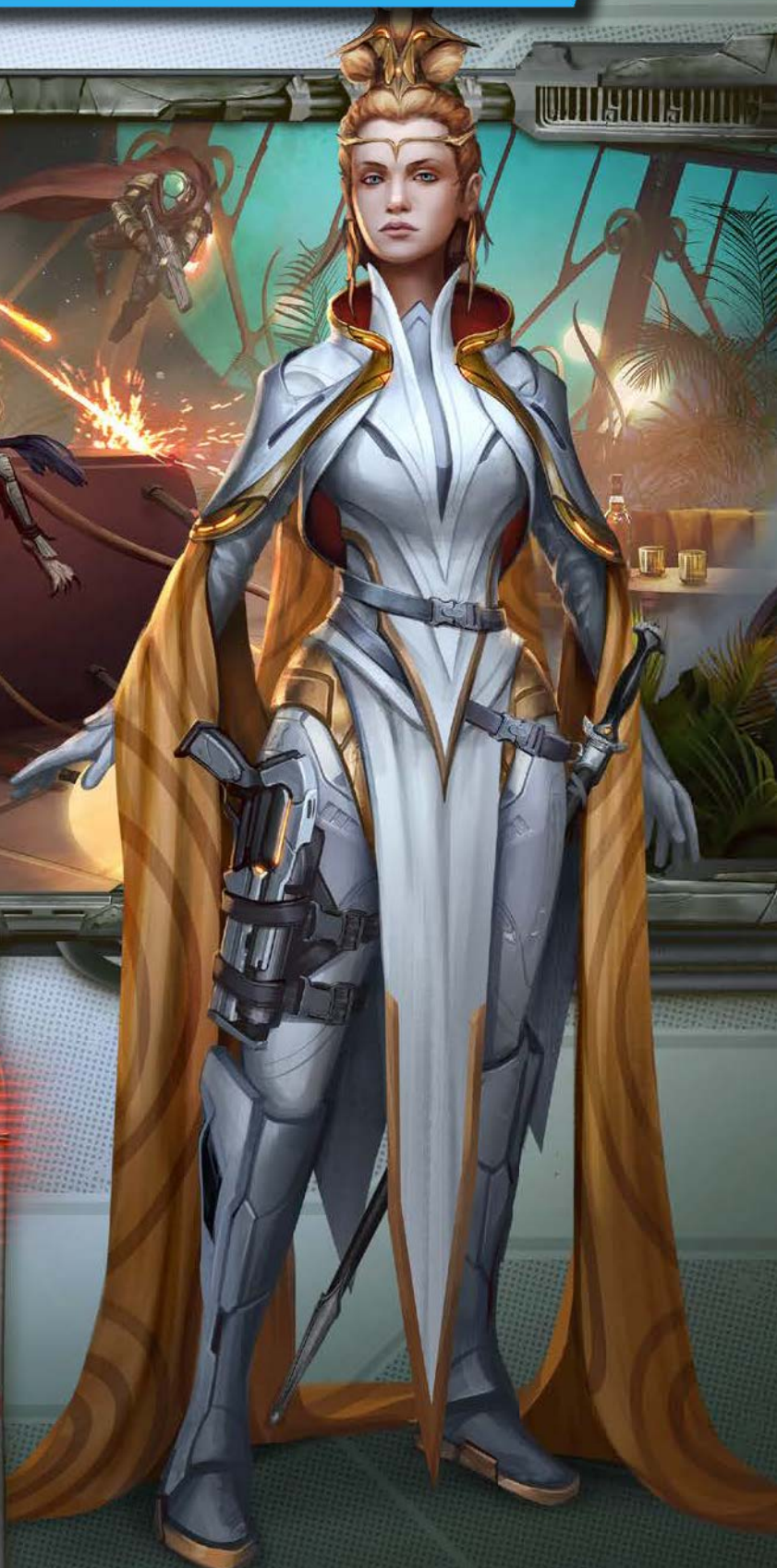


STARFINDER[®]

FLY FREE OR DIE
ADVENTURE PATH

**CRASH
AND
BURN**

BY CHRISTOPHER WASKO





RUST BUG

TIER 2

Medium transport

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

AC 12; **TL** 13

HP 70; **DT** —; **CT** 14

Shields medium 120 (forward 30, port 30, starboard 30, aft 30)

Attack (Turret) flak thrower (3d4; 5 hexes)

Power Core Pulse Blue (200 PCU); **Systems** basic computer, budget medium-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 2 armor, mk 3 defenses; **Expansion bays** cargo hold (4), tech workshop

Modifiers -2 Piloting; **Complement** minimum 1, maximum 6

SPECIAL ABILITIES

System Damage Electrovores have mutilated the *Rust Bug*'s systems. When calculating the DC for crew actions aboard the *Rust Bug*, treat it as a tier 10 starship. When the pilot, engineer, or science officer fails a crew check, systems on the *Rust Bug* short out. Once per round, the chief mate can attempt a DC 25 Acrobatics or Athletics check to negate the effect of a short; this doesn't affect the chief mate's ability to take crew actions. The specific effect of a system short depends on the crew action that failed:

Electrical Feedback (Engineer failure): The *Rust Bug* takes 5 damage to a random shield; if the shield is depleted, this damage reduces the ship's Hull Points.

System Crash (Science Officer failure): The *Rust Bug*'s countermeasures fail, reducing its TL for the next gunnery phase by a number equal to the mark of the ship's defenses.

Thruster Misfire (Pilot failure): The *Rust Bug*'s turn is increased by 1 for the next helm phase.

If the *Rust Bug* is ever improved to tier 11 or higher, it loses the System Damage trait.

Thasteron Fueled The *Rust Bug* can't be fitted with a Drift engine.

One of the last thasteron-fueled starships built on Akiton before Drift technology became standard, the ship once called the *Rise Up* might be considered a classic by collectors of antique starships—were it not a flying deathtrap. Originally designed for short-range cargo deliveries to dangerous locales, the ship survived countless firefights, centuries of missed maintenance, and dozens of cheap repairs as its stingy owners squeezed “just a few more runs” out of the hapless starship. When an engineer discovered a pair of electrovores nestled into the *Rise Up*'s already-fragile command board, the crew paid a few credits to an enterprising ysoki named Drillbit, who towed the 300-year old junker to a scrapyard on Absalom Station.

While the previous owners promptly wrote the ship off as a business expense, Drillbit rechristened the ship as the *Rust Bug* and got to work refurbishing it in junker style. This job proved bigger than anticipated, and after a decade of part-time repair work on the vessel, Drillbit died in a freak compactor accident. Ownership of the *Rust Bug* fell to his nephew, Ratrod, who much preferred to spend his time winning fame on the junkracer circuit instead of toiling away on a starship worth less than the sum of its parts. Eventually, the electrovores overran the ship, stripping its wires and feeding off its power core, while the *Rust Bug* became a piece of Downlow folklore, reputedly both haunted and cursed.

The *Rust Bug* doesn't have much left to recommend it: a single flak thrower to shoot down missiles and other tracking weapons, Drillbit's old workshop, decent shields, and an overlarge power core. These days, all that power goes to waste, feeding a colony of hungry electrovores.

STARFINDER

AUTHOR

Christopher Wasko

ADDITIONAL WRITING

Kim Frandsen, Violet Hargrave, Dave Nelson, Anne Toole, and Christopher Wasko

DEVELOPERS

Jason Keeley and Jason Tondro

EDITING LEAD

Kieran Newton

EDITORS

Janica Carter, Leo Glass, Patrick Hurley, Ianara Natividad, Kieran Newton, and Lu Pellazar

COVER ARTIST

Tomasz Chistowski

INTERIOR ARTISTS

Franklin Chan, Javier Charro, Michele Giorgi, Doruk Golcu, Pixeloid Studios (Mark Molnar, David Metzger, Gaspar Gombos, Zsolt 'Mike' Szabados, Janos Gardos, Laszlo Hackl, Orsolya Villanyi), and Sebastian Rodriguez

PAGE BORDER DESIGN

Tomasz Chistowski

CARTOGRAPHERS

Robert Lazzaretti and Damien Mammoliti

ART DIRECTION AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

Adam Vick

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Robert G. McCreary

DIRECTOR OF GAME DEVELOPMENT

Adam Daigle

STARFINDER LEAD DESIGNER

Joe Pasini

PUBLISHER

Erik Mona



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This book refers to other Starfinder products using the following abbreviations, but 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.

Armory

AR

Starship Operations Manual

SOM

Pact Worlds

PW



ON THE COVER

Tomasz Chistowski brings EJ Corp Executive Vice President Eline Reisora to life as her army of mercenaries brings Quig and Barsala's luxury vacation to a fiery end.



Paizo Inc.
7120 185th Ave NE, Ste 120
Redmond, WA 98052-0577

paizo.com



CRASH AND BURN

PART 1: WE'VE BEEN ROBBED!

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For a time, the crew of the *Oliphaunt* enjoy the fruits of their labor, indulging in exotic vacations or hobnobbing with interstellar celebrities. But soon, their old enemies—Lord Sinjin of the Golden League and Eline Reisora of EJ Corp—join forces to ambush the crew. The *Oliphaunt* is stolen, and the crew burned, leaving the PCs with little resources to get their ship back.

PART 2: DOWN AND OUT ON ABSALOM STATION 8

The PCs have no ship, no work, and no place to stay. If the crew hopes to recover the *Oliphaunt*—and get revenge on Eline Reisora and EJ Corp—they'll need to cash in some favors owed by some old friends.

PART 3: HONOR AMONG THIEVES

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Golden League thieves have delivered the *Oliphaunt* to Eline's private estate on a remote asteroid. To get there, the crew must take a rusty starship through territory controlled by undead pirates and past the lair of a lonely asteray.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Crash and Burn" is designed for four characters.

The PCs begin the adventure at 9th level.

9

The PCs should advance to 10th level before leaving Absalom Station.

10

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

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ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Eline Reisor has come a long way. Abandoned in the Spike, she spent her infancy in an Absalom Station orphanage before being adopted by a pair of wealthy Kalistocrats. For a time, she knew only wealth and privilege. Eline's parents drove her hard to excel, but by the time she began private college on Vercas, she needed no outside motivation; she always looked for her next opportunity to climb one more rung up the ladder. By adulthood, the ways of the Prophets had been ingrained into her, and she obeyed them without a second thought—along with being a vegetarian, she dressed in white to signal her purity and used gloves to avoid touching unclean people and objects. More importantly, she knew that only one thing measures success in life: wealth. And it didn't matter how she acquired it, since amassing wealth guaranteed that her immortal soul would never be judged—she could spend eternity as a digital consciousness in a paradise of her own creation.

Loved by her adopted parents, Eline nevertheless risked their anger when she refused to join her father's bank. Instead, she forged her own way, proving she didn't need her wealth and connections to be successful. Instead of inheriting the family business, she accepted an offer from the Evgeniya-Jaimisson Corporation. Immediately, she suspected she'd made a terrible mistake; EJ Corp was filled with cutthroat executives. Suddenly, everyone she met aggressively self-promoted themselves at least as well as she did. She got sidelined, cut out of projects she had hoped to lead, and eventually found herself supervising a bioresearch project on Sovall's Folly, a remote planet in the Vast.

Sovall's Folly, however, proved to be Eline's salvation. Indigenous freedom fighters ambushed her and a small escort in an effort to kick the Company off the planet. During her desperate escape, Eline stumbled across a huge vein of inubrix, the starmetal known as "ghost iron." The ore and its location were sacred to the people of Sovall's Folly, and Eline knew without a shadow of a doubt that exploiting this resource was wrong—but her greed and desire for power overcame her morality. When EJ Corp's facilities on Sovall's Folly transitioned from bioresearch to inubrix extraction, Eline received a percentage of the profits. With her financial future secure, her star began to rise. Newly promoted, she leveraged her experience with ghost iron and her Kalistocracy background to supervise the Oliphaunt Project, a program to develop *null-space cargo holds* to replace the golden commerce barges built at the Horse Eye Orbital Plate.

At first, all went well. With a hardworking team of scientists, mystics, and starship engineers, Eline scaled up

null-space technology until it could fill a cargo hold while still remaining stable in the Drift. This project had potential far beyond the Kalistocracy—if the Company had exclusive use of *null-space cargo holds*, it would make trillions of credits, and Eline could get a percentage of every delivery. Doing so would mean betraying the Prophets and keeping the *Oliphaunt*, but Eline remains far more interested in the pursuit of her own greed than in staying loyal to the Prophets.

Then, the unthinkable happened. Just as the *Oliphaunt* finished its field tests, a group of disgruntled former EJ Corp employees stole the ship. If the theft became public, it would ruin Eline's career. She kept the loss of the *Oliphaunt* a secret and sent spies and assassins to find both the thieves and the ship. Recently, on Fortune's Heart, a secret Kalistocracy resort in the Drift, she even got close enough to see and speak with the crew that had taken the *Oliphaunt*—but they didn't have the ship with them, and before she could determine its location, they escaped.

Eline's time has run out. She can't hide the *Oliphaunt's* theft any longer. The Board of Directors is breathing down her neck, and they sense something's wrong. So far, Eline's persuaded them the *null-space cargo holds* are just behind schedule, and the Board thinks she's stalling for time. But the Board will visit the Horse Eye Orbital Plate soon, and if Eline doesn't have a ship to show them, it'll be the end of her career. She'll lose everything—her wealth, her position, and her plans for the afterlife. It's time for desperate measures, and that means an alliance with the one individual Eline has every reason to hate: Lord Sinjin of the Golden League. She knows Sinjin originally hired the crew to steal the *Oliphaunt*, and that should make him her enemy. However, she also knows the crew stiffed him, kept the ship for themselves, and have avoided his efforts to reclaim it. So Eline reached out and offered an alliance—Sinjin's forces, working together with hers, could kill the thieves and reclaim the *Oliphaunt*. Sinjin could have the ship long enough to copy the *null-space cargo hold*, then deliver it to Eline in time to show EJ Corp's Board of Directors. Between the two of them, they'd split the monopoly on null-space cargo transport—Eline and the Company would profit off legal and legitimate trade, while Sinjin and his crime family reaped the profits of the rest.

Sometimes, even a Kalistocrat has to get her hands dirty.

PART ONE: WE'VE BEEN ROBBED!

At the end of *Starfinder Adventure Path #37: The White Glove Affair*, the PCs stole a huge haul of starmetals, exotic minerals, and other commodities—not to mention a Kalistocrat golden commerce barge. Tariqa, the PCs' fixer, can sell these things

PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

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to make the crew fantastically rich, but they attracted a lot of heat on that job and must split up for a while, temporarily leaving the *Oliphant* in Tarika's care. A month later, the crew reunites on Absalom Station—in the meantime, they've enjoyed lifestyles of the fabulously wealthy. How the PCs spend that month remains up to them.

LIVING THE DREAM

During their month apart, all the PCs gain the benefits associated with living a luxurious lifestyle (detailed in "Galactic Trade," *Starfinder Adventure Path #34: We're No Heroes* 50–55) without having to spend any of their Build Points (BP). In addition, each PC chooses how to spend their time and money, taking unique downtime activities similar to those detailed on pages 150–155 of the *Starfinder Character Operations Manual*. These special downtime activities take 1 month to perform, and each requires significant amounts of money or valuable resources on hand. The PCs can't easily use their stolen wealth to buy equipment directly, but laundering it through Tarika provides access to valuable gear and resources. You should encourage players to narrate their characters' solo ventures using their high-wealth downtime actions as inspiration, playing up the status and luxury that comes with exorbitant wealth. The PCs will have only one opportunity to be rich beyond all dreams of avarice, so they should enjoy it!

If a PC wants to use their wealth for an activity not detailed below, create a new downtime activity based on the ones presented. These downtime activities are largely narrative, and a player might describe their month in an extended flashback. However, some activities might become genuine encounters. Extravagant Adventuring, for example, might include hunting a giant creature on safari or participating in a state-of-the-art virtual reality simulation. This activity presents an especially useful diversion if your PCs need a little more XP to reach 9th level. If your PCs are already level-appropriate for this adventure, their downtime activities don't pose a real challenge. The PCs aren't at risk of death or serious injury during these activities, as their wealth affords them curative magic, advanced medicine, or even resurrection.

Players might suspect that their sudden increase in wealth might be too good to be true. As the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path explores themes of resource scarcity, the limits of professional ambition, and the impact of galactic mercantilism, encourage your players to roleplay any concerns or feelings their characters might have based on the choices they've made and the credits they've acquired. It's important to note, however, that granting unlimited wealth to the PCs can trivialize challenges in the story and decrease player motivation—so their good fortune is, in fact, only temporary. It might be helpful to let players in on this secret or allude to the fact that their newly acquired resources might soon be threatened. After all, nothing lasts forever, especially not wealth.

Some of the downtime activities that follow include special mechanics that interact with Part Two, in which the crew find themselves cut off from all work in the Pact Worlds and Near Space. Such mechanics are described in the activity's Burned entry. Don't reveal these interactions to the players when they choose downtime activities, as it would spoil the later parts of this adventure.

CHARITABLE WORK

You leverage your finances to fund a good cause, boost a charity, fund a nonprofit, or back a political campaign.

Activity: You spend a month attending closed-door fundraisers, meeting with influential people, building new headquarters, organizing events and ground teams, and tackling other logistical challenges for your cause.

Results: Your recognition as a philanthropist earns you goodwill and gratitude. For the next week, whenever you attempt a Charisma-based skill check on a creature that's indifferent, friendly, or helpful toward you, you can use either the result of your roll or the result as if you had rolled a 10, whichever is greater.

Burned: The character's grateful supporters will risk their reputations to help out, even during trying times. These supporters will buy 12,000 credits' worth of gear from the character at market value (10% the item's price) and will sell them up to 6 items of level 11 or lower at market price even while the character is burned. They also provide basic food and lodging for the character and up to 5 other people at no charge for up to 2 weeks.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

You use your resources to dominate a major market in the Pact Worlds, earning a reputation as a formidable businessperson.

Activity: You spend the month building a business empire or working the stock market.

Results: Your investments pay off with profits transferred directly to your personal supply chains. Attempt a Computers, Engineering, or Profession check; you earn 700 times the check's result in UPBs. Alternatively, you can choose to earn BP equal to your check's result. These UPBs and BP are available immediately, although you can't use BP to improve the *Oliphant* until after you reunite with your comrades at Absalom Station.

Burned: A PC can't spend the UPBs they gain from this activity once burned, but they can use UPBs to craft gear and BP to upgrade the *Rust Bug* (in Part 2 of this adventure) or the *Oliphant* (once the crew reclaims the ship).

EXTRAVAGANT ADVENTURING

You keep your skills sharp by participating in pricey escapades to faraway locations, hiring guides, and sponsoring fellow thrill-seekers to experience fun and (limited) danger.

Activity: You spend a month partaking in commercially controlled adventures, such as going on a safari on Castrovell,

big game hunting on Vesk-2, or leading high-end mercenary companies on Apostae.

Results: You hone your killing edge. Once per day for one week following your extravagant adventuring, when you roll a 19 on an attack roll and hit, you score a critical hit. Your heroics also earn you a noteworthy trophy: you acquire one weapon, weapon accessory, armor, armor upgrade, or creature companion (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 3 138-147) of item level 11 or lower. If you choose a weapon of level 9 or lower, you also acquire any single weapon fusion compatible with that weapon.

GRANT FUNDING

You fund scientific endeavors, supporting research and development for the good of mankind—or corporate profit.

Activity: You spend a month reviewing applications for your many research grants, overseeing recipients' experiments, and distributing the results through publications or conferences.

Results: Your close monitoring of science has given you deep insights into various topics. For one week, whenever you attempt an Intelligence-based skill check, you may use either the result of your roll or the result as if you had rolled a 10, whichever is greater. For one week, you can purchase medicinals and serums at 10% their normal price. Finally, you automatically receive 1 biotech or cybernetic augmentation of item level 10 or lower, installed for free.

Burned: The discount purchase of medicinals and serums granted by this activity can be used even once the character has been burned.

HIGH-ROLLING

Your money funds a gambling spree the likes of which the galaxy has seldom seen.

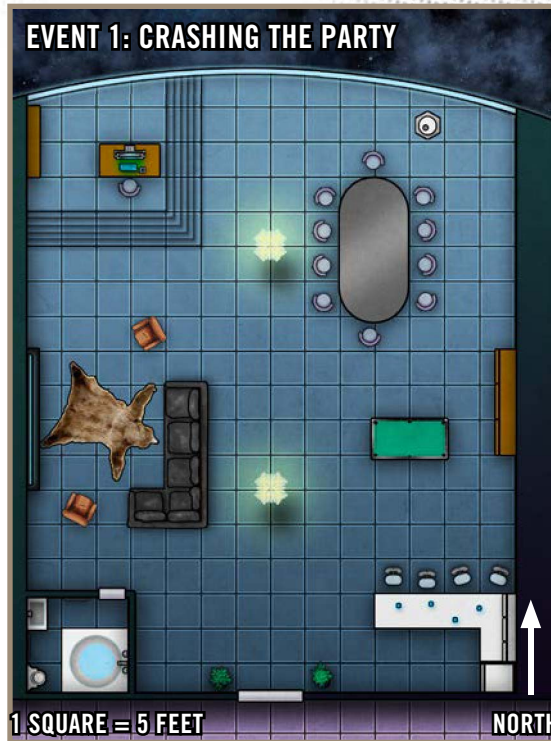
Activity: You spend the week reveling in seedy dens like King Curney's Kasbah or the illustrious Vestani Gaming Complex. Your losses are insignificant given your exorbitant wealth, but the rush is intoxicating.

Results: Attempt a DC 28 Bluff, Culture, Profession (gambler), or Sense Motive check; if you succeed, you pocket 2d6 × 2,500 credits in cash. For one week, your gambling high grants you a +2 bonus to your worst saving throw and increases your maximum Resolve Points by 1. When these benefits end, however, you must attempt a DC 18 Will save. If you fail, for 1 week, you gain a -1 penalty to saving throws and your maximum number of Resolve Points is reduced by 1.

Burned: A character who took this downtime activity and succeeds at a DC 28 Bluff, Culture, Diplomacy, Disguise, or Intimidate check while burned can find a desperate vendor who will sell them one item of level 11 or less for cash, charging a 50% markup.

LAVISH LIFESTYLE

You live a life that's the envy of the Pact Worlds, indulging in every luxury without care for cost.



Activity: You spend the week living in luxury, indiscriminately enjoying fine dining, expensive leisure activities, and costly hobbies.

Results: Your extravagant lifestyle grants you the benefits of privilege. For 1 week, one of your ability scores gains a +2 status bonus. You also accumulate some pricey trinkets around your home; you acquire one technological, magic, or hybrid item of item level 10 or lower, or two such items of item level 8 or lower, at no cost.

EVENT 1: CRASHING THE PARTY (CR II)

A month after the PCs stole the commerce barge, Tarika reaches out to the crew for a rendezvous at Absalom Station, where she intends to disperse additional funds gathered from the sale of their plunder. She has reserved a room for their reunion at Absalom Zero, a hotel in the Eye. Each PC makes their way up a transparent glass elevator to the designated room on the 18th floor. As the crew reconvenes, read or paraphrase the following:

This luxurious chamber drips with finery, from the twin crystal chandeliers to the marble countertop kitchenette. A massive flatscreen entertainment system stands before an assortment of plush couches and armchairs. Ornate wooden chairs surround a giant mahogany table, and an elevated workspace overlooks the entire room. The north wall offers a stunning view of a shopping plaza far below and of the starship docks on Absalom Station's Arms.

