delivery and bring it to you."

Development: If the PCs accept Vog's offer, he slips off to contact his superiors and plan, informing the PCs to "take the Mount Winterpeak turnoff. When you see an old cabin off the side of the road, that's it." The PCs will need to defend the hovertruck against hobgoblin soldiers trying to reclaim it.

If the PCs refuse Vog's offer, he still slips away to report to his superiors. The PCs drive the hovertruck to the Authority armory but will need to defend the truck against resistance members trying to steal it.

Story Award: If the PCs agree to help the resistance, award them 600 XP.

EVENT 8: WINTERPEAK RUN (CR 3 AND 4)

Once the PCs have transferred all 50 tons of cargo to the two heavy hovertrucks, Quartermaster Siib returns with a group of six hobgoblin soldiers in tow. "A member of my squad can drive the second truck," she tells the PCs, "but you'll be in the lead with a couple of my troopers to give you directions. If there's any trouble along the way, they'll know what to do." Most of the troopers board the second hovertruck, but two join the PCs; Private **Glaka** (LE female hobgoblin trooper^{AA2}) and Private **Shenk** (LE male hobgoblin trooper^{AA2}) don't have much to say, but they know where the Authority armory is and expect trouble from the resistance. Glaka points to the gate leading out of the camp and says, "Follow the road. We'll tell you when to turn off." Shenk positions himself on the trailer, among the cargo containers.

If the PCs intend to aid Vog and the resistance, they divert their loaded hovertruck to a resistance hideout high up the slopes of Mount Winterpeak. The PCs must defend the convoy from Gideron soldiers trying to reclaim it (full details for this option are under Siding with the Resistance below).

If the PCs choose to carry out the Gideron Job as planned, the Event is largely the same; the crew instead takes the convoy to a Gideron Authority armory up the mountain, protecting it from resistance forces along the way (these differences are detailed under Siding with the Authority on page 26).

Once the PCs make their choice, the heavy hovertruck convoy sets out for Mount Winterpeak.

HEAVY HOVERTRUCK

LEVEL 5

Price 7,500

Gargantuan land and water vehicle (15 ft. wide, 60 ft. long, 10 ft. high)

Speed 15 ft., full 450 ft., 50 mph

EAC 14; **KAC** 17; **Cover** improved cover

HP 65 (32); **Hardness** 6

Attack (Collision) 6d8 B (DC 11)

Modifiers -2 Piloting, -2 attack (-4 at full speed)

Systems cargo trailer, planetary comm unit; **Passengers** 3

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cargo Trailer (Ex) The heavy hovertruck tows a hovering trailer with a 25-ton capacity. The trailer provides no cover itself, but characters on a loaded trailer can take cover behind cargo containers. Hiding among cargo containers provides only partial cover from attacks from above.

DESCRIPTION

The heavy hovertruck resembles an ordinary hovertruck in most respects, but its longer trailer and stronger hover capacity can accommodate heavier loads. The front cabin seats four, including the pilot, but additional crew can position themselves on the trailer among the cargo containers.

The two trucks—with the PCs in the lead—emerge from the labor camp, turn onto the highway, and begin a long drive between towering mountains. Glaka tells the PCs to take a narrow side road which leads up the winding slope of Mount Winterpeak. The second truck follows.

SIDING WITH THE RESISTANCE

Creatures: The first challenge for PCs helping the resistance is to discreetly deal with Glaka and Shenk. Eventually, the convoy reaches the turnoff Vog mentioned that leads toward the resistance hideout; if the PCs haven't incapacitated the two hobgoblin troopers by this time, the unplanned turn alerts them that something is wrong, and they attack. However, the PCs can get the jump on the pair by surprising them before reaching the turn. This is a CR 3 encounter.

HOBGOBLIN TROOPER (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

HP 20 each (*Alien Archive* 2 76)

TACTICS

Combat Hobgoblin troopers rely on their laser rifles, focusing on easy targets that aren't behind cover. If

enemies are grouped together or behind cover, one trooper targets the group with a stickybomb grenade.

Morale The hobgoblins can't retreat from a moving vehicle and fight to the death.

When the PCs make the turn, this alerts the troopers in the second truck and they pursue, using the planetary comm unit on their hovertruck to call for help. This summons Authority reinforcements, who come by air—but the PCs have time to rest and recover Stamina Points on the road before they arrive.

Reinforcements: The attackers roar onto the scene in light enercopters, unarmed civilian vehicles, each crewed by hobgoblin troopers, including a pilot with Piloting +10. This is a CR 4 encounter.

LIGHT ENERCOPTER

LEVEL 4

Price 5,000

Huge air vehicle (15 ft. wide, 15 ft. long, 7 ft. high)

Speed 30 ft., full 550 ft., 60 mph

EAC 13; **KAC** 14; **Cover** partial cover

HP 35 (17); **Hardness** 5

Attack (Collision) 6d6 B (DC 11)

Modifiers -2 Piloting, -2 attack (-4 at full speed)

Systems drop cables, planetary comm unit; **Passengers** 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Drop Cables (Ex) These enercopters are equipped with one piece of non-standard equipment: cable lines that allow passengers to descend to the ground when the vehicle is still aloft. The cables are 60 feet long, and a passenger can attach or detach one by using a swift action. A passenger attached to a cable can descend 30 feet down the cable as a move action.

DESCRIPTION

Light enercopters are simple aircraft with single pilots, cramped seating, and large openings on both sides of the vehicle. Although used for civilian purposes, they are also employed by military units for inexpensive reconnaissance. The pilot of a light enercopter has improved cover but can't attack out of the vehicle.

Each of the Authority enercopters utilizes different tactics. One enercopter hovers over the back of the PCs' hovertruck, with two hobgoblin trooper passengers (page 24) descending to the trailer on drop cables. They quickly detach themselves from the cables and attempt to clear the trailer of enemies. Meanwhile, the second enercopter keeps pace in front of the hovertruck as its solitary passenger hobgoblin snipes at the PCs in the cabin with their laser rifle.

The road is narrow and exceptionally windy, and the second truck keeps dangerously close. To one side is a calamitous drop down the mountainside; to the other is a sheer cliff wall. Each round, the PC piloting the hovertruck must attempt a DC 14 Piloting check to race the second hovertruck; on a failure, the PCs' vehicle slows down enough to get bumped by the

second truck. When this occurs, everyone on the PCs' truck becomes flat-footed until the end of their next turn. All vehicles are moving at full speed; attacks from these vehicles have a -4 penalty. Ignore this penalty if both the attacker and the target are in or on the same vehicle. For this encounter, characters have an attack penalty only if attacking another vehicle or its passengers.

PCs might break open the weapon crates on the trailer and try to use the contents. Each crate contains either tactical infinity rifles^{AR} or mk 2 fragmentation grenades; the rifles do not have batteries.

Because of the unusual circumstances of this encounter—the PCs can't slow down or turn aside, and there is only one route to their destination—do not use the full chase rules on pages 282–286 of the *Core Rulebook*. However, you can still use those rules for guidance to adjudicate actions the PCs may attempt. For example, if the PC pilot attempts to accelerate at the leading enercopter so a PC can attempt to board it, they can use the



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Engage Another Vehicle action. PCs who fail checks or saving throws should not fall from the hovertruck; after all, there's nowhere to go but down, and the PCs cannot turn back to rescue anyone. Instead, PCs who stumble or fall or are incapacitated should end up hanging onto the side or back of the vehicle, from which they can climb back up or be rescued by an ally.

SIDING WITH THE AUTHORITY

Creature: If the PCs refuse Vog's offer, he sneaks aboard their hovertruck as they exit the camp, concealing himself under the trailer. Vog makes his move soon after the convoy takes the turn toward the Gideron armory. This is a CR 3 encounter.

VOG MINEBREWER

CR 3

XP 800

HP 35 (page 23)

TACTICS

During Combat Vog targets Shenk first, on the trailer, along with any nearby PCs. Now that he's no longer disguised as a hobgoblin, Vog ditches his laser rifle and relies on his handcoil and switchblade to make trick attacks.

Morale Vog is willing to die for the resistance and fights to the death.

After dealing with Vog, give the PCs a chance to rest and recover Stamina Points before resistance forces arrive by air.

Creatures: The resistance uses the same two enercopters as the Gideron Authority, but each is crewed by resistance fighters, instead (similarly, the pilot of each enercopter has Piloting +10). This is a CR 4 encounter.

RESISTANCE FIGHTER

CR 1

XP 400

CG Medium humanoid

Init +1; Perception +5

DEFENSE

HP 20

EAC 11; KAC 13

Fort +5; Ref +3; Will +0

Defensive Abilities ferocity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical pike +8 (1d8+5 P)

Ranged autotarget rifle +5 (1d6+1 P)

Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with tactical pike)

TACTICS

During Combat Resistance fighters spray all targets in a 30-ft. cone with automatic fire until they run out of ammunition but won't do so if this would risk injuring fellow resistance fighters. They coordinate their attacks on a single enemy. When reduced to 0 HP, they gain the benefit of ferocity, potentially fighting for one more turn.

Morale The resistance fights to the death.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +5, Bluff +5, Stealth +10

Languages Common

Other Abilities racial traits

Gear autotarget rifle with 20 longarm rounds, tactical pike

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Racial Traits The resistance is made up of humans, dwarves, and shirrens in equal measure; add languages and racial traits appropriate to each species. Many of these racial traits can be ignored for this encounter, but a few are especially important.

- Dwarf resistance fighters gain the traditional enemies trait.
- Human resistance fighters gain Engineering +4 and the feat Laugh at Danger^{COM}.
- Shirren resistance fighters gain blindsense, limited telepathy, and communalism.

The two resistance enercopters utilize the same strategy as those flown by the Authority, but while the PCs fight, two additional enercopters attack the second hovertruck. This battle rages throughout the PCs' encounter, with the Authority troopers holed up in the hovertruck's cabin, fending off resistance fighters who have seized control of the trailer. The fight keeps the second hovertruck dangerously close, requiring the same DC 14 Piloting checks as described on page 25.

Glaka and Shenk aid the PCs in this encounter. These NPCs should not overshadow the PCs; in fact, they make excellent first targets when the enemy lands on the truck or targets it with long-distance sniper fire. You can also give control of these NPCs to players at your table—such as the player whose pilot PC is stuck behind the wheel of the hovertruck, or a player whose character has been incapacitated. If you are controlling these NPCs and they are fighting on the PCs' behalf, they seek direction from nearby PCs and obey their instructions.

OPTIONAL EVENTS

Each round, consider using one of the following events to enliven the chase. Most of these events affect everyone on the hovertruck equally; use these if the PCs are struggling or if you simply need to energize the proceedings. If the PCs are handling the event with ease, use the Reinforcements event to add some extra challenge.

When you are ready to end the chase, proceed to The Tunnel, detailed on page 27.

Bridge Out: As the vehicles cross a long stone bridge, one of the PCs notices part of the bridge is missing. A battle between Authority and resistance forces resulted in a bomb hitting the middle of the bridge, and there's now a 60-foot hole in its surface. The hovertruck does not have true flight, and without quick action by a PC pilot, the vehicle will fall through the gap and crash. A PC pilot must attempt a DC 19 Piloting check. On a success, they leap the chasm and land cleanly on the far side of the bridge; on a failure, the landing is more of a crash.



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Everyone on the vehicle takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage before the truck rights itself and continues on safely.

Enemy Barrage: Enemies aboard the second truck spray the first truck with weapons fire, targeting friend and foe alike. Every creature on the trailer is attacked with a +5 ranged attack; benefits from cover can apply. Anyone struck takes 1d6+1 damage (piercing for resistance fighters, fire for hobgoblin troopers).

Falling Rocks: Rock and snow, perhaps dislodged by weapons fire, cascades down the side of the mountain and onto the hovertruck. Everyone not in the cabin must attempt a DC 12 Reflex save or be staggered for 1 round and take 1d6 bludgeoning damage. A PC can attempt to provoke such an avalanche, using a grenade or weapon capable of attacking multiple foes in an area. The PC must attempt a ranged attack roll against KAC 15. On a hit, the PC can select a row of squares cutting across the hovertruck; all targets on one side of this row are subject to the Reflex save described above. An enercopter pilot caught in a cascade of snow and rock must attempt a DC 18 Piloting check or fall behind the hovertruck, preventing any attacks between the two vehicles for 1 round.

Reinforcements: If the PCs easily defeat this encounter, another enercopter shows up and drops more hobgoblin troopers or resistance fighters, respectively, onto the truck. This time, they land on the cabin directly and try to force their way inside.

THE TUNNEL

The PCs' hovertruck rounds a bend and immediately enters a tight tunnel bored through a portion of the mountain. Enercopter pilots must succeed at a DC 18 Piloting check or else the vehicles take 12d6 bludgeoning damage, destroying them in a brilliant fireball. The pilot of any enercopter in front of the PCs' hovertruck takes a -2 penalty to this Piloting check. An enercopter pilot who succeeds at this check safely turns back, abandoning pursuit. If the pilot succeeds at the check by 5 or more, they can choose to follow the PCs into the tunnel. The second truck misses the turn and swerves off the side of the road, plummeting hundreds of feet to the bottom of the mountain and exploding.

An enercopter pursuing in the tunnel can't turn aside or pass. The passengers can't use drop cables to board the hovertruck, though they can still use personal weapons and potentially leap from the enercopter to the truck. The PC piloting the truck can attempt a DC 19 Piloting check to force the pursuing enercopter into the ground or a wall of the tunnel; this damages the vehicle and allows the PCs to escape pursuit.

Once they survive the chase, the PCs eventually arrive at their destination: a resistance hideout or Gideron Authority armory.

Development: If the PCs have driven to a resistance hideout, they are met by an old woman named **Ahnya** (NG female human) who is bundled in heavy clothing to protect against the cold. Vog told her the PCs were coming, and she is waiting

for them with the agreed-upon payment: a fraction of what the Gideron Authority would have paid. If the PCs refuse payment, Ahnya smiles knowingly, clapping a PC on the back. "I knew you were one of us," she says. "Welcome to the fight."

BD514 appears on the horizon and lands nearby. Vog stole the ship from Labor Camp 1120 and now emerges from the vessel before thanking the PCs for all they have done. The PCs can now leave Vohxa—though they know the Company won't be satisfied with this reduced payment.

If the PCs have driven to a Gideron Authority armory, they arrive at an imposing concrete fort garrisoned by hobgoblin troopers who wave the PCs into a garage where they can turn over the vehicle and cargo. The armory commander authorizes payment for the portion of the cargo the PCs saved, but refuses payment for anything the resistance captured or which was on the second hovertruck. The PCs can leave Vohxa, but they know the Company won't be satisfied with this reduced payment.

Treasure: If the PCs haven't already taken some of the weapons for themselves, Ahnya leaves them two crates: one containing 4 tactical infinity rifles (*Armory 17*) and another with 16 frag grenades II.

Story Award: In addition to XP awarded for defeating enemies, award the PCs 600 XP for delivering the cargo and completing the Gideron Job. If they refuse payment and allow the resistance to have the weapons for free, award them an additional 600 XP.

The PCs don't know that Lord Sinjin tipped off Vog to set them up for failure, ensuring that they'd be desperate when he makes them an offer. The PCs have no new contract, and any message from Tarika will take 3d6 days to reach them in Near Space. It's time to go back to Absalom Station, report in, and face the consequences of another botched job.



The journey to Absalom Station takes 1d6 days of Drift travel. When they arrive, Tarika quickly hails them and asks about the Gideron Job. When she learns of the loss of the cargo, and little or no payment, she agrees with their decision, but she also expresses concern over the Company's response. "I'll file

a report with the information from your ship log," she tells the PCs. "I'll make it look as good as I can. Try not to worry." But her expression means the PCs should probably be a little worried.

"Meanwhile," Tarika says, "Lord Sinjin is lookin' for you.

By now, he's gotta know how things went down on Vohxa. You'd think he'd be mad about the job fallin' through, but he says he just wants to talk to you about, ah, 'a potential business opportunity.' He's stayin' at King Curney's Kasbah, in the Armada. Y'all feel up to a face-to-face?"

True to her word, Tarika fields the PCs' communication with EJ Corp, leaving them to attend to any personal matters they may have on the station before directing their ship into the Armada and to King Curney's Kasbah.



KING CURNEY'S KASBAH

King Curney's Kasbah is a strange amalgamation of large freighters and smaller vessels welded together to create a maze-like casino, brothel, and drug den. As the PCs near the Kasbah, they are contacted by Deminda (page 38), one of Sinjin's bodyguards, who directs them to a specific docking port

hidden among the chaotic jumble of former starships. After docking and emerging from *BD514*, Deminda meets the PCs in person, greeting them courteously and escorting them through one of the casino's common areas to a private lounge.

The Kasbah is an experience designed to stimulate the senses. When the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following.

Inside King Curney's Kasbah, you're instantly bombarded by sights, smells, and tastes. A live band playing an assortment of strange instruments from across the galaxy jams with a chilled rhythmic thrum. The air is full of smoke from a variety of illicit substances and the layered murmur of clandestine deals. Members of many unusual species from Near Space and the Vast fill the establishment—a squid-like *ijtkri* crawls atop the bar to order a drink, and across the room a leafy *ghoran* and peaceful fur-covered *neskinti* pass a dose of hyperleaf back and forth. In a darkened corner, a masked *embri* negotiates with a strike team of *vesk* commandos. Deminda maintains a steady pace, moving across the large chamber to a bulkhead door guarded by a pair of female *drow*. The door opens as she approaches.

Beyond lies a sumptuously appointed chamber with a central rectangular table, at the head of which sits a handsome *drow* who rises as Deminda enters. "Ah," he says with a smile. "The individuals who have cost me a great deal of money. At last we meet." A half dozen armed female *drow* are positioned around the edges of the room, avoiding direct eye contact. The man steps out from behind the table and extends a hand. "I, of course, am Lord Sinjin."

Sinjin invites the PCs to take a seat, and Deminda pours them a rich Apostae wine. He knows all about the PCs, and might even be old friends with one of them, if a PC took the relevant background in character creation (page 43).

"You failed to deliver my weapon shipment on Vohxa as ordered," he says; if the PCs gave or sold the cargo to the resistance, he notes this as well. "I don't suppose you'd care to explain yourselves?" Although he knows the broad outline of events that transpired on Vohxa, Sinjin doesn't know details, and he patiently listens to any story the PCs choose to tell.

"I have every reason to be furious," Sinjin says at last. "And when I get furious with someone, they usually end up breathing vacuum. But the stars have aligned in your favor. I need a crew for a very special job, and you... well... you've alienated both me and your corporate paymasters. If you hear me out, perhaps we can both come out of this ahead."

"You're all Evgeniya-Jaimisson employees, but how much do you really know about the Company, hm? Well, I've spent enough credits to learn quite a bit about it, and I've discovered that they've made a breakthrough in hybrid null-space technology. Null-space chambers aren't new, but no one's been able to figure out how to make them bigger than a few feet across. Your friends at EJ Corp, however, led by a woman named Eline Reisora, have cracked the code. They've discovered how to make a null-space chamber large enough that it makes a space bigger on the inside than it is on the outside—large enough to double the size of a starship's cargo hold."

The PCs might not be impressed by this revelation, but Sinjin is passionate about the possibilities.

"Imagine if every emergency vessel carrying supplies to victims of the Swarm could carry twice the medicinals, if every starship bringing settlers to a distant uninhabited world could carry twice the spare parts and supplies, or if a place like this station could give everyone holed up in Downside twice as much room! I know the galaxy seems like a pretty big place, but I assure you, when you're paying for air, food, and water, it's really much smaller than you think. If the Pact Worlds had access to this technology, it would suddenly become twice as big. That's more elbow room for everyone. Who doesn't want that?"

With a press of a remote, Sinjin summons up a holographic representation of a transport starship, its image slowly rotating over the table. "The answer to that question, of course, is your employer. EJ Corp wants to keep this technology for itself and use it to crush the competition. They've built a prototype starship for it, called the Oliphaunt. It's housed on the Horse Eye Orbital Plate, near Aballon." Sinjin thumbs his remote again, and the image of the starship is replaced by a three-dimensional holographic model of a large starship construction facility in space. "No outsiders

are allowed on the orbital plate, with one exception: many corporations have starship construction projects there, and shareholders for those corporations are allowed to dock and move around freely.

"You aren't shareholders in EJ Corp. At least, not yet. But you do all have stock options as part of your severance pay bonus structure. If you were to leave the Company—before you're all fired—you could redeem those options for a not-inconsiderable amount of EJ Corp stock. You could then walk onto the Horse Eye Orbital Plate and steal the Oliphaunt for me. And then, my friends, I could make you all rich beyond your wildest dreams... and you could do whatever you want for the rest of your lives."

PCs have many reasons to be suspicious of Sinjin and will doubtless have questions for him. He's an excellent liar; PCs must succeed at a DC 23 Sense Motive check to confirm he isn't telling the truth.

Who are you, anyway? "A businessman. I left Apostae a century ago to seek better fortunes elsewhere. Now I and my family are members of the Golden League." This is the truth.

Is Deminda part of your family? "My family isn't involved in our current business. Deminda's a loyal bodyguard, that's all." This is also true.

Who is Eline Reisora? "A Kalistocrat and executive vice president of EJ Corp. She's led the development of null-space technology, supposedly to help secure Kalistocracy cargo vessels constructed at the Horse Eye Orbital Plate.

TO: EJ Corp personnel serving aboard
Company Transport BD514
FROM: EJ Corp Sapient Resources Department
SUBJECT: Possible Contract Breach and
Termination

Dear Employees,

Your recent activity on Vohxa has triggered an objective, AI-led investigation into potential violations of your employee contracts. This investigation may result in your termination. EJ Corp is under no obligation to share the results of this investigation with you.

In addition, Company Transport BD514 has failed to meet expected profit goals. EJ Corp is conducting an internal review to determine the viability of this revenue stream going forward. In the event your company transport is reassigned, your contracts will be voided, effective immediately.

Thank you for your time.

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But I don't think they'll actually use this technology for the Prophet's golden barges. The Company stands to make much more money if they keep the secret to themselves." This is all true.

If we steal this ship for you, what do you intend

to do with it? "Sell it, of course. For a fantastic sum of money. I'm sure AbadarCorp will be interested in doubling their cargo capacity, and I can rely on their sense of fair play to ensure the technology is disseminated throughout the Pact Worlds." This is a lie; Sinjin intends to keep the *Oliphaunt* long enough to copy its technology, then sell the secret to his fellow families in the Golden League.

There's a lot about that last job that

didn't make sense. "It was remarkably straightforward, actually. I hired you to deliver 50 tons of laser rifles and grenades to the Gideron Authority. Instead, most of it ended up at the bottom of a ravine. Or worse. The Gideron Authority didn't pay me, and you've cost me 5.2 million credits." This is a lie; Sinjin set the PCs up to fail the Gideron Job, weakening their relationship to the Company and giving him more leverage.

Why us? "I need EJ Corp employees to get onto the Horse Eye Orbital Plate. And some of you may have a moral compass, which means you'll want this technology shared with the Pact Worlds as much as I do." This is all true, except that Sinjin has no intention of sharing this technology.

What if we say no? "I'll hire someone else. Look, I'm going to pay someone for this job. Wouldn't you rather it was you?" This is true but conceals the fact that Sinjin intends to murder the PCs as soon as they deliver the *Oliphaunt* to him.

Sinjin is prepared to let the PCs think about it, but he offers them 2,000 credits up front if they accept. If they take the job, he pays them this sum immediately, instructs them to quit EJ Corp and cash in their severance packages, and tells them that Deminda will be in touch shortly with further details. If the PCs refuse, Sinjin takes the rejection in stride and allows the PCs to enjoy his hospitality a bit longer before his bodyguards escort them out.

TAKE THIS JOB AND SHOVE IT

By the time the PCs emerge from King Curney's Kasbah, a message from the Company awaits them on their personal comm units (see the sidebar on page 29 for details; you can distribute this to your players as a handout if you wish).

Tarika is sympathetic to the PCs' situation and confides that she herself is contemplating getting out of the Company. "I don't know what I'll do exactly," she says. "And Shan is still off terraforming some water world in the Vast for

these bloodsuckers. But at least she's on her own now, so I have options. I've made some contacts in the free trader community—other crews, not unlike yourselves. I could go independent, I s'pose..." She encourages the PCs to leave the Company on their own terms. "With your severance packages, you might get enough for your own ship! I mean, if you pooled everything together, and the bank gives you a loan. You could go freelance!"

Ultimately, the decision is up to the PCs, but if they don't quit the Company, they're soon fired. Their severance packages become forfeit and they are blacklisted, left with no job prospects or resources beyond Lord Sinjin's offer.

MUSTERING OUT

PCs who quit EJ Corp get a severance package that includes both credits and stock options—but the Company works hard to ensure the PCs get as small a reward as possible, and preferably none at all beyond the laughably negligible stock options it advertises in job listings (and thus, is legally obligated to provide). The severance package is detailed in each employee's hire contract, which is periodically renewed and updated.

These contracts contain a plethora of bureaucratic language that makes them hard to decipher, with exceptions and stipulations that give EJ Corp an endless array of excuses for withholding partial or full severance pay. PCs who attempt to redeem their severance packages spend many hours on their personal comms and the infosphere, negotiating with faceless Company personnel who shuffle them from department to department, converse in monotone using jargon they never explain, contradict each other, and leave the PCs on hold for hours until the call simply ends.

To redeem any of their severance pay, each PC must attempt a DC 13 check using Diplomacy, Intimidation, or a relevant Profession—such as accountant, corporate professional, general contractor, lawyer, manager, or merchant. On a success, the PC gains 1 Build Point and 250 credits; for every 5 points by which the PC succeeds at this check, they gain 1 additional Build Point and 250 credits. Build Points go into a single pool that represents the combined credit, capital, and collateral held by the PCs' crew. "Galactic Trade" on pages 48–55 details how Build Points can be used to buy or improve a starship or to secure additional services, personnel, and benefits. However, after quitting the Company, the PCs won't have enough BP to buy their own ship. They'll have enough to buy cargo and go into business for themselves if they can first pay for a ship, and Sinjin has promised a considerable reward.

If the PCs finish their negotiations with fewer than 10 BP, Tarika chips in enough for the group to reach 10 BP. She, too,



has quit the Company and negotiated her severance package. "Looks like whatever happens, we're in it together!" she says, with characteristic optimism. "Once we do this thing for Sinjin, we'll be independent at last! No one'll tell us what to do. I'll find you all the work you need—for a modest administrative fee, of course—and the universe will be your open road."

Once everyone has mustered out of the Company, EJ Corp locks access to *BD514* and sends an android crew to return the PCs' personal possessions and collect the ship. Everything else, including the hovercarts and Company rig, is reclaimed by EJ Corp. Deminda contacts the PCs by personal comm and gives them the coordinates for an uninhabited asteroid in the Diaspora. "Once the *Oliphant* is in your possession," she tells them, "rendezvous with me at this location for the handoff and your payment."

GETTING ONTO THE PLATE

The Horse Eye Orbital Plate derives its name from Aballon's ancient nickname, "The Horse." Although few call the world by that name now, the Horse Eye Orbital Plate was founded before the Gap by a coalition that included species from lost Golarion. Many corporations use the massive starship construction facility simultaneously, generally subcontracting to anacite firms for the actual construction. Only the employees and shareholders of the various corporations that use the plate are allowed entry; fortunately, the PCs are now shareholders in EJ Corp. They do not, however, have a ship of their own; a no-frills ticket to Aballon on a passenger liner costs 50 credits per day of travel, and travel time is 1d6 days. More luxurious accommodations are probably beyond the PCs' means; see page 235 of the *Core Rulebook* for ticket prices.

When the PCs emerge from the Drift, they see Aballon, a small gray planetoid covered in enormous high-tech metroplexes separated by mountain ranges and the occasional crater. It takes a few hours to reach the Horse Eye Orbital Plate, a miles-long floating factory with a flat upper surface covered in solar collection panels forever angled toward the sun. Starships in various states of construction—most of them barely visible among scaffolding, robotic cranes, and a swarm of workers—hang like bats from the shadowed bottom of the facility. Among these vessels is a colossal bulk cruiser plated in gold—one of the legendary commerce barges manufactured by followers of the Prophecies of Kalistrade. The PCs' passenger liner docks in the middle levels of the plate, where workers and guests are housed. An anacite worker briefly inspects each PC's identification against a database of authorized visitors. As each PC is cleared for entry, the anacite checking their credentials informs them, "Shareholders are authorized to travel freely in the Horse Eye Orbital Plate, but some corporations maintain restricted areas. You must secure separate authorization for entry to each of these regions. The Horse Eye Orbital Plate is not responsible for injury

or inconvenience resulting from failure to obtain this authorization. Do you understand?" Once the PC indicates yes, the anacite issues them a guest room in the middle levels of the facility.

The PCs don't know exactly where the *Oliphant* is being kept, so discovering its location is their next objective. Once they know where the ship is, they'll need to infiltrate the facility and steal it.

INVESTIGATION

The PCs can pursue a variety of methods to find the *Oliphant*. These include research on the plate's infosphere (separate from Aballon's), exploring the Horse Eye Orbital Plate clandestinely or as part of a visitor tour, or hacking computers in the orbital factory.



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A successful DC 13 Diplomacy check to gather information, or half an hour of research on the local infosphere, allows a PC to identify five areas on the Horse Eye Orbital Plate that are both Company-controlled and have restricted access. This information is publicly available to ensure guests do not try to enter areas for which they are not authorized. PCs who initially fail this check can spend 1d4 hours to try again.

Tours are available for guests, giving a broad overview of the Horse Eye Orbital Plate. These tours do not enter any restricted areas, but they provide a convenient alibi for reconnaissance of Company facilities and, potentially, access to computers that might provide more information if hacked. Tours are offered throughout the day, spotlighting different parts of the facility, and have been tailored for two audiences: visiting shareholders checking in on projects conducted by their firms, and potential investors. By attending several of these tours, PCs can look at all five of the Company facilities they've already identified.

As they visit one of these facilities, located near the bottom of the plate, they spot a human woman dressed head to toe in white, walking and talking to an unusual, mantis-shaped anacite. This is Executive Vice President **Eline Reisora** (LN female human envoy), and the anacite is Monitor 77B (page 36), an anacite security specialist. As Reisora walks by, ignoring the PCs as simple tourists, her anacite companion says to her, "After so much overtime, employees are discontent and are beginning to pose a security risk."

"Give everyone a few days off," Reisora replies. "We've come in on time and under budget. They deserve a chance to celebrate."

Monitor 77B answers, "This is satisfactory," as they exit through a secure door into a restricted area marked with the EJ Corp logo.

A PC with the Kalistocrat childhood background (page 43) will recognize Reisora immediately, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 13 Culture check identifies the woman's clothing as the uniform of a follower of the Prophecies of Kalistrade. The PCs should already know Reisora is a Kalistocrat from their conversation with Sinjin, but they can also positively identify the woman as EVP Reisora with a successful DC 18 Diplomacy check to gather information or with a few hours of research into EJ Corp's publicly available records, where Reisora appears, wearing a similar all-white outfit, in her corporate headshot. This is all the PCs need to confirm that they've found where the *Oliphaunt* is being kept.

PCs can hack the Horse Eye Orbital Plate or the Project Oliphaunt facility specifically once they know where it is. Publicly available computers on the plate, such as those found in every guest room, are tier 1; hacking one requires a successful DC 17 Computers check. If the PCs learned the location of the *Oliphaunt* from the chance sighting of Reisora during the tour, a successful Computers check to hack is all they need to get a map of the facility.

If the PCs do not know where on the plate the *Oliphaunt* is being kept, they must hack EJ Corp's network. They can do that through the infosphere using public computers on the plate, or by sneaking away from the tour to reach an EJ Corp computer; a successful DC 13 Stealth check is required to avoid notice long enough to attempt a hack. However a PC chooses to attempt this, EJ Corp uses tier 2 computers, so the DC of the Computers check to hack rises to 21. The network is protected by a countermeasure locking out a given computer for 1 day after three failed attempts. A PC who succeeds at this hack can identify all the Company facilities on the Horse Eye Orbital Plate, but not which one contains the *Oliphaunt*. For that, the PC must hack a secure data module protected by a firewall; this requires a DC 23 Computers check, and a PC who succeeds obtains a map of the Project Oliphaunt facility.

However, this secure data module is protected by an alarm. A PC who triggers the alarm draws the attention of three android security guards. If the PC is hacking while on a tour, these androids arrive in 1 minute. Otherwise, they take 1d4+1 minutes to arrive at the location of the hack attempt.

ANDROID SECURITY GUARDS (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Mixed gender soldiers

N Medium humanoid (android)

Init +8; Senses low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

HP 20

EAC 13; KAC 15

Fort +3; Ref +1; Will +3; +2 vs. disease, mind-affecting, poison, and sleep effects (unless the effect targets constructs)

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee static shock pad +5 (1d4+4 E; critical staggered [DC 14])

Ranged tactical numbing beam +8 (1d6+1 C nonlethal; critical staggered [DC 14])

Offensive Abilities fighting styles (sharpshooter), sniper's aim

TACTICS

During Combat The guards open fire with their nonlethal numbing beams, focusing on a single target and ignoring up to 2 points of AC from cover. In melee, they defend themselves with shock pads integrated into their hands.

Morale The guards retreat and seek allies if reduced below 11 HP.