The room's ceiling is 30 feet high. As the PCs reconvene, give everyone an opportunity to describe how they spent

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their time and money during the hiatus, including sharing any new gear or benefits they derived from their exploits. As the crew finishes catching up, however, they all receive a simultaneous text message from Tarika: "GET OUT! IT'S A TRAP!" At the same time, four individuals wearing jetpacks fly up and through the glass window; most are armed with flamethrowers. Use the map on page 5 for this encounter.

Creatures: This team of Golden League hitmen and one scrubber specializes in taking out large groups and doctoring the crime scene to frame someone else or to make it look like an accident. The hitmen get to work engulfing the PCs in flames; they use their jetpacks to keep out of reach until they want to engage in melee combat.

GOLDEN LEAGUE HITMAN (3)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

Human soldier

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

HP 105 EACH RP 4 EACH



**GOLDEN LEAGUE
HITMAN**

EAC 19; KAC 21

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

DR 8/-; **Resistances** electricity 5, fire 7

OFFENSE

Speed 25 ft., fly 30 ft. (jetpack, average)

Melee *wounding wrack devastation blade* +14 (2d8+11 S; critical wound)

Ranged salamander-class flamethrower +17 (2d6+7 F; critical burn 2d6) or
cryo grenade I +17 (explode [10 ft., 1d8 C plus staggered, DC 15])

Offensive Abilities fighting style (bombard), gear boosts (brutal blast, powerful explosive), grenade expert (20 ft.), heavy fire (+4 damage)

TACTICS

Before Combat Each hitman uses grenade expert to create a cryo grenade I.

During Combat The hitmen try to deal damage to as many enemies as possible with their flamethrowers, using cryo grenades if fire damage appears ineffective. They close into melee range once their heavy weapons run out of petrol.

Morale A hitman flees if reduced below 25 HP.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +14

Languages Akitonian, Common

Gear golemforged plating III (jetpack, mk 1 electrostatic field), *wounding wrack devastation blade*, salamander-class flamethrower with 20 petrol, cryo grenades I (2), credstick (500 credits); **Augmentations** cardiac accelerator, mk 1 dermal plating

GOLDEN LEAGUE SCRUBBER CR 7

XP 3,200

Agender android biohacker (*Character Operations Manual* 40)

LE Medium humanoid (android)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

HP 100

EAC 19; KAC 20

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

Resistances cold 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

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

Melee advanced venom spur +13 (2d6+7 P plus poison)

Ranged advanced nightarch needler +15 (2d6+7 P plus injection; critical injection DC +2) or
cryo grenade I +15 (explode [10 ft., 1d8 C plus staggered, DC 17])

Offensive Abilities biohacks (6), injection expert +1, primary field of study (genetics), secondary

field of study (pharmacology), spark of ingenuity 1/day, theorems (hampering inhibitor, strange anatomy [10 damage])

TACTICS

Before Combat The scrubber uses their genetics breakthrough to render themselves and the hitmen immune to ability damage and drain 30 minutes prior to combat; they also have four doses of biocide poison keyed to the PCs' races. They activate their force field before entering.

During Combat The scrubber uses biohacks to reduce the fire resistance of PCs who are resistant to the flamethrowers. They try to inject PCs with biocide before using biohacks to hinder the most dangerous PCs.

Morale The scrubber flees if reduced below 25 HP, or if all three hitmen flee or are defeated.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Engineering +14, Life Science +19, Medicine +19, Physical Science +19

Languages Akitionian, Common

Other Abilities breakthrough (genetics), constructed, custom microlab, flat affect, scientific method (studious), upgrade slot

Gear estex suit III (jetpack, mk 1 thermal capacitor, purple forcefield), advanced nightarch needler^{PW} with 30 darts, cryo grenades I (2), biocide^{COM} (4 doses), *mk 2 serum of healing* (3), credstick (500 credits); **Augmentations** venom spur (DC 17)

Development: While the crew battles the Golden League team, Tarika tries to reach the PCs on their comm units. Once the PCs answer, she breathlessly explains that the Golden League has chased her for hours; she barely escaped thanks to the timely help of her daughter, Shan. She has more to tell the crew.

"Sinjin and Reisora, they couldn't beat ya on their own, so they've joined forces! I tried to warn ya as soon as I could, but it sounds like I was far too late and the shootin' had already started. We gotta get to the ship and figure out our next move, stay one step ahead of Eline and that drow sonofa..."

Even as Tarika speaks, a horrifying sight comes into view. The *Oliphant*, flanked by two other starships, rockets out of a dock on Absalom's Arms, headed for space.

The ship doesn't respond to any communications and is too far away to reach. Within seconds, it's gone from sight.

RICHES TO RAGS

The crew can retreat to regroup and plan—perhaps to a well-patrolled public location or somewhere they can blend in and go unnoticed, like a bar in the Spike—but the crew

members are in for more bad news: Eline Reisora and Lord Sinjin have combined their legal and illegal influence to burn the PCs. They find their bank accounts frozen. No business will buy from or sell to them, even for cash. Once-reliable merchants refuse to make eye contact and hurriedly shoo them away; attempts to interact with automated kiosks garner them only flashing, red "DENIED" messages. PCs with black market contacts receive similarly cold shoulders, as underworld dealers and fences pretend not to know them and flee when confronted.

Tarika suffers all the same problems. If the crew hasn't already figured out what happened, she hesitantly explains that she and the crew have been burned by EJ Corp and the Golden League. Every business in the Pact Worlds and Near Space, legal or not, has their names, appearances, genetic information, and account numbers, along with strict orders not to engage with them under the threat of being sanctioned (or worse, as the Golden League could violently punish anyone trying to help the crew). No matter the PCs' wealth, their credits are useless if nobody will sell items to them.

The normally calm Tarika experiences a brief but serious episode of panic, as she has no idea how to get out of this situation. PCs can reassure and help her through this feeling of helplessness, and if they don't think of a plan themselves, she eventually comes up with one.

"We can't live like this. The Company has influence everywhere, and anywhere they don't go, the Golden League does. But it all comes back to the Oliphant. That's where it all started. If we find where they took yer ship, Reisora won't be far away."

Tarika paces as she continues, thinking out loud. "But... even if we find it where it is, we'll have to get to it. And to get to it, you're gonna need a new ship. Or, at least, one that's new to you, if ya know what I mean. Cause we can't be buyin' a brand new starship when we can't even buy a cup'a noodles. I don't mean steal one, we're in enough trouble as it is! We need a starship, but there's gotta be another way."

If a PC asks about Lord Sinjin, Tarika tells them that he lives at Rendalairn, his impregnable fortress on Verces, surrounded by hundreds of bodyguards, soldiers, and Xun assassins; trying to strike him there would be suicide. Tarika adds, "He just wants the ship to make a fortune—but Reisora needs that thing. I bet her bosses are wonderin' where the hell it's been all this time. She's under pressure, and that means we've got leverage." She also notes that gathering information on Eline and the Company is simply easier than trying to do the same for Lord Sinjin and the Golden League, so the crew should focus on lifting the legal and legitimate aspects of their burned status first. They can worry about their underworld contacts later.

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PART TWO: DOWN AND OUT ON ABSALOM STATION

When everyone on Absalom Station treats the PCs as if they were radioactive, where can the crew turn? Tarika encourages them to reconnect with any friends they might have made in their travels—people who owe the PCs more than just credits.

If Rattlesnarp, Fleagreeb, and Goog (detailed on page 40 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #35: Merchants of the Void*) survived and remain on good terms with the PCs, the goblins send the PCs a message from whatever planet they've finally settled on. "We heard about what happened," says Goog in a holographic recording, "but we're from Botscrap, and scrappers like us, we pay our debts. Head down to the junkracer tracks and look for Ratrod. We put in a good word for you. Maybe he can help." Goog's tip leads the PCs to Ratrod Racing (page 15).

Likewise, if the PCs have good relations with Dizzy, the *Wintermourn's* engineer (detailed on page 40 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #35: Merchants of the Void*), they also send the crew a message, though this one comes from another part of Absalom station. "Hey. I guess you finally pissed off the Company bad enough for them to hit you where it counts, huh? Well, I'll never forget that business on Marixah. Go see Tsalu,

he owns the Click-Clack Club. I can't promise anything, but he won't turn you over to the Golden League, that's for sure. And Niva knows about your dilemma too, so you might be seeing us real soon." The Click-Clack Club is detailed on page 13.

The PCs can follow up on these leads in any order. If the PCs have alienated either Dizzy or the goblin siblings, a successful DC 15 Culture check allows a character to remember that both the Click-Clack Club and the junkracer teams in Botscrap are notorious for both ignoring the law and avoiding the influence of the Golden League; either would make a promising place to look for help or gather resources.

The PCs can't easily rest and recover while burned since no hospitality establishment will serve them. Unless they receive lodging from a helpful NPC—such as supporters noted in the charitable work downtime activity or the owners of the Click-Clack Club—a PC can't take an 8-hour rest without succeeding at a DC 15 Survival check to live off the land; even on a success, the character is fatigued the next day. This fatigue can't be removed by resting in the streets, but successive nights doing so don't result in the PCs becoming exhausted. Similarly, characters can't secure long term medical care or the surgical expertise required to install an augmentation.

WHAT GOES AROUND

Thanks to the influence of EJ Corp and the Golden League, the PCs' social exile quickly becomes common knowledge throughout the Pact Worlds and Near Space. Fortunately for them, this news also puts them back on the radar for several

of their old contacts. Depending on how the crew interacted with significant NPCs throughout the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path, those characters might resurface to support the PCs during their time of need. Some of these NPCs might reappear quickly as the PCs seek shelter and a starship, while others appear later in Part Two of this adventure, after the crew locates Eline and prepares the *Rust Bug*.

Life for Life: If the PCs saved Sevaranna's life in "The White Glove Affair," an agent working on her behalf approaches the crew and awkwardly delivers Sevaranna's heartfelt thanks soon after the burn begins. The agent hands off two *Absalom affable Pact World serums*^{PW} and bids the crew good luck in reversing their misfortunes.

You I Remember: If the PCs rescued Lindol Syfskoda from the *mind siphon* in "Merchants of the Void," he finds the crew at the Click-Clack Club or the junkracer track. Although nervous about being observed and still recovering from the altered memories implanted by the *mind siphon*, he discreetly hands one of the PCs a magazine containing 40 rounds of adamantine alloy ammunition for their preferred ranged weapon before retreating back into the crowd. If none of your PCs use projectile weapons, you can substitute a 5th-level weapon accessory instead, such as a laser scope (*Armory* 60).

Spy vs Spy: If the PCs returned the data module to the two V-Spec agents in "The White Glove Affair," Varav and Luxrana interfere with Droon and Gantz (see **Event 2: Company Warfare**), negating interference from the Company spies at a single location. Once the PCs ultimately defeat Droon and Gantz, they find two short-circuit grenades (*Starfinder* #37: *The White Glove Affair* 29) stashed on the spies' bodies, accompanied by a handwritten note reading, "With sincere gratitude."

Vesk on the Run: If the PCs helped Agavana Stoneblood escape in "Merchants of the Void," a hooded figure hands the PCs a package before they launch for Eline's palace in Part 3. A cardstock note attached to the package reads, "You once helped me disappear. Perhaps I can do the same for you." The package contains a 10th-level *obscuring*^{AR} fusion seal.

Watch Your Back: Shan's helping her mother cope with being burned and can't help the PCs much. If, however, the crew were especially helpful to her and the aglian community in "Professional Courtesy," Shan offers to install a homemade flak thrower she built in her apartment on any of the *Rust Bug* (area **C**)'s available light weapon mounts.

If the PCs ignore the Click-Clack Club (area **A**), Ratrod Racing, and Reisor's Office (area **B**), they can't learn about Eline's location and won't have a way to reach her; they might not even have basic food and shelter. In this case, other NPCs the crew has interacted with in previous adventures might appear and help the crew get back on track—perhaps for a price. Black market information brokers, agents of rival corporations, unscrupulous gamblers, and similar opportunistic scoundrels the crew has never met would also be eager to profit off their misfortune. Self-serving contacts point the PCs in the right direction, but always at a steep cost, demanding a PC hand over

a favorite piece of equipment, perform a favor for no pay (such as complete one of the Side Jobs presented throughout the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path), or simply pay a hefty fee.

EVENT 2: COMPANY WARFARE (CR III)

Eline knows the PCs are resourceful—they'll try to lift the economic sanctions she imposed on them and strike back at her. So she's assigned two Company agents—field managers **Droon** (LE female human operative) and **Gantz** (LE male human operative)—to monitor them and sabotage any revenge efforts. Unlike Golden League thugs, who simply try to put the PCs into early graves, Droon and Gantz watch the crew from afar, spying on them and bribing local informants while relying on stealth and their master of disguise ability. Whenever the PCs interact with denizens of Absalom Station in Part 2 of this adventure, a character who succeeds at a DC 33 Perception or Sense Motive check notices they're being watched. Droon and Gantz can only observe two groups at a time, however, and they need to sleep, so the PCs could avoid some surveillance simply by splitting up or conducting their activities across a 24-hour period. At the GM's discretion, class abilities and unusual equipment might allow the PCs to avoid being watched. Although Droon and Gantz begin by observing the PCs, they'll inevitably take more direct action.

Creatures: As the PCs make progress toward getting off Absalom Station or unearthing Eline's location, Droon and Gantz work to frustrate their efforts. The encounters that make up Part 2 of this adventure have a "Company Spies" entry that includes specific suggestions for how to use the two agents. Be creative when using the spies; they might begin by planting false evidence that throws the PCs off Eline's trail or leads the PCs to suspect their friends of betrayal. Eventually, Droon and Gantz resort to kidnapping, impersonating, or assassinating NPCs who help the crew. The two spies might try to wear down the PCs in hit-and-run combat, making use of sniper fire and their bleeding shots ability. Try to leave a way for the spies to escape so that at least one of them can be present for the crew's investigation of the *Rust Bug* (area **C**).

If the PCs capture Droon or Gantz, they confess that Eline employed them to monitor the crew and sabotage their efforts but reveal nothing else. They'll take any opportunity to escape, and if they do (or are released), they flee Absalom Station for less deadly job opportunities, abandoning this assignment.

COMPANY SPY (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Human operative

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +9; Perception +23

DEFENSE

HP 135 EACH

EAC 22; KAC 23

Fort +8; Ref +13; Will +12

Defensive Abilities evasion, uncanny agility

PROFESSIONAL
COURTESY

PART 1:
WE'VE BEEN
ROBBED!

PART 2:
DOWN AND
OUT ON
ABSALOM
STATION

PART 3:
HONOR
AMONG
THIEVES

SIDE JOBS

CORPORATIONS
OF THE
GALAXY

A MEASURE
OF
SOLIDARITY

ALIEN
ARCHIVES

CODEx OF
WORLDS

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee ultrathin switchblade +17 (2d4+9 S)

Ranged elite semi-auto pistol +19 (3d6+9 P) or
phantom assassin rifle +19 (3d6+9 P)

Offensive Abilities debilitating trick, operative exploits
(bleeding shot, debilitating sniper, master of disguise
[DC 18]), trick attack +5d8, triple attack

TACTICS

Before Combat Each spy positions themselves where they can
inflict the most harm while having an avenue for escape.
If possible, they find a far-off sniping position with cover.

During Combat The spies target healers and other support
characters first, striking quickly and escaping to let their
bleeding shot special ability do most of the work. Even if

they don't kill any of the PCs, wounding characters and
slowing the crew's progress is sufficient.

Morale The spies flee after scoring one or two good hits,
to continue their harassment later. When they confront
the PCs aboard the *Rust Bug*, Droon and Gantz fight until
reduced below 20 HP, then flee or surrender.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +6; **Con** +0; **Int** +3; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +4

Skills Acrobatics +18, Bluff +23, Disguise +23, Sense Motive
+18, Sleight of Hand +23, Stealth +23

Languages Akitonian, Common, Elven

Other Abilities operative specialization (spy)

Gear gold AbadarCorp travel suit, elite semi-auto pistol
with 36 rounds, phantom assassin rifle^{AR} with 20 rounds,
ultrathin switchblade^{AR}, holoskin, laser microphone
scanner, credstick (800 credits)

Development: If either Droon or Gantz fails to check in over
a 24-hour period (because of death or capture), Eline initiates
a more severe solution to the problem posed by the crew (see
Event 4: Asset Liquidation).

EVENT 3: WHAT COMES AROUND (CR 12)

The crew of the *Wintermourn* (detailed in pages 38–43 of
Starfinder Adventure Path #35: Merchants of the Void) know
the PCs have been burned, but they don't know the *Oliphant*
has been stolen. At some point in Part 2 of this adventure,
Niva and her crew seek out the PCs—but whether they've
come to help or collect the bounty on the PCs' heads depends
on the actions the PCs took throughout the Adventure
Path. This event is the climactic confrontation with the
Wintermourn's crew, and you can introduce it into your story
anytime during the PCs' investigation of the Click-Clack Club
(area **A**) or Ratrod Racing. The PCs should definitely confront
Dizzy, at least, before they go to Reisor's Office (area **B**), as
Dizzy has special information about the office and a favor to
ask, if the crew seems amenable. Until they find the PCs,
the *Wintermourn's* crew maintains a low profile, sticking to
sparsely populated, low-budget stretches of Downlow.

The nature of this encounter varies based on the PCs' past
interactions with Niva's crew. If the PCs have sacrificed their
own well-being and comfort to help others, they've inspired
Niva to do the same, and the *Wintermourn's* captain has come
to help the PCs in their hour of need. If the PCs only took risks
when they expected payment and thought only of themselves,
then Niva has come to follow their example, intending to
murder the PCs and collect Sinjin's reward. If the PCs haven't
taken a clear moral and ethical stand in their actions in the
Adventure Path so far, Niva's attitude toward them depends
more on how the PCs have treated her and her crew individually.
In particular, you can use the guidelines for "Evaluating the
PCs" on page 35 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #36: Professional*



Courtesy to determine if the PCs have inspired Niva, Dizzy, Jinx, and Nemelith to take the "High Road" of altruistic and selfless behavior, the "Low Road" of greedy self-service, or a "Middle Road" that falls somewhere in between.

Creatures: If the PCs took the High Road, the *Wintermourn's* crew approaches them as friends and allies. Niva's usual bravado is softened by empathy for the PCs' situation. The brash ysoki expresses her sympathies for the PCs' plight, albeit in an awkward fashion, and confesses a reluctant desire to help. "But I have a policy against giving away anything for free," she says before Dizzy speaks up.

"Yeah, about that," they say. "I have information you can use. And I'll give it to you, if you help me with something at the same time." If the PCs agree, Niva is mollified.

"I did a little look-see for this woman who hates you so much," Dizzy explains. "Executive Vice President Eline Reisora. Now I couldn't find out where she is. But I did find her private office... right here on this station. I bet if you get in there and hack her terminal, you'll be able to find out where she's hiding. And, while you're there, maybe you could do a little snooping for me, too?"

Niva has forbidden Dizzy from going anywhere near Eline's office (area **B**), located in the Ring, out of a sense of self-preservation. However, she knows what Dizzy wants from the PCs; Dizzy's uncle, a dragonkin named Darzalfen, is a public relations agent in a Company office on Triaxus. Darzalfen suffers from lung and kidney disease and will die without medical care. Unfortunately, the Company refuses to cover Darzalfen's medical costs, citing "preexisting conditions." Dizzy has written code that will alter the Company's records and get Darzalfen the treatment he needs. While Dizzy's drone, Digit, can carry the code, Dizzy needs the PCs to get to the office's secure server, where the code must be uploaded, and protect Digit long enough for the code to do its work. If the PCs agree to this task, Dizzy happily reveals the location of Eline's office. Dizzy instructs Digit to accompany the PCs.

If the PCs have a mixed or neutral history with the *Wintermourn*, they find themselves subject to all manner of juvenile but ultimately harmless ridicule from Niva and Nemelith while Jinx and Dizzy roll their eyes. Dizzy approaches the PCs later, alone; they ask the PCs for the favor described above and offer the location of Eline's office in exchange.

If the PCs took the "Low Road" and inspired Niva and her crew to help only themselves, the crew of the *Wintermourn* seeks out the PCs to attack and kill them. Although she'd prefer to lay an ambush for the PCs and take them by surprise, fighting in a public place doesn't deter Niva; she does, however, wait until the PCs have gone to the Spike or some other lawless area before springing her trap. This encounter works best if it takes place in a location the PCs already know on the station, such as the Click-Clack Club (area **A**) or Ratrod Racing; other locations from previous adventures are also

appropriate, especially the Revenant Urge, where the PCs first met the *Wintermourn's* crew in "Merchants of the Void."

Any battle with the *Wintermourn's* crew is an epic challenge; PCs forced into this fight unprepared and without rest will likely suffer multiple fatalities.

NIVA

CR 9

XP 6,400

Female ysoki soldier

CN Small humanoid (ysoki)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +17

DEFENSE

HP 145 RP 4

EAC 22; KAC 24

Fort +13; Ref +9; Will +10

OFFENSE

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

Melee paramagnetic storm hammer +22 (3d6+18 B & E; critical knockdown)

Ranged aphelion laser rifle +19 (3d6+9 F; critical burn 1d6) or frag grenade III +18 (explode [15 ft., 4d6 P, DC 16])

Offensive Abilities close enough to kill^{COM}, fighting styles (guard, wrathful warrior^{COM}), frenzied fighting^{COM}, gear boost (laser accuracy, melee striker), ignore pain^{COM}

TACTICS

During Combat Niva interposes herself between the most dangerous PCs and her crew, using melee attacks boosted by her frenzied fighting ability. She doesn't pursue retreating PCs but jeers at them as they flee.

Morale Niva fights until incapacitated or slain.

STATISTICS

Str +6; Dex +4; Con +2; Int +0; Wis +3; Cha +0

Skills Athletics +22, Engineering +17, Intimidate +22, Piloting +17, Profession (miner) +17, Stealth +22, Survival +17

Languages Common (signed and spoken), Ysoki

Other Abilities armor training, cheek pouches, scrappy^{COM}

Gear advanced iridishell (jetpack), aphelion laser rifle with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges), paramagnetic storm hammer^{AR} with 2 batteries (20 charges each), frag grenade III (2), *mk 3 serum of healing*, personal comm unit, credstick (200 credits)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Wrath of the Fallen (Ex) If Niva is in a frenzy resulting from her frenzied fighting ability and she sees an ally take damage, Niva can take a reaction to make a melee attack.

DIZZY

CR 8

XP 4,800

Agender dragonkin mechanic (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 40)

NG Large dragon

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +16

DEFENSE

HP 115

EAC 20; KAC 21

Fort +11; Ref +11; Will +11

PROFESSIONAL
COURTESY

PART 1:
WE'VE BEEN
ROBBED!

PART 2:
DOWN AND
OUT ON
ABSALOM
STATION

PART 3:
HONOR
AMONG
THIEVES

SIDE JOBS

CORPORATIONS
OF THE
GALAXY

A MEASURE
OF
SOLIDARITY

ALIEN
ARCHIVES

CODEx OF
WORLDS

Immunities electricity, paralysis, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (clumsy)

Melee tail +18 (1d12+12 B nonlethal)

Ranged S-band scorchgun +16 (1d10+8 F) or
riot grenade III +16 (explode [15 ft., staggered, DC 18])

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

Offensive Abilities breath weapon (60-ft. line, 9d6 E,
Reflex DC 18 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), overload,
remote hack

TACTICS

During Combat Dizzy supports their allies. When Dizzy attacks, they use their riot grenades and their scorchgun's stun setting to inflict nonlethal damage while sending Digit to steal foes' ranged weapons. If Jinx is slain, Dizzy switches their scorchgun off of stun and begins using their breath weapon.

Morale If both Niva and Nemelith are defeated, Dizzy flees.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Computers +21, Diplomacy +16, Engineering +21,
Physical Science +21

Languages Brethedan, Common (signed and spoken),
Draconic, Triaxian, Vesk

Other Abilities artificial intelligence (drone), expert rig
(cerebral implant with standard datajack), mechanic
tricks (provisional repair^{AR}, technological medic^{COM}),
miracle worker 1/day, robotics specialist

Gear vesk brigandine III^{AR} (pet carrier^{AA2}), S-band
scorchgun^{AR} with 2 batteries (20 charges each), riot
grenades III^{AR} (2), *mk 3 serum of healing*, engineer's
puzzle box^{AR}, business card bearing the address for Eline
Reisora's office (area B), credstick (200 credits)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Partner Bond (Ex) Dizzy and Jinx can communicate with each other as if they both have telepathy with a range of 100 feet. In combat, when Dizzy is within 30 feet of Jinx, both characters roll initiative checks separately and treat the higher result as the result for both of them.

Robotics Specialist (Ex) Once per day, Dizzy can reroll a failed Engineering check to build, modify, or repair a construct (including Engineering checks attempted when using their technological medic mechanic trick) but must take the result of the second roll. The DC of their Engineering checks to identify creatures and technology is also reduced by 5.

DIGIT

CR -

Dizzy's drone

N Tiny construct (technological)

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

Perception +13

DEFENSE

HP 80

EAC 18; **KAC** 19

Fort +5; **Ref** +10; **Will** +4

Immunities construct immunities, integrated weapons;

Resistances electricity 8

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +12 (1d6+6 P)

Ranged ribbon lightning pistol +14 (1d8+6 E nonlethal)

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

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +18, Computers +13, Sleight of Hand +18,
Stealth +18

Feats Improved Combat Maneuver (disarm), Mobility, Spring
Attack

Languages Common, Draconic, Triaxian

Other Abilities expert AI, mods (camera, climbing claws,
reactive camouflage, resistance, speed, weapon mount),
reduced actions, simulated squox tricks, unliving

Gear ribbon lightning pistol^{AR} with 2 high-capacity batteries
(40 charges each), integrated camera

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Simulated Squox Tricks (Ex) Like a squox, Digit can use Acrobatics to jump instead of Athletics. In addition, Digit can use its Acrobatics bonus as its attack bonus when it attempts a dirty trick, disarm, or trip combat maneuver. If Digit succeeds at a dirty trick maneuver, it can choose only between the entangled and off-target conditions. Digit's robotic tail, front paws, and mouth count as hands for a disarm attempt.

JINX

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male verthani operative (*Alien Archive* 118)

N Medium humanoid (verthani)

Init +9; **Senses** deaf, low-light vision; **Perception** +22

DEFENSE

HP 115

EAC 20; **KAC** 21

Fort +7; **Ref** +12; **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities evasion, uncanny agility; **Resistances**
electricity 6

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee recruit spark knife +15 (1d6+8 E & S; critical arc 1d6)

Ranged corona optical laser +17 (2d6+8 F; critical burn 1d6) or
red star plasma pistol +17 (1d8+8 E & F; critical burn 1d8) or
series-37 plasma guide +17 (2d8+8 E & F; critical wound
[DC 18])

Offensive Abilities Bluff stunts (feinting stunt^{COM}, set-up^{COM}),
operative specialization (daredevil), Stealth stunts
(sniper's stunt^{COM}), stunt and strike^{COM}

TACTICS

Before Combat If Jinx anticipates hostilities against the PCs, he hides in a distant place and uses his sniper weapon in lieu of his normal tactics.

During Combat Jinx uses his Bluff stunts to harry and weaken foes caught in the area of his plasma pistol. He

prioritizes attacking PCs who threaten Dizzy.

Morale If both Niva and Nemelith are defeated, Jinx flees.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +17, Bluff +22, Computers +17, Piloting +22, Profession (Steward officer) +17, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +22 (+32 using skin mimic)

Languages Common (signed and spoken), Vercite (signed and spoken)

Other Abilities easily augmented, operative exploits (holographic clone, stalwart), partner bond, skin mimic, specialization exploit (versatile movement)

Gear advanced lashunta tempweave, recruit spark knife^{AR} with 1 battery (20 charges), red star plasma pistol with 1 battery (20 charges), series-37 plasma guide^{AR} with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges), *mk 3 serum of healing*, credstick (200 credits); **Augmentations** corona optical laser^{AR}, datajack, *mk 2* personal upgrade (Dexterity), *mk 3* resistant hide (electricity)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deaf (Ex) Jinx can't attempt Perception checks to listen and is immune to effects that rely on hearing to function.

Partner Bond (Ex) As Dizzy (see page 12).

NEMELITH

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female Hylki (human) witchwarper (esotericist; *Character Operations Manual* 60, 99)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

HP 105 RP 4

EAC 19; **KAC** 20

Fort +7; **Ref** +9; **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities enigmatic nullification^{COM} (evocation)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical knife +13 (2d4+8 S)

Ranged *bleeding advanced semi-auto pistol* +15 (2d6+8 P; critical bleed 1d6) or
screamer grenade II +15 (explode [20 ft., 2d10 So plus deafened 1d4 minutes, DC 18])

Offensive Abilities infinite worlds 3/day (3rd-level spells), paradigm shifts (inhibit, magic deletion)

Witchwarper Spells Known (CL 8th; melee +13)

3rd (4/day)—*explosive blast* (DC 20), *haste*

2nd (6/day)—*hold person* (DC 19), *invisibility*, *reality leap*^{COM}, *slice reality*^{COM} (DC 19)

1st (at will)—*jolting surge*, *overheat* (DC 18)

TACTICS

During Combat Nemelith casts *haste* on her allies, and attempts to disorient her foes using her infinite worlds ability before peppering them with *explosive blast* and *slice reality* spells. She casts *hold person* against very dangerous enemies.

Morale Nemelith fights until incapacitated or slain.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Culture +17, Diplomacy +22, Intimidate +22, Mysticism +22, Stealth +17

Feats Diehard, Spellguard^{COM}

Languages Akitonian, Common (spoken and signed), Kasatha

Gear kasatha microcord III, *bleeding advanced semi-auto pistol* with 12 rounds, tactical knife, screamer grenade II (2), *mk 3 serum of healing*, credstick (200 credits)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Grasp the Chain (Ex) If Nemelith has been reduced to less than her maximum Hit Points, the DCs of her special abilities and spells increase by 2.

Company Spies: If Droon and Gantz become aware of the PCs' plan to infiltrate Eline's office, they take active measures to sabotage the mission, potentially intercepting the PCs before they get in or impersonating Dizzy to get close enough to destroy Digit and its valuable payload. If they fail, they attempt to assassinate vulnerable members of either crew.

Development: If the PCs defeat the *Wintermourn*'s crew, they might attempt to take the *Wintermourn*, but Niva has planned for this possibility; the ship—parked in the Armada—has been programmed to self-destruct rather than permit theft. However, PCs who search Dizzy find their custom rig, and a character who succeeds at a DC 15 Computers check to hack the rig discovers the location of Eline's office. A character can also find this information in Digit's memory by recovering it from the drone's remains with a DC 17 Computers check.

A. THE CLICK-CLACK CLUB (CR 9)

A well-known haven for augmented individuals, mechanical creatures, and social outcasts, the Click-Clack Club (or "C3," as locals call it) welcomes those down on their luck... as long as they have something to offer. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach the club.

Graffiti art covers the outer walls of this factory-like structure with a pyramid of cartoonish pictures and bubble letters ascending toward a glowing green sign that reads "Click-Clack Club" in iridescent letters. A torrent of flashing lights and mechanical sounds emanates from the glass doors, and dozens of conflicting vidscreens and holograms dance along the interior walls. The air outside carries a pungent mix of gin and motor oil.

The bouncer, a heavily augmented half-orc named **Dramok** (N nonbinary half-orc soldier), demands the PCs' IDs before letting them in. Dramok raises a tattooed eyebrow when presented with authentic identification, since they recognize the PCs from being burned. Still, Dramok allows the PCs to

PROFESSIONAL
COURTESY

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WE'VE BEEN
ROBBED!

PART 2:
DOWN AND
OUT ON
ABSALOM
STATION

PART 3:
HONOR
AMONG
THIEVES

SIDE JOBS

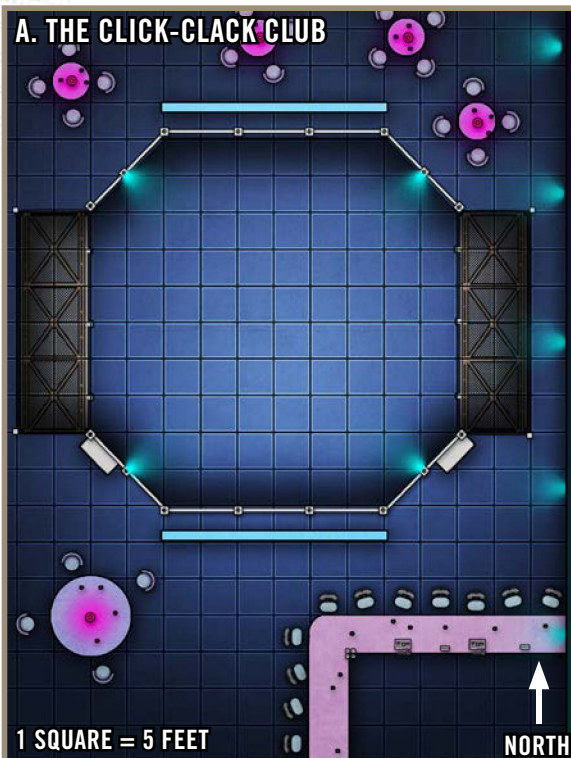
CORPORATIONS
OF THE
GALAXY

A MEASURE
OF
SOLIDARITY

ALIEN
ARCHIVES

CODEX OF
WORLDS

A. THE CLICK-CLACK CLUB



enter. The club interior teems with a crowd of competitive anacites, fresh off a successful transport and eager to play some of C3's famous VR games before returning to their regular jobs on Aballon. The club has such a large overflow that even the managers are taking on shifts; the gruff yet sociable **Barnaba** (CN male rhyphorian operative) works the bar, and the smooth, proud **Tsalu** (LN male dragonkin technomancer) monitors the VR parlor, where a massive UV overhead light replicates sunlight for all the anacites.

If the crew come here after a tip from Dizzy, they probably approach Tsalu. The dragonkin looks harried, with many customers and staff vying for his attention at once. "Yes," he says, "Dizzy told me about you. I'm not sure I can help. As you can see," he says, gesturing to the swarm of anacites crowding the club, "we've got a situation here and I'm short-handed." Tsalu and Barnaba begin indifferent to the PCs but are friendly to those who are androids, SROs, or who have multiple visible augmentations. PCs who try their hand at the free VR games and succeed at a DC 25 Computers, Piloting, or Profession (vidgamer) check draw a crowd of admirers; Tsalu and Barnaba are friendly to these PCs as well.

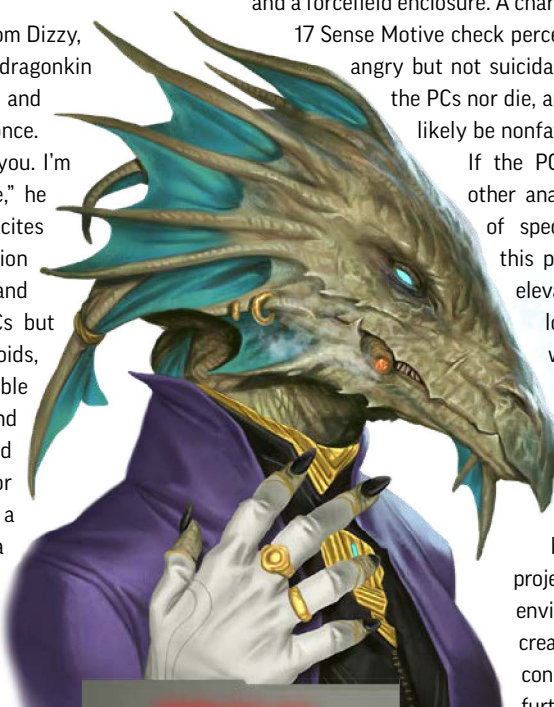
Once Tsalu or Barnaba is friendly to at least one PC, they offer to help, "If I get through tonight, of course. In the meantime, would you mind

making yourself useful?" The owners expect the PCs to help out around the club. Each PC should attempt one of the following checks, which might prompt a roleplaying scene; all checks have a DC of 25.

- Athletics to unload deliveries at the club's rear and carry supplies to and from the bar.
- Engineering to keep the club's overused VR machines and other facilities in working order.
- Diplomacy to head off a conflict among some belligerent and intoxicated SROs.
- Intimidate to help Dramok with security at the front door when an anacite predator drone with a fake ID tries to enter.
- Perception to guide an inebriated ambassador named **Syntax** (LN agender anacite) to a safe place where they can sober up before they make a mess.
- Any Profession skill relevant to running a bar, VR parlor, or gambling den.

Creatures: As the PCs attempt these checks to help manage the club, two anacite laborers named Supplier 50L and Hauler 94H (though their friends call them "Lift" and "Haul" while off duty) recognize them. These anacites are former colleagues of Monitor 77B, the anacite the PCs defeated when they first acquired the *Oliphant* (*Starfinder Adventure Path #34: We're No Heroes*). Lift and Haul badger and harass the PCs as they try to do their jobs, imposing a -2 penalty to the skill checks listed above. When confronted, the anacites admit they want to avenge their fallen friend, and they challenge the PCs to a fight in "the Pot," a 30-foot-deep octagonal combat pit in the club occasionally used for boxing matches or drone fights, outfitted with VR environs and a forcefield enclosure. A character who succeeds at a DC 17 Sense Motive check perceives that Lift and Haul are angry but not suicidal; they neither want to kill the PCs nor die, and any fight with them will likely be nonfatal.

If the PCs agree to the fight, the other anacites form a rowdy crowd of spectators. Use the map on this page for this encounter. An elevator platform on one end lowers the PCs into the Pot, while Lift and Haul descend on the opposite platform. Once the PCs are inside, a forcefield encloses the Pot and the fight begins. The VR projectors built into the Pot's walls project shifting holographic environments, granting all creatures within the Pot concealment against creatures further than 10 feet away.



TSALU

LIFT AND HAUL

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

Anacite laborers (*Alien Archive* 10)

HP 100 each

TACTICS

Before Combat The anacites are reconfigured to have improved AC (EAC 21, KAC 22) and elongated arms (reach 10 ft.).

During Combat Lift and Haul team up against the most vulnerable foe they can reach in melee, coordinating their attacks using their shortwave ability. At first, they attempt to deal nonlethal damage, taking a -4 penalty to their attack rolls, but if any of the PCs inflict lethal damage, Lift and Haul abandon nonlethal attacks. If a PC falls to 0 HP, Lift and Haul don't continue to attack them and instead call for their surrender, claiming victory.

Morale Each anacite surrenders when reduced to fewer than 20 HP, though the other continues fighting after their partner yields.

Development: If at least 3 PCs succeed at their skill checks to help run the Click-Clack Club, Barnaba and Tsalu become helpful, listening to the crew's story as the two owners close up shop in the morning. Defeating the anacites counts as 1 success, and defeating them while sparing their lives counts as 2 successes. Surrendering to the anacites negates 2 successes, as Barnaba hates having the PCs' humiliation conflated with C3 staff. Upon hearing about the burn, the bonded pair sympathizes with the PCs and offers them a place to stay at the club. They wish they could offer more help, but they have little knowledge of how to pursue an EJ Corp executive or secure a starship. Either owner says, "But at least you'll have a safe place to stay while you figure things out." Barnaba suggests the crew approach the junkracers in Botscrap, saying, "They've got all kinds of wild patched-together vehicles down there. Maybe they're hiding a starship, too! Worth a shot." Tsalu also urges the PCs to seek out Dizzy: "Diz needs something from the Company. I'm not sure what, but if you help Diz, Diz'll help you."

Company Spies: The crowded club provides an ideal playground for Droon and Gantz, who might use android disguises to surreptitiously attack PCs entering or emerging from the Pot, serve the PCs drinks laced with arsenic (*Starfinder Armory* 133), or lethally sabotage their work for the club (imposing a -2 penalty to each check). If a PC fails a check the spies are sabotaging, the Company spy inflicts

trick attack damage and the severe wound critical hit effect (DC 18).



Treasure: If the PCs make Barnaba or Tsalu helpful, the pair offers advanced C3 VR tech that could prove useful once the crew gets a starship. Applying this tech to the *Rust Bug* (area C) grants it a mk 3 mononode computer and increases the mark of its defensive countermeasures by 1. If the PCs earned 4 or more successes, the pair takes a particular liking to them, and Barnaba challenges them to a bout of Drift Racer, one of his favorite games. A PC can beat Barnaba by succeeding at a DC 30 Computers, Piloting, or Profession (vidgamer) check. If a PC beats him, Barnaba gives the crew another node for the VR tech and a power core mod; adding this tech to the *Rust Bug* improves its computer to a mk 3 duonode and

upgrades the ship's power core to a Pulse Orange.

RATROD RACING (CR 9)

The crew might be directed here by their old friends Rattlesnarp, Fleagreeb, and Goog, or by Barnaba. Ratrod Racing is located in Botscrap, a mountainous pile of discarded tech dominated by the ysoki-run Scrap Union. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach the racetrack.

Haphazardly spaced lampposts assembled from assorted machine parts illuminate a colossal mound of scrap. A wide groove cuts a crooked path through the base of the junk pile, its curves bordered by rows of flattened steel that resemble bleacher seats. A distant echo and swirling dust make the junkyard seem lonely and deserted until the roar of an unseen engine or the crash of splintering metal shatters the quiet.

A mottled gray-and-white ysoki racer named **Ratrod** (N male ysoki technomancer) manages the track, which he closed for renovations a while ago. Ratrod put junkyard technology and an army of badly-paid laborers to work carving a new track outfitted with sharper turns and new environmental hazards, but test runs using drones have proven disastrous. Construction delays and mounting costs threaten Ratrod's reputation, and he's getting desperate.

Ysoki workers crowd the track but direct the crew to Ratrod. "Oh hey!" Ratrod exclaims, smiling broadly as he recognizes the PCs. "You're the dopes who got smoked by EJ Corp and the Golden League! Hey everybody, we got us some celebrities here! Introduce yourselves now, for everyone. Speak up." Ratrod is willing to help the PCs once he learns

PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

PART 1:
WE'VE BEEN
ROBBED!

PART 2:
DOWN AND
OUT ON
ABSALOM
STATION

PART 3:
HONOR
AMONG
THIEVES


SIDE JOBS

CORPORATIONS
OF THE
GALAXY

A MEASURE
OF
SOLIDARITY

ALIEN
ARCHIVES

CODEx OF
WORLDS



why they've come. "Seen' as how I'm such a personable, generous, and gracious guy," he says. "I do happen to have a starship that would get you jokers back in action. And I'd be happy to loan it to ya, happy to! Just as soon as, you know, I'm sure I won't go broke on account of these lazy slackers!" As he speaks, he gestures to his many overworked and underpaid employees.

Ratrod has three tasks that need completion around the track. First, a hairpin turn needs to be widened because the test vehicles keep clipping the inside bend. Second, the decorative flamethrowers on the track's jump ramp need their spacing adjusted so they don't incinerate quite so many racers. Finally, the 180-degree bank turn at the rear of the track keeps shifting, and Ratrod doesn't know why. Once these three issues are under control, and the track has a successful test run, Ratrod will help the crew.

The Hairpin Turn: Workers here struggle to move unusually heavy chunks of metal. A PC who inspects the area and succeeds at a DC 25 Physical Sciences check realizes the metal is hard to move because some of the materials used in the turn are magnetic—and also explains why so many racers hit the wall here. With this knowledge, a PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Engineering check can reverse the polarity of the magnetism so that not only is the area easier to repair, but vehicles that pass through the turn are actually accelerated. Actually repairing the track requires a PC to succeed at a DC 25 Athletics or Profession (laborer) check, but this DC rises to 30 if the PCs haven't discovered the magnetism problem; multiple characters can aid another to complete this check. As long as the PCs participate in the manual labor required to fix the track, the other laborers here work alongside them. Alternatively, the PCs might insist on "supervising" without getting their hands dirty; a character can motivate Ratrod's workers to repair the track by succeeding at a DC 27 Intimidate check. If the PCs fail this check, Ratrod's crew refuses to help them, and by the time the PCs finish the work, they're fatigued.

The Flamethrowers: Spacing out flamethrowers on the jump ramp is less physically demanding than repairing the hairpin turn but is more dangerous, requiring three successful DC 15 Dexterity checks; any PC can attempt these checks. Each time a character fails, however, they trigger a flamethrower's fire nozzle for 3d10 fire damage (Reflex DC 18 half). Alternatively, in lieu of adjusting the spacing, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Engineering check recognizes that the flamethrowers could be integrated into an automated firing routine, which would spare the racers while also looking more dazzling and impressive to the audience. A character who succeeds at a DC 27 Computers check knows how to set up this routine; however, before they can do so, a PC must convince the pyrotechnics staff with a DC 27 Diplomacy check to allow the crew to perform the installation.

The Bank Turn: The area around the bank turn is deserted, and the workers have been ordered to avoid it. The PCs can easily see why: the compacted scrap, which has been crushed

into a flat surface elsewhere along the track, pulses and wobbles here as if some giant creature from beneath is trying to burst through. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Engineering or Physical Science check recognizes that a liquid reservoir was trapped beneath the scrap pile when it was compressed into a racing surface. This pressurized liquid—a noxious combination of industrial chemicals—now threatens to burst through the track, and the characters must find a way to safely release it.

There are two ways to drain the pressurized liquid beneath the track. If one of the PCs has a burrow speed, the characters can construct a miniature pump with a DC 25 Engineering check. Then, the burrowing character must succeed at a DC 25 Perception check to navigate through the trash and a DC 25 Engineering or Piloting check to tap the fluid with the pump and direct the reservoir to a safe drainage site. The PC can repeat any of these checks if they fail, but a failed attempt to tap the fluid forces the character to attempt a DC 18 Reflex save as pressurized chemicals overwhelm them in the tunnel. On a failed save, the character takes 10d12 acid and bludgeoning damage and is sickened for 1d4 hours; on a successful save, the character takes half damage and isn't sickened. If the character takes Hit Points damage (not merely Stamina Points) or doesn't have environmental protections, they're also exposed to filth fever (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 418).

If the crew doesn't have anyone who can burrow, they must vent the pressurized fluid from the surface. This task requires one character to identify a good venting location with a DC 25 Physical Science check and a second character to vent the liquid with a DC 25 Athletics check. A failed Athletics check exposes the character who failed the check to the same damage, sickened condition, and filth fever described above, with the same DC 18 Reflex saving throw. The PCs can attempt these checks as often as necessary; eventually, the pressurized industrial liquid drains from under the track, and the turn becomes safe to drive.

If the PCs complete all three repair tasks, Ratrod lauds their helpfulness while ordering his staff to clean up the debris and prepare for a test drive. See *Treasure* below for Ratrod's rewards.

Company Spies: Droon and Gantz could sabotage the crew as they try to repair the track; these efforts inflict a -2 penalty to the PCs' checks, and if the check fails, the character suffers trick attack damage and 3d6 burn damage. Alternatively, they might snipe at the PCs from afar.

Treasure: Ratrod gives the PCs a *ratfolk belt* (*Starfinder Pact Worlds* 201) for their help fixing the track. If the PCs made the hairpin turn accelerate passing vehicles with magnetism or wired the flamethrowers into a pyrotechnic display, he also gives them a hellhound-class blaze rifle (*Armory* 37) built from one of the flamethrower nozzles as an extra token of his gratitude. The real treasure is the *Rust Bug*. "It's a starship!" he exclaims. "But not just any starship. A junk starship! I inherited it from my uncle Drillbit when he died 10 years ago."