STATISTICS

Str +3; Dex +4; Con +2; Int +0; Wis +0; Cha -1

Skills Athletics +10, Intimidate +5, Sense Motive +3

Feats Improved Initiative

Languages Common

Other Abilities constructed, flat affect, upgrade slot (static shock pad)



C14

C13

C12

C9

C11

C10

C5

C5

C6

C5

C5

C7

C4

C8

C2

C3

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NORTH

C. PROJECT OLIPHAUNT

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

33

Gear troop ceremonial plate, static shock pad^{AR} with 1 battery (20 charges), tactical numbing beam^{AR} with 1 battery (20 charges)

If the PCs acquire a map of the Project Oliphaunt facility, give them a copy of the map on page 33. They won't know what any of the numbers mean, but they will be able to divine some information from the map itself. Once the PCs know where the *Oliphaunt* is kept, they can move to the infiltration and theft.

Story Award: When the PCs identify the location of Project Oliphaunt, award them 400 XP; if they get a map of the site before breaking into it, award an additional 400 XP.

C. PROJECT OLIPHAUNT

Eline Reisora has been developing and testing the *Oliphaunt's* null-space cargo holds at a restricted research facility on the Horse Eye Orbital Plate. Her responsibilities in the Company are many, however, and by the time the PCs attempt to infiltrate Project Oliphaunt, she's taken a shuttle to Absalom Station to meet with representatives of the Kalistocracy. She is no longer in the area and has ordered a furlough for most of the facility's employees. Only a handful of security personnel—including two android guards, Monitor 77B, and a pair of maintenance workers—remain inside, but the PCs will have to overcome the guards to reach the ship. Security cameras within Project Oliphaunt may capture their intrusion, but EJ Corp is unwilling to allow anyone else in, so the security staff will have no reinforcements. If the PCs take the proper precautions, they can erase the security camera feed entirely.

PCs who took the tour recognize this section of the orbital plate in one of the lower levels near the station's exterior. The single door is marked with the EJ Corp logo and the word "Restricted." This door leads into area **C1**. It is locked (Engineering DC 18 to bypass); failing this check by 5 or more triggers an audible alarm that summons three android security guards (page 32) in 1d4+1 minutes. They will not enter Project Oliphaunt, however.

C1. RECEPTION (CR 1)

This oddly shaped room boasts a two-story ceiling. Two doors lead out of this chamber behind a podium. Several chairs line the front wall on either side of the door.

Creature: An android security guard sits on a stool behind the podium. The guard expects neither visitors nor intruders; Project Oliphaunt's employees all have a few days off as a reward for a long bout of extended overtime. When the PCs bypass the front door, they take the guard by surprise (*Core Rulebook* 239).

ANDROID SECURITY GUARD CR 1

XP 400

HP 20 (page 32)

TACTICS

During Combat The security guard calls to Monitor 77B in area **B13** and asks for backup.

Morale Outnumbered by the PCs, the guard fights for a round or two before attempting to retreat toward the guard in area **C12**.

Development: If the guard successfully calls for help, Monitor 77B urges them to retreat into the hall (area **C2**) to lure the PCs into an ambush set by the anacite dustar and the guard stationed in area **C12**.

The podium has a built-in tier 2 computer that can be hacked to gain a map of the facility (see "Investigation" on page 31) if the PCs don't already have one. A successful hack of this computer also allows PCs to lock and unlock secure doors throughout Project Oliphaunt (noted on the map by the blue keypad mounted on the wall next to each. A successful hack also grants a PC access to security cameras throughout the facility, allowing them to see a second guard stationed in area **C12** and a couple of anacite dustars—one in the hall (area **C2**) and one on the factory floor (area **C13**). Monitor 77B is hiding in area **C13**; thanks to its chameleon circuits, it can only be detected by a PC who succeeds at a DC 33 Perception check. A PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Computers check can transfer control of doors and cameras to a personal comm unit, datapad, or other handheld computer, allowing them to control these devices as they move through the facility. Control of the security cameras also allows a PC to erase the recordings made by those cameras, or simply turn them off.

The two doors behind the guard lead to hallways (area **C2**) and EVP Reisora's office (area **C8**); this latter door is clearly labeled with a nameplate that reads "Eline Reisora, Executive Vice President". The door is locked and usually opened with a keypad mounted on the wall next to the door; a PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Engineering check bypasses this lock.

C2. HALLS (CR 1)

Creature: The white walls and metal floors throughout Project Oliphaunt are kept spotless, thanks to the tireless efforts of an anacite dustar that moves on a regular route throughout this area, occasionally pausing to chat with the guard in area **C12**. The dustar pretends to be a simple maintenance robot, reporting any intruders to Monitor 77B over shortwave, but defends itself if attacked.

ANACITE DUSTAR CR 1

XP 400

HP 17 (page 57)

TACTICS

During Combat An anacite dustar uses its innocuous trick ability to catch targets flat-footed.

Morale The anacite dustar fights until destroyed.

Development: If the anacite dustar observes the PCs and is not attacked, it moves near the guard stationed in area **C12** and waits to ambush the PCs.

C3. TRAINING ROOM

This gathering space is used for training vids and staff briefings and contains many chairs facing a large screen and podium. A PC investigating the podium finds a vid player loaded with several informational programs. One of these, narrated by EVP Reisora, is a brief summary of Project Oliphaunt and the potential for widespread null-space technology. In the vid, Reisora explains that Project Oliphaunt was originally sponsored by followers of the Prophecies of Kalistrade seeking a way to protect the golden commerce barges, which are manufactured on the orbital plate, from pirates. "But the best way to avoid piracy," she says, "is to never attract the attention of pirates in the first place. Project Oliphaunt puts all the cargo of a bulk cruiser into a small, fast, unobtrusive transport. To pirates, the *Oliphaunt* is just another starship among countless others. But that's only how we began this project; now that we've made a breakthrough, we've set our sights much, much higher."

There's no additional information about Project Oliphaunt on any of the other vids.

C4. CONFERENCE ROOM

This long, narrow room contains a large metal table and eight rolling leather chairs. In one corner, a small bar counter containing a variety of liquid dispensers sits ready for occupants.

C5. OFFICE

Each of these small offices includes a metal desk, a cloth office chair, and a darkened computer. They are used by expert scientists and engineers, who have left various personal items lying around, such as squox slippers, family photos, and drawings made by children.

C6. HEAD SCIENTIST'S OFFICE

A small desk sits in the middle of this medium-sized room. On the wall behind it is a large painting depicting a ship entering the Drift. The desk itself is tidy, with a single photo depicting a happy couple at the beach. This office is used by the lead scientist on Project Oliphaunt.

Treasure: A quick search of the desk reveals an obsidian *ring of resistance mk 1* with the inscription "Always & Forever."

C7. SERVER ROOM

This room's door is locked and can be entered using a keypad on the adjacent wall (Engineering DC 22 to bypass). Inside, the room is noticeably cooler than the hallway, and rows of black pillars with glowing blue lights fill nearly all of the available space.

The servers are tier 2 computers that contain confidential information regarding EJ Corp personnel and the work conducted at Project Oliphaunt. They are protected by a security IV module and a rank 2 shock grid (Computers DC 25 to hack). But the servers have no user interface or

even basic functions, and the information on them can be accessed only by someone with root access (Computers DC 45 to hack). Failing a Computers check to hack activates the shock grid, which has the standard stun and kill settings; the first time the shock grid is activated, every creature in the room must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1 round. The second time the shock grid activates, all creatures in the room take 10d6 electricity damage (Reflex DC 22 half).

C8. REISORA'S OFFICE

The smell of expensive perfume permeates this lavishly appointed office. A large wooden desk sits in front of the back wall, and a vibrant red rug adorns the floor in the center of the room. To the right, a leather couch and two matching chairs form a cozy nook, and a fully stocked bar occupies the left corner. A decorative shelf along the back wall of the room bears a pale yellow model of a starship.

This lavishly appointed room is Eline Reisora's workspace when she's at the facility. The room and desk are tidy, and the desk drawers are locked (they can be opened with a successful DC 20 Engineering check). Atop the desk is a family portrait; if a PC took the relevant background (page 43), they are included in this photo. On the desk is a tier 2 computer with a security II module (Computers DC 23 to hack). A secure data module behind a firewall (Computers DC 25 to hack) contains schematics for the *Oliphaunt*, a map of the facility, and a history of the project, including the information from the training vid in area C3.

Treasure: The desk contains a key card that opens several doors in the facility and grants access to the *Oliphaunt*, a *serum of enhancement* (diplomat), and a cylindrical lens pistol (Armory 14) with manual sight and high capacity battery (40 charges). The model on the back shelf depicts the *Oliphaunt* and is crafted from an alloy of gold and inubrix, a starmetal (Armory 67); the large model is 2 Bulk and worth 1,500 credits.

C9. RESTROOMS

Toilet stalls and white basins line the walls of this large employee restroom. The stalls all have inside locks, and the sinks are serviceable. The exit door bears a sign that reads, "Employees must clean manipulators before exiting."

C10. RESEARCH

This oversized room is filled with cubicles separated by thin blue walls. Every desk has its own computer, and most have an array of personal effects ranging from family photos to small figurines of favorite ships or famous people. This room is used by scientists performing research and other tasks for the Company. The tier 2 computers (Computers DC 21 to hack) contain nothing of interest except for a copy of *Super Swarm Six*, a popular computer game.

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Treasure: *Super Swarm Six* operates like a basic strategy game (Armory 108), but players must attempt Dexterity checks instead of Intelligence; the next time the winner provides covering fire for an ally who also played during the same game session, increase the AC benefit by +2.

C11. BREAK ROOM

This large room holds several tables and chairs, vending machines, a cold water dispenser, and various cooking devices. Cabinets store cups, powdered drinks, and sugars, as well as mundane cleaning supplies.

Treasure: A mk 2 culinary synthesizer (Armory 129) and a self-heating pot (Armory 130) sit on the counter. A quick search with a successful DC 11 Perception check reveals 2 ultra-capacity batteries in a drawer, while a longer search with a successful DC 17 Perception check discovers two *mk 2 serums of healing* tucked into a first aid kit in the cabinet.

C12. FACTORY ENTRANCE (CR 1)

This area's steel double door is locked and labeled "Authorized Personnel Only." To the right of the door is an access pad that requires a keycard. These doors lead to the factory where *null-space cargo holds* were crafted and installed on the *Oliphant*.

Creature: A single android security guard is on duty here. If the PCs have avoided raising a facility-wide alarm and Monitor 77B is still unaware of their presence, this guard is likely to be caught unawares. If the PCs have been observed by the anacite dustar in the halls (area C2) or the guard in reception (area C1) was able to retreat, the surviving defenders make their stand here to defend this doorway.

ANDROID SECURITY GUARD CR 1

XP 400

HP 20 (page 32)

TACTICS

During Combat The security guard calls Monitor 77B to request backup and defends the door.

Morale If reduced below 11 HP, the guard tries to flee through the door and join Monitor 77B in the factory (area C13).

Development: If the guard calls for help, Monitor 77B emerges from the factory floor (area C13) one round later and joins the fight. A round after that, the anacite dustar in area C13 also arrives. These reinforcements make the fight very deadly for PCs.

The door to the factory floor requires a DC 23 Engineering check to hack. However, it opens easily for any PC who uses the keycard from Reisora's desk (area C8).

C13. FACTORY FLOOR (CR 4)

Sheet metal floors and gleaming white walls frame a massive space packed with equipment; tables are littered with

technological parts and arcane components. To the east, a large assembly area includes scaffolding and frames that surround an empty space. This is where the *null-space cargo holds* were assembled before each was installed in the *Oliphant*. Vid boards line the walls, filled with scribbled notations.

Creatures: An anacite dustar moves around the factory floor, keeping everything spotless while also searching for intruders. In addition, Monitor 77B, the chief of security in this facility, has stationed itself here.

In the unlikely event the PCs have gotten this far without all the defenders in the facility being alerted to their presence, the anacite dustar pretends to be a simple maintenance robot until Monitor 77B launches a surprise attack. The monitor is unmoving and nearly invisible in the square marked with an X; it can be detected only with a successful DC 33 Perception check.

ANACITE DUSTAR CR 1

XP 400

HP 17 (page 57)

TACTICS

During Combat An anacite dustar uses its innocuous trick ability to catch targets flat-footed.

Morale The anacite dustar fights until destroyed.

MONITOR 77B CR 3

XP 800

HP 40 (page 58)

TACTICS

Before Combat Monitor 77B uses its chameleon circuit to hide and let enemies come within range, then attacks by surprise.

During Combat Once combat begins, Monitor 77B coordinates with any allies in the fight; it spreads its electric rays among several enemies using multiattack.

Morale Monitor 77B fights until destroyed.

Development: The android guards in areas C1 and C12, or the anacite dustar in the hall (area C2), may have contacted Monitor 77B by shortwave or personal comm, alerting the security chief to intruders. Monitor 77B's first strategy is to order its subordinates to retreat to the door at C12, with instructions to hold this door against all intruders. Monitor 77B and the anacite dustar in this room can then open the door to C13 and support their allies there.

If this plan fails and all the defenders on the other side of the door are defeated, Monitor 77B hides at the spot on the map marked with an X, orders the anacite dustar to hide as well, and waits to ambush the PCs.

Characters who analyze the writing on walls around the room can attempt DC 18 Engineering and Mysticism checks; a success reveals this area was used to construct multiple large hybrid null-space devices. All this work appears to be completed. The tier 2 computers here have security II

modules (Computers DC 23 to hack) and contain plans for the *Oliphaunt*; a secure data module protected by a firewall (Computers DC 25 to hack) contains schematics for the *Oliphaunt*'s hybrid null-space cargo holds.

Treasure: Crates scattered about the room contain 1,000 UPBs and four fist-sized cubes of raw inubrix (each 1 Bulk and worth 625 credits). Additionally, a *serum of enhancement* (scientist) is tucked behind one of the computer screens.

C14. HANGAR

The doors to the hangar are locked but can be opened with the keycard from Reisora's desk (area C8); a successful DC 20 Engineering check is otherwise required to bypass the doors. The *Oliphaunt* rests, in the massive chamber beyond, its airlock open and the vessel ready for its first flight. There's even a bottle of champagne and several glasses laid out in the bridge. The northern wall of the hangar is a semipermeable force field; it retains atmosphere inside the hangar but allows large objects, such as the *Oliphaunt*, to enter and exit.

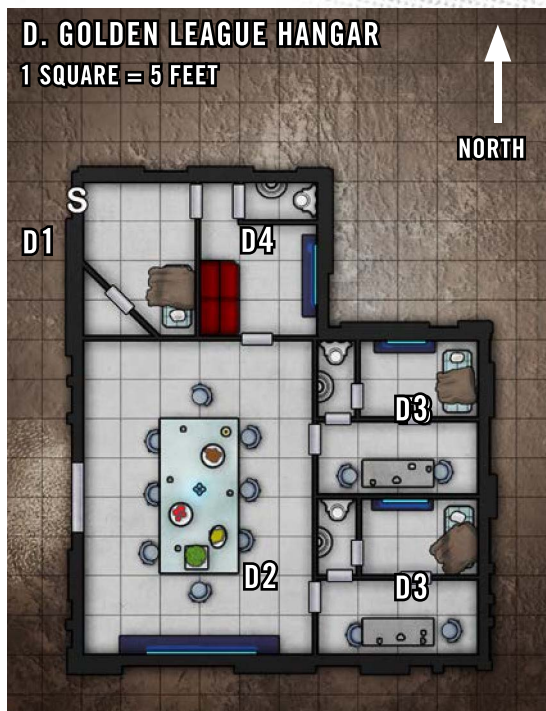
To leave, all the PCs have to do is take control of the *Oliphaunt*, start up its thrusters, and fly it out. To take control of the ship's systems, a PC must hack the *Oliphaunt*'s onboard tier 2 computer with a successful DC 21 Computers check or use the keycard from Reisora's office (area C8). The ship's thrusters require 3 minutes to start. When the *Oliphaunt* emerges from the hangar, it goes temporarily unchallenged; a PC can take 10 minutes to plot a course to the remote asteroid where the handoff is to take place by succeeding at a DC 10 Piloting check, but the time required is halved for every 5 by which the check succeeds. See page 145 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook* for more on navigation.

It takes the PCs 1d6 days to reach the handoff location, but PCs who suspect Sinjin's betrayal might choose to simply keep the *Oliphaunt*, giving up any chance of securing their promised payment; this does not change the sequence of events in the adventure path, and you can move directly to *Starfinder Adventure Path* #35: *Merchants of the Void*. However, because the PCs never face Deminda, she could reappear in a future adventure—at an appropriately higher CR and accompanied by drow henchmen.