It's the last of its kind! Pro'ly pretty dangerous, I admit. So I've been saving it for someone so desperate, so down on their luck, so hopeless, that they've got no other choice but to fly it. And guess what? That's you!"

Ratrod keeps the *Rust Bug* in a nearby vault, but he warns that he hasn't checked on it in years, and he doesn't know its current condition. He gives the crew a security code they can use to open the vault. "Once you get that thing flyin'," he says, "Me and the gang will work our magic on it. You'll see!"

If the crew brings the *Rust Bug* back to Ratrod, he and his workers improve the mark of its armor by 2 and improve its thrusters to M10.

Story Award: If the PCs fix Ratrod's track, award them 6,400 XP.

B. REISORA'S OFFICE

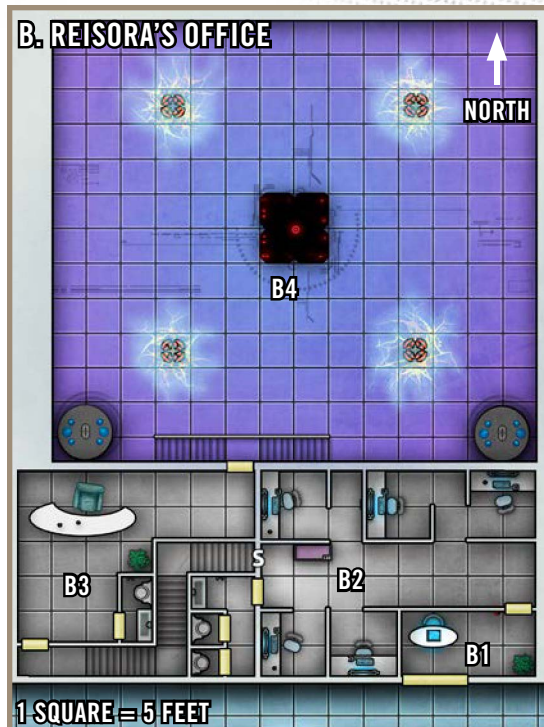
EJ Corp's regional headquarters on Absalom Station are located at Bluerise Tower, but Eline has a private office elsewhere in the Ring where she keeps confidential information and pursues her secret projects; this office includes a complete duplicate of EJ Corp's corporate files on a secret server, allowing Eline easy access to confidential records, such as personnel files or Company projects she's not cleared for. Eline took a big risk in building and keeping this secret facility, but the knowledge she has gained from it allowed her to stay one step ahead of her corporate rivals—and blackmail them when necessary.

The crew can learn about this office from Dizzy or, if the PCs have defeated the crew of the *Wintermourn*, from Dizzy's custom rig or Digit's remains. Alternatively, characters looking for a lead on Eline's whereabouts can attempt a DC 30 check with one of the following skills: Computers to surf the dark infosphere, Profession (corporate professional) to recall knowledge, or Diplomacy to gather information. If the character succeeds at this check, they learn the location of Eline's secret office. If all else fails, the PCs could learn about the office from an old contact (see *What Goes Around* on page 8); if the crew's relationship to this contact is less than friendly, they charge 5,000 credits for this information.

Once the PCs locate the office, they'll need to hack a computer within to discover Eline's location. The crew could use any combination of skills, equipment, class abilities, roleplaying, and other inventive solutions to infiltrate the office, so reward players for thinking creatively. Some guidelines are detailed below.

If the crew agreed to help Dizzy plant code in the office's duplicate server, Dizzy meets with them before the mission and assigns Digit to accompany them. Dizzy observes the mission remotely through Digit's sensors; they can control the drone if necessary but generally leave Digit to its own devices. Digit avoids combat unless one of the crew is in deadly peril, trying to keep itself safe and intact so it can deliver the code to the duplicate server in area **B4**.

The entire office is comfortably and expensively decorated in white with gold accents; the ceilings are 10 feet high. The



doors are secured with biometric handles that open only when touched by Eline or one of the staff who work here. Bypassing these locks requires a character to succeed at a DC 29 Computers or Engineering check.

Company Spies: Droon and Gantz don't know about this office until the crew go to it; they might follow the PCs into the office's lower levels and attack the crew shortly after fighting the golems in area **B4**. Alternatively, one of them could impersonate Siro, the receptionist, and turn the PCs away from the office diplomatically, raising an alarm and attacking if the PCs persist.

Alarm (CR 9): If the small staff at work in the office activate an alarm or call security, Absalom Station security forces move to surround the office. The PCs have some time to complete their mission and escape, however, as security takes at least 5 minutes to gather outside before entering. The security forces listed below aren't much of a challenge for 9th-level PCs, but wise characters might simply flee into the station's labyrinthine corridors. A signal jammer or similar device blocks the office alarm. The PCs earn no XP for defeating these security forces, and leaving a trail of corpses in their wake would only complicate their burned situation.

DETECTIVE CR 5

HP 65 each, RP 4 each (*Pact Worlds* 177)

SECURITY GUARDS (6) CR 1

HP 23 each (*Pact Worlds* 176)

SECURITY SPECIALISTS (3) CR 3

HP 32 each (*Pact Worlds* 177)

PROFESSIONAL
COURTESY

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PART 3:
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SIDE JOBS

CORPORATIONS
OF THE
GALAXY

A MEASURE
OF
SOLIDARITY

ALIEN
ARCHIVES

CODEX OF
WORLDS

B1. RECEPTION

This small room features a large, sleek desk surmounted by a tier-4 computer and various personal effects, including family pictures.

Siro (N male human), Eline's receptionist, works here and appears dressed in casual business attire. Siro knows about the crew and that they're burned, but he isn't expecting visitors; the PCs might try to get past him using a disguise (DC 24) and either presenting forged identification (DC 24 Computers) or telling a convincing story (DC 29 Bluff). Alternatively, a character can cow him into silence with a successful DC 31 Intimidate check. If these checks fail, Siro instructs the PCs to leave and threatens to call security. Siro can, in fact, raise an alarm by pressing a button on his keyboard, but he's a noncombatant with AC 10 and 6 HP. The door behind Siro is locked.

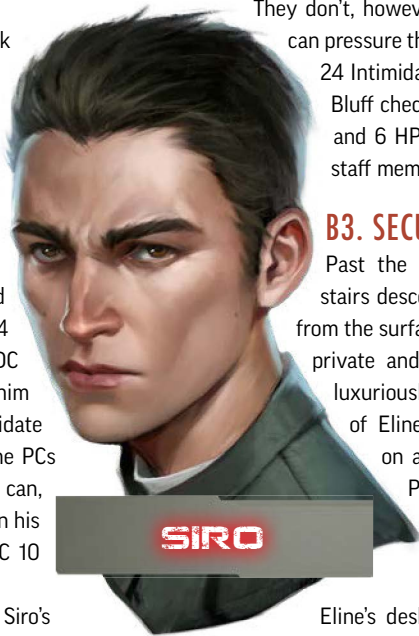
Development: A character who hacks Siro's computer with a DC 29 Computers check discovers that Eline has gone on an "executive retreat" to her personal estate, located on an asteroid in the Diaspora. Her travel and time off was approved by Visanmark, a Company financial auditor and colleague of Eline's who has joined her at her estate. Her agenda hasn't been updated since, so presumably she's still there. A firewall (DC 31 Computers check to hack) protects confidential information, including the coordinates for Eline's palace in the Diaspora and a message from the Golden League agents that reveals the imminent delivery of "Drift-capable assets"—the *Oliphaunt*—to the palace. A character who manages to get root access to this computer with a successful DC 49 Computers check can disable alarm systems and open all doors in area **B**.

If Digit is with the crew and they gain access to this computer, Dizzy's voice comes from the drone's speaker: "The server I need isn't here. It must be in a secure room somewhere deeper. You'll know it when you see it."

B2. STAFF CUBICLES

Eline keeps a small private staff to maintain her secret data center and handle tasks she doesn't want anyone else in EJ Corp to know about. Three of the cubicles are currently occupied (see *Creatures*), while two others are empty. A vending machine with snacks and beverages stands in the west, near a unisex restroom. A character can spot a locked secret door adjacent to the vending machine with a DC 25 Perception check (marked with an "S" on the map on page 14). Occupied or not, each cubicle has a tier-4 computer with access to the same files as detailed in reception (area **B1**); they can be hacked in the same way.

Creatures: **Izzep** (N host shirren), **Jem** (N female damaya lashunta), and **Marv** (N male human) are working in their cubicles when the PCs enter. All of them know about the secret door and can summon security with a button on their consoles.



They don't, however, recognize the crew, and the PCs can pressure them into revealing the door with a DC 24 Intimidate check or trick them with a DC 27 Bluff check. All are noncombatants with AC 10 and 6 HP; if the crew brandish weapons, the staff members cower.

B3. SECURE OFFICE

Past the secret door, three flights of steep stairs descend 40 feet, cutting off noise to and from the surface. An unlocked door leads to Eline's private and secure office. The room within is luxuriously furnished and includes mementos of Eline's life, including an inubrix amulet on a leather cord and a family photo; a PC with the *Kalistocrat Upbringing* (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #34: *We're No Heroes* 43) appears in this photo. There's no computer on

Eline's desk, as she took her private datapad with her. A locked door on the north wall opens only for Eline but can be bypassed with a successful DC 29 Computers or Engineering check. If Digit is with the crew, the drone can open the door automatically, and if left open, the door closes and relocks after 1 round.

Treasure: A hovering mimic imager (*Armory* 105) rests on Eline's desk, sitting in its charger with a full battery.

B4. DUPLICATE SERVER (CR 11)

Stairs descend into this warehouse-like subterranean chamber, its walls and 15-foot-high ceiling a sterile, off-white color. A massive computer storage unit in the room's center buzzes with energy, flickering green lights peppering its otherwise-featureless gray surface. Four floor-to-ceiling columns of electrical circuitry flank the machine, with some of their transparent wires glowing faintly with white light. Imposing steel gray cylinders fill two corners of the room.

This massive data processing unit is a real-time duplicate of EJ Corp's central data archive. Eline uses only a fraction of its capabilities to read confidential files she isn't authorized to handle and keep an eye on her rivals. The server is a tier-7 computer with a Security IV upgrade and firewall (DC 47 Computers check to hack); the entire apparatus is permanently affixed to the floor. Hacking the duplicate server lies beyond the capabilities of most 9th-level PCs, but Dizzy acquired a password that they've programmed into Digit to gain access to the server's personnel files. Once the crew have entered, Digit approaches the server and plugs into it.

Creatures: When Digit plugs into the data processor, or if the server is attacked or damaged, the room's security system activates. The two cylinders in the corners of the room rotate 90 degrees, revealing a pair of cybernetic golems plugged into

charging stations. The golems animate and attack all creatures in the room, returning to their charging stations only when there are no more signs of life. These same protocols activate if the data processor is attacked or damaged.

CYBERNETIC GOLEMS (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 125 each (*Alien Archive 2 66*)

TACTICS

During Combat The golems activate their haste circuits and close to melee range, firing their artillery lasers if they can't reach a target and still attack. If driven berserk, they attack the closest target, including each other and the trap columns, but never the duplicate server.

Morale The golems fight until destroyed. If driven berserk, any exposure to electrical damage from the trap (see below) grants a +2 circumstance bonus to its next saving throw to end the berserk state.

Trap: As long as either golem is outside of its charging station, the four columns that surround the server pulse with deadly electricity. Each round, one of the columns activates; choose the column that would affect the most targets (including the golems, who are healed by electricity damage).

ELECTRICAL PULSE TRAP

CR 8

XP 4,800

Type technological; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable** Computers DC 29 (must be performed at the server, and disables all four columns) or Engineering DC 25 (performed at each column, disables only that column)

EAC 19; **KAC** 23; **HP** 30 (each column); **Immunities** electricity; **Fort** +11; **Ref** +8

Trigger proximity (motion); **Init** +14; **Reset** automatic

Effect power surge (4d12 E); Reflex DC 18 half; multiple targets (all targets within 15 feet of the column)

Development: The countermeasures lock Dizzy out, but Digit can proceed with the hack so long as the PCs keep the golems busy. If Digit is destroyed, a PCs can salvage the code from its remains to finish the job with a DC 25 Computers check. As detailed in **Event 3: What Comes Around**, Digit's code secures medical care for Dizzy's uncle, Darzalfen, an EJ Corp employee who has been denied lifesaving treatment by the Company.

Treasure: If the PCs help Digit reach the duplicate server and implant the code, Dizzy finds the crew afterward and provides them with the location of the *Rust Bug*. If the crew already knows about the junk starship, Dizzy does one better: they persuade Niva to give the crew a plasma cannon starship weapon that the *Wintermourn* recently salvaged. The PCs can install this starship weapon on the *Rust Bug*'s forward-facing heavy weapon mount.

Story Award: If the PCs and Digit successfully hack the duplicate server for Dizzy, award the PCs 6,400 XP.

EVENT 4: ASSET LIQUIDATION (CR 10)

Once the crew infiltrates Eline's office, or if Droon or Gantz are killed or captured and fail to check in after 24 hours, the Kalistocrat initiates her Plan B. With a message to a clandestine laboratory on Absalom Station, she unleashes a genereaver—a genetically engineered assassin—to hunt down and kill the crew.

Creature: A genereaver is biologically unstable and must drain the genetic material of preprogrammed targets to survive. In this case, the targets are the PCs. The creature instinctively seeks the PCs out to violently consume their DNA. Once the genereaver has been activated, it could attack the PCs any time before they leave Absalom Station, even ambushing them in the belly of the *Rust Bug* along with the Company spies!

While Droon and Gantz easily move throughout Absalom Station, the genereaver terrifies bystanders, and law enforcement attacks it on sight. But the creature is cunning, stealthy, and remarkably durable; it moves and acts in the shadows, attacking the PCs when they're isolated from reinforcements and fleeing to recover from unsuccessful assaults. The genereaver is an opportunistic enemy that repeatedly ambushes its targets until it kills them. The PCs might try to capture the monster, especially if they prove unable to kill it, but the beast will try to escape and kill anyone in its way. Reward players who come up with creative solutions to the genereaver threat. While Absalom Station security will attack the genereaver and protect the station's residents, they won't help the PCs while they remain burned.

The genereaver is a novel biological weapon of recent, secret design. A PC can identify it with a DC 30 Life Science check; however, a character who retrieves a blood or tissue sample from the genereaver, analyzes it, and succeeds at a DC 25 Life Science check identifies its fatal susceptibility to poison, radiation, and other afflictions.

GENEREAVER

CR 10

XP 9,600

HP 150 (see page 58)

TACTICS

During Combat The genereaver injects its helicase barb into the closest target, then focuses on killing that target. If it faces resistance from other foes, it retaliates with its breath weapon. If anyone attacks it with an affliction or electricity, it shifts its attention to that creature.

Morale If observed by noncombatants, the genereaver flees when reduced below 75 HP. If observed only by its targets, the genereaver fights until reduced to 0 HP, then begins to heal itself through the use of its genetic reconstruction ability; when it becomes ambulatory again, it flees to heal in hiding.

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COURTESY

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C. RUST BUG

Once the crew learn of the *Rust Bug*'s existence, they can reach the derelict starship without resistance. It lies in a vault deep beneath Botscrap. Ratrod provides the electronic key to this vault, but the lock has completely deteriorated, and if the crew find the vault some other way, they can force it open with a simple DC 15 Strength check.

The vault door rolls open with a hideous screeching noise of metal grinding against metal. Beyond, in a vast darkness, lies a decrepit starship ravaged by the elements. Blankets of rust and splashed stains mask dozens of dents and patchwork welding along the outer frame. A ramp to the port airlock hangs open at an odd angle, unable to close. Emergency lights flicker within the ship, which looks more like an ancient wreck than a habitable spacecraft.

Use the map on the inside back cover for the encounters inside the *Rust Bug*. Despite the ship's ghastly appearance, its frame remains intact. All walls and doors are made of standard starship material, with 15-foot ceilings throughout the ship (30-foot ceilings in the port, aft, and starboard cargo holds, where the catwalk overlooks the holds). Its analog doors hang open on broken hinges. Emergency lights, which flicker constantly, fill the ship with dim illumination until the power core is repaired.

Creatures: If the PCs haven't permanently dispatched the Company spies (**Event 2: Company Warfare**) or the genereaver (**Event 4: Asset Liquidation**), these foes make their final stand aboard the *Rust Bug*. They follow the PCs using Stealth, avoiding conflict (and each other) until they find the PCs vulnerable or off their guard (for example, while retreating from an encounter or resting to regain Stamina Points). Space out both events to avoid overwhelming the crew, and give the PCs a chance to spot their enemies, potentially confronting them on favorable (or at least less disadvantageous) terms.

In addition, the *Rust Bug* houses a colony of electrovores. Individually, these creatures don't pose a significant threat to the PCs (and don't award XP), but one or two of them might appear in *Rust Bug* rooms as nuisances or minor hazards. The electrovores harass the PCs, the Company spies, and the genereaver but flee to the power core (area 9) if they meet any resistance.

ELECTROVORES

CR 2

HP 23, RP 3 (*Alien Archive* 44)

1. AIRLOCKS

Both airlocks stand open and offline, their electrical systems horribly frayed. A character who succeeds at a DC 17 Life Science or Piloting check recognizes this damage as the work of electrovores. Time and resources can repair the damage, but until the characters drive the creatures off, any repairs will be temporary.

2. CARGO HOLDS

The lower-level cargo holds stand empty, the floors littered with bits of wiring and discarded wall plating—more evidence of the electrovores' destructive presence. Rusty but functional ladders climb up to the galley, but the elevator lifts won't work until the power core is repaired.

3. CATWALK (CR 9)

Blobs of sticky red slime dot the tarnished floors and dented walls of this catwalk. The floor creaks with a metallic whine under any sort of weight.

This elevated walkway overlooks the port, aft, and starboard cargo holds; each cargo hold has a lift with separate controls, but they won't operate until characters repair the ship's electrical grid. Sticky red resin makes the catwalk difficult terrain until cleaned.

Creatures: Besides the resident electrovores, the catwalk is home to a scavenger slime that poached most of the usable gear from the *Rust Bug*'s tech workshop. It slowly patrols the length of the walkway, firing over the railing at intruders it detects with its blindsight.

RUST BUG SLIME

CR 9

XP 6,400

Variant scavenger slime (*Alien Archive* 100)

HP 145

Defensive Abilities scavenger shell; **DR** 5/adamantine;

Immunities ooze immunities; **Resistances** electricity 10

Ranged advanced X-gen gun +21 (2d12+9 P) or

jolt storm coil^{AR} +21 (2d6+9 E) or

15-notch plasma fork^{AR} +21 (1d10+9 E & F)

Treasure: All of the scavenger slime's weapons are salvageable, and its corpse can be used to acquire stickybomb grenades (*Alien Archive* 101). In addition, there are enough blobs of ambulatory residual scavenger slime along the catwalk that a character who succeeds at a DC 28 Engineering or Life Science check can install a slime-patch system (*Alien Archive* 101) in the *Rust Bug*.

4. CREW'S QUARTERS

Electrovores have shredded the synthetic mattresses that used to occupy these rooms, and the rest of the crew quarters were stripped of anything valuable years ago. The washrooms don't have running water until the characters restore the ship's power.

5. MESS HALL

Similar to the crew quarters, the mess hall was plundered long ago. The cabinet doors and chairs lie in disarray from electrovore exploration. Pools of fetid water have gathered on the broken faux-tile floor and in the tarnished sinks.

6. BRIDGE

The basic architecture of the ship's bridge remains sound, but electrovores have devastated the electrical work. Chewed, tangled wires carpet the floors, while gashes and cracks splinter every computer monitor. Everything from the captain's chair command keys to the pilot's joystick hangs together by strained shards of plastic and strips of metal.

7. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Upstairs from the mess hall, the captain's quarters overlook the starship's sorry exterior through a shattered windshield. The mattress appears intact but ancient and hard, while dust blankets the desk.

Treasure: A keyring bearing a transparent, bean-shaped jewel and a single key lies inside the desk drawer underneath some stiffened and illegible papers. The key fits the *Rust Bug*'s power core (area 9). The jewel is Ratrod's uncle Drillbit's lucky charm, a *mk 3 air elemental gem*.

8. TECH WORKSHOP

With electrovores having ravaged its electronic equipment and the scavenger slime pilfering its metallic contents, the laboratory over the aft catwalk is all but useless. Its tool shelves lie empty, and its robotic arms hang listlessly. One floor-level cupboard remains sealed behind a padlock.

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Engineering or Strength check to bypass the analog lock finds a dusty X-ray visor and an old but intact set of computer equipment designed for a starship interface. With these parts and a successful DC 28 Computers check, a character can improve the mark of the ship's defensive countermeasures by 1.

9. ENGINE ROOM (CR 9)

Orange scales and black barbs litter every shelf, cabinet, keyboard, stair, and floor panel in this chamber. Tangles of wires and cables have been knotted together into crude nests, gathered around a dimly glowing blue power core that throbs with faint energy. The whole room smells like a mix of salt and ozone.

The only still-functioning part of this junk starship, the *Rust Bug*'s Pulse Blue power core has remained in operation for far longer than any engineer would think possible. Its longevity made it an irresistible feeding ground for parasitic electrovores, who siphon just enough electricity from the active core to sate themselves without causing it to fail. The key from the captain's quarters (area 7) can be inserted into the power core and used to turn it off or on.

Creatures: The bulk of the electrovore colony has gathered here, and they fly into a fury if their home appears threatened by outsiders. The monsters attack as a group, aggressively pursuing targets throughout the *Rust Bug*'s rooms. The electrovores make little distinction whether they attack the

PCs, the Company spies, or the genereaver, caring only about driving intruders out of the starship; the electrovores avoid the scavenger slime, however.

ELECTROVORE COLONY TROOP

CR 9

XP 6,400

HP 165 (see page 61)

Development: The crew can begin restoring the *Rust Bug* to working order once the electrovore colony has been defeated, but a few stray electrovores might remain hidden aboard ship; these creatures sabotage the *Rust Bug*'s systems (as detailed on page 45 of *Alien Archive*) if the crew don't hurry to Eline's lair. If the PCs turn off the ship's power core with the key from the captain's quarters, all the electrovores in the *Rust Bug* abandon the ship in 1d4 days.

PREPARED FOR LIFTOFF

The process of repairing the *Rust Bug*'s electrical systems and getting the ship in nominal working order requires no check, just 2 days of work by anyone trained in Computers and Engineering. The PCs can combine this time with the 1d4 days they need to apply any starship upgrades they might have picked up in events and encounters on Absalom Station. Even after his workers upgrade the *Rust Bug*, Ratrod occasionally visits the crew as they repair the ship, bringing them meals or supplies and admiring their work. By the time the PCs finish, they'll have a (very) humble but spaceworthy vessel on their hands. Once the PCs know the location of Eline's private estate—probably by hacking computers in Reisor's Office (area B)—they'll have everything they need to pursue her.



With coordinates to Eline Reisor's palace and a spaceworthy starship, the crew can depart Absalom Station to confront their enemy and recover the *Oliphant*. Upgrading their ship will have taken a few days, affording the PCs time to touch base with Tarika and any other characters who might have helped them get back on their feet. The burn spans all Pact Worlds and allied Near Space businesses, both legal and criminal, so they can expect no further assistance once they leave their allies on Absalom Station behind.

Eline's estate is hidden in a dense cluster of asteroids within the Diaspora, and the *Rust Bug* has no Drift engine, so the journey takes 1d6+2 days. As presented, the trip

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to Eline's estate is relatively direct, but you can extend the crew's time in the *Rust Bug*—cut off from contacts and resources while struggling to keep the ship in working order—with Side Jobs (page 38) or other encounters, as long as the crew reaches the palace before Eline departs on the *Oliphaunt*.

NAVIGATING THE DIASPORA

The *Rust Bug* hits several snags as the crew navigates the Pact Worlds' notorious asteroid belt. To start, the asteroids that comprise the Diaspora make space travel treacherous. If the PCs aren't in a stressful situation (such as starship combat) and both the pilot and science officer roles are filled, the *Rust Bug* can safely navigate these asteroids. When the crew enters starship combat in the Diaspora (**Event 5: Living Asteroids**, **Event 7: Boarding Party**, and **Event 8: Approaching Reisor's Estate**), scatter 20 1-hex asteroids randomly across the map. The rules for asteroids can be found on pages 134–135 of the *Starfinder Starship Operations Manual*.

Asteroids are also the least of the crew's problems. Void-dwelling monsters and space pirates haunt the Diaspora, and the PCs' battered starship presents an easy target. Simply surviving the journey is the goal, so the PCs receive XP even for fleeing from encounters, although emerging victorious might yield other prizes for their efforts.

EVENT 5: LIVING ASTEROIDS (CR 8)

Two days into the journey, the *Rust Bug*'s course crosses into the asteroid belt, and the ship's flight path enters the Diaspora ecosystem. Read or paraphrase the following.

An eddy of debris circling independently of the greater asteroid belt stands out from the mostly stable field. These spiraling chunks of rock have jagged, porous surfaces with a dull sheen, as though the metallic portions had been gnawed away. The cluster orbits a single large object resembling a massive uncoiled pillbug, its legs irregularly twisted and motionless.

A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Life Science or Piloting check identifies the object as the corpse of a blinking telelith, one of the largest species of "living asteroids." This check also reveals that teleliths are social creatures that feed on metal; the distinctive features of this asteroid eddy mark it as a likely telelith habitat. A science officer can confirm this information with a DC 20 Computers check to scan the eddy, detecting barnacle-like nodules containing larval teleliths attached to several of the chewed-up asteroids.

Starship Combat: Three living members of this telelith colony quickly emerge from the eddy, attracted by the deteriorated metals of the *Rust Bug*. These teleliths have caches of easily thrown detritus stored throughout their nest, granting them a

+2 bonus to gunnery checks to hurl debris whenever they're adjacent to an asteroid. They vigorously defend their home but don't pursue ships that flee beyond the eddy.

SWARMING TELELITHS (3)

TIER 2

HP 35 each (*Alien Archive 3* 110)

TACTICS

During Combat The teliths keep close to asteroids while hurling debris. If the *Rust Bug* suffers critical damage, one of the teliths yields to its hunger and tries to slam the *Rust Bug*'s hull.

Morale The teliths fight until slain, triggering their auto-destruct ability.

Development: If the PCs investigate the blinking telith corpse, they find the organ it used for blinking fully intact. The PCs can harvest the organ with a successful DC 25 Life Science or Mysticism check, allowing them to install a *telith matrix* (*Alien Archive 3* 111) expansion into an empty cargo hold with only 1 day of work.

Story Award: If the PCs defeat or escape the teliths, award them 4,800 XP.

EVENT 6: LONELY ASTERAY (CR 12)

One day after the telith encounter, the computers aboard the *Rust Bug* behave erratically. Loudspeakers produce wavering tones like multiple theramins playing dark harmonies, and scanners display images of grand, alien cairns carved with strange sigils. This miniature starship graveyard once served as the playground of a family of asterays. The fey were close-knit and joyful, cavorting about the Diaspora and feeding on the remains of carbon-based organisms that they led to destruction whenever they got hungry. Their charmed life was shattered when their sensor song attracted the *Lost Cause* (**Event 7: Boarding Party**), a territorial ship of pirates. The asterays stood little chance against starship weapons, and the sadistic pirates brutally exterminated the fey. One asteray named Arzenj, however, survived the *Lost Cause*'s onslaught, though they would hardly consider themselves lucky. Traumatized by the murder of their family, Arzenj is crushed with grief, fear, and fury. The asteray's sensor song reflects that mourning, creating holographic images of graves for their family and filling the void with the sound of their sorrow.

As the *Rust Bug* steers around the asteroid field, the wailing tones respond to its changes in direction; a character who succeeds at a DC 17 Piloting or Sense Motive check can discern that the sounds lead in a specific direction, slightly off the crew's course. With this evidence, a character who succeeds at a DC 22 Mysticism check can guess that these phenomena signal a distressed asteray, a vacuum-dwelling fey known to crave organic food.

Should the characters ignore the electronic wailing, their lives become noticeably inconvenienced. No downtime activities can be completed while the noise persists, and a PC must succeed at a DC 25 Piloting check to navigate. The effort to navigate with the asteray's interference leaves the pilot and science officer shaken for the rest of the day.

If the crew follow the asteray's illusory trail, they eventually reach its home. Read or paraphrase the following.

A misshapen scrapheap—the result of half a dozen starships smashed into each other—floats serenely among the asteroids. Charred streaks left behind by starship weapons and a blasted chunk shrouded in detritus scar the wreckage's amalgamated form. Among the clouds of surrounding space junk, strips of what appear to be pale, tattered flesh drift in macabre silence.

Creature: Fear overwhelms Arzenj when the *Rust Bug* enters their domain; the dirge emanating from the ship's loudspeakers becomes a shriek of terror, and the asteray darts into the



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wreckage for cover. The PCs' external communication devices can't reach the asteray through the vacuum, but if they park the *Rust Bug* and step onto the ship's hull or into space, Arzenj gradually emerges to communicate via telepathy; they begin unfriendly to the PCs, however. Recent events have traumatized the fey, and their bizarre mindset further complicates negotiations. Arzenj doesn't grasp the needs or motivations of mortals except through the prism of their personal experiences. This outlook manifests as a childlike lack of empathy; further, Arzenj believes mortals are extensions of the starships they travel in, similar to the way their illusions represent extensions of their own consciousness. Thus, Arzenj addresses the PCs as one unit—the “mind” of the *Rust Bug*. Arzenj believes the *Lost Cause* devoured their family's souls, which can only be freed if the murderous starship is added to the wreckage of their lair, returning the family “home.”

A character who succeeds at a DC 22 Sense Motive check understands Arzenj is traumatized and in mourning, granting a +2 circumstance bonus to attempts to change the fey's attitude. If the crew can improve Arzenj's attitude to indifferent (requiring a successful DC 28 Diplomacy check), they trust the PCs enough to share their story. If the crew offers to help, Arzenj insists that the only solution is to crash the ship that killed their family into the starship wreckage. If the PCs agree to this course of action, the excited fey insists on joining the hunt for justice; Arzenj intends to cling to the *Rust Bug* and ride it all the way to the *Lost Cause*. To discourage Arzenj from this course of action and convince them to stay behind, a character must succeed at a DC 35 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check.

If Arzenj detects a threat of violence from the PCs or the *Rust Bug*, including attempts to reenter the starship during or following an argument, they panic and their attitude worsens by one category. Likewise, a PC who fails a Bluff or Intimidate check against Arzenj worsens the asteray's attitude by one category. If Arzenj becomes hostile, fear overwhelms them and they attack; this battle takes place outside the *Rust Bug* in empty space, a zero-gravity vacuum.

ARZENJ

CR 12

XP 19,200

Agender asteray (*Alien Archive* 18)

HP 170

TACTICS

During Combat Arzenj uses *confusion* on as many targets as possible and follows up with *charm person*, *discharge*, and *overload systems* to weaken their enemies before closing within reach of their tail whip.

Morale If reduced below 20 Hit Points, Arzenj flees into the wreckage and cowers.

Development: If the PCs agree to help Arzenj but don't convince them to wait in the wreckage, the fey rides safely tucked into a dent on the *Rust Bug*'s exterior while overseeing the hunt for the *Lost Cause*. Arzenj aggressively keeps the

crew focused on the hunt, using their sensor song special ability to impose a –2 penalty to any starship or downtime actions that don't actively further their agenda. None of the ship's weapons can strike Arzenj while they ride the *Rust Bug*.

Treasure: As long as Arzenj lives and the *Lost Cause* isn't added to the starship graveyard they call home, the asteray's sensor song makes scanning the wreckage challenging. A science officer who succeeds at a DC 37 Computers check overcomes the distortion and locates an exposed captain's quarters protruding from a prison transport tangled in the metallic monstrosity; if Arzenj is slain, however, the DC for this check drops to 27. The asterays devoured the captain's remains long ago, but his adamantine enforcer armor II (*Armory* 68) and *punishing heavy sap* (*Armory* 53) are still intact. The opening also affords access to some of the wreck's interior, where the PCs find a fully functional coilgun starship weapon and enough spare parts to upgrade one of the *Rust Bug*'s light turret mounts to accommodate a heavy weapon. With 1 day of work and a successful DC 25 Engineering or Piloting check, the PCs can install the coilgun onto any available weapon mount on their starship and upgrade their turret. If the PCs add the *Lost Cause* to the wreckage, Arzenj gives these items to the crew freely in a rare flash of gratitude.

Story Award: If the PCs escape Arzenj, agree to help them, or simply interact with them and avoid combat, award them XP as if they had defeated Arzenj in combat.

EVENT 7: BOARDING PARTY (CR 12)

The *Lost Cause* was once a Free Captain vessel. Its captain, a vesk named Kyanhex, had a notorious reputation as someone who'd sell his family for the right price—though that's not so unusual for space pirates. The *Lost Cause* found work as a “sweeper,” exploring and securing territory for the Free Captains to safely navigate, establish secret meeting places, or lay ambushes. This work pitted Kyanhex against space itself, and the proud vesk performed it efficiently and discretely, carving out bigger and bigger stretches of controlled space over the years.

One unlucky day, however, the *Lost Cause* ran afoul of a void-dwelling beast known as a Besmaran whelp. Such creatures rarely pose a threat to experienced starship crews, but Kyanhex's pirates simply couldn't shake the creature, which critically damaged their life support and thrusters before tiring of the ship and leaving it to flounder. As oxygen slowly ran out, Kyanhex and his lackies fumed at having been bested and left to suffocate by such a trivial threat. Obsessed over repairing their ship, stomping out the whelp, and completing their sweep, the pirates evaded permanent death, rising in their airless vessel as a crew of undead varculaks.

The transition into undeath allowed the *Lost Cause*'s crew to accomplish exactly what they intended. They tracked the whelp, slaughtered it, used its spines to decorate their ship, and finished their assignment, even boarding a passing science vessel and butchering its staff. The *Lost Cause* returned to

Broken Rock to collect their pay, but their peers now looked at them with pitying eyes. Kyanhex didn't accept that he and his crew deserved pity for their undead state; certain the *Lost Cause* had acquired a reputation for weakness after the crew's humiliating demise, he set out to prove just how fearsome his team really was. Captain Kyanhex and the *Lost Cause* now take any and every sweeper job they can get; they push further and further into the Diaspora to amplify their terrible reputation, trying to squash their shared insecurity. They have mercilessly taunted and attacked starships and creatures, including Arzenj's family. Now, the *Rust Bug* is in their crosshairs.

Four hours beyond Arzenj's lair, the *Rust Bug* and the *Lost Cause* cross paths. If the crew searches for the *Lost Cause*, the PCs find the pirates ready for battle. Read or paraphrase the following.

A bulky transport, its hull heavily patched and augmented with decorative spikes, darts out from behind an asteroid with uncanny agility. Its prow is emblazoned with the mark of the Free Captains, and the Vesk words for "Lost Cause" have been scribed boldly over its forward window.

A light flashes on the *Rust Bug*'s interior as the comms activate. "This is Captain Kyanhex," the unknown party growls. "Of the Free Captains. Surrender your... vessel... and prepare to be boarded. Judging by the looks of your ship, we'll be doing you a favor."

Starship Combat: Kyanhex harasses the crew over comms, belittling the *Rust Bug* and promising to let the crew live if they cooperate. A successful DC 26 Sense Motive check allows a character to perceive that Kyanhex is lying; he has no intention of leaving any of the characters alive. The PCs might, however, choose to let the pirates onto their ship to engage in tactical combat; in this case, skip to Creatures on page 26.

The pirates participate in starship combat only long enough to board (*Starship Operations Manual* 40) and confront the PCs in tactical combat aboard the *Rust Bug*. The *Lost Cause*'s light ship tethers are the primary method by which Kyanhex initiates a boarding action, using ramming speed (*Starship Operations Manual* 17) as a last resort.

If Arzenj accompanies the crew, they distract the *Lost Cause* with electromagnetic disturbances; once per round, at the PCs' direction, the *Lost Cause* must reroll one check made as part of a crew action and take the lower result.

LOST CAUSE TIER 5

Medium transport

Speed 10; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2)

AC 20; **KAC** 21

HP 85; **DT** –; **CT** 17

Shields light 70 (forward 25, port 15, starboard 15, aft 15)

Attack (Forward) heavy plasma torpedo launcher (5d10; 20 hexes), particle beam (8d6; 20 hexes)

Attack (Turret) linked light ship tethers (2d6; 1 hex)

Power Core Pulse Red (175 PCU); **Systems** basic medium-range sensors, crew quarters (good, no oxygen), mk 2 duonode computer, mk 3 armor, mk 4 defenses, upgraded forward weapon mount; **Expansion bays** brig^{pw} (2), cargo hold (2), smuggler compartment

Modifiers +2 any two checks per round, +2 Computers; **Complement** 6

CREW

Captain (Kyanhex) Bluff +16 (8 ranks), gunnery +10 (7th level), Intimidate +21 (8 ranks)

Engineer Engineering +14 (7 ranks)

Gunners (2) gunnery +11 (8th level)

Pilot Piloting +14 (7 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +14 (7 ranks)



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Creatures: The PCs might prefer to fight the pirates hand to hand rather than risk starship combat with the *Rust Bug*, and Kyanhex will gladly accommodate them. As noted above, if the crew refuses, he tries to board anyway. Once able to board, Kyanhex leads his entire crew onto the *Rust Bug*, intending to kill everyone on the ship. Run this encounter with tactical combat using the map of the *Rust Bug* on the inside back cover, rather than through starship actions. If Arzenj is present when the pirates board, they keep their distance and harry the pirates with spell-like abilities.

KYANHEX

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male varculak solarian (*Alien Archive* 3 126)



LOST CAUSE
PIRATE

CE Medium undead

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

HP 125 RP 4

EAC 20; **KAC** 22

Fort +10; **Ref** +8; **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities deathless vitality; **DR** 5/-; **Resistances**

cold or fire 5

Weaknesses deathless weakness, silver susceptibility

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee acolyte shadow chains +19 (3d4+14 C; critical bind or leech [DC 16])

Ranged corona shoulder laser +16 (1d8+8 F; critical burn 1d6)

Offensive Abilities grave touch (DC 16), stellar revelations (black hole [25-ft. radius, pull 15 ft., DC 16], corona, defy gravity, supernova [10-ft. radius, 9d6 C, DC 16])

TACTICS

Before Combat Kyanhex activates his solar armor and stellar alignment.

During Combat Kyanhex closes into melee range, counting on his crew to keep him alive. He uses his supernova revelation whenever possible.

Morale Kyanhex fights until slain.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +21, Bluff +16, Intimidate +21, Mysticism +16

Languages Common, Vesk

Other Abilities cold soul, solar manifestation (armor), stellar alignment, torpor, unnerving visage (vesk)

Gear vesk brigandine III^{AR} (corona shoulder laser^{AR} with 1 battery [20 charges], deflective reinforcement), acolyte shadow chains^{AR}, credstick (200 credits)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cold Soul Kyanhex's powers have become twisted in undeath. His corona and supernova stellar revelations deal cold damage instead of fire, and his corona provides resistance to fire rather than cold.

LOST CAUSE PIRATES (5)

CR 7

XP 3,200

Varculak envoy (*Alien Archive* 3 126)

CE Medium undead

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

HP 100 EACH RP 4 EACH

EAC 19; **KAC** 20

Fort +6; **Ref** +8; **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities deathless vitality

Weaknesses deathless weakness, silver susceptibility

OFFENSE

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

Melee tactical knife +13 (2d4+7 S; critical leech [DC 17])

Ranged corona laser pistol +15 (2d4+7 F; critical burn 1d4) or incendiary grenade II +15 (explode [10 ft., 2d6 F plus 1d6 burn, DC 17])

Offensive Abilities expertise talent (menacing gaze), grave touch (DC 17)

TACTICS

During Combat The pirates support Kyanhex with envoy improvisations like inspiring boost and improved get 'em. One pirate targets Kyanhex with a defender shield projector (see Treasure below).

Morale The pirates fight until slain.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Bluff +19, Computers +14, Diplomacy +19, Engineering +14, Intimidate +19, Piloting +14, Sense Motive +19

Languages Common, Vesk

Other Abilities envoy improvisations (focus, improved get 'em, inspiring boost [19 HP]), torpor, unnerving visage (human)

Gear estex suit III (jetpack), corona laser pistol with 1 battery (20 charges), tactical knife, incendiary grenade II (2), credstick (200 credits)

Treasure: One pirate wields a defender shield projector (Armory 53), which she uses to protect her captain in battle. The *Lost Cause* can't support living creatures, so it makes a poor substitute for the *Rust Bug*; the PCs can cannibalize enough parts to repair their ship after dispatching the pirates. Furthermore, the PCs can salvage the ship's heavy plasma torpedo launcher with a successful DC 25 Engineering check and 1 day's work.

Story Award: If the PCs defeat the *Lost Cause* in starship combat, award them XP as if they had defeated the ship's crew in combat.

EVENT 8: APPROACHING REISORA'S ESTATE (CR 9)

After their encounter with the *Lost Cause*, the PCs enter the final leg of their journey. When Eline's private estate comes into view, read or paraphrase the following.

Among the asteroids, one of the larger rocks boasts a palatial estate, its facade graced with alabaster columns and gold leaf. When an asteroid drifts close enough to threaten the structure, automated turrets turn toward it and obliterate it with concentrated laser fire. A starship hangar at one end of the estate is protected by a shimmering blue force field, which parts long enough for two starships to emerge—the same vessels that accompanied the *Oliphaunt* as it rocketed away from Absalom Station!

The PCs instantly recognize the two starships, which are flown by Golden League agents who stole the *Oliphaunt*. The *Rust Bug* hasn't yet been detected, and the asteroid field makes it easy to hide. The crew can intercept the two vessels,

or they can lie low, wait for the ships to escape into the Drift, and then approach Eline's estate.

Starship Combat: If the PCs engage the thieves, place the Golden League Hijackers in the middle of the map and allow the *Rust Bug* to enter from any side. The Hijackers are taken by surprise; they didn't expect anyone out here, let alone the PCs, so for their first turn, the Hijackers automatically lose initiative and can take only Pilot actions. On subsequent rounds, however, the two ships work together to destroy the *Rust Bug*. The Golden League crews fight until one of their ships is completely disabled, at which point the other flees into the Drift. The PCs can then board the disabled Golden League ship, and the surviving Golden League crew offers no resistance. Once the ship's critical damage conditions have been patched, the PCs can fly it right into the estate hangar without incident, bypassing the challenges described below in Entering the Estate.

GOLDEN LEAGUE HIJACKERS (2) TIER 4

Nebulor Outfitters Starhoppers (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #3: *Splintered Worlds* inside cover)

Medium explorer

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

AC 19; **KAC** 19

HP 65; **DT** —; **CT** 13

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

Attack (Forward) light particle beam (3d6; 10 hexes)

Attack (Port) light laser cannon (2d4; 5 hexes)

Attack (Starboard) light laser cannon (2d4; 5 hexes)

Attack (Turret) chain cannon (6d4; 5 hexes)

Power Core Pulse Green (150 PCU); **Systems** budget

long-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk

1 duonode computer, mk 4 armor, mk 4 defenses;

Expansion bays cargo hold, medical bay, smuggler compartment, synthesis bay

Modifiers +1 any two checks per round, +1 Piloting;

Complement 6

CREW

Captain Bluff +15 (4 ranks), Diplomacy +15 (4 ranks), gunnery +10 (4th level), Intimidate +15 (4 ranks)

Engineer Engineering +15 (4 ranks)

Gunners (2) gunnery +10 (4th level)

Pilot Piloting +15 (4 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +15 (4 ranks)

ENTERING THE ESTATE

If the PCs decide to allow the Golden League ships to escape, they can easily hide behind an asteroid until the thieves pass into the Drift. However, the crew must then get into the estate's hangar bay. They have no way of doing so without attracting a lot of attention; laser-cannon turrets protect the estate, and the hangar has a force field covering its entrance.

Getting the *Rust Bug* into the estate's hangar is a starship chase; the full rules for starship chases can be found on pages 44–47 of the *Starfinder Starship Operations Manual*. The crew

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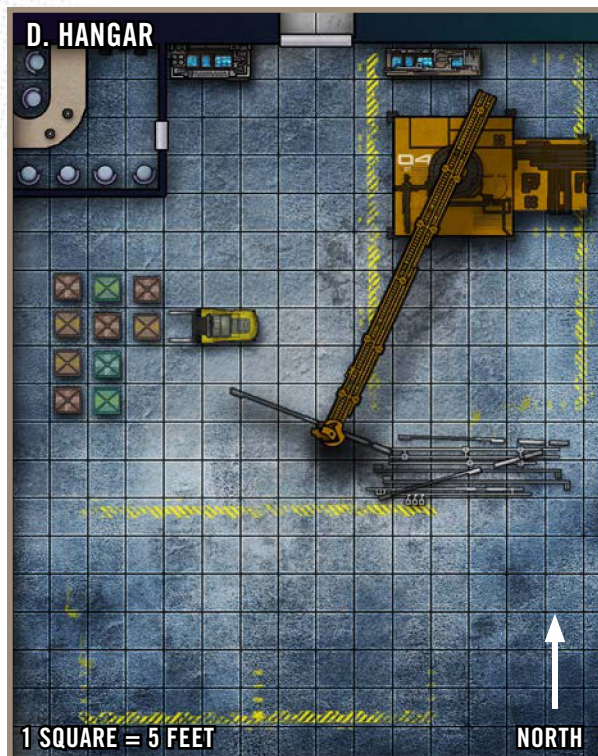
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must overcome three obstacles: the asteroid field, the laser turrets, and the hangar force field. All obstacles have a DC of 23.

ASTEROID FIELD (GUNNER, PILOT)

Small asteroids surround the estate, and their velocity makes them a serious threat. The *Rust Bug* can avoid the asteroids or blast them into dust. On the first round, the *Rust Bug* must attempt to overcome this obstacle.

Failure: Take 1 hit, and the *Rust Bug* must attempt to overcome the asteroid field obstacle again next round.

Success: The ship evades the asteroids and gets close to the estate but gets detected by automated lasers. Next round, the PCs must attempt to overcome the laser turrets obstacle.

LASER TURRETS (ENGINEER, GUNNER, PILOT, SCIENCE OFFICER)

Multiple turrets open fire on the *Rust Bug* when it gets close to the estate. The ship can avoid them, jam their sensors, destroy them, or reinforce shields and try to absorb the punishment.

Failure: Take 1 hit, and the *Rust Bug* must attempt to overcome the laser turrets obstacle again next round.

Success: The ship makes it past the turrets and can make a run for the hangar bay. Next round, the PCs must attempt to overcome the hangar force field obstacle.

HANGAR BAY FORCE FIELD (GUNNER, MAGIC OFFICER, SCIENCE OFFICER)

A force field protects the hangar bay. The *Rust Bug* can either destroy the field generators, hack it remotely, or use magic to cause the field to temporarily fail.