D. GOLDEN LEAGUE HANGAR

Deminda, bodyguard and assistant to Lord Sinjin, has given the PCs coordinates for a desolate asteroid in the Diaspora where they can deliver the *Oliphaunt* to Sinjin in exchange for payment. The PCs emerge from the Drift within sensor range of this asteroid, which has a small hangar that serves as a base for Golden League smugglers. The hangar quickly detects the *Oliphaunt*, and Deminda invites the PCs to land.

The entire base is in dim light to accommodate the drow stationed here, and all doors are unlocked. When Deminda springs her trap, she turns off all the lights in the base and



locks all the doors; each door can be bypassed only with a successful DC 24 Engineering check.

PCs who suspect a trap can take precautions, such as wirelessly hacking the base's computer network. This requires a successful DC 21 Computers check to gain access to basic functions, which includes control of doors and lighting. Hacking the base's network while observed by drow enforcers requires a successful DC 14 Sleight of Hand check; a PC who fails this check alerts the drow enforcers. Due to light blindness, if the PCs turn the lights in the facility up to their brightest setting, the drow enforcers are blinded for 1 round and dazzled for as long as they remain in bright light.

D1. HANGAR (CR 1)

The hangar is large enough for a Medium starship such as the *Oliphaunt* and is otherwise empty. A permeable force field retains atmosphere within the hangar, but physical objects such as a starship can enter and exit freely. A single door leads into the hangar's small habitation suite (areas D2-D4); the door has Hardness 35 and 160 Hit Points, but a hit with any starship weapon destroys it.

Creature: A single drow enforcer waits by the door. She tells the PCs, "I will escort you to Deminda." She is leading the PCs away from the ship and into an ambush; a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Sense Motive check can tell the drow enforcer is pretending to be helpful, but is in fact hostile. She leads the PCs through the doors to area D2.

DROW ENFORCER

CR 1

XP 400

HP 20 (*Alien Archive* 42)

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TACTICS

During Combat The enforcer uses create darkness to hide before attempting to flee. If unable to flee, she defends herself with her laser rifle, which is imbued with a rune of the eldritch knight.

Morale The drow enforcer does not want to fight the PCs in the hangar without backup and will try to flee if attacked, leaving the door behind her unlocked.

D2. LOUNGE (CR 3)

The PCs are led here by the drow enforcer from area **D1**. As the PCs enter this chamber, the door closes behind them; a PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check detects that the door locks.

The room is spacious and laid out to host a celebratory banquet: a broad table is surrounded by chairs and laden with delicacies arrayed on fine plates while glasses of dark Apostae wine are positioned on the bar on the south wall of the room. All this food is delicious and safe to eat; Deminda intends to murder the PCs with the help of her enforcers, and she set this table to celebrate with her allies. Three additional doors each lead to personal quarters for one of the drow.

Once all the PCs (or as many as are coming) have entered the room, Deminda triggers the ambush. The lights in the entire base go out, all doors lock, and the drow enforcers attack.

Creatures: In addition to the drow enforcer who led the PCs into the room, a second waits against the far wall.

DROW ENFORCERS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

HP 20 each (*Alien Archive* 42)

TACTICS

During Combat The drow enforcers have imbued their laser rifles with runes of eldritch might. They take advantage of the darkness, focusing their fire on a single enemy with low defenses or vulnerable positioning and hurling shock grenades at groups of foes. If the PCs create light, one of the drow uses her create darkness ability.

Morale The enforcers fight to the death.

While the enforcers keep the PCs busy here, Deminda uses a secret door to move from her chambers (area **D4**) to the hangar, where she attempts to sabotage the *Oliphaunt* (as described in **Event 9**, below).

D3. ENFORCER CHAMBERS

These small but comfortable chambers are kept for Golden League smugglers who occasionally use this base. Each has a sitting area furnished with a desk and tier 2 computer; a bedroom with bed, dresser, and wardrobe; and a bathroom.

D4. DEMINDA'S CHAMBERS

Deminda has taken the largest suite of rooms for herself. The suite has a large entertainment center along one wall and a

private bathroom. The bedroom is sizable, with an expansive and comfortable bed and walk-in closet. A secret door in the bedroom provides private access to the hangar; this door can be spotted by anyone who searches the room and succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check. It is opened by pressing a well-concealed button and can't be locked.

EVENT 9: PARTING SHOT (CR 3)

As the PCs fight the drow enforcers in the lounge (area **D2**), Deminda moves from her chambers (area **D4**) to the hangar via the secret door. Under cover of darkness, she plants a powerful explosive charge in the *Oliphaunt*'s thrusters. Any PCs who remained in the hangar may detect her with a successful DC 24 Perception check. She doesn't finish planting the charges until the fight in the lounge is over; once it is, she hides in the hangar, waiting to ambush any survivors.

DEMINDA

CR 3

XP 800

Female drow operative

NE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +14

DEFENSE

HP 35

EAC 16; **KAC** 16

Fort +2; **Ref** +5; **Will** +6; +2 vs. enchantment

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immunities** sleep

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee inferno knife +7 (1d4+4 S; critical burn 1d6)

Ranged carbonedge shuriken +13 (1d4+4 P; critical bleed 1d4)

Offensive Abilities create darkness, trick attack +1d8

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)

At will—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*

TACTICS

During Combat Deminda uses create darkness to give herself somewhere to hide, drinking her *daywalker serum* if necessary. She targets the most vulnerable PCs with trick attacks using her carbonedge shuriken, relying on her Mobility feat to avoid attacks of opportunity and falling back on her inferno knife if forced into melee combat.

Morale Deminda knows that Sinjin will kill her if she fails to stop the PCs, so she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +14, Bluff +9, Culture +9, Engineering +9, Stealth +14

Feats Mobility

Languages Abyssal, Castrovelian, Common, Drow, Elven

Other Abilities operative exploits (shuriken assassin^{COM}), specialization (daredevil)



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Gear zeizerer diffractor 1^{PW}, carbonedge shurikens (10), inferno knife (*Starfinder Adventure Path #2: Temple of the Twelve 12*), daywalker serum, personal comm unit



Once Deminda is defeated, the PCs can depart the asteroid on the *Oliphaunt*. (For a map of the *Oliphaunt*, see the inside cover of *Starfinder Adventure Path #35: Merchants of the Void*.) If the PCs have no other destination in mind, they can return to Absalom Station, where Tarika can find them their next job. However, Deminda left a final surprise: unless a PC interrupted her in the hangar, the *Oliphaunt* is rigged with explosives!

PCs who search the ship for sabotage find the explosive charge planted in the thrusters with a successful DC 19 Perception check. Disarming it requires a successful DC 19 Engineering check. If undetected, the explosive charge goes off when the PCs enter the Drift, inflicting 4d6 damage.

If this damage is 15 or greater, this also applies a critical damage effect to the *Oliphaunt*; roll on the table on page 321 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. This isn't enough to seriously threaten the PCs or impede their journey, but they'll need to stop and repair the damage eventually if they want to stay flying.

If the PCs don't head for Absalom Station immediately, Tarika tries to contact them. Presuming they don't leave the Pact Worlds system, her message reaches them in 1d6 days: she invites them to come to Absalom Station, where she has a lead on a job to keep them flying. The PCs should be 3rd level by now, but if they aren't, grant a story award of enough XP to level them to 3rd.

The PCs have acquired several powerful enemies: Lord Sinjin still wants them dead, not only because they're loose ends who know all about the *null-space cargo holds*, but because now they've stolen the *Oliphaunt*. The theft of the *Oliphaunt* also puts Eline Reisor's job on the line, and as a Kalistocrat, that means her immortal soul is at stake. Pursued by the Golden League, hounded by the Company, and desperate for work, the crew of the *Oliphaunt* have the power to go anywhere they wish... but everywhere is perilous, and they're sure to make even more enemies.

Their story continues in the second volume of the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path: "Merchants of the Void"!



WORKING FOR A LIVING

“‘Take it to the EJ.’ Yeah, it’s a cool slogan, I s’pose, if you’re one of them Pact Worlders who don’t know drek from drive grease. We call it ‘livin’ on the EJ’ out here in the lanes. Sometimes, that edge is at your throat, ya know, cuttin’ time to grab that bonus. Other times, it’s skirtin’ the EJ, doin’ what needs doin’ to get the job done, no worry for proper procedure. One thing is sure as death and taxes, though: the Company always has the edge. Always. See, they make the rules, and us proles gotta live by ‘em if we wanna see that next payday.”

—Gar EnGilly, EJ Corp freighter engineer

WELCOME TO THE EJ!

Congratulations! You signed your contract, and you're ready to ship out! You've just joined one of the most innovative, sophisticated, and diverse companies in galactic industry, and we're happy to have you as part of the Evgeniya-Jaimisson team. Like our countless customers, you know us as EJ Corp™, and that's a fine start. We don't stand on formalities here!

This data file contains guidelines to help you be the best employee you can be, but the more you know about EJ Corp and the way we do things, the better. So, don't be afraid to ask questions and contribute your opinions. This employee manual is only a starting point.

As you digest this material, here are a few points to keep in mind.

- This document doesn't constitute a contract of employment. You or EJ Corp can terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice.
- This document doesn't constitute binding policy. It can change at any time.
- This document can be found on public EJ Corp sites in numerous infospheres, including those in EJ Corp facilities and starships. You can suggest changes via such interfaces. Our Sapient Resources department regularly reviews such submissions and uses them to make future revisions.

WHO WE ARE

Tarn Jaimisson founded Jaimisson Corporation over 50 years ago as a mining and transport company based in the Pact Worlds. A lot can change in five decades, and a lot has. Jaimisson became a publicly traded company nearly 40 years ago. The Evgeniya Corporation of Vesk Prime bought controlling interest in Jaimisson more than 20 years ago, expanding the company's capabilities, cash flow, and galactic reach. As EJ Corp, we've continued growing ever since. Now we produce everything from ration packs to planetary atmosphere converters. Our customers know to Take it to the EJ™ for their shipping, supply, and industrial needs—from colonization to terraforming, from the central systems of the Pact Worlds and the Veskarium to the Vast. You're part of that legacy now!

WHO YOU ARE

We hired you because you fit our needs. Your assignment should suit yours. All we require is that you understand your role and seek to fulfill it. In doing so, apply your expertise, work hard, use good judgment, support your team, and cling to integrity. Expect as much from yourself as you do from others... **DATABASE CORRUPTION...**

All right, let's cut the crap. To the Company, you're just an employee number. The Company doesn't care about your skill, industriousness, or honesty. The Company cares about three things, and that's money, money, and more money. Remember that. Keep being a good little source of profit and you'll be fine.

COMPANY JARGON

Every corporation has an internal culture, and the Evgeniya-Jaimisson Corporation is no different. A few samples of Company jargon appear in this datafile. The following examples of vernacular are commonly used at EJ Corp.

The Company: Most employees call EJ Corp by this commonly understood, capitalized name.

Dispatcher: A member of middle management who arranges contract work for transport crews.

EJ: The initials of the Evgeniya-Jaimisson Corporation, pronounced colloquially as "edge" at the Company (both internally and externally), as well as in popular culture.

Exec: A member of Company upper management, though employees might use abbreviated ranks for specific execs (i.e. VP for vice president).

Lanes: Short for space lanes, referring to common trade routes.

Prole: An old term referring to a member of the working class who sells their labor for pay.

Salarati: A term for a white-collar worker that often implies a comfortable, middle-class lifestyle.

But if you cause trouble or stop being useful, you'll be ejected like yesterday's garbage. Here's some real advice.

CHARACTER OPTIONS

During the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path, no matter what your class, you're a member of the crew aboard a merchant vessel, shipping freight from one world to another across the galaxy and engaging in speculative trade—trying to buy low and sell high. When the Adventure Path begins, you're employed by the Company, and if you earn them profits, they've promised you a fat annual bonus. Eventually, however, you might aspire to become your own boss, pointing your starship at a destination of your choosing and striking it rich—or going bust—by your own merits. Regardless, you need to stay employed somehow because you've got bills to pay.

You want a crew competent in starship handling and business dealings. This isn't to say you won't need combat capabilities—the galaxy is dangerous, even for working people. However, you might want to focus on abilities and features that allow you to better negotiate in outer space and thrive as a freight trader, including starship- and space-oriented class features, skills, and feats. A high Sense Motive bonus, knowing how to use cargo lifter powered armor for more than moving big crates, and a steady aim all go together in this campaign.

When you reach 2nd level, consider the free trader archetype (*Character Operations Manual* 103). This archetype imparts one feature that grows over time. However, that feature's effects

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STARSHIP ROLES

You're going to be working with your fellow crew members on a Company freighter, so you need to consider your starship role. Most themes detailed in this article suggest possible starship roles. Those that don't might lend themselves to a character who can fill any role, depending on class and skills. At the very least, your group needs an engineer, a gunner, a pilot, and a science officer. Look for opportunities to build your characters to fill other roles, too, including chief mate and magic officer (both found in the *Starfinder Character Operations Manual*).

can prove extremely useful to everyone on the crew, even if only one character has it.

THEMES

People from all walks of life come to EJ Corp for work, and the themes below make good backstories for Company employees, as do the new prole and vaster themes at the back of this article (pages 48–49). As you develop your character, share your ideas with your fellow players and look for ways your characters might have met before or even have some history together.

Ace Pilot: Every starship needs a reliable pilot. Flying Company freighters and driving loading vehicles might not seem glamorous, but it's steady work. A dependable navigator helps ensure timely deliveries and safe passage. Most pilots plying the Drift are like you, making sure payloads and passengers move across the galaxy.

Corporate Agent^{PW}: You're a businessperson. When your crew needs to negotiate a legitimate deal, you handle the talking. You know EJ Corp's policies and applicable laws, as well as how to skirt them. Another one of your specialties involves getting something done with help from others further up the corporate chain. If you can't do something yourself, you probably know who in the Company to ask. As the (probable) highest-ranking Company rep on the starship, you're well-suited to serve as the vessel's captain.

Grifter^{COM}: The Company is filled with smooth-talking corporate agents, products of a university education or packaged corporate management training. You're not one of them. You learned your negotiating skills in less reputable establishments, and you know the shady side of business. To your colleagues, you're someone who always has a plan or readily comes up with one. They depend on your quick thinking and smooth-talking to make better deals appear out of thin air.

Mercenary: You could be a security specialist or a gunner, but you're just as likely to be a natural leader—and good chief mate material (*Character Operations Manual* 146). You know how to handle a heavy workload and can direct your colleagues to efficient action. Simultaneously, you know how military hierarchy works, which helps you deal with corporate structures and law enforcement agencies. Your colleagues look to you when events take a dangerous turn.

Outlaw: You have a dark past, perhaps giving you a reason to stay on the move. As part of a Company crew, you likely have the most know-how in handling corrupt dock managers, navigating shady business deals, and hiding illicit cargo. Perhaps you feel grateful for the second chance that your hauler job represents, or maybe this gig just helps you pay the bills while you wait for another opportunity to present itself.

Prole (page 48): As part of the working class, you survive by selling your labor for a paycheck. You're probably very good at what you do, whether you're an accountant, a cook, or a technician. However, it's only a job, and the Company is just your employer. The pay isn't good enough to merit a lot of risk. You might be marking time until something better comes along, using the job to meet some other desire, or hoping—like so many others—that you can make it big despite your humble origins and skills.

Spacefarer: In the corporate shipping world, spacefarers serve as engineers, navigators, science officers, and surveyors. Maybe you've always had a fascination with outer space, and taking a freighter job gave you the opportunity to scratch that itch. Most people who spend a lot of time in the void are like you. You likely have many skills useful to your crewmates, and they look to you because you always seem to have a knack for getting the job done.

Starwalker: As a starwalker (*Starfinder Adventure Path #22: The Forever Reliquary* 53), you're used to being in space. On a corporate hauler, you're equally skilled in both astrogation and extravehicular work, potentially specializing as a pilot or engineer. In any case, you excel at getting into tricky areas to make repairs or to perfectly execute your role in the crew's latest cunning scheme.

Street Rat^{COM}: You grew up without a lot of options, and you took corporate work to escape the streets of your home world and make a better life for yourself. You provide your crew with information on local scenes, from official import regulations to unofficial export channels. What's more, you know how to blend in as a hidden observer or unanticipated backup. If a deal goes bad, you have a natural talent for using alleys and byways to cut a quick retreat to the spaceport.

Vaster (page 49): You come from a planet in the Vast, possibly one terraformed a generation ago by the Company. Resourceful and diverse, vasters must know how to handle a starship and make do with less, whereas other settlers focus on simple survival. Maybe you initially traveled to the Pact Worlds on the Company payroll so you could see the galaxy. You might come from a society unrelated to the Pact Worlds or Veskarium, and a job on a Company hauler granted you a ticket out.

Themeless: If you want to be a nondescript Company drone, going themeless might work. However, for this series of adventures, a theme such as prole or vaster might better serve you. Both suggest a humble background but provide features that you'll likely use in this adventure path.