Failure: Take 1 hit, and the *Rust Bug* must attempt the hangar bay force field obstacle again next round.

Success: The ship gets through the force field and enters the hangar. The chase ends in success.

ADJUDICATING SUCCESS

If the crew overcomes the hangar bay force field obstacle, the chase ends in success. If the *Rust Bug* has taken 3 or fewer hits when it reaches the hangar bay, it lands in (more or less) one piece. If the ship took 4-5 hits, it crashes in the hangar bay, collapsing into an unflyable wreck; each character takes 5d10 damage and, presuming they remain conscious, can extricate themselves from the wreck.

If the PCs don't overcome the hangar bay force field by the end of the 6th round, the chase ends in failure. The crew are forced to withdraw in the face of withering laser fire, and they can try again after repairing the *Rust Bug*.

Story Award: If the PCs defeat the Golden League Hijackers or the starship chase ends in success, award them 6,400 XP.

REISORA'S ESTATE

Eline Reisora's private estate is an extensive building outfitted for extravagant living and constructed atop an asteroid. The PCs arrive in the hangar (area **D**), where they learn that Eline is preparing to depart the estate on the *Oliphant* from a private launch bay elsewhere in the estate; the crew have only minutes to reach her before she escapes. On the way to the launch bay, however, the crew must pass through the Garden of Contemplation (area **E**), and they might choose to investigate and destroy the Kalistocrat's immortality server (area **F**)—a powerful computer designed to store her consciousness after her death in a perpetually maintained virtual reality simulation. With luck, they eventually reach the private launch bay (area **G**), where they can board the *Oliphant* and confront Eline. The PCs decide her ultimate fate, but they have the power to sentence her to a fate worse than death—by exposing her failure to EJ Corp and destroying her path to immortality.

No map of the estate is provided here since it's too large for the crew to explore in the limited time they have before Eline escapes. Speed is crucial, particularly if the alarm is raised, but the PCs have time to rest for 10 minutes and recover Stamina once before catching Eline at the launch bay; if the crew lock down the bay while in area **F**, they secure an additional 10 minutes to rest, should they want to. Characters who take more than this limited number of 10-minute rests risk allowing Eline to escape. You could emphasize the danger by intercepting the crew with a terminator-class security robot (area **D**). Should you decide that Eline escapes, the PCs might need to chase her in the *Rust Bug* (if it survived crashing into the hangar) and defeat the *Oliphant* in starship combat, or begin the search for her all over again.

D. HANGAR (CR 10)

Blinding fluorescent lights illuminate a large hangar with several high-end starships parked in orderly rows. A single door emblazoned with the interlocking circles and triangles of the Prophecies of Kalistrade stands on the far wall, surrounded by clutter—a mobile crane hovering its arm over a stack of metal construction rods and rows of boxes lined up before a small forklift. The windows of a nearby office reveal a reception desk within, and a massive robot guards the area.

Use the map on page 28 for this encounter. The ceilings in the hangar are 30 feet high to accommodate the starships parked within. PCs flying one of the Golden League Hijacker starships can land in the hangar without attracting suspicion; if the crew forced their way in piloting the *Rust Bug*, however, they immediately trigger an estate-wide alarm that puts all enemies on alert through flashing red lights and repeated warnings. An office at the northwest corner has a computer with information vital to the crew's mission. The PCs can bypass the locked door on the north wall with a successful DC 30 Computers or Engineering check; a failure to bypass the door triggers the alarm. Alternatively, anyone using the office computer can automatically open the door (see Office Computer on page 30).

Creatures: Two unarmed Company employees staff the office. If the alarm has been raised, the office staff cover behind a reception desk and rely on the security robot to defeat the PCs. If the crew got into the hangar without raising an alarm, the PCs can trick the staff into believing they're Golden League mercenaries (and thus authorized to be in the estate) with a successful DC 25 Bluff check or simply bully the employees into cooperating with a successful DC 25 Intimidate check. Should these checks fail, the office staff trigger the alarm. Once tricked or persuaded, the office staff can tell the PCs that Eline is scheduled to depart the estate any minute; she isn't coming to the hangar, however, as she's taking the *Oliphant* from her private launch bay. The characters can also learn this information and more by hacking the computer (see Office Computer on page 30).

A terminator-class security robot patrols the area, but it won't immediately act aggressively against the PCs unless an alarm has been raised. However, if the robot is attacked, it raises the alarm.

TERMINATOR-CLASS SECURITY ROBOT CR 10

XP 9,600

N Large construct (technological; *Starfinder* #11: *The Penumbra Protocol* 58)

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

Perception +19

DEFENSE

EAC 23; KAC 25

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

HP 165

HANDOUT: PRIVATE MESSAGE THREAD

Recent exchange between Eline Reisora and Visanmark.

E: I got it back.

V: Yes!! How?

E: Sinjin.

V: The drow???

E: Yes.

V: Can you trust him?

E: Doesn't matter. We want the same thing.

V: So what about the loose ends?

E: Dealt with. I put them on the burn list.

V: !!!!

E: They deserve it.

V: Still, that's pretty harsh.

E: They stole from me and threatened my soul. They should die penniless.

V: I think you're giving them too much credit.

E: Don't write off a threat until it's dealt with.

V: You're right, I apologize.

E: I've invested in my server, and it's functional — but even once I'm in there, it'll need upkeep. That's not cheap. If I lose my career, I lose that resource, I lose my money, I lose my immortality. I'd just be... ordinary.

V: Gods, wouldn't that be awful.

E: A fate worse than death.

Defensive Abilities integrated weapons, nanite repair;

Immunities construct immunities

Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits, vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee slam +22 (2d10+18 B)

Ranged integrated *continuous yellow star plasma rifle* +19 (2d10+10 E & F; critical burn 1d8)

Offensive Abilities hardware acceleration

TACTICS

During Combat The robot attacks targets that prompted triggering the alarm. Once reduced below 80 HP, the robot's property-defense inhibitor code deactivates, allowing it to use the environment to attack foes. As a full action, it can pick up and throw a box, beam, or forklift as a ranged slam attack (with a +22 attack modifier, inflicting 2d10+18 B, and a range increment of 20 feet); it can also tip over a truck, crane, or other vehicle, dealing slam damage (2d10+18 B) to all creatures

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E. GARDEN OF CONTEMPLATION



within 10 feet (Reflex DC 17 half).

Morale The robot fights until destroyed; if the alarm hasn't been triggered, destroying the robot triggers it.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Computers +19, Intimidate +24, Stealth +19



Languages Common

Other Abilities unliving

Gear integrated *continuous*^{AR} yellow star plasma rifle with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hardware Acceleration (Ex) Once per day as a swift action, a terminator-class security robot can overclock its processors to gain greater speed than other security robot models for 5 rounds. This extra speed has several benefits: when making a full attack, the robot can also take a separate move action in order to move; this movement can occur before, after, or between the attacks from the full attack, but all movement must occur at the same time. In addition, the robot's land speed increases to 70 feet. This ability functions as a *haste* effect.

Nanite Repair (Ex) A terminator-class security robot's nanites heal it, restoring 10 Hit Points per hour. Once per day as a full action, a terminator-class security robot can restore 5d8 Hit Points to itself or any construct with the technological subtype it touches.

Office Computer: The hangar office has password-protected tier-4 computers that handle internal communications throughout the palace and control hangar functions. A PC can hack a desktop with a DC 29 Computers check to reveal the *Oliphant's* location in a private launch bay, the route to the launch bay, and Eline's scheduled departure in mere minutes. Successfully hacking the computer also divulges another key fact: the location of Eline's immortality server. A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Mysticism check or who has the Kalistocrat Childhood background (*Starfinder Adventure Path #34: We're No Heroes* 43) knows an immortality server is a powerful virtual reality device designed to store an individual's consciousness forever, granting them a kind of immortality. Finally, a character who hacks a computer here finds a private conversation between Eline and Visanmark, an EJ Corp financial auditor whose name the crew might recognize from earlier in the adventure. Give the players a copy of **Handout: Private Message Thread** (page 29).

Anyone using these computers can open the door out of this room. The PCs should have the location of Eline's private launch bay (area **G**) or the immortality server (area **F**), so they can make their way toward one of these locations.

Development: The crew can use the information found in the private message thread to weaken Eline when they confront her in area **G**. They might decide, based on her words in the message thread, that allowing her to live in disgrace is actually a superior punishment to killing her.

Story Award: If the PCs get past the security robot without a fight, award them XP as if they defeated it in battle.

E. GARDEN OF CONTEMPLATION (CR 12)

The path to both the launch bay and immortality server leads through an elaborate garden. Use the map on page 30 for this encounter. Read or paraphrase the following:

A gilded cobblestone walkway dotted with comfortable benches winds through a spacious park featuring clean-cut grass, carefully maintained flower gardens, neatly trimmed trees, and pools of crystal clear water. A marble platform etched with the sigil of the Prophecies of Kalistrade and studded with fountains rises over the central pool, where an idealized, solid gold statue of Eline Reisorra stands, reflected in the sparkling water.

Although the garden chamber is artificial, the plant life within is real, dutifully maintained by groundskeeping staff and drones. The room flawlessly emulates perfect weather on lost Golarion. The 2-foot-deep pools are difficult terrain, and the central platform rises 15 feet above its surface. The stairs gently ascend to the platform and are normal terrain. The trees and benches can provide cover.

Creatures: Visanmark—Eline's coworker, confidant, and friend—has detected the crew's infiltration of the estate; he waits here atop the platform in the middle of the map with a two members of the estate's private security forces. A devoted materialist, Visanmark used his impressive intellect to amass great wealth; he took a consulting position with the Company years ago and now audits many of EJ Corp's major financial transactions and investments. As soon as he spots the PCs, he and his security guards attack. If the alarm hasn't been triggered yet, it is when the battle starts.

VISANMARK

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male contemplative technomancer

LN Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** blindsense (thought) 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE

HP 140 RP 5

EAC 22; KAC 23

Fort +9; **Ref** +11; **Will** +15 (+19 vs. mind-affecting effects)

Weaknesses atrophied

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (Su, perfect)

Melee incapacitator +17 (3d4+9 B; critical staggered [DC 19])

Ranged aphelion laser pistol +19 (3d4+10 F; critical burn 1d4)

Offensive Abilities applied knowledge, cache capacitor (unseen servant), magic hacks (extended spell, tech countermeasures), spell cache

Technomancer Spells Known (CL 10th; melee +17)

4th (3/day)—*dimension door*, *rewire flesh* (DC 22)

3rd (6/day)—*arcing surge* (DC 21), *discharge* (DC 21), *dispel magic*, *haste*

2nd (at will)—*inject nanobots* (DC 20), *microbot assault*

TACTICS

Before Combat Visanmark casts *haste* on himself and the estate security just before battle.

During Combat Visanmark uses his spells and *telekinetic gloves* to neutralize the most visibly dangerous enemy.

Morale If reduced below 40 HP, Visanmark casts *dimension door* to escape. He doesn't confront the PCs again.

STATISTICS

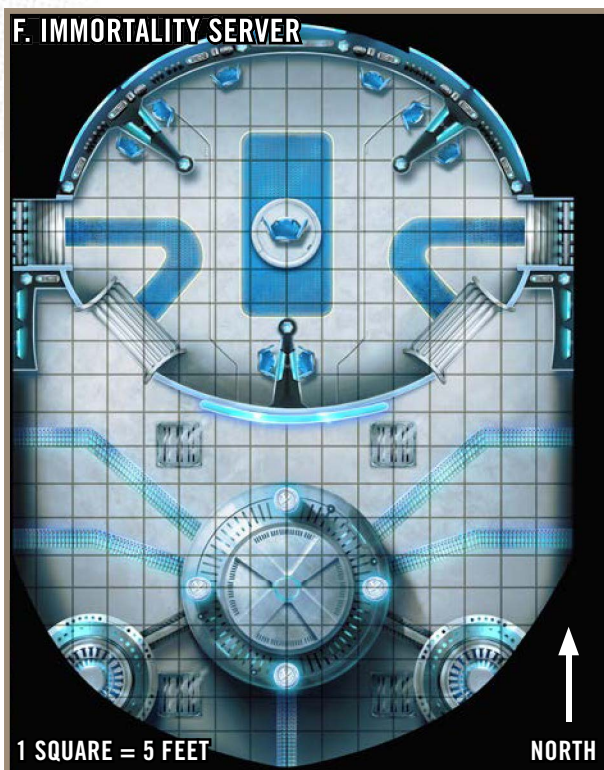
Str -1; **Dex** +3; **Con** +0; **Int** +8; **Wis** +5; **Cha** +0

Skills Computers +24, Engineering +24, Mysticism +19

Languages Akitonian, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

Gear gold AbadarCorp travel suit, aphelion laser pistol with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges), incapacitator with 1 battery (20 charges), *telekinetic gloves*^{AR}, credstick (5,000 credits)





ESTATE SECURITY (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female human soldier

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

HP 125 EACH

EAC 21; **KAC** 23

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

Defensive Abilities guard's protection

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee sintered starknife +16 (4d4+12 P; analog)

Ranged 15-notch plasma fork +19 (1d10+8 E & F; critical knockdown) or

frag grenade III +19 (explode [20 ft., 4d6 P, DC 16])

Offensive Abilities fighting styles (guard), gear boosts (plasma immolation 1d8)

TACTICS

During Combat The security guards stay close to

Visanmark to protect him with guard's protection. They use Cook Grenade whenever they can catch more than one PC in the blast; otherwise, they focus their attacks on a single target and try to take advantage of the boost quality of their plasma forks.

Morale If Visanmark escapes or dies and either of the security guards are below 30 HP, they surrender.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +21, Culture +16, Intimidate +16, Sense Motive +16

Languages Common

Feats Bodyguard, Cook Grenade^{COM}

Gear lashunta ringwear III (infrared sensors, mk 2 mobility enhancer, targeting computer), 15-notch plasma fork (light bayonet bracket^{AR} [sintered starknife]) with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges), frag grenade III (2), mk 3 healing serum

Development: If the crew captures any of the combatants alive, the PCs can interrogate them with a successful DC 25 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check. The captives confirm that Eline doesn't fear death; so long as her immortality server is functional, she'll live forever in a paradise of her own creation. The worst fate she can imagine is to lose her wealth, power, and status. This information can help weaken Eline during their final confrontation with her in area G. If the PCs don't know where the launch bay or immortality server are located, a successful interrogation gets them that information.

F. IMMORTALITY SERVER (CR 12)

Kalistocrats have multiple ways of avoiding judgment by Pharasma and escaping the Cycle. Some mummify themselves and sail forever on starships through deep space. Others, such as Eline Reisora, build powerful—and very expensive—hybrid virtual reality simulations. Every month or so, Eline uploads her current consciousness with all her memories into the simulation, but the simulation won't activate until she dies. On that day, her soul will travel to the immortality server, and she'll "wake up" in the simulation, where she could theoretically continue to live for as long as the server is maintained. Reisora has spent a mind-boggling amount of money on this device and intends to make it more secure through backups and redundancies, so that even if one server is destroyed or simply unplugged, she would survive in other copies elsewhere in the galaxy. However, she hasn't yet implemented those redundancies, so this immortality server is currently her only path to life after death.

The PCs don't have to come here and destroy the server; they might decide they don't have time. If they do destroy it, however, they can block Eline's plans for immortality and use this knowledge to weaken her in the final confrontation (area G). Should the crew decide to kill her, rather than expose her failures to EJ Corp and strip her status, title, and wealth, Eline lives on in the immortality server—unless, of course, the PCs have destroyed it.

Once the PCs reach the immortality server, they can enter through the double doors on either side of the room. Read or paraphrase the following.

A steep stair ascends into a wide chamber illuminated by flashing lights, swiftly changing vidscreens, and descending streams of code. Computer terminals line the walls of this circular room, each in a separate cubicle; a central command chair can swivel to monitor them. Two

stairwells ascend to the upper level, where a massive power core disseminates and distills energy through two attached reactors.

All stairs in this room are difficult terrain. The upper and lower levels are separated by 10 feet of elevation, and the ceiling throughout the entire room is 30 feet high above the lower level.

Creature: In the unlikely event the alarm hasn't been raised, 10 computer technicians work in this facility at the various interfaces. These employees are noncombatants, who each have AC 10 and 6 HP. If the alarm has been triggered, the staff flees from this room before the crew arrives. Regardless, the server's overseer—a hacker devil named Zanfora—permanently guards the room. Zanfora protects the server and monitors activity throughout the estate; as payment for this effort, Eline has promised Zanfora access to all the data she accumulated on the Company when she dies. Thanks to the duplicate server in her private office (area B4), she has amassed a lot of information.

ZANFORA

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female hacker devil (*Starfinder Adventure Path #17: Solar Strike* 57)

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

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness;

Perception +19

DEFENSE

HP 150

EAC 22; **KAC** 23

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

DR 5/good; **Immunities** fire, poison; **Resistances** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 21

Weaknesses technomagic susceptibility

OFFENSE

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

Melee claw +19 (2d8+11 S)

Ranged electrical discharge +19 (3d4+10 E)

Offensive Abilities overload (DC 19), override (DC 19)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

1/day—*destruction protocol*, *rewire flesh* (DC 22), *soothing protocol*, *summon allies* (2 imps 60%)

3/day—*instant virus* (DC 21), *synaptic pulse* (DC 21)

At will—*implant data*, *inject nanobots* (DC 20), *security seal*

TACTICS

During Combat Zanfora keeps her distance, using spells and electrical discharge attacks against the most dangerous foes. She casts *rewire flesh* and *inject nanobots* when confronted in melee combat unless reduced below 100 Hit Points, in which case she uses *synaptic pulse* to put some space between herself and her attackers.

Morale If reduced below 50 Hit Points, Zanfora possesses the immortality server and attacks through the disintegration beam trap (see page 34). If the trap

is disarmed, she hides in the computer and doesn't harass the PCs further, as she has no wish to die. If the server is destroyed, she retreats to Hell in a burst of smoke that smells like melting wires and microwaved synthetic meat.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Bluff +19, Computers +24, Sense Motive +19

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities mechanic tricks (distracting hack, ghost intrusion), possess computer, remote hack (40 ft.; DC 19)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Electrical Discharge (Ex) Zanfora can fire an electrical bolt as a ranged attack with a range increment of 40 feet.

Possess Computer (Ex) As a full action that provokes attacks of opportunity, Zanfora can convert her body and gear into digital code and merge with a computer



ZANFORA

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to which she has access. This ability fails if she's encumbered. While possessing a computer, Zanfora has total cover and is immune to any effect that requires the target to have a body. She can use her Computers skill on the possessed system. If the computer is destroyed, the possession ends unless Zanfora can use a reaction to flee to a connected system.

While possessing a computer, Zanfora can be found and rooted out as though she were a module of a tier-5 computer behind a fake shell and with the feedback and firewall countermeasures. When revealed, she can be forced out of a possessed computer with a successful DC 33 Computers check. A *dismissal* spell cast on the computer can force Zanfora back to Hell, but if the spell would send her to a random plane, she's instead forced to end the possession. When the possession ends, Zanfora appears in an unoccupied space as close to the computer as possible.

When she exits a computer, Zanfora can take a reaction to leave behind a tier-5 *software imp* (Armory 124).

Technomagical Susceptibility (Ex) Any effect that works on a construct works on a hacker devil. An effect that works on a construct and an outsider has the worst possible effect.

Trap: The immortality server is outfitted with a disintegration beam trap that targets intruders and their equipment. The trap targets one random PC in the room's lower level every round after the first; characters that move up to the reactor area are safe from the trap. A PC can attempt to disarm the trap using any computer interface in the room or by connecting a computer of their own to either power core reactor. If Zanfora possesses the mainframe, she chooses which target the trap attacks, and the DC to disable the trap increases by 2.

DISINTEGRATION BEAM TRAP

CR 10

XP 9,600

Type technological; **Perception** DC 35; **Disable** Computers DC 30

Trigger proximity (visual); **Init** +16; **Reset** automatic

Effect disintegration beam +23 ranged (6d12 A); if the trap's attack roll exceeds the target's EAC + 8, the disintegration beam also damages the target's armor, reducing the armor's EAC and KAC bonus by 2 (to a minimum of a +0 bonus) until the armor is repaired using Engineering. If the target isn't wearing armor, this effect impacts a random weapon or technological item held by the target instead, dealing 6d6 damage to the item as though from a sunder combat maneuver.

Computers: All the user interfaces throughout this room connect to the immortality server, a tier-5 computer with thousands of modules that securely store every moment of

Eline Reisor's life. A hybrid system built into the computer acts as a soul trap, pulling Eline's soul to the computer at the moment of her death. A PC can hack the computer with a successful DC 33 Computers check; if they successfully hacked the desktops in the hangar bay office, they're familiar with the code, so the character has a +2 bonus to this check. A feedback countermeasure guards the entire mainframe, activating if an attempt to hack the system fails by 5 or more, and a fake shell protects Eline's memories; identifying the fake shell requires a character to succeed at a DC 38 Computers check. PCs who fail to hack the mainframe can try again, but a second failure triggers a wipe countermeasure that erases the server's data.

If the PCs gain access to the secure data modules, they gain access to Eline Reisor's entire life, displayed across the room's many monitors. The images include elements from her childhood in an Absalom Station orphanage, her exploitation of natural resources sacred to an indigenous species to ascend the Company's corporate ladder, and her concealment of the *Oliphaunt's* theft from EJ Corp's Board of Directors—as well as her clandestine activities, such as collaborating with the Golden League and her construction of a duplicate server that copies everything in the Company's database.

If the crew hasn't already figured out that ruining Eline financially and professionally would impose a far more serious punishment than merely killing her (especially when her soul will live on in the immortality server), they learn that now by observing these memories. More importantly, the crew can use the information stored on this server to expose Eline's misdeeds to the Pact Worlds and, more specifically, EJ Corp's Board of Directors. If the PCs send some or all of the memories here to Pact Worlds contacts, a scandal of this scope will be picked up by journalists, posted on infospheres, and rapidly spread from planet to planet. Assembling the memories stored here into an information packet that illustrates Eline's many crimes and scandals takes 1 minute. The crew can use the information gained here to weaken Eline in area G, whether they merely observe the stored memories or broadcast them—any transmission takes 1d6 hours to reach its destination in the Pact Worlds, 3d6 days to reach Near Space, or 5d6 days to reach the Vast. Though releasing her memories will surely lead to the end of her professional career, the PCs might choose to hold onto this leverage for the time being (see "Concluding the Adventure" on page 37).

Finally, if the PCs successfully hack the immortality server, they can access the estate's other systems and lock down the launch bay that has the *Oliphaunt*. Doing so buys the crew 10 minutes, which they can use to rest and recover Stamina Points, and they learn the bay's location (if they didn't already know it).

A character can safely shut down the immortality server with a DC 25 Computers check; this check can be retried, but after two failures, the wipe countermeasure activates. Alternatively, the characters can sabotage the server by



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succeeding at a DC 30 Engineering check to overload the reactors; on a success, the reactors slowly build to an irreversible explosion, destroying the entire room with plenty of time for the crew to escape. On a failure, the uncontrolled explosion happens quickly; characters in the room take 5d10 fire damage as the computer explodes (Reflex DC 19 half).

Treasure: A character who succeeds at a DC 28 Mysticism or Perception check notices one of the decorations hanging over a terminal in the server room—a wire-frame sigil of Kalistrade—is a *mk 2 computer idol*.

G. LAUNCH BAY (CR 13)

The PCs can learn the location of the launch bay where the *Oliphaunt* waits for departure from the computers in the hangar office, from Visanmark and the other security guards, or from the immortality server. The private launch bay is a small hangar barely large enough for the *Oliphaunt*; a single entrance connects to the *Oliphaunt's* cargo airlock, which is unlocked. As long as the characters didn't take more than 1 10-minute rest (2 if they hacked the immortality server to buy time), they find the *Oliphaunt* here, prepped for takeoff. The ship remains unchanged from when the PCs last possessed it during their rendezvous with Tarika at the end of "The White Glove Affair," although any internal defenses they installed might now be used against them. Use the *Oliphaunt* map from the inside back cover of *Starfinder Adventure Path #35: Merchants of the Void* for this final encounter.

Creatures: Eline and a small detachment of private security oversee the *Oliphaunt's* flight preparations. EJ Corp's Board of Directors are coming to the Horse Eye Orbital Plate to inspect the ship, and she intends to fly it directly there in time for that inspection.

The PCs have almost certainly triggered the alarm by now, and Eline knows about their impending arrival. In the event that she remains unaware of them, they find her in the ship's bridge. Otherwise, she arranges her guards in the corridor adjacent to the lavatory and the forward airlock; they expect the PCs to come through the cargo bay door, so they take cover safely around the corner. Eline uses her infinite worlds ability to fill the corridor leading out of the cargo deck with environmental effects.

ELINE REISORA

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female human witchwarper (*Character Operations Manual* 60)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE

HP 168 RP 5

EAC 22; **KAC** 23

Fort +9; **Ref** +11; **Will** +15

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee ultrathin dueling sword +16 (3d6+10 S)

Ranged *guarded hailstorm-class zero pistol* +18 (2d6+10 C; critical staggered [DC 19])

Offensive Abilities alternate outcome 1/day, infinite worlds 3/day (4th-level spells), Kalistocrat conviction, paradigm shifts (flash teleport, resist elements)

Witchwarper Spells Known (CL 10th; ranged +18)

4th (3/day)—*confusion* (DC 22), *gravity well*^{COM} (DC 22)

3rd (6/day)—*baleful polymorph*^{AA2} (DC 21), *explosive blast* (DC 21), *irradiate* (DC 21), *slow* (DC 21)

2nd (at will)—*caustic conversion*, *force blast* (DC 20)

TACTICS

Before Combat Eline knows the PCs and their abilities.

If she realizes the crew is close, she activates her armor upgrades and uses both her spell gems, modifying *resistant armor* to best counter the PCs' preferred weapons.

During Combat Eline hurls her *mk 2 microbot grenade* down the corridor and uses infinite worlds to fill the corridor with difficult terrain and other environmental effects to slow any advance. She uses Kalistocrat conviction to heal her guards, *gravity well* to pull the PCs back towards the cargo bay, and *confusion* when she can catch more than one enemy in the area.

Morale As long as she believes she maintains her wealth, status, and immortality, Eline fights to the death. If she loses her Kalistocrat conviction ability and is reduced below 40 HP, she surrenders in shock over her loss.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Bluff +24, Computers +24, Diplomacy +24, Intimidate +24, Mysticism +19

Languages Aballonian, Common, Elven

Gear white carbon skin armor (*invisibility detector*^{AR}, white force field), *guarded hailstorm-class zero pistol* with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges), ultrathin dueling sword, *mk 2 microbot grenade*^{AR}, *red dwarf captive-star amulet*^{AR}, spell gems (*displacement*, *resistant armor*), credstick (5,000 credits)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Kalistocrat Conviction (Su) Eline believes wholeheartedly in the Prophecies of Kalistrade and draws strength from her status in one of the Pact Worlds' wealthiest corporations. She gains a +2 bonus to Will saves (already included in her statistics above). Each turn, she can spend 1 Resolve Point to either cast *mystic cure* (4th level) or use infinite worlds as if she had expended a 4th-level spell slot, without using a spell slot or expending charges of her infinite worlds ability. However, if the PCs have caused Eline to lose her wealth, status, and immortality—or make her believe they've done so, even if they haven't—she loses this ability and becomes shaken for 1d4 rounds. Convincing Eline that they've ruined her life requires the PCs to succeed at two DC 34 Bluff or Intimidate checks; the first leaves her skeptical,

but the second convinces her. Characters who've read Eline's private message thread with Visanmark (see the handout on page 29) or heard the testimony of her employees (area **E**) have a +2 bonus to these checks; if the PCs transmitted evidence of her crimes to the Pact Worlds or shut down her immortality server (area **F**), this bonus increases to +4.

ESTATE SECURITY (4)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

HP 125 each (page 32)

TACTICS

During Combat Presuming the PCs come through the door leading from the *Oliphaunt's* cargo hold, two guards open fire with boosted plasma forks while the other two hurl cooked grenades. In subsequent rounds, the guards protect Eline with guard's protection and attack enemies who threaten or harm her.

Morale Eline has chosen only the most loyal employees to guard her; they surrender if she's defeated but otherwise fight to the death.

Development: If the crew took too long to reach the launch bay and the *Oliphaunt* has already launched into space, the PCs might be able to catch Eline in the *Rust Bug* or another starship. Eline's personal guards were selected for their ability to serve as starship crew; among them, they include a pilot (Piloting +16), two engineers (Engineering +16), and a science officer (Computers +16). Any of the four guards can also serve as a gunner (gunnery +14).

Treasure: Among the navigation tools Eline brought onboard is Compass, an elite deckhand drone (*Armory* 101). Its control module is already installed into the *Oliphaunt's* computer, making it easy to commandeer from the helm.

BACK ON THE MARKET

Once the PCs overcome Eline, they find their ship has already been prepared for launch. A glance at the bridge console reveals Company starships on their way; the PCs can leave Eline to be judged by the Company or bring her along, perhaps handing her over to the Stewards or another reputable law enforcement agency. While she might be alive, Eline's career in EJ Corp is over, and without her money and her immortality server, her immortal soul is now scheduled for judgment before Pharasma just like everyone else's. If a PC took the Kalistocrat Childhood background, there could be a long-postponed reunion. While Eline has done many evil and inexcusable things, losing the destiny she meticulously planned for herself could prompt introspection and possibly a change in her behavior—especially if one of the PCs acts as a mentor or role model, showing her good behavior and guiding her through relapses. Eline Reisora deserves justice, but that justice can take many forms, and the PCs might decide she's

not irredeemable; characters who want to encourage good behavior in her could find some success.

However, there's one last surprise in store for the crew. When the PCs enter the bridge, the captain's chair is turned away from the door. It then rotates to face them.

Read or paraphrase the following.

A small emitter in the arm of the captain's chair projects a holographic image of Lord Sinjin, relaxing at the helm, his smooth elven features wrinkled into a condescending sneer. "I hope you remember me, because I certainly remember you, and I'm leaving this message in case Reisora steps in it again. You might give those corporate pencil pushers the runaround, but it won't matter. I've got what I need. My engineers had the *Oliphaunt* long enough to copy the null-space technology in your cargo hold, and I've installed it in my own ship, after making a few... improvements. Soon I'll have a whole fleet, and my smuggling empire will make the Company look like a startup.

"Of course, that still leaves some loose ends, by which I mean you. But I'm done trying to wrestle you all to the ground myself. Instead, I've taken out an insurance policy, and it was expensive. Six figures, on each of you. By the time you see this message, every bounty hunter from Absalom Station to the Vast will be strapping on their guns and dreaming of your beautiful faces. Sleep tight."

The message winks out and deletes itself. When the PCs connect to a Pact World infosphere, they can use their knowledge of the underworld to learn Sinjin has made good on his threats: the drow is offering 100,000 credits for the death of each PC, and the contracts include pictures of the characters, known associates (like Tarika and other friendly NPCs), locations where the crew has been spotted, and more. These lucrative and well-documented contracts will likely attract the most dangerous assassins and bounty hunters in known space.



There are many possible outcomes to "Crash and Burn." Eline might be dead forever, her immortality server destroyed; in this case, she'll be judged by Pharasma, and that judgment is unlikely to be kind. If the crew killed her but didn't destroy her server, her consciousness lives on inside virtual reality, from which she might plan a resurrection or simply work to maintain her paradise for all eternity.

Regardless of how the crew decides to deal with Eline, EJ Corp quickly learns of her failure—though this happens

sooner if the PCs transmitted her memories from the immortality server. By the time they fly the *Oliphaunt* away from her estate, the Pact Worlds infospheres are abuzz: with Eline's crimes brought to light, EJ Corp has headed the scandal off at the pass, disavowing her as a "disgruntled employee" that acted in violation of both EJ Corp policy and interstellar law. The Company announces that it's working to improve its internal culture, ousting several high-profile members of its leadership team over the coming weeks. EJ Corp's stock price steadily climbs amid the calculated, humble press tour.

Whether or not the crew releases Eline's memories, however, they're swiftly contacted by EJ Corp's arbitration team, inviting them to a meeting at their Absalom Station headquarters in Bluerise Tower. The PCs might refuse or ignore the missive outright; in this case, they remain burned and EJ Corp's lawyers hound them relentlessly, contracts in hand. When the PCs do eventually sit down to deal, the Company's lawyers affirm, behind cold smiles, EJ Corp's commitment to keeping the crew on its burn list. The Company also plans to pressing charges against the crew that start with grand theft starship and proceed from there, unless the PCs agree to their terms. The deal offered by the Company gives the crew 60,000 credits, 80 BP, and legal ownership of the *Oliphaunt*—a paltry sum for a company of EJ Corp's magnitude—and requires that they sign a non-disparagement clause. They can never speak a bad word about EJ Corp in public.

The crew might believe that they have leverage here, but they don't. EJ Corp assumed that it would lose its monopoly on null-space cargo holds eventually; the PCs might have accelerated the process, but the Company is ready to start production of the technology immediately, so its product will still come to market first. If the PCs held onto Eline's memories and threaten to release them here, the lawyers calmly point out a clause in the proposed contract that requests that the PCs do exactly that. The Company wants its press tour (described above).

If the PCs refuse, the lawyers make clear that EJ Corp will keep the crew on its burn list as long as possible, and that sooner or later, the PCs should run out of options and come crawling back—especially with such large bounties on their heads. In a calculated plea, one of the lawyers might remind the crew that Eline has done awful things, and that siding with EJ Corp means she'll get what she deserves. Sure, the Company will profit, but isn't it more important that justice be served?

Once the PCs accept the deal, EJ Corp lifts the burn and transfers the title for the *Oliphaunt*. The crew are now legitimate merchants and free traders once again—but they're still marked for death. Lord Sinjin, the Golden League, and an army of assassins and bounty hunters give chase in the next and final adventure of the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path: "The Gilded Cage."

PROFESSIONAL
COURTESY

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WE'VE BEEN
ROBBED!

PART 2:
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PART 3:
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OF
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SIDE JOBS

"The corporations on Absalom Station are ruthless, but they have nothing on the dragoncorps of Triaxus. Take some of the most powerful and intelligent creatures that you can think of, and then add stock options and litigation. What? Do I disapprove? No, I work for them! The opportunities and benefits are unbelievable. It gets even better if you're one of their troubleshooters, though—their pay is through the roof. I'm definitely not built for that; it can require too much actual shooting. Much safer to stay in the office and outsource the dirty work."

—Vyron Mennig, accountant

Side jobs are designed for when you need some extra encounters between the big plot beats of an adventure path (especially the Fly Free or Die Adventure Path). Maybe your players managed to skip some of the content presented, or maybe you ended up with a bigger group of players than the adventure assumes. Additionally, if your players are coming up short of their expected wealth by level, it may be worthwhile to use a side job as a way to dump some extra credits on them without having to shoehorn them into an existing encounter. If you aren't running Fly Free or Die, you can use side jobs for a quick palate cleanser between campaigns or when you're looking for a session's worth of fun and excitement. Whatever the reason, side jobs can be used easily by any group.

Remember that if you run your players through all of an adventure path's encounters, as well as side jobs (and your players are a typically sized group who managed to obtain the average amount of credits and recovered gear), the PCs will end up with more experience and gear than the rest of the adventure path expects. This can be a good option if your players seem to be having a lot of trouble—side jobs don't present a great deal of extra material so they likely have a negligible impact on the PCs' overall effectiveness—but if the adventure is already easy for your players, you may not want to give them another advantage going into the next set of encounters.

ARCHONOMIX

Archonomix is a dragon-corp based on Triaxus that specializes in researching and designing hybrid terraforming technology, which it supplies to various settlement efforts on inhospitable worlds. Many of the major colonization efforts led by Pact Worlds business concerns use Archonomix's technologies, and it has also begun taking contracts for Veskarium interests. Though Archonomix isn't a name known to the average galactic citizen, the company is still quite profitable and remains well-respected to those in the know.

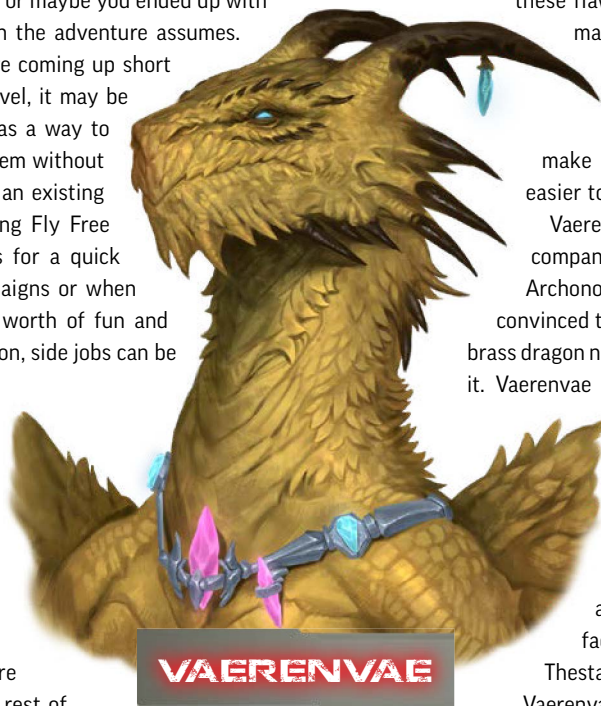
The current CEO of Archonomix is **Vaerenvae** (LG female mature adult gold dragon^{AA2}), who gained her position more than a century ago through smart business practices and old-fashioned cunning. Born on Triaxus a few decades after the end of the Gap, Vaerenvae was encouraged by her parents to travel among dragonkin and ryphorians at a young age. She spent several decades on various starship crews, venturing throughout the galaxy and selling more

than a few pieces of Archonomix equipment along the way. In the process, she learned that the corporation was cutting corners on important safety features, and started a campaign to force Archonomix to recognize and fix these flaws. She also started a small manufacturing firm (using a loan from her parents' hoard) to supply Archonomix with plastic casings to make their products safer and easier to use and transport.

Vaerenvae ensured that her company, Verve Plastics, was vital to Archonomix's continued growth and convinced their previous CEO, a very old brass dragon named Thestauresk, to acquire it. Vaerenvae parlayed the buyout into a role as vice-president at Archonomix and soon earned her way into her predecessor's trusted inner circle, all the while taking pains to establish herself as a friendly, knowledgeable face around the office. When Thestauresk was ready to retire, Vaerenvae was the obvious choice to replace him, and no one in the company had any objections.

The gold dragon has spent much of the previous century turning Archonomix into an industry leader that makes premium products with unmatched safety standards. She's also a staunch proponent of her workers' rights, and she has called out several dragon-corp executives for the poor treatment of their employees. This has made her a few enemies among her peers but has also resulted in positive changes in other Triaxian companies' policies, which has garnered her substantial respect among many throughout the Pact Worlds.

Lately, there have been rumblings within Triaxus's business world that an up-and-coming executive named **Nalathraz** (NE male young adult blue dragon) wants to expand his investment portfolio with a very hostile takeover of Archonomix. The blue dragon sees his older rival's concern for the well-being of her employees as a weakness, loudly declaiming how much she "coddles her minions" on various conservative Triaxian media channels. Vaerenvae has taken notice of her would-be rival, and while she has the advantage of experience, she hasn't gotten this far in life by ignoring or underestimating possible foes. Though some of her more-traditional draconic colleagues have recommended she simply tear out Nalathraz's throat, Vaerenvae considers such violence uncouth. However, to protect her assets, Vaerenvae has reached out to some freelancers for an especially important job.



VAERENVAE

**PROFESSIONAL
COURTESY**

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WE'VE BEEN
ROBBED!**

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AMONG
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SIDE JOBS

**CORPORATIONS
OF THE
GALAXY**

**A MEASURE
OF
SOLIDARITY**

**ALIEN
ARCHIVES**

**CODEX OF
WORLDS**

ADVENTURES IN EGG-SITTING

This side job is suitable for 9th-level characters.

BACKGROUND

Vaerenvae recently laid a clutch of eggs but must leave them behind to attend a vital business conference in Triaxus's Allied Territories. Her mate is on an unrelated mission in the Vast, and with the threat of Nalathraz looming, she's unsure whether she can trust Archonomix's internal security. A mutual acquaintance suggests the PCs as reliable freelancers, usually available to take on even the oddest of jobs.

THE JOB OFFER

At some point when the PCs have returned to the Pact Worlds (perhaps to resupply at Absalom Station), they receive a message from Vaerenvae's office, offering them a lucrative opportunity on Triaxus. The dragon's secretary, the blonde-furred **Meb** (LG female ysoki) relays the details: 14,000 credits for four days of security work within Archonomix headquarters, with daily meals and lodging also provided. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Culture or Engineering check (or appropriate Profession check) knows the facts about Archonomix and its dragon CEO presented on page 39.

If the PCs take the job, Vaerenvae herself explains the full details of the assignment. The PCs are to watch over her clutch of eggs in her penthouse office while she's away. Archonomix's regular security forces will keep watch over the rest of the building, as normal, and the PCs can ask Meb for anything they need (within reason). Vaerenvae explains that she isn't expecting any real issues but notes that her company is in a nebulous dispute with a rival corporation that has been known to employ underhanded tactics in the past. If asked for specifics, the CEO says that the world of dragon-corps can be a dangerous one, and she wants to cover her bases.

ARCHONOMIX PENTHOUSE

Archonomix HQ is located in the central Drakelands and has its own small spaceport. When the PCs arrive, they're escorted into the building, given temporary ID badges, and directed to the elevator, which takes them to the top floor of the 100-story building.

1. ENTRYWAY

The elevator opens onto a large but comfortable-looking waiting area. An imposing mahogany desk sits before a holographic Archonomix logo. There are several couches, sized for all manner of species, and a handful of planters containing rare orchids. Meb sits behind the desk at her workstation, a tier 4 computer that has access to Vaerenvae's schedule and other information important to the secretary.

2. OFFICE

Vaerenvae's office features a dragon-sized desk and a handful of cushioned chairs for humanoid guests. A pair of tall, wide glass doors leads out onto a balcony, which has a breathtaking view. Several abstract paintings hang on the walls. Vaerenvae's tier 5 computer is scaled for her size and has access to all of Archonomix's financials and other systems.

3. EGG ROOM

Vaerenvae's unhatched progeny are kept at a constant temperature, 140 degrees F, in the egg room. In the center of the room is a substantial heating grate, on top of which are three dragon eggs, each in a separate carrier keeping them a foot above the floor. Each egg is around 4 feet tall, 2 feet wide, and quite heavy (weighing 6 bulk). Hidden speakers play various draconic audio-plays designed to calm the unborn wyrmlings and teach them important lessons before they hatch.

4. WASHROOM

This washroom is designed specifically for very large creatures to use in comfort. All the facilities are voice-controlled and can be (somewhat uncomfortably) used by smaller humanoids.

THE THREE NIGHTS

After the PCs meet Vaerenvae and Meb and finalize the details for their assignment, the dragon asks them to return the following evening after she leaves for her conference. The assignment is divided into three evenings, as Archonomix's security is sufficient for the CEO's peace of mind during the day. The PCs are asked to "fill in the gaps" during the nights. Vaerenvae requests that the characters stay out of the egg room as much as possible to avoid disturbing her young. Meb stays at her desk until 10 P.M. each night (though she leaves a little early on the second night; see **Event 1** below).

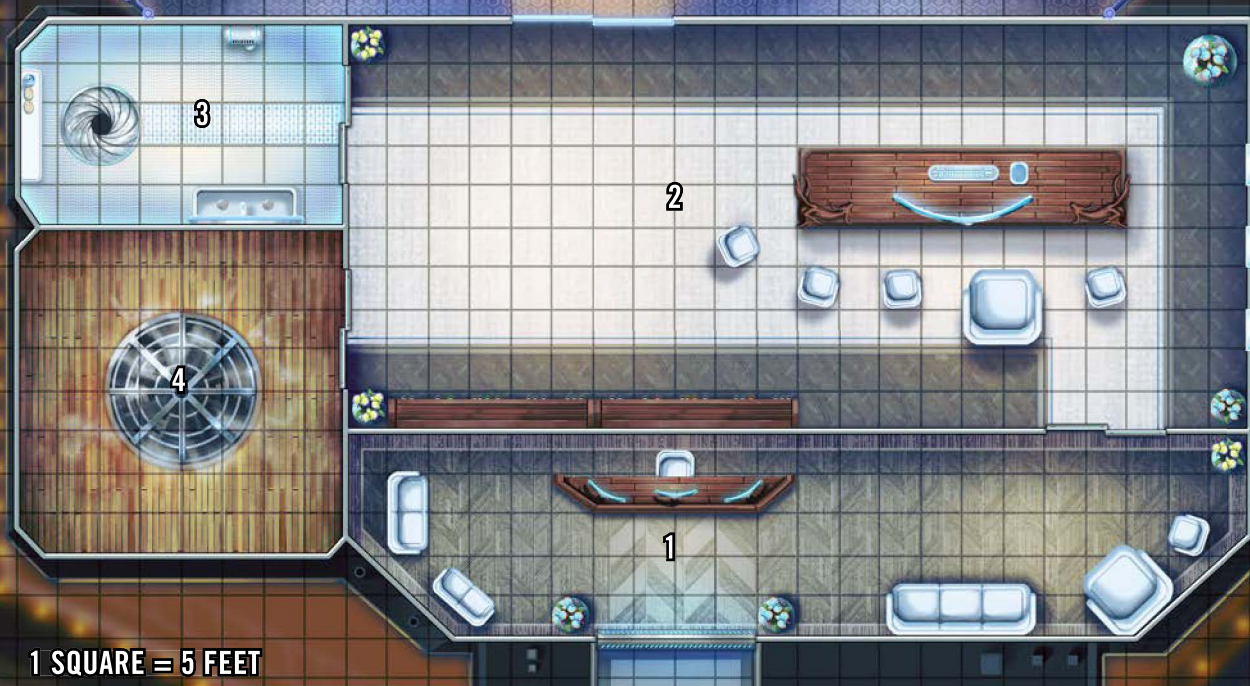
The first night is uneventful. As the chilly Triaxus weather grows slightly warmer, the sound of hail on the balcony turns to the patter of rain.

EVENT 1: NIGHT TWO (CR 10)

At the beginning of the second night, Meb mentions that she'll be leaving early for a dinner date with her new boyfriend. Just before 8 P.M., her beau—a male ysoki named Geng—arrives to pick up the secretary. She's surprised to see him exit the elevator with a bouquet of flowers in a vase; he explains that "he couldn't wait to see her again." They chat for a few minutes, and Geng convinces her to leave the flowers, saying that "they brighten up the place." They both leave shortly after.

One hour later, have each PC attempt a DC 28 Perception check. Those who succeed hear a distinctly metallic clunk of

ARCHONOMIX PENTHOUSE



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something landing on the balcony outside Vaerenvae's office; if any result exceeds the DC by 5 or more, the PC also notices a small, flashing red light inside the vase on Meb's desk. Peering onto the balcony reveals a damaya lashunta dressed in all black descending from the building's roof. The balcony is slippery from ice and precipitation, increasing the DC of any Athletics checks to balance or tumble by 5.