Other Themes: Other character themes can work, but if you elect a theme that doesn't lend itself to you being a Company worker, you need to answer one question: Why are you working the shipping lanes aboard a corporate freighter with your crewmates?

ALIGNMENT

The words on the cover say it all: You're no hero. Instead, you're a corporate cog trying to make a life out of shipping goods aboard a starship owned by the Evgeniya-Jaimisson Corporation, known among its workers as the Company. Your crew might be mere coworkers, or you might consider them good friends; regardless, you need to get along with your crew during extended hauls through the Drift. You might stick your neck out for these colleagues, but only because you expect them to do the same for you.

They say nice people finish last in the corporate world. They're right, but sometimes it's better to finish last with your integrity intact—though only you can make that trade-off. You'll have to make a lot of choices in this business, often between doing what looks easy, efficient, and practical as opposed to doing what's right. So remember this: doing the right thing usually means doing the hard thing. The right thing is going to cost you time and money, maybe even blood. Every action has consequences, and we affect those we meet and do business with in a hundred small ways; when you treat other people well, you've got a good chance they'll treat you favorably in return. If you decide to stab them in the back or punch them in the face, don't be surprised if they shoot first the next time you cross paths.

A lot of people in this business are survivors. They look out for themselves because they have to. They keep their head down and their visual organs on the prize, taking risks only to protect their interests and their friends. When it comes to following corporate policy, law, and moral codes, flexibility serves you well. Survivors follow the rules when they have to, but when mischief gives them the best solution, they misbehave. Nobody wants to die for a small paycheck.

The worst among you are antiheroes. These people do the right thing for the wrong reasons. Their motivations are often selfish or predicated on baser desires. An antihero might still chase down a vicious criminal or ruin a corrupt former employer, though only for a fat bounty or to satisfy revenge—not because “it was the right thing to do.” Antiheroes consider everyone else to be bleeding hearts. Fuzzy feelings and good deeds don't pay the bills.

Still, no one wants to share bunk space with a bloodthirsty murderer or inveterate thief. Living in a moral gray area poses a constant balancing act, and the corporate hauler world is full of scoundrels, slackers, and vagabonds. Maybe you've made some bad choices in your life—you wouldn't be the first. But just like everybody else in this (or any) line of work, you have to try to learn from those mistakes, live a better life, and earn an honest day's pay for an honest day's labor whenever possible.

If your character is a normal worker just trying to get along, that's a neutral outlook. Flouting the rules and relying on improvisation makes you chaotic. If you follow your conscience and put the welfare of others before your own, even when it costs you, you're good. Most of your fellow EJ Corp colleagues are neutral; they prefer reliable laws and trustworthy companions, but they'll keep looking out for themselves unless someone—maybe you—gives them a good reason not to.

BACKGROUNDS

You're going to meet a lot of people in the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path, and some of those characters will return repeatedly. The backgrounds provided here add elements to your character history that give you a clear connection to one of the Adventure Path's most important or recurring NPCs. They aren't intended to replace your character's entire backstory, which you should develop in collaboration with your GM and fellow players. Instead, they detail one specific incident in your past that you can integrate with the story you imagine for your PC. Select only one of these backgrounds with each player choosing a different one. If none of these backgrounds seem appropriate for your character, work with the GM to create a new one.

Former Smuggler: You have a checkered past; for a time, you smuggled illegal weapons, drugs, and other contraband in and out of the Pact Worlds. After you attracted the attention of the Stewards, they briefly incarcerated you aboard the *Steadfast*, their flagship. There, you met Xegas Xervanas, a young Steward who'd grown disenchanted with his career path. In conversations with you, Xegas became enthralled with the idea of the smuggler life; he broke you out of the brig and became a smuggler himself, under the codename Jinx. You left that job for something with a bit less heat attached, and although you've heard Jinx works as a transport pilot now, you haven't seen him since.

Golden Parachute: For a time, you lived on the other side of the law. Specifically, you worked for the Golden League a while ago, alongside a Xun assassin named Sinjin. After a particularly nasty job on Eox, you decided to walk away from the League to find a career with a longer life expectancy. The Golden League didn't want to let you go, but Sinjin covered for you; out of gratitude for all the close calls over the years, he told his bosses in the Golden League that he pushed you out of an airlock as punishment for your betrayal. You haven't seen Sinjin since, but you've heard he has risen high in the League, even forming his own crime family.

Kalistocrat Childhood: You grew up in a family that followed the Prophecies of Kalistrade. Since these prophecies insist on celibacy, you and your siblings were all adopted, and your parents filled your head with the idea that the zeros in your credit balance measured your success in life. When you became an adult, you left home and abandoned the religion, alienating your parents and your sister, Eline, who

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has continued to rise in the organization. Now, she works as an Executive Vice President in the Company. The two of you haven't spoken in years, but fortunately, the executive level might as well be another star system. She almost certainly doesn't know you're also employed by EJ Corp.

Mine Collapse: Here's the story of how you almost died. There you were, mining thasteron in Akiton's Winterlands a few years ago. Akiton doesn't even have laws, let alone safety regulations, so no one was surprised when, one day, a molecular borer ignited a thasteron explosion that collapsed

the mine on hundreds of workers. Most died, but you and a ysoki named Niva Rovo managed to work together to melt your way out. You've never forgotten Niva, and you can bet she has never forgotten you. You heard that she has her own ship now, *Wintermourn*, with a whole crew to boot.

New Hire: Life is hard, and you've been down on your luck for a long time. However, you still have a few friends from the old days when you had credits to burn. One of those friends is a brenneri named Tarika; you and she had a lot of good times together, but she dropped out of your

LIGHT ARMOR

ARMOR MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	EAC BONUS	KAC BONUS	MAXIMUM DEX BONUS	ARMOR CHECK PENALTY	SPEED ADJUSTMENT	UPGRADE SLOTS	BULK
EJ coverall, utility	1	230	+1	+1	+4	—	—	2	L
EJ coverall, industrial	2	900	+2	+2	+4	—	—	2	L

HEAVY ARMOR

ARMOR MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	EAC BONUS	KAC BONUS	MAXIMUM DEX BONUS	ARMOR CHECK PENALTY	SPEED ADJUSTMENT	UPGRADE SLOTS	BULK
EJ hardsuit, utility	1	350	+2	+3	+2	-2	-5 ft.	2	2
EJ hardsuit, industrial	2	1,200	+4	+5	+2	-2	-5 ft.	2	2
EJ hardsuit, advanced	5	3,500	+8	+10	+2	-2	-5 ft.	3	2
EJ hardsuit, elite	9	14,200	+14	+16	+3	-2	-5 ft.	4	2
EJ hardsuit, paragon	13	53,500	+18	+20	+4	-2	-5 ft.	5	2
EJ hardsuit, spec-ops	17	260,500	+23	+25	+4	-2	-5 ft.	6	2

ELECTRIC PRODS (ONE-HANDED BASIC MELEE WEAPONS)

ONE-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	BULK	SPECIAL
Electric prod, jolt	2	900	1d4 E	Stunned	1	Nonlethal, powered (capacity 20, usage 1), professional (farmer)
Electric prod, impulse	6	4,500	1d6 E	Stunned	1	Nonlethal, powered (capacity 20, usage 1), professional (farmer)
Electric prod, storm	10	19,000	2d6 E	Stunned	1	Nonlethal, powered (capacity 20, usage 2), professional (farmer)
Electric prod, surge	14	75,000	4d6 E	Stunned	1	Nonlethal, powered (capacity 100, usage 4), professional (farmer)
Electric prod, tempest	18	385,000	8d6 E	Stunned	1	Nonlethal, powered (capacity 100, usage 4), professional (farmer)

EXCAVATION DRILLS (TWO-HANDED ADVANCED MELEE WEAPONS)

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	BULK	SPECIAL
Excavation drill, utility	2	750	2d4 P	Bleed 1d4	2	Powered (capacity 20, usage 1), professional (miner), shatter, unwieldy
Excavation drill, industrial	6	4,200	3d6 P	Bleed 1d6	2	Powered (capacity 20, usage 1), professional (miner), shatter, unwieldy
Excavation drill, helical	10	18,000	5d8 P	Bleed 2d6	2	Powered (capacity 20, usage 2), professional (miner), shatter, unwieldy
Excavation drill, volute	14	70,500	8d10 P	Bleed 3d6	2	Powered (capacity 100, usage 4), professional (miner), shatter, unwieldy
Excavation drill, gyroidal	18	387,750	11d12 P	Bleed 3d8	2	Powered (capacity 100, usage 4), professional (miner), shatter, unwieldy

MOLECULAR BORERS (TWO-HANDED HEAVY WEAPONS)

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
Molecular borer, utility	2	800	2d4 C or F	40 ft.	—	20 charges	2	2	Modal (cryo), professional (miner), shatter, unwieldy
Molecular borer, industrial	6	4,800	3d6 C or F	40 ft.	—	40 charges	4	2	Modal (cryo), professional (miner), shatter, unwieldy
Molecular borer, advanced	10	20,000	5d8 C or F	40 ft.	—	40 charges	4	2	Modal (cryo), professional (miner), shatter, unwieldy
Molecular borer, elite	14	80,000	8d10 C or F	40 ft.	—	80 charges	8	2	Modal (cryo), professional (miner), shatter, unwieldy
Molecular borer, paragon	18	400,000	11d12 C or F	40 ft.	—	100 charges	10	2	Modal (cryo), professional (miner), shatter, unwieldy

social scene to raise her daughter. Things went downhill for you after that. A few weeks ago, you were squatting in Downside when you ran into Tarika and she recognized you. She put in a good word with the Company and got you this job as a result.

Old Hand: You've been with the Company a long time, and you know just how cynical it is. Another employee has been around as long as you have, however: Tarika, a brenneri who has endured endless employee orientation workshops alongside you. A couple of times over the years, you or Tarika have almost gotten fired—a threat that, at EJ Corp, never feels distant enough to be funny—but you've always covered for each other. When you were behind on your quota one month, Tarika kicked some jobs your way, and when Tarika needed some time off to take care of her daughter, you pulled a few double shifts to help out. She's reliable and trustworthy, and maybe one of the few friends you can count on.

Terraformer: Before you started work aboard BD514, you worked for the Company on a terraforming project on the planet of Entha in the Vast. Entha is a water world with an immense ocean so deep and dark that it's never been fully explored, earning it the name "the Shadow Sea." While there, you worked alongside a resourceful and reliable brenneri construction worker named Shan. Shan always looked out for others, and when shifts were just too long and hard, she sometimes covered for you. When you left Entha for less dangerous work on a cargo hauler, Shan was preoccupied with the unsafe working conditions on Entha. You haven't heard from her since.

Union Busted: If there's one thing that brings corporate management together, it's the threat of an employee union. A few years ago, before you started at the Company, you worked long hours at an AbadarCorp factory when one of your coworkers—an idealistic brenneri named Shan—started speaking to you and the others on your shift about forming a union. She insisted that unionizing posed the best way to secure better wages and working conditions, and you figured she was probably right. She must've made some progress, because the managers came down like a hammer soon after, and you were all out on the street. You bounced back—if you can call the Company a bounce—but you're not really sure what happened to Shan.

EQUIPMENT

Your character is a crew member on a starship hauler, so when you purchase equipment, prepare for your job in space, whether you're an engineer or a science officer. You still need reliable armor—at the very least for its environmental protections—as well as weapons. Like any Starfinder

Adventure Path, Fly Free or Die will have plenty of danger. However, don't forget to grab the tools you need for your work. Given your job and regular visits to ports, you should have regular opportunities to reequip, but it's also always useful for one or more of your crew members to have the skills to fabricate what you might need when you're far from a place to buy gear.

COMPANY CATALOG

Evgeniya-Jaimisson Corporation prides itself on creating the best equipment for its personnel, from armored spacesuits to mining tools to starship drives. To facilitate your work, you'll be granted access to specific resources provided to you by EJ Corp, including a Company cargo rig for transporting shipments, cargo-handling equipment such as a power lifter or hovercarts, and, of course, an EJ Corp starship. Evgeniya-Jaimisson

Corporation retains all ownership of these materials, and you're expected to follow all operating instructions and safety guidelines while keeping this equipment in proper working order.

In addition, as an EJ Corp employee, you can order additional items from company stores or download their schematics so you can manufacture what you need on the go. Although your place of work is outfitted with devices for your use, you can also purchase EJ Corp merchandise to use as you see fit. Remember to show good judgment as a representative of... **DATABASE CORRUPTION...**

Gimme a break! Okay, listen up. The Company does make some nice toys. Your starship's databanks should have schematics for all the latest EJ Corp gear. Now, as an employee, you technically have the right to use these schematics to make equipment you can't acquire from the Company. Thing is, who's going to keep tabs on you for making and using this stuff? If I were you, and thank Triune I'm not, I'd ask a hacker buddy to grab these schematics for your personal device, so the company can't take them from you if they ever decide to kick you to the curb. Also, I've left you some notes of my own—hope you find them useful!

TOOLS (WEAPONS)

EJ Corp makes cutting-edge tools for demolition and excavation ventures as well as for the transportation of valuable animal species. These tools are for our experts to use in our operations and aren't intended for use in other capacities. EJ Corp accepts no responsibility for injury resulting from improper use. *(What the Company is saying here is that you can use these as weapons, but, y'know, "please don't!")*

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WEAPON SPECIAL PROPERTY

Some weapons in this section have a new special property, defined as follows.

Shatter: The first time a weapon with this property is used on a target, the weapon has the penetrating special property. However, if the weapon's damage is dealt to the same target continuously over subsequent rounds, the amount of Hardness the weapon ignores = $3 \times$ the weapon's item level. If the weapon bearing this property is modal (*Starfinder Armory* 29), the damage type dealt by the weapon must change each round, or the weapon functions only as a penetrating weapon.



ELECTRIC PROD

Company personnel must occasionally transport animals from one world to another. Large herd animals, such as ruthigs, can be notoriously stubborn, and sometimes a beast proves more dangerous than anticipated. In these situations, crews appreciate this stout electric prod capable of delivering a nonlethal shock that can stun or incapacitate even a surly wolliped. Electric prods see civilian use on Castrovell, Triaxus, and other worlds, where ranchers and farmers utilize them to keep large animals under control without causing permanent harm.

EXCAVATION DRILL

Excavation drills are a core hand tool for miners across the galaxy. Some claim that dwarf mining engineers poached from Ulrikka Clanholdings initially designed these drills, as Ulrikka has previously produced similar designs. Dwarf knights have long used these drills in combat, as have gladiators, who often use them to put on bizarre and grisly shows. Utility and industrial models see extensive use in demolition and mining, while helical and volute drills are essential for some star-metal mining, where hard ore requires a tougher tool. Gyroidal drills are restricted, special-operations tools predominantly used to breach starship hulls during rescue or military boarding operations.

MOLECULAR BORER

Molecular borers are bleeding-edge tools that function by slowing molecular action and then, with a modal change, exciting the molecules to cause sheering force, resulting in quicker excavation. Instead of damaging valuable ores, the molecular borer allows a miner to detect different materials by their variable response to the borer's energy loop. Rescue operations make good use of utility borers, which easily penetrates penetrating the lighter materials used for public doorways and vehicles. Industrial borers routinely remove typical mining materials, such as limestone. Advanced and elite models cut through plate steel or airlocks. The paragon model has tested favorably against pure plate adamantine.

UTILITY WEAR (ARMOR)

EJ Corp offers a variety of clothing options, from utility overalls for work to casual outerwear that shows your company spirit. Most of our mining and spacefaring employees also have access to protective, vacuum-certified suits. *(This armor is based on vesk military designs from the Evgeniya Corporation. They're solid models.)*

EJ COVERALL

When a task requires skillful work in a harsh environment with no tolerance for a flimsy space suit, the EJ utility suit is the answer. Flexible and durable, this coverall provides protection and comfort, and with room for upgrades, it's adaptable to a variety of jobs. *(These suits resemble light vesk brigandine [Armory 69]. Heavier EJ coveralls are just branded versions of that armor.)*

EJ HARDSUIT

For a tough job, your suit has to be tough, too. The EJ hardsuit's protective plating and bulk belie its comfortable and modifiable design.

ARMOR UPGRADES

These utility modifications provide safety upgrades that ensure your survivability in hazardous conditions and enable supervisors to safely monitor your work in dangerous environments. Upgrading your utility wear allows you to Take it to the EJ™ without fear.

ENVIRO-SENSOR

ARMOR
UPGRADE

PRICE 250

LEVEL 1

ARMOR SLOTS 1

ARMOR TYPE any

BULK –

This sensor allows your armor to automatically activate environmental protections when the environment changes in a way contrary to your survival needs. This automatic process doesn't require you to take or be able to take actions.

HIBERNATION SYSTEM

ARMOR
UPGRADE

PRICE 1,500

LEVEL 3

ARMOR SLOTS 1

ARMOR TYPE any

BULK 1

With your verbal command and confirmation (a process that requires a standard action), a hibernation system puts you to sleep inside your armor with environmental protections active. The system can be set to awaken you after a certain amount of time or to maintain hibernation until environmental protections fail. While you hibernate, you need no extra food or water, and your environmental protections from the armor with this system installed last four times as long. Someone can awaken you from hibernation from outside your armor only by taking the time and effort to remove your armor.

REMOTE MONITORING SYSTEM

ARMOR
UPGRADE

PRICE 100	LEVEL 1
ARMOR SLOTS 1	ARMOR TYPE any
BULK –	

Your armor is equipped with a number of systems designed to monitor your health and activity, information that's simultaneously broadcast to any comm unit set to receive this data. The upgrade includes an obvious camera and microphone mounted on the outside of your armor, and the upgrade transmits everything it sees and hears; it has access to any senses installed in the armor (for example, infrared sensors), but not any unusual senses you possess. The remote monitoring system upgrade tracks your vital signs, and an individual receiving the transmissions from this upgrade can see if you've taken Hit Point damage as well as any conditions currently affecting you.

SUSTENANCE SYSTEM

ARMOR
UPGRADE

ARMOR SLOTS 1	ARMOR TYPE any	BULK 1
MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE
Basic	1	150
Mk 1	2	800
Mk 2	4	2,200
Mk 3	6	4,500

A sustenance system provides a way for you to consume sustenance without removing your armor or shutting down environmental protections. The basic version of this system holds 1 Bulk of actual food and drink, whether field rations, R2Es, or other cuisine. Higher model numbers function as miniaturized culinary synthesizers of the same model number (*Armory* 129), allowing the armor to produce food and drink from UPBs on verbal or text command. These nonbasic systems can also store up to 1 Bulk of UPBs.

VOICE-COMMAND MODULE

ARMOR
UPGRADE

ARMOR SLOTS 1	ARMOR TYPE any	BULK –
MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE
Mk 1	1	250
Mk 2	3	1,350
Mk 3	5	2,700
Mk 4	7	5,400

This microphone-linked control module allows you to activate one of your armor's systems, such as environmental protections, with a verbal signal; no action is required. The function must require no more than a standard action for you to activate normally. Higher-end models can be linked to a number of different systems equal to the model number; different vocal commands activate each of these systems. At mk 2 and higher, this upgrade comes with an enviro-sensor (page 46) built in.

When combined with a computer interface (*Armory* 82), this upgrade has a voice command module that functions as a number of extra control modules equal to its model number. This feature allows you to program the computer interface to automate each system linked to the voice-command module in the same way the computer interface can automate one system on its own.

HYBRID ITEMS

While EJ Corp relies on technology for most of its operations, it doesn't neglect the many conveniences made possible by industrialized magic.

SUSPENSION PILL

LEVEL 3

HYBRID ITEM	PRICE 250	BULK –
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The Company recognizes the hazards involved in long distance Drift travel and the many unexpected situations that might arise. A *suspension pill* ensures that whether you've contracted radiation sickness, been exposed to an unknown plague on a remote planet, or accidentally pricked yourself with a lethal toxin, help is never more than a Drift away. Individuals who have consumed a *suspension pill* should be taken to Absalom Station or another world within their present planetary system for immediate medical treatment.

A character can consume a *suspension pill* by taking a move action; alternatively, another character can take a standard action to feed a *suspension pill* to an unconscious or willing character. The *suspension pill* places the character in a coma-like state for a period of one week, during which the character is unconscious and requires no food or water. During this time, any afflictions affecting the character don't progress, and the character doesn't attempt saving throws for them; the affliction remains at whatever state it was in for the duration of the pill's effect, then resumes when the pill wears off.

Once a *suspension pill* wears off, the character is immune to the effects of *suspension pills* for one week.

DRUGS

The Company provides certain pharmaceuticals for emergency use. Consult your doctor before taking any unprescribed medication. (*Sometimes your Drift is long, and there aren't enough hands for every shift. Whites will keep you awake long enough to reach port, and blues are for pain. Only use blues when you have to. We all know good folks who haven't come back from blues.*)

PAIN-AWAYS™

LEVEL 1

Type drug (ingested); **Save** Fortitude DC 15; **Addiction** Fortitude DC 15 (mental and physical); **Price per Dose** 15 **Track** Strength; **Effect** After 1 minute, you gain a +2 morale bonus to saves against pain effects for 1 hour.

STAY-AWAKES™

LEVEL 1

Type drug (ingested); **Save** Fortitude DC 12; **Addiction** Fortitude DC 12 (mental and physical); **Price per Dose** 5 **Track** Dexterity; **Effect** After 1 minute, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saving throws against effects that cause the asleep condition and to Fortitude saves from sleep deprivation for 24 hours. If you use three stay-awakes in a week, you immediately gain the exhausted condition when the effects of the third dose wear off.

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PROLE

+1 INT OR WIS

You're an anonymous cog in the corporate machine. Along with countless others just like you, you form the foundation of the galactic financial system by selling your labor for regular pay. Automation and virtual intelligences, such as robots and advanced computers, provide the truly unskilled labor in the economy, so at least you fit in somewhere above that bottommost level. You're no artist, nor are your practical skills specialized enough to win you high pay or a management position. However, you're good enough at what you do to make it in the everyday working world.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

Up until now, you've been a typical working person, punching the clock and scraping by at your everyday job. Choose a Profession skill that is Intelligence- or Wisdom-based.

That skill has been the basis of your job up until now, and although you might not think about it, you're good at what you do. When attempting a Culture or Profession check to recall knowledge about your profession or industry and its leaders, whether businesses or businesspeople, reduce the DC by 5. Since Profession is a class skill for you, you gain a +1 insight bonus to checks with your chosen profession and +1 to checks with Profession skills in general. (These bonuses stack to a total of +2 for your chosen Profession skill.) In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Intelligence or Wisdom at character creation, but the ability score you pick must match the ability score tied to your chosen Profession skill.

TEAM PLAYER [6TH]

You know how to work as part of a cohesive group dedicated to accomplishing the same particular task. This competence translates into efficiency and a knack for how to best supplement another's efforts. If the GM rules that you can attempt to aid another, you automatically succeed on the check to do so.

CORE COMPETENCIES [12TH]

Your expertise in your chosen Profession requires a broad knowledge of other skills. As you grow in proficiency in your Profession, your ancillary know-how also increases. Choose three skills that you have ranks in and that are related to the Profession skill you chose at 1st level. You gain a +1 insight bonus to checks with each skill you choose. In addition, once per day, you can take 10 on a check using your chosen Profession or one of these three related skills, even if you wouldn't normally be allowed to do so.

FAILING FORWARD [18TH]

You learn by doing, especially by doing the wrong thing enough times to get it right. Up to twice per day, you can spend 10 minutes considering a mistake you or your team made, analyzing it, and thinking about how to avoid it in the future. If you do, you recover 1 Resolve Point. Doing so doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points.



VASTER

+1 WIS

You aren't from the Pact Worlds, the Veskarium, or any other major system. Instead, you were born far from any major interstellar society, on a world with few Drift beacons to attract traffic. Maybe your family helped establish a settlement on your home world a few generations ago, or perhaps your planet developed in isolation only to be transformed by Drift travel and the recent arrival of visiting aliens from societies more technologically advanced than yours. Whatever the case, you have an outsider's perspective on galactic society, and you know how to improvise, learn from your circumstances, and deal with the unexpected.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

All your life, you've had to fix essential machinery with the wrong parts and makeshift tools. Reduce the DC of Engineering checks to repair items by 5, which also applies to the following starship engineer actions: hold it together, patch, and quick fix. If you have all the proper parts and tools, you can halve the time it takes to repair an item; this stacks with the reduced time required to repair an object you crafted, so you spend only one quarter the original time required when repairing something you made. Engineering is a class skill for you, though if it's a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Engineering checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Wisdom at character creation.

VASTER SAVVY [6TH]

You've dealt with countless situations outside the normal experience of mainstream galactic society. As a result, you have an uncanny talent for improvising; you also have great situational awareness and can astutely evaluate other people. Once per day, if you fail an Intelligence- or Wisdom-based ability or skill check, you can reroll the check. If you still fail the check, this ability isn't expended for the day, but you can't reroll the same check again.

STARSHIP SAVANT [12TH]

Former crewmates whisper of your strange, innate ability to get any ship to do exactly what you need, when you need it. You know starships and how to get the most out of them, so you can fill in for many crew roles whenever necessary. When taking chief mate (*Character Operations Manual* 146), pilot, and science officer actions, you can treat half your ranks in the Engineering skill as ranks in the appropriate skills needed for actions in those crew roles. For gunnery checks, you can use your Engineering ranks in place of Piloting ranks, and you can use your Wisdom modifier in place of your Dexterity modifier. This feature gives you effective ranks in skills, so you're considered to be trained in those skills for the purpose of fulfilling the crew role. If you're trained in a skill required for a crew action, you instead receive a +1 insight bonus on the check for the action.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS [18TH]

Nothing inspires you like succeeding against challenging odds. Up to twice per day, when you defeat a significant foe, pull off a difficult job, rescue a friend, help meet an important goal, or do something similarly meaningful to you and your allies, you can recover 1 Resolve Point.



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GALACTIC TRADE

"You have to be a damned fool to choose this line of work. Always on the move. Friends and family months away. Never sure if there's a cargo waiting for you on pickup, or whether or not your buyer will get cold feet. The ship's one Drift jump away from falling apart, and if it's not pirates trying to steal your goods, it's crooked customs officials looking for a taste of your profits. The only folks you can count on are the ones that share the bridge with you. But I'll tell you what: it's honest work, and I'm my own boss."

—Samarra Polniner, captain of the *Gray Gremlin*

The life of an independent trader isn't an easy one. On paper, the career seems simple: get a ship, get a crew, get cargo, get paid. In reality, nothing ever seems to go as planned—starships break down or get scorched in firefights, a journey through the Drift turns out far more dangerous than expected, and sellers overcharge while buyers haggle down. But the prospect of danger and uncertainty makes for an exciting *Starfinder* campaign! The following optional rules provide a new way to structure a campaign around a PC crew of independent merchants flying a starship of their own while buying, moving, and selling cargo in the Pact Worlds, Near Space, and the Vast.

During the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path, the PCs take control of their professional destinies to work as freelance traders and troubleshooters. The rules presented in this article are designed to simulate part of that lifestyle, and you can use them in almost any campaign, especially a sandbox-style one.

ALTERNATIVE BUILD POINTS

These new rules focus on altering the way PCs can obtain Build Points (BP) for building and upgrading starships. In the normal rules, Build Points are a pool that constantly increases as the PCs level up, but in this subsystem, Build Points become a form of currency. The PCs spend BP to buy a starship and cargo, and they earn BP whenever they make a sale.

The PCs' starship becomes an investment like any other piece of equipment, but bought with BP instead of credits. As the PCs complete jobs, they get more Build Points to spend on upgrading their starship. They can do so gradually, installing one new system at a time, or they can hoard BP and then spend them all at once. However, the PCs should always keep some BP on hand to buy the cargo for their next job. If the PCs' ship is destroyed, they also lose the BP they invested in it! (Many crews insure their starships for just this eventuality; see page 54 for details.) But if the PCs' business flourishes, they'll find themselves living in the lap of luxury, hiring additional employees, or even buying a second starship to ply the interstellar trade routes.

The *Starfinder Core Rulebook* includes some guidelines for how PCs can acquire the BP they need to build and upgrade their first starship—via salvage, favors, or an arrangement with a friendly spacedock, for instance. In this case, Build Points represent much more than simple credits and become exclusively useful through the starship creation system, staying separate from the methods by which PCs buy their personal equipment. This separation provides an important distinction because if PCs had the ability to exchange Build Points for credits, they could end up underpowered in starship combat while simultaneously overpowered in all their other encounters.

In the rules presented here, Build Points roughly represent the party's business capital. That capital has many components, including the PCs' available credit, loans they've taken out, and assets they might use as collateral. PCs use this capital to make big purchases, like cargo or starship modifications, often with financing help from a bank or other establishment.

To begin, the PCs receive a number of Build Points determined by their Average Party Level (APL) as noted in Table 9-1: Starship Base Statistics on page 294 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. They should use this BP to build their starship; you might want to remind the PCs that their vessel needs plenty of room for cargo and that they'll have to spend a few BP to purchase that cargo. (The PCs in "We're No Heroes" receive a prebuilt starship and earn a few extra BP by the end of the adventure.)

GALACTIC TRADE BASICS

The PCs will earn most of their Build Points by hauling cargo from one world to another. See Running the System on page 55 for other ways the PCs can receive BP.

A cargo job boils down into several steps.

- **Find Cargo:** The PCs find cargo. Determine the cargo's type, the price to buy it, its destination (if any), and how much it might sell for.
- **Determine Complication:** Most jobs have a unique complicating factor, which you determine in secret when the PCs find their cargo.
- **Transport:** The PCs take the cargo to its destination or to a world where they hope to sell it.
- **Make the Sale:** The PCs deliver the cargo to its intended recipient or try to find a buyer.

FIND CARGO

Cargo in the *Starfinder* setting is standardized into lots, each massing 25 tons. A single lot of cargo fits into one of a starship's cargo holds, so the PCs can transport a number of lots equal to the number of cargo holds on their vessel. Finding cargo to buy is a downtime activity as detailed in the sidebar on page 52. For more on downtime activities, see page 150 of the *Starfinder Character Operations Manual*.

CARGO TYPE

When the PCs successfully find cargo to purchase, you determine the type of cargo, usually to match the needs of your campaign. Alternatively, you can randomly determine the type of cargo by rolling a d20 on the table below.

TABLE 1: CARGO TYPES

D20	CARGO	D20	CARGO
1	Art or antiques	11	Plastics
2	Base metals	12	Precision equipment
3	Ceramics or glassware	13	Precious metals
4	Chemicals	14	Prepared food
5	Furniture	15	Textiles
6	Hides or leather	16	Toys or games
7	Live animals	17	Vegetable products
8	Machinery or electronics	18	Vehicles
9	Minerals or byproducts	19	Weapons or ammo
10	Paper products or books	20	Wood

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FIND CARGO

You look for suitable cargo to purchase with the hopes of selling it elsewhere.

Activity: You spend the day searching the infosphere, talking with contacts, and visiting warehouses or the local starport. You must be within a settlement, though the GM might allow you to find cargo in other locations. At the end of the day, attempt a Diplomacy or Profession (merchant) check (DC = $10 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ your character level). You take a cumulative -1 penalty to this roll for every find cargo activity you or your allies have previously attempted in this settlement within the last week.

Results: On a success, you find 1d4 lots of cargo that you can buy. The cargo can't be split up; all of the lots must be bought together. The cargo's total buy price equals 1d4 BP \times the number of lots. For every 5 by which the result of your check exceeds the DC, you can increase or decrease the amount of cargo by 1 lot.

The GM determines the type of cargo and might even tell you where you can sell it for a reasonable price. All of the cargo must be transported and sold together; you and your allies must load the cargo onto your starship yourselves. You might have to deliver some cargoes within a certain time frame. When you're told the type of cargo, its buy price, and (if applicable) its destination and its sell price, you can choose not to purchase that cargo. However, when you purchase the cargo, you decide what to do with it, though you might want to perform the find buyer downtime activity (page 54) at another settlement to sell it.

Special: If multiple allies perform this downtime activity on the same day, only one of them attempts the check, but with a cumulative +1 circumstance bonus for each aiding ally (not including the one attempting the check).

SHIPPING OR SPECULATION?

When the PCs purchase cargo, they generally have to find a place to sell it themselves. After all, transport drivers who earn flat rates usually cover established shipping routes; as galactic traders, the PCs typically do more than that. However, at your discretion, the seller can give the PCs a tip as to where they might offload the cargo they just bought. This tactic can benefit players who've just started interacting with this system or for groups who only want to dip their toes into the trading game. In such cases, the PCs don't need to use the find buyer downtime activity (see sidebar above), and they receive an amount of BP of your choosing per cargo lot.

DESTINATION

If you've decided that the cargo's seller gives the PCs an idea of where to sell those goods, you can choose that destination based on the needs of your campaign (especially

if the players have expressed interest in going to a specific place). Alternatively, you can randomly determine the general destination by rolling a d10 on the table below.

TABLE 2: DESTINATIONS

D10	DESTINATION
1	Absalom Station. If the PCs are already on Absalom Station, reroll.
2-4	A different world in the same star system where the PCs bought the cargo.
5-7	A world in Near Space.
8-10	A world in the Vast.

DETERMINE COMPLICATION

Once a PC finds the cargo, but before they commit to purchasing it, you should determine what makes this particular job unusual. You decide the complication, and the PCs decide how to deal with it—if they even become aware of the problem, that is!

To randomly determine a complication, roll a d10 on the table below, keeping the result a secret. You can tweak the result as needed for your campaign; once you've rolled the same result from the table a couple of times, consider throwing out that entry and substituting one of your own! If a complication requires a skill check, the DC for that check equals $15 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the party's APL. Usually, only one PC should attempt this check. An asterisk (*) marks a complication that the PCs can be made aware of before purchasing the cargo, and some complications modify the buy or sell price of the cargo.

TABLE 3: COMPLICATIONS

D10	COMPLICATION	D10	COMPLICATION
1	Competition	6	Regulated*
2	Expiration Date*	7	Stolen
3	Handling Problems	8	Stowaway
4	High Demand*	9	Strange Customs
5	Imitation*	10	Tough Sell

Competition: Once the PCs have loaded their cargo and determined their destination, a rival crew contacts them and declares they're selling similar cargo at that location. Determine how long the rival crew takes to reach the destination (usually assuming average time in the Drift); if the PCs don't beat the rival crew to the destination, the sell price is reduced by 2 BP per lot.

Expiration Date*: This cargo is perishable. If the PCs don't deliver it in 2d8 days, they can sell it for a maximum of 1 BP per lot.

Handling Problems: There's a potential accident while loading or unloading the cargo. Treat this complication as a trap with a CR equal to the party's APL. The exact nature of the trap and the skills necessary to disable it are up to you.

High Demand*: This cargo is trending. The buy price is increased by 1 BP per lot, and the sell price is increased by 2 BP per lot.

Imitation*: These goods are actually cheap knockoffs. A PC can detect this fact with a successful Perception check, reducing the buy and sell prices by 2 BP per lot. If the PCs want to try to sell the goods at the unreduced price, they must succeed at a Bluff check or else attract the attention of law enforcement.

Regulated*: Exhaustive laws govern this cargo at the point of purchase. A PC must succeed at a Computers or Profession (merchant) check, or the crew members must spend 1 day navigating customs and filling out forms before they can load the cargo on their ship.

Stolen: This cargo was stolen from another crew, and they're coming to get it back! This complication represents a hard encounter, but the PCs can pacify the NPCs by surrendering the cargo.

Stowaway: An NPC with a CR equal to the party's APL hides among the cargo, revealing themselves after takeoff. A PC who succeeds at a Perception check can detect the stowaway during the cargo-loading process.

Strange Customs: The buyer comes from an unfamiliar culture or has unusual traditions. A PC must attempt a Culture check to maintain proper etiquette. If they succeed, the sell price increases by 1 BP per lot. If they fail, the sell price decreases by 1 BP per lot.

Tough Sell: The buyer tries to strong-arm the PCs, reducing the sell price by 2 BP per lot. A PC can negate this reduction with a successful Intimidate check.

TRANSPORT

Next, the PCs must get the cargo onto their starship and transport it to a place where they can sell it. In general, the farther the PCs take the cargo, the more it's worth (see Table 4 below).

CARGO HANDLING

Loading or unloading a single lot into a starship cargo hold takes 1 hour for one person using a cargo lifter (*Core Rulebook* 204) or similar equipment. Without such equipment, loading the same lot takes 8 hours of labor; multiple people can work together to reduce this time. For example, it takes 4 hours for two people without major equipment to load a single lot into a cargo hold. While the PCs can usually take their time, a complication might mean that every hour counts!

The PCs must also unload the cargo once they reach the world where they want to sell it, but unloading generally occurs while at least one of the crew engages in the find buyer downtime activity (page 54).

MAKE THE SALE

Once the PCs have reached the area where they want to try to sell their cargo, finding a buyer is a downtime activity detailed

in the sidebar on page 54. Certain complications might make this activity more difficult, but once a PC finds a buyer, you need to determine the sale price.

CARGO SELL PRICE

First, determine the base sell price of a cargo by rolling a d8; if you roll an 8, roll again once, and add the new result to 8. This result is modified by the distance traveled (as noted on the table below) and any complications, in that order; the total results in a sale price per lot (minimum 1 BP per lot). Finally, the results of the PCs' find buyer downtime activity can also alter this price.

**TABLE 4:
TRANSPORT
MODIFIERS**

TRAVEL TIME	DESTINATION	BASE SELL PRICE MODIFIER
1d6 days	Another world in the system or Absalom Station	-2 BP/lot
2d6 days	One of the Pact Worlds other than Absalom Station from outside the system	-1 BP/lot
3d6 days	A Near Space world	No change
5d6 days	A Vast world	+1 BP/lot

SPENDING BUILD POINTS

The following section expands on the rules for spending Build Points and includes some obligatory expenditures (like upgrading the PCs' starship so they can take on more lucrative jobs and bigger threats) as well as new options (like having a comfortable lifestyle or hiring employees). The PCs can hold onto as many unspent BP as they like.

EXPANSION

The PCs can spend BP to hire agents, professional representatives, and even full-time employees who work for them. They can also buy another starship and hire crew to haul cargo as part of their overall operations. When the PCs hire personnel to expand their business, you decide the NPCs' stats (though usually, an NPC has a total skill bonus in a handful of skills equal to $4 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ their CR). Though usually loyal to the PCs, these NPCs won't risk their lives. If treated poorly, they might leave the PCs' service. An employee hired by the PCs agrees to a 1-year contract; at the end of that term, the PCs must hire them again, or the NPC leaves their service.

Planetary Agent: A planetary agent costs BP equal to the agent's CR, which can be no higher than the party's APL; as



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FIND BUYER

You look for someone interested in buying your cargo.

Activity: You spend a day researching markets on the infosphere, checking with union or guild representatives, meeting with local contacts, and haggling. You must be within a settlement, though the GM might allow you to find a buyer in other locations. At the end of the day, attempt a Diplomacy or Profession (merchant) check (DC = $15 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times \text{your level}$).

Results: On a success, you find someone willing to buy your cargo for the sell price (as determined by the GM). For every 5 by which your check exceeds the DC, increase the sell price of the cargo by 1 BP per lot. If you fail, you still find a buyer, but the sell price of the cargo is reduced by 1 BP per lot.

Special: If multiple allies perform this downtime activity on the same day, only one of them attempts the check, but with a cumulative +1 circumstance bonus for each aiding ally (not including the one attempting the check).

the party's APL increases, the PCs can spend the difference to raise the agent's CR. The agent lives on one world or space station; while they may have many other clients, they work on the PCs' behalf to perform the find cargo and find buyer downtime activities. The agent can also perform the gather information task of the Diplomacy skill. The agent won't leave the world on which they're stationed. The PCs must supply the agent with the credits or other requirements necessary for any task they ask the NPC to perform.

System-Wide Representative: A system-wide representative operates similarly to a planetary agent, but the system-wide representative will travel to any world in a single star system (such as the Pact Worlds system). A system-wide representative costs BP equal to twice the representative's CR, which can be no higher than the party's APL.

Starship: The PCs can use their BP to buy another starship. This starship can't be higher in tier than the party's APL - 2. The PCs must spend additional BP equal to $5 \times$ the starship's tier to hire an NPC crew to run this starship; each crew member has a CR equal to the starship's tier, and they follow the PCs' instructions when it comes to buying, transporting, and selling cargo as well as the starship's day-to-day operations. All the BP earned by this other ship goes to the party's pool of BP. The PCs are responsible for the costs and maintenance of any additional starships they own.

INSURANCE

The PCs can insure their starship or cargo. Starship insurance policies cost a number of BP equal to a percentage of their starship's total BP value at time of purchase (see below). An insurance policy remains in effect for 1 year; after this time, the PCs must buy a new policy (at a higher price if their starship has increased in BP value). If the PCs' starship is completely destroyed with a policy in effect, the PCs receive a percentage of the ship's BP value in payment. The rest of the Build Points the PCs spent on their starship are lost!

Starship insurance policies are rated bronze, silver, and gold. A bronze insurance policy costs 5% of the starship's total BP value and pays out 50% of the total value. A silver insurance policy costs 10% of the starship's total BP value and pays out 75% of the total value. A gold insurance policy costs 15% of the starship's total BP value and pays out 100% of the total value.

To insure cargo, the PCs can buy a policy for 10% of the cargo's buy price (minimum 1 BP). If the cargo is lost and not delivered, and the PCs can prove that they didn't steal or lose the cargo through negligence, they're repaid BP equal to the cargo's buy price.

The PCs can have only one insurance policy per starship and per each cargo.

LIFESTYLE

The PCs can spend BP to live the good life. These lifestyles assume a group of 4 PCs; you can adjust the costs for larger and smaller groups as you see fit. Lifestyles don't impart any mechanical benefits to the characters.

Comfortable: The party spends 1 BP to live comfortably for 1 month on a single world or space station. The PCs reside in spacious lodgings decorated to their taste and have access to stylish personal transportation. They partake in high-quality



food and drink whenever they wish, and they attire themselves in fashionable and flattering clothing.

Luxurious: The party spends 5 BP to live in luxury for 1 month on a single world or space station. The PCs reside in fabulous homes in an elite neighborhood; they have multiple forms of personal transportation, and unique fashions made for them by famous designers (equivalent to formal wear) fill their wardrobes. A large staff of professionals—housekeepers, gardeners, personal tailors and groomers, a chauffeur—see to everyday chores the PCs don't wish to concern themselves with (each professional is a professional freelancer with a skill bonus equal to the party's APL).

UPGRADES

The PCs can spend BP on their starship if they have the time and facilities required make such upgrades (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 305). Using this system, the total BP value of the PCs' starship can be no more than 5% more than the value listed for its tier in Table 9-1: Starship Base Statistics on page 294 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. For example: a group of 1st-level PCs have a tier 1 starship on which they have spent a total of 52 Build Points (saving the rest to purchase cargo). As they accumulate BP by selling cargo, they can spend, at most, 5 BP to upgrade their starship, raising its BP value to 57 (5% more than the 55 BP used to normally create a tier 1 starship). When their APL rises to 2, this group can upgrade their starship further but no higher than 78 BP (because a tier 2 starship is normally created with 75 BP). The PCs still can't spend more than 1,000 BP on their starship when their APL reaches 20.

DOWNGRADES

Due to bad luck or mishandling of cargo, the PCs might end up with no spare BP to keep the cycle of buying and selling going. In such cases, the PCs can sell parts of their starship to acquire BP. There's no added cost to downgrade; for instance, if the PCs want to pawn their vessel's coilgun, they receive the weapon's full BP cost of 6.

RUNNING THE SYSTEM

In many ways, this subsystem helps generate short adventures for your cargo-hauling PCs since there's always a chance of something going a little wrong. At the very least, the system works hand-in-hand with a sandbox-style campaign, as the PCs travel from world to world looking to buy low and sell high!

SESSION ZERO

Before beginning a game using the galactic trade subsystem, make sure your players are interested in engaging in the life of freelance merchants. While it might not seem as glamorous as delving into alien ruins or fighting back against an evil empire (though galactic traders can still undertake such adventures), this type of campaign has its appeal to certain players. Generally, merchant PCs aren't beholden to any one patron and can go where they please. However, if your group doesn't

FREE TRADERS

The free trader archetype (*Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 103) is an excellent choice for a character in a campaign focused on galactic trade. The merchant savvy ability can be used with these rules as follows.

- A free trader can use market savvy to reroll the checks required for the find cargo and find buyer downtime activities.
- At the GM's discretion, a free trader can use market savvy to reroll skill checks during a complication.
- At 9th level, a free trader can transport an extra lot of cargo for every five cargo holds their starship has; at 14th level, this bonus increases to an extra lot of cargo for every two cargo holds their starship has.
- At 18th level, a free trader can spend Resolve Points to negotiate the best possible price, reducing the cargo's buy price by 1 BP per lot or raising the sell price of cargo by 1 BP per lot during the find cargo or find buyer downtime activities, respectively; the free trader must be the primary PC performing the activity.

seem keen on the bookkeeping required, it might be better not to use this subsystem!

GMING EXPECTATIONS

On average, the PCs will need to complete three to four cargo transport jobs to gain enough BP to upgrade their starship to the next tier. As the group advances in level, they might need to complete a few extra transport jobs per tier, depending on their market savvy and whether or not they've switched to a larger frame that can hold more cargo.

Of course, during this time, the PCs should earn XP in the usual ways (by overcoming skill-based challenges, defeating enemies, and earning story-based rewards) so that the group's APL keeps approximate pace with the amount of BP they can invest in their starship. At your discretion, you can reward the PCs with XP as if they had overcome an easy encounter (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 390) upon selling their cargo; you should add this XP to any XP they earn from encounters that emerge from complications.

OTHER SOURCES OF BUILD POINTS

This subsystem assumes that the PCs earn their BP only from transporting and selling cargo. However, at your discretion, you can reward them with BP as treasure from particular encounters (such as a raid on a smuggling operation's warehouses) or as salvage from starship combat encounters (such as a fight against a rogue Corpse Fleet ship). In the former case, the PCs have to transport the BP to their ship much in the same way as loading cargo (count a cargo lot as 4 BP for these purposes), and in the latter case, the PCs can earn a number of BP depending on the enemy starship's size category (Tiny = 1, Small = 2, Medium = 3, etc.).

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"You see all sorts of strange things in the Drift; it's a fact that every spacer knows. If you're lucky, you only spot the burning chunk of Hell on your sensors and don't have to fly anywhere near it. Sometimes, though, the Drift seems to have other ideas, and seeks you out—a big, red leech attaches to your hull and starts draining your ship's energy or a purple ball of energy bounces through your vessel's corridors, shocking anyone who comes near it. So keep your eyes peeled. There's never a boring watch in the Drift."

—Kodo Baize, freelance security

ANACITE DUSTAR

CR
1

XP
400



N Small construct (technological)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +10

DEFENSE

HP 17

EAC 11; **KAC** 12

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

Defensive Abilities concealed weaponry; **Immunities** construct immunities

Weaknesses light dependency

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee serrated edge +4 (1d4+1 S)

Ranged polishing laser +7 (1d4+1 F; burn 1d4)

Offensive Abilities innocuous trick

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +5 (+13 when climbing), Bluff +10, Disguise +10, Stealth +10

Languages Common (can't speak); shortwave 100 ft.

Other Abilities unliving

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Aballon)

Organization solitary or flock (2-12)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Concealed Weaponry (Ex) An anacite dustar can project a whirling and serrated edge around their circular frame and conceal their polishing laser within their carapace. When not in use, these weapons are hidden from sight. A creature unaware of the dustar's concealed weaponry must succeed at a DC 16 Perception check to notice them. The anacite can deploy or retract one of these weapons as a swift action or as part of making an attack or full attack with it. The anacite can't be disarmed of such a weapon, but while deployed, the retractable weapon can be sundered as an item with a CR equal to the dustar's CR.

Innocuous Trick (Ex) An anacite dustar looks like a simple housecleaning tool, but is actually programmed to ambush intruders. As a full action, an anacite dustar can move up to their speed and then make an attack with one of their concealed weapons. After their movement, the dustar can attempt a Bluff check opposed by their target's Perception check; if the dustar is successful, their target is flat-footed against the attack and takes 1d4 additional damage on a hit.

Light Dependency (Ex) An anacite dustar can acquire power from dim or brighter light, and can store power generated in this way. The dustar can operate in darkness for 2 hours. After this time, the dustar gains the

sickened condition until they return to an area of dim or brighter light.

Polishing Laser (Ex) The anacite dustar's pop-up laser is ostensibly used to polish metals as the dustar goes about their rounds, but can be lethal. The polishing laser has a range increment of 30 feet.

Shortwave (Ex) An anacite can communicate wirelessly. This ability acts as telepathy, but only with other creatures with the shortwave ability or constructs with the technological subtype.

Anacites are truthful and peaceful by nature, but are surprisingly capable of deception or violence when necessary, especially when confronted by organic intruders from beyond Aballon. To safeguard their businesses, factories, homes, and public buildings, anacites developed the dustar.

These small constructs have domed shells and glide silently across the floor on dozens of tiny legs concealed beneath their carapace. Every day, they go about their work: sweeping floors and walls, sucking up dirt with tiny vacuums mounted on their underside, and disintegrating this debris in a specialized internal chamber. They even polish glass, metal, and other materials with a simple pop-up laser—but every anacite dustar is also a hidden spy and potential assassin. Typically communicating with higher-ranking anacites, such as monitors (page 58) or ambassadors (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 10), the dustar keeps an eye on non-anacite visitors while pretending to be a simple cleaning robot. When intruders threaten to trespass into sensitive areas, the dustar doesn't issue a warning, which would blow their cover. Instead, they inform other anacites of the danger, coordinate with other dustars within communication range, and lay a trap to exterminate the threat.



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ANACITE MONITOR

CR
3

XP
800



N Large construct (technological)

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

Perception +13

DEFENSE

HP 40

EAC 14; **KAC** 16

Fort +3; **Ref** +3; **Will** +0

Immunities construct immunities

Weaknesses light dependency

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft, fly 60 ft. (Ex, perfect)

Melee arm slash +9 (1d6+8 S)

Ranged electric ray +12 (1d4+3 E; critical arc 1d6)

Multiattack 4 electric rays +6 (1d4+3 E; critical arc 1d6)

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

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +8 (+16 to fly), Intimidate +8, Stealth +13

Languages Common; shortwave 120 ft.

Other Abilities chameleon circuit, unliving

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Aballon)

Organization solitary, pair, or squadron (3–6)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Chameleon Circuit (Ex) An anacite monitor can fade into the background by assuming the colors around them. When an anacite monitor remains stationary for 1 round, they gain a +10 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks. If they take any action, they lose this bonus until they once again spend 1 round remaining stationary.

Electric Ray (Ex) An anacite monitor can fire electric rays from the pods on the side of their head. These rays have a range increment of 60 feet.

Light Dependency (Ex) An anacite monitor can acquire power from dim or brighter light, and can store power generated in this way. The monitor can operate in darkness for 2 hours. After this time, the monitor gains the sickened condition until they return to an area of dim or brighter light.

Shortwave (Ex) An anacite can communicate wirelessly. This acts as telepathy, but only with other creatures with the shortwave ability or constructs with the technological subtype.

Monitors are one of the many specialized forms of intelligent anacites. They provide unobtrusive security wherever anacites anticipate physical violence but also desire to avoid an overt display of force. It is not unusual for anacite ambassadors (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 10) to be assigned a pair of monitors as guards, for example, and anacite facilities with a large number of non-anacite visitors or employees—such as the Horse Eye Orbital Plate—are home to many of these silent, nearly-invisible warriors. A single monitor is often given authority over security in a given facility; there, they maintain shortwave communication with nearby anacites, extending the monitor's surveillance range and ability to observe threats. If necessary, the monitor can even direct nearby anacites to intercept security threats.

An anacite monitor is mantis-like in shape, with two delicate-looking wings, six long legs, and a distinctive triangular head. Although they have the same unusual eye pattern that all anacites share, the monitor is further equipped with rotating pods on the side of their head, each armed with a deadly electric ray. Despite their large size, they are also surprisingly agile, with two powerful forelegs that end in slashing edges. A monitor's natural armor is burnished red, but through the use of their chameleon circuits, the anacite monitor can adopt any color or hue, making them surprisingly stealthy.



DRIFT LEECH

CR
1/3

XP
135



N Small magical beast

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +7

Aura tech trouble (60 ft.)

DEFENSE

HP 6

EAC 11; **KAC** 11

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

Defensive Abilities heal self, void adaptation; **Immunities** electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee maw +5 (1d4 P)

Ranged power discharge +2 (1d4 E critical arc 1)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +3 (+11 to climb), Intimidate +3, Stealth +3, Survival +7

ECOLOGY

Environment the Drift

Organization nest (3-12), or colony (13-20)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Heal Self (Ex) Once per day, as a standard action, a drift leech can expend energy it has siphoned from starships or other technology to restore 1d4+1 Hit Points to itself.

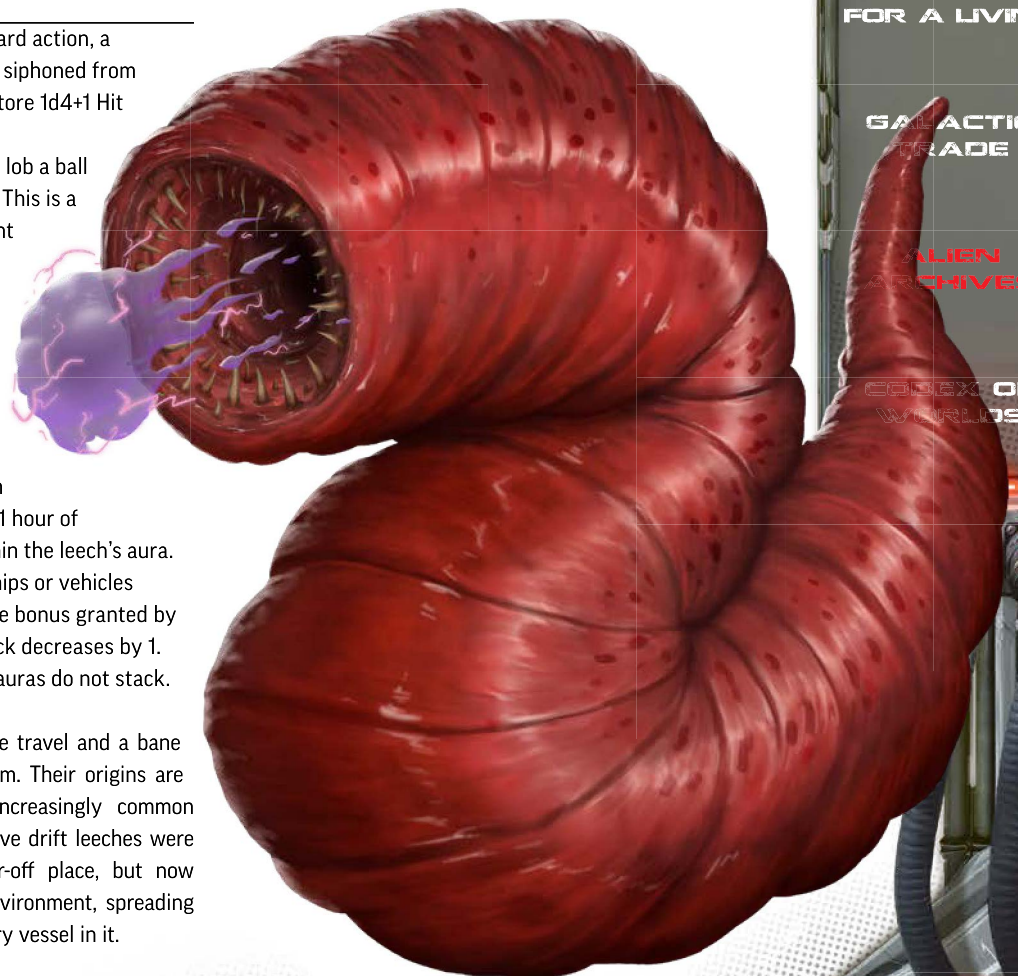
Power Discharge (Ex) A drift leech can lob a ball of energy-infused mucus at its foes. This is a ranged attack with a range increment of 30 feet that targets EAC and has the arc 1 critical hit effect.

Tech Trouble (Ex) Drift leeches have a negative effect on technology in close proximity to them. Attacks using weapons without the analog trait take a -1 penalty to attack and damage rolls. Armor with environmental protections expends 1 hour of that protection every round it's within the leech's aura. Piloting checks attempted for starships or vehicles within the aura take a -1 penalty. The bonus granted by any technological item to a skill check decreases by 1. The effects of multiple tech trouble auras do not stack.

Drift leeches are the parasites of space travel and a bane to all technology that comes near them. Their origins are unknown, but they've become an increasingly common nuisance for Drift travelers. Most believe drift leeches were sucked into the Drift from some far-off place, but now these creatures thrive in their new environment, spreading throughout the Drift and menacing every vessel in it.

These giant red slugs measure more than 3 feet long and have circular suctioning maws equipped with hundreds of tiny, razor-sharp teeth. Incredibly hardy, they can spend months floating through space waiting for a ship to pass by and become their next meal. Once attached to a starship hull, these pesky vermin siphon energy from the vessel and store it for reproduction. If allowed to siphon too much energy, a drift leech terrorizes a starship—life support systems fail, engines cease to function, and the vessel becomes mere debris floating through the Drift. To make matters worse, Drift leeches produce an energy-draining field that interferes with advanced weapons and armor, so they're especially hard to scrape off a starship hull, even once they are found.

Drift leeches show no signs of intelligence, and live only to feed and multiply. They reproduce asexually via fission. As these parasites siphon energy over several weeks, they grow until they've doubled in size; they then split in half, becoming two parasites instead of one, and the process begins anew.



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WORLDS

DRIFT MOTE

CR
1/2

XP
200



N Tiny outsider (extraplanar)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +4

DEFENSE

HP 11

EAC 9; **KAC** 10

Fort +0; **Ref** +2; **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities void adaptation; **Immunities** electricity

OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (Su, perfect)

Ranged electrical discharge +3 (1d4 E)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Offensive Abilities jolting cascade (15-ft. cone, 2d8 E, DC 11)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st)

At will—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 13)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +9 (+17 to fly), Stealth +9

Other Abilities tech phase

ECOLOGY

Environment the Drift

Organization solitary or dance (3-5)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Electrical Discharge (Su) As a ranged attack, a Drift mote can unleash an electrical blast with a range of 30 feet at a single target. This attack has the first arc 1d3 weapon special property (*Starfinder Armory* 28).

Jolting Cascade (Su) Once per day, a Drift mote can create a wave of dangerous electricity in a 15-foot cone that deals 2d8 electricity damage. Creatures in the area of effect can attempt a DC 11 Reflex save for half damage.

Tech Phase (Su) Drift motes can pass through material objects (but not corporeal creatures) that contain mostly technological components. For instance, a Drift mote can enter a starship through the controls of an airlock door, but couldn't pass through a solid steel bulkhead. The Drift mote must begin and end its turn outside of any object.

Like the other natives of the strange hyperspace plane of the Drift (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 3 24), Drift motes aren't well understood. Many planar scholars believe they were created when parts of the Plane of Air were pulled into the Drift and mutated by unknown energies. However, some religious sages proclaim that Drift motes are the stray, cast-off thoughts of the goddess Triune given some form of life by strange planar energies.

Whatever their origin, Drift motes are tiny balls of electrical energy that flit aimlessly through the Drift until they sense passing starships. Instinctively attracted to the electrical currents within most vessels, a Drift mote enters a ship through its sensors or other technological components. Once inside a ship, a Drift mote moves haphazardly through the ship's rooms and corridors, bouncing off walls, floors, and ceilings. As it travels, its random bursts of electrical energy often damage sensitive equipment or start fires. A Drift mote can be captured within a conductive cage surrounded by plastic, but most crews settle for destroying such a pest before it causes too much havoc. However, a Drift mote defends itself if attacked, unleashing a dangerous wave of jolting energy. Those familiar with Drift motes know to ground themselves as well as possible before confronting one to protect themselves from the electrical discharge.

Travelers in the Drift have reported seeing Drift motes that are much bigger than the norm, some the size of small starships, but these stories have been dismissed as either tall tales, the consequences of drunkenness, or the result of simply spending too much time in the Drift.



HOBBE HOUND

CR
2

XP
600



N Medium animal

Init +2; **Senses** blindsense (scent) 30 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +7

DEFENSE

HP 24

EAC 13; **KAC** 15

Fort +6; **Ref** +6; **Will** +1

Resistances fire 5

Weaknesses chemical intolerance

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +10 (1d6+5 P plus grab; critical bleed 1d4)

Offensive Abilities worry (DC 11)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +7, Stealth +12

Other Abilities skin secretions

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, pack (3–6), or hunting party (2–4 plus 2–12 hobgoblin troopers^{AA2})

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Chemical Intolerance (Ex) Due to generations of experimentation, a hobbe hound's blood is a cocktail of unstable chemicals that reacts unpredictably to certain pharmaceuticals. When a hobbe hound is injected with a medicinal (usually requiring a successful melee attack against its KAC by a foe), it immediately takes an amount of damage equal to 1d6 × the medicinal's tier, in addition to the medicinal's usual effects.

Skin Secretions (Ex) A hobbe hound's skin releases an oily residue that makes it difficult to keep hold of or trap. A hobbe hound gains a +4 circumstance bonus to Acrobatics checks to escape.

Worry (Ex) As a reaction, when a hobbe hound successfully grabs a Medium or smaller creature with its bite attack, it can violently shake the grabbed creature. A creature shaken in this way gains the off-target condition for 1d3+1 rounds. The creature can reduce this time to 1 round by succeeding at a DC 11 Fortitude saving throw.

Though hobbe hounds vaguely resemble canines, they are actually a species of large, blunt-nosed rodents descended from creatures known

as “goblin dogs” on lost Golarion. Long ago, hobgoblins (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 76) used alchemy and selective breeding to fashion their smaller cousins' pets into sturdier and more ferocious stock for their warbands. The modern hobbe hound stands 4 feet tall at the shoulder and is 200 pounds of solid muscle. Most hobbe hounds are bred and trained to have vicious temperaments and to be loyal to only their hobgoblin keepers.

While many hobgoblin societies—including the Gideron Authority (*Starfinder Near Space* 82)—rely more on electronic means of surveillance and protection, hobbe hounds continue to be used in fighting rings and as recreational hunting animals. In addition, these fiercely loyal beasts have found roles in certain hobgoblin military units, guarding posts and tracking down deserters in places where technology is unreliable. Some hobgoblin researchers have tried to apply various cybernetic enhancements to hobbe hounds, but the creatures' physiology often rejects such implants. This has led to a counterculture movement among fringe hobgoblins who believe that hobgoblins should return to their pure roots and reject all forms of artificial enhancements.



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CODEx OF WORLDS

VOHXA

The Mines

Diameter: ×.8

Mass: ×1.1

Gravity: ×1

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 22 hours; **Year:** 429 days

Vohxa circles far from its sun, and its mountainous surface largely consists of frigid tundra covered in snow and ice. Even the equatorial lowlands rarely warm past 65 degrees, and Vohxa's native life is limited to spindly and resilient trees, hardy shrubs, and passive herd animals that graze the frozen plains or climb the rocky slopes. But at some point during the Gap, Vohxa became a home for many cold-weather species indigenous to other planets, such as high-

flying niaqs (*Starfinder Adventure Path #11: The Penumbra Protocol 57*), sharpwings, lumbering wollipeds (*Alien Archive 3 134*), and even the occasional silver dragon. No one is quite sure how so many creatures from other planets came to dwell here.

Vohxa was discovered by accident when a mining vessel crewed by dwarves and humans experienced a hazard in the Drift and emerged far from its original course. But the presence of familiar life on the planet spurred the crew's curiosity, and the intrepid miners soon discovered the world was rich in siccattite, as well as other more mundane resources. Finding the planet had no native sapient life, the miners decided to settle there and used the mining equipment mounted on their starship to dig the foundation for Tahxia, now the planet's largest settlement; there, dwarves, humans, and shirrrens who followed after escaping the Swarm established homes in warm, comfortable, and expansive subterranean chambers.

The people of Vohxa are hardy, hard-working, and fiercely loyal to their home, family, and neighbors. Modern mining facilities rise up from across the world's surface, scarring the planet's majestic landscape with dingy metal towers and refineries that release a steady stream of chemicals into Vohxa's water and air. Virtually all of its economy is based on mining and related industries—the precious gems and metals taken from its mines are highly coveted throughout the galaxy—and there's little else to draw visitors here.

Recently, war has come to Vohxa. The discovery of ancient hobgoblin ruins in Vohxa's southern hemisphere gave the Gideron Authority (*Starfinder Near Space 82–83*) an excuse to invade. Local defense forces were no match for the Authority's fleet of interstellar warships, and now the Authority all but rules the planet's surface, where they have set up command posts, barracks, armories, and labor camps exploiting Vohxa's population to work the mines under cruel and inhumane conditions. Families have been separated, settlements reduced to rubble, and lives cast aside as the Authority pillages Vohxa in support of a xenophobic and militant agenda. Tahxia, which holds the planet's only starship construction facility, is now fully under the control of the Authority.

There is a resistance movement, however, founded in the siccattite tunnels and carried to remote cabins and caves across the planet's surface. This resistance benefits from charismatic leaders and canny fighters of many species, but lacks the weapons, vehicles, and the other materials of war required to seriously threaten the invaders, and so far no outside force has been willing to risk engaging the Gideron fleet in orbit to supply the resistance.



NEXT MONTH

MERCHANTS OF THE VOID

By Leo Glass

The crew of the *Oliphant* are free of the Company, but now they have a new challenge: keeping the ship flying on their own while pursued by bounty hunters, corporate agents, and rivals who will stop at nothing to come out on top!

SIDE JOBS

By Owen K.C. Stephens

Side jobs are brief adventures played between chapters of an Adventure Path or when your players go off on their own. In this first of a series, the PCs transport dangerous skreelings and explore the haunted wreck of a lost starship!

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SCOUNDREL'S GAMBITS

By Isabelle Thorne

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MAP KEY

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Bridge | 4. Smuggler compartment |
| a. Engineer's station | 5. Cargo hold |
| b. Pilot's station | 6. Airlock |
| c. Captain's station | 7. Galley |
| d. Science officer's station | 8. Engineering |
| 2. Lavatory | 9. Power core |
| 3. Crew quarters | 10. Drift engine |



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