Creature: Lensir is a mercenary hired to distract the PCs while the device Geng left in the vase remotely hacks Meb's computer; both are freelance agents hired by Nalathraz. Lensir begins the fight by shooting through the glass window at a random PC. Though he's only supposed to be a diversion, Lensir is bloodthirsty and attacks the PCs with lethal force. During the battle, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Sense Motive check notices Lensir occasionally glancing toward the door to the entryway; a PC who moves into the entryway can attempt a DC 28 Perception check to spot the flashing light.

A PC can remove the tiny device from the vase with a move action to destroy it (hardness 5, Hit Points 15) or shut it down (successful DC 25 Computers or Engineering). If the device goes unnoticed and unimpeded for 5 rounds after Lensir begins his attack, it downloads top-secret information from Meb's computer and transmits it wirelessly to a secret location.

If Lensir is reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points, he attempts to flee to the roof, where he has a parachute waiting. If captured and interrogated, Lensir refuses to give up his employer (unless powerful divination magic is used), though he does hint that he's "but a cog in the machine."

LENSIR

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male mercenary commando (*Starfinder Pact Worlds* 175)

HP 150

EVENT 2: NIGHT THREE (CR 10)

The skies clear up on the third evening. If the PCs discovered the device and tell Meb, she's quite upset that Geng used her and vows to avoid the dating scene for a while.

Creatures: Just before dawn, Tarke and Zendegos, a pair of dragonkin, fly to the balcony, guns blazing. Their plan is simple: kill anyone in their way and steal the eggs for Nalathraz. Zendegos has a special temperature-controlled *mk 2 null-space chamber* to keep the eggs safe. If either of the pair is reduced to fewer than 15 Hit Points, they surrender, with the other one following suit on their next turn. If either of the pair is killed, the other screams for revenge and fights to the death. The two carry nothing to tie them to Nalathraz.

TARKE AND ZENDEGOS

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Male and female dragonkin (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 40)

HP 142 each; RP 4 each

GETTING PAID

As long as no one has stolen or harmed the eggs by the time Vaerenvae returns, the dragon CEO pays the PCs the contracted amount. If the PCs stopped the hacking attempt, she includes a standard dragon gland (fire) as a reward.

EXPLOSIVE ESPIONAGE

This side job is suitable for 10th-level characters.

BACKGROUND

Having failed in his earlier attempt to steal Vaerenvae's eggs, Nalathraz changes tactics and attempts to weaken Archonomix through subtler means. He has sent an agent to infiltrate the biosphere in which Archonomix tests its terraforming equipment. Located on the coast of Ignomus Bay, this huge, transparent aluminum dome uses hybrid technology to simulate all manner of terrain and weather conditions. This can sometimes be dangerous, especially when untested equipment fails, so the workers there are part of a union that tries to guarantee their safety. Though inherently at odds, Archonomix and the union have maintained an amicable relationship for years.

Nalathraz's agent, an emotivore named Marishka de Wit, managed to secure a job in the biosphere a few months ago. Since then, she has been subtly sabotaging and manipulating her coworkers, poisoning their opinions against Archonomix and, about a week ago, initiating a strike. Archonomix's negotiators reached out to union representatives, but they were just as baffled. Marishka hasn't presented any terms or demands and is simply using incendiary rhetoric to sway her colleagues. Vaerenvae, who wants her employees heard and to ensure safe working conditions for them, has investigated the situation. The union leadership know her commitment and have disavowed the movement as a wildcat strike. They've also reported rumors they've heard that Marishka might be planning something sinister at the facility and using the strike as a cover, so the gold dragon turns to the PCs once again.

THE JOB OFFER

If the PCs were successful in the previous side job, Vaerenvae is motivated to contact them wherever they are and request their services once more, though she asks that they return to Triaxus at all speed. She is worried that violence might erupt that could hurt both her employees and, ultimately, Archonomix's bottom line. She promises the PCs 10,000 credits if they look into the situation and peacefully stop any hostilities.

If the PCs were less than successful in keeping Vaerenvae's eggs safe (and survived their encounter with the two dragonkin kidnapers), the draconic CEO has recovered her children using different means and doesn't hold a grudge against the PCs. She believes in second chances, and sends them this particular job offer, though the pay is only 8,500 credits. Despite this, she increases the offered compensation as noted in **Event 2**.

ARCHONOMIX BIOSPHERE

The Archonomix biosphere is practically a city unto itself. A mile in diameter, it's internally divided into seven sections, six of which can be transformed into a variety of biomes. The seventh is a central monitoring hub and habitation module for employees to use when they aren't staying in the other areas testing long-term terraforming equipment. The PCs can land their starship outside the dome nearby or at the Archonomix headquarters and take a terrestrial vehicle to the biosphere.

Several dozen scientists, engineers, and other workers are gathered outside the biosphere's entrance. Some are holding holographic signs that demand better safety measures, and the mood is a little tense. A prefab trailer stands nearby, marked with the Archonomix logo. This is where Marishka has been holding loud arguments with union leaders, attempting to sway them.

Marishka stands on a platform in the middle of the crowd in her guise as a winterborn ryphorian climate scientist. She gives an impassioned speech about how Archonomix doesn't care about its employees' safety. Most of the other workers present are nodding their heads in agreement, but none of them look ready to engage in physical conflict. The emotivore knows what is about to happen (see **Event 1**) but was hoping to get the crowd to turn to violence on her own.

The PCs have about an hour to speak with the strikers before **Event 1** occurs. With a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check, they can learn that Marishka is a fairly recent employee but has been the driving force behind the strike. The emotivore refuses to speak to the PCs beyond claiming (truthfully) that she was hired by Vaerenvae and telling them to take it up with her.

EVENT 1: THE CONFRONTATION (CR 11)

Eventually, a vehicle also bearing the Archonomix logo arrives, and four ryphorian guards step out. One of them loudly claims that "Vaerenvae has had enough of your laziness" and demands the strikers disperse and get back to work. The others heft their weapons threateningly.

Creatures: These operatives were hired by Nalathraz to stir up trouble, and a PC who succeeds at a DC 32 Culture or Perception check can see that their uniforms don't match the regular Archonomix security uniforms the PCs have seen before. If the PCs point this out, the crowd looks confused but backs away from the impostor strike-breakers.

The PCs can try to talk down these "security officers," but after a few moments, Marishka throws a rock at one of them and screams "We won't be broken!" The strike-breakers then attack whomever is closest (which is likely the PCs). At the

end of the first round of combat, the strikers scatter, leaving the PCs to face the guards alone. However, Marishka stays and tries to hinder the PCs with her spells as best she can until she is found out, after which she reveals her true form and attacks. The guards flee when reduced to fewer than 10 Hit Points, but Marishka fights to the death.

RYPHORIAN GUARDS (4) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Ryphorian Skyfire pilot (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 96)

HP 63 each; **RP** 4 each

MARISHKA DE WIT CR 9

XP 6,400

Female emotivore (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 50)

HP 120

EVENT 2: THE BOMB (CR 12)

With her last ounce of strength, Marishka laughs at the PCs and presses a button on her comm unit. Seconds later, a klaxon starts blaring, followed by an automated message: "Warning! Malfunction detected! Please evacuate immediately!" A worker can tell the PCs that one of the systems within the biosphere must be malfunctioning, even though they're tested regularly. Vaerenvae immediately receives notice of this alert and contacts the PCs on their comm units, asking them to stop the biosphere from being destroyed. She increases their offered pay to 25,000 credits for putting themselves at risk in this way.

The PCs can discover what's happening by hacking Marishka's comm unit with a successful DC 27 Computers check, discovering that she placed (and has now activated) a bomb in the dome's central hub. Alternatively, they can simply rush into the biosphere and succeed at a DC 30 Engineering check to trace the alert to the monitoring stations in the central hub.

Trap: Upon entering the central hub, the PCs have 1 minute (10 rounds) to find and defuse the bomb Marishka set before it goes off. The damage to the structure would take months to repair, setting back much of Archonomix's research and production.

FIRE BOMB CR 12

XP 19,200

Type technological; **Perception** DC 38; **Disable** Engineering DC 33 (defuse explosive)

Trigger special; **Reset** none



NALATHRAZ

Effect explosion (10d12 F); Reflex DC 21 half; multiple targets (all targets within central hub)

EVENT 3: THE SHOWDOWN (CR 11)

Nalathraz has been monitoring the situation at the biosphere from a perch a few miles away by tapping into nearby security camera feeds. When he learns of Marishka de Wit's defeat, he decides to take matters into his own claws.

Creature: Using *dimension door*, Nalathraz appears above the area outside the biosphere a few rounds after the PCs emerge, whether or not they were successful at defusing the bomb. (If your PCs are having a rough time, you might want

to give them an opportunity for a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points). Read or paraphrase the following as Nalathraz descends.

A blue dragon swoops down from high above. In a high-pitched bellow, he screams, "Who do you think you are, interfering in the plans of dragons? Such impudence! Now I must do what my feeble-minded flunkies could not and crush you like the bugs you are!"

Nalathraz starts the fight by using his breath weapon to catch as many of the PCs as possible. He continues his assault with his weapons and spells, fighting to the death.

NALATHRAZ CR 11

XP 12,800

Male young adult blue dragon (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 38)

HP 183

GETTING PAID

Vaerenvae arrives on the scene shortly after Nalathraz has been defeated. She thanks the PCs profusely for their help and explains the blue dragon's vendetta against her. She pays the PCs the promised 25,000 credits and allows them to salvage any equipment they want from Nalathraz and his minions. She also hints that Nalathraz's other assets are likely up for grabs and that Archonomix will likely attempt to acquire them—a job that might require the PCs' skills once more. It's clear that being on Vaerenvae's good side is a lucrative relationship.

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SIDE JOBS

CORPORATIONS OF THE GALAXY

A MEASURE OF SOLIDARITY

ALIEN ARCHIVES

CODEX OF WORLDS



CORPORATIONS OF THE GALAXY

"This is the welding bay where the Drift engines for the Wyrms get put together. It's not as glamorous as zipping from star to star, but it's also a fair bit safer. The geniuses in R&D design the engine, acquisitions gets us the supplies from wherever, and my crew puts it all together. Then the pilots get to test it out, the lunatics. There's a lot of ways to get hurt trying to make the perfect ship; I figure we have the good one. Getting welding scars on my arms is a lot better than having my atoms stretched across the Drift."

—Rojnar Symeral, construction supervisor at
Ringworks Industries

Few constants exist among sentient life throughout the galaxy, and one that will likely remain true for some time is that someone will find a way to sell whatever commodity a person or society lacks. This simple fact drives commerce from the center of the Pact Worlds into the Vast, and corporations handle the complex logistics required to provide services over such enormous distances. Each with their own purposes and motives, these massive groupings of workers, bureaucrats, lawyers, financial analysts, and support staff account for the majority of employed citizens in the galaxy. Corporations often hold as much power as small governments, and sometimes even more, depending on local culture and law. However, this massive amount of influence can make them lumbering beasts, unable to react as quickly to certain problems as smaller organizations.

Player characters will likely interact with many of these corporations, even just to purchase or use equipment that they manufacture. Adventuring life doesn't fit well with corporate duties, but these companies have deep pockets and serious troubles for which they're willing to enlist freelance help. Characters who provide their services to these corporations aren't only paid well (usually), but might also garner favors with powerful and influential individuals for later use. Of course, this dynamic can work the other way, too, where interfering in a company's business might earn the party a star system's worth of trouble.

ABADARCORP

So prolific that its name is almost synonymous with the idea of commerce, AbadarCorp provides essential and non-essential goods and services throughout the Pact Worlds and beyond. As both a corporate and religious organization, AbadarCorp has innumerable warehouses, manufacturing plants, administrative offices, and banks that also serve as churches to the Master of the First Vault. Provided services range from construction and settlement assistance to everyday items, such as datapads. Even for those rare products AbadarCorp doesn't manufacture, it likely acts as a distributor—with the exception of illegal goods, of course.

CEO and Executive Archdirector **Gevrant Iseki-Okaibo** (LN male human mystic) has maintained stewardship over AbadarCorp for more than two decades. He works in conjunction with the various archdirectors who manage the planetary branches of the corporation and also presides over religious duties as the head of Abadar's faith throughout the Pact Worlds. He rarely strays from his offices at the top of the Golden Vault—the corporation's headquarters on Absalom Station—from which it's said he can see every transaction that occurs on the station and beyond.

With a focus on affordability and high supply, AbadarCorp rarely makes top-of-the-line products. While not flimsy or cheaply made, their goods typically won't match their competitors in durability and effectiveness. The church of

Abadar accepts these limitations, instead marketing their products as the ideal choice for the consumer on a budget. With a trading outpost on every planet, customers of AbadarCorp can be assured that they'll find what they need to suit their purposes well enough, and at a price to justify the purchase.

Despite the intimidating breadth and influence that AbadarCorp possesses, the corporation carefully avoids abusing its resources. The bankers and priests of AbadarCorp understand that concentrated wealth creates a choke hold on growth and trade. The church of Abadar sponsors education in finance at no cost, often inspiring new competitors with the lessons they dispense. Loans to businesses that provide the means for lower-class citizens to rise from poverty carry no interest, as AbadarCorp believes that created prosperity for all outweighs any credits that could be made through usurious lending practices.



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ARIOCH-OYADAE

A privatized tech conglomerate within the Azlanti Star Empire, Arioch-Oyadae produces a good portion of the empire's ships through its subsidiary, Vanguard Craftworks. Though technically not run by the government, the company still works in close concert with the Aeon Throne, and few policies are implemented within the corporation without at least the passing knowledge of the Star Imperators. The vessels produced by Vanguard Craftworks are considered ideal for colonization and for overseeing any planets that the Star Empire subjugates.

The company takes its name from its founders, Tyrifor Arioch and Secodine Oyadae, both distant scions of Azlanti noble houses. Pre-Gap records show that Arioch served as the public face and business mogul of the conglomerate, while Oyadae managed the research and development side. While the company's official history states the two grew up together and were the best of friends, they constantly jockeyed against one another for complete control of the company, each attempting to curry more favor with the Aeon Throne. This rivalry led to an accident at a terraforming project when Arioch attempted to personally sabotage one of Oyadae's prototypes—but was caught in the act by his cousin. The resulting explosion killed Arioch and Oyadae, along with hundreds of non-Azlanti workers. Though the corporation nearly collapsed as a result, several vice presidents stepped up to take control. This incident is publicly treated as an unfortunate calamity in the company's past. The company observes a brief 10 minutes of silence and work-stoppage on the anniversary of the founders' deaths, though little is ever spoken of the other fatalities.

Arioch-Oyadae operates mainly out of Preval in the Disaj system and enjoys nearly boundless access to the technomagical hotbed of the Azlanti Star Empire. The corporation has cornered the market in the Star Empire for colonization equipment and services, including the deployment of its own corporate security to clear undesirable elements from occupied planets. These suppression forces act outside the Aeon Guard and serve as an outlet for those too brutal or unruly to be accepted within the official military. Resistors on a planet claimed by the Star Empire have almost equal chances to meet with Arioch-Oyadae forces as the Aeon Guard. In cases of particularly effective resistance, corporate security has taken prisoners for experimentation and forced indoctrination into its ranks, though prisoners who prove capable enough are sold to the Star Empire to serve in the Alien Cohort.

ASPIS CONSORTIUM

Business and criminality often go hand in hand. Such is the case with the Aspis Consortium, a collective corporation of criminals that operates as a self-governing political entity with roots in the Pact Worlds. Ostensibly a legitimate endeavor that seeks out uncharted worlds and assesses the resources

found on each one, the Consortium engages in everything from piracy to the enslavement and sale of entire planets, which isn't to say that the corporation doesn't conduct legal business. However, its public activities are designed to mask its more heinous ventures.

The corporation received its unprecedented autonomy after the Swarm attacked the Pact Worlds and the Veskarium. Calling on its many contacts in both systems, the Aspis Consortium brokered an end to the Silent War between the two and helped form the alliance that eventually repelled the insectile invaders. The company then bargained with the Pact Worlds' government for concessions that allow it to operate in the manner it does today.

A group of 10 majority shareholders, collectively known as "the Patrons," oversees the Aspis Consortium. Long ago, the company kept the Patrons' identities a closely guarded secret, but in modern times, it has become increasingly difficult to hide the existence of such wealth in a person's portfolio. As a result, any profits that stem from the Consortium's illegal activities get funneled through a wide array of shell corporations and dummy funds; tracing such a trail back to one of the Patrons presents a task that would baffle even the most accomplished forensic accountants. When the Patrons need to discuss criminal ventures, they do so through encrypted holo-conferences, and even then, they speak in coded phrases and couched language. To date, no one has cracked one of these transmissions. The composition of this council shifts every few years, as Patrons retire with the credits they've made or are forcibly removed in hostile takeovers. It's possible to rise in the Consortium's ranks to become a Patron, but only through the most ruthless and cutthroat of business dealings.

The existence of the Aspis Consortium proves no small thorn in the side of law enforcement, which must struggle against the organization's deft use of fronts and technicalities to avoid prosecution. The Consortium favors cutting ties with members implicated in major offenses, claiming they didn't support any illegal actions and revoking membership once they were aware of such wrongdoings. Investigators can spot this usually obvious lie, but rarely do they produce enough evidence to earn the company more than a legal slap on the wrist. The Consortium knows the difference between what one knows and what one can prove and wields the legal distinction with expert skill. Officers of the law who push the issue too far end up in protracted civil court battles in which the Consortium often wins settlements of slander and corporate harassment cases.

FORGEWORKS INNOVATIONS

The militaristic Veskarium is known for its warrior culture and expansionist policies, but they still have substantial need for civilian-focused products. With that in mind, a portion of the Conqueror's Forge is relegated to Forgeworks Innovations,

which develops technology for everyday use. Many of these breakthroughs later get adapted for military purposes. The corporation receives significant funding from the Council of Despots, which views it as both an asset to the growth of the Veskarium and an example to other governments that the empire has focuses beyond hostility.

Major General **Olekzarda Kyrimadov** (LN female vesk soldier) is the officer in charge of Forgeworks Innovations. She holds this post with honor, but she hopes it will lead to something more prestigious on the Veskarium's front lines. She mainly allows the scientists to go about their work and procures the budgets they request without a great deal of inquiry. High Despot Kominar frequently seeks her out for security recommendations, and Kyrimadov can be credited with the various safety protocols and emergency responses that have been implemented on the station. Acknowledging the expertise of her staff has led to breakthroughs that might otherwise have been delayed by vesk pride, but it has also led her to clash with her superiors who want her to take a more active role in her department.

Since the end of the Swarm War and the unprecedented era of peace that the Veskarium has experienced, Forgeworks Innovations has become even more central to the Veskarium economy. Threats throughout Near Space persist, but wartime technology has proven a less stable venture than items for civilian use. With the Conqueror's Forge opening its decks for free trade with the Pact Worlds and other planets, the Veskarium has sold many technological breakthroughs to keep its empire funded. Like the peace itself, these investments don't always sit well with more traditional vesk who consider providing technology to those unconquered by the Veskarium as disgraceful.

HOUSE ZEIZERER

While most corporations put forward a pleasant demeanor to secure deals and win over allies, the esteemed drow House Zeizerer, owner and operator of the influential Zeizerer Munitions, maintains no such facade. With total dominion of the city of Nightarch on Apostae, House Zeizerer is the premier manufacturer of weapons within the Pact Worlds, no small accomplishment given its species' reputation for armaments. Known for extended ammo magazines and longer-lasting batteries, Zeizerer Munitions products are fired from more than half the weapons in the system.

The controlling business interests lie in the hands of multiple house nobles, with **Viomourn Zeizerer** (CE female drow vanguard^{COM}) overseeing the production and development sites as well as managing relations with orcs and other species that serve as the company's enslaved workforce. Viomourn takes a different tack than the usual brutality of Apostae. The overseer has instituted learning and sponsorship programs for orcs who show a natural inclination to science and manufacturing rather than designating them to that role through social conditioning. This approach has

led to some claims of a sedition plot by Viomourn, but she has managed to placate her superiors by displaying increased productivity with these policies.

House Zeizerer's focus as an ammunition supplier provides it with a unique opportunity. While weapons are a finite market, consumable ammo always stays in demand, and Zeizerer is keen to acquire repeat customers. With the majority of drow weaponry being distastefully cruel and destructive, the munitions supplier has so far avoided the production of anything more gruesome than the average instrument of death. As a result, the company has achieved a position as the supposedly softer face of Apostae, a notion that it neither embraces nor disputes.

House Arabani, Zeizerer's closest competitor among the drow houses, works almost as hard to spurn its rivals as it does to increase its profits. The Karkaken Testing Grounds



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that Arabani operates bypasses Nightarch's control as much as possible, including recent construction of a starport on a scale similar to that of the city. Zeizerer coolly ignores any jabs in public, content to stockpile massive amounts of weapons within the hidden Zeizerer Repository. As tensions rise between the two groups, the other drow houses remain content to watch and plan for what opportunities might arise in the inevitable clash.

RINGWORKS INDUSTRIES

A corporation with origins stretching to before the Gap, the Verces-based ship designer has been in business for longer than any other company in the Pact Worlds (with the debatable exception of AbadarCorp). The aethershops manufactured by Ringworks and launched from the Skydock space platform were among the first interplanetary vessels within the system, and the company has grown and diversified its product line. Ringworks pivoted from the opulent models of the past and now focuses on creating practical vessels accessible to all.

The crafts made by Ringworks Industries have become synonymous with space travel in the Pact Worlds. The company's designs have the durability to survive a vacuum merged with the aerodynamic lines of atmospheric aircraft, and many of their frames stay in service for decades, if not centuries. Ringworks designers implement only the smallest of aesthetic changes to their ship lines over the years, making the company's products easily recognizable in the market. To add to their popularity and ubiquity, Ringworks ships sell well in used markets.

This isn't to say that Ringworks doesn't offer interesting and exciting vessels. They recently released the Orienteer line that has grown in popularity among daredevils who appreciate the craft's speed and maneuverability as well as adventuring groups who prioritize defenses over luxury living space. The profitability of this model has yet to be proven, but competing companies such as Sanjaval Spaceflight Systems are already drafting similar prototypes for market.

Rumors circulate that Ringworks is illegally collaborating with manufacturers outside the Pact Worlds on top-secret research and development, linking the company to everyone from Forgeworks Innovations of the Veskarium to the Azlanti Star Empire. Ringworks management fiercely denies this claim. The controversy has led to public discussion about the transparency of corporate law in the Pact Worlds, and a rising number of litigators have called for greater public access to technological patents.

SOPETH CORPORATION

A massive think tank of bonded barathus, Sopeth is both a single entity and a corporation. This fused creature comprised

of thousands of Bretheda's most intelligent barathu bioengineers resides in the inhospitable equatorial zone on their home world. In comparison to most barathus, who accept humanoids, Sopeth is harshly xenophobic, viewing other species as inferior for their inability to cooperate fluidly. Largely automated, Sopeth Corporation requires manual labor only for limited testing. The entity makes the majority of its profits by inventing conceptual technology, which it then sells to intermediaries for production and distribution. Sopeth's breakthroughs have led to countless advances in the medical and biochemistry fields, including some radical patents on artificial organ growth.

Only the most loyal barathu employees gain the privilege to merge with and split from Sopeth, often to attend conferences on other worlds or oversee facilities where the macroentity couldn't physically fit. Most believe that Sopeth maintains its collective intelligence and decision-making capabilities through a core of several hundred barathus who have never left since the corporation's founding. Distrustful of any non-barathus, Sopeth doesn't make the typical accommodations that other sites on Bretheda do for humanoids at its base location. In fact, uninvited guests are sometimes captured and used for torturous experimentation. Despite its disdain for humanoid species, Sopeth seems fascinated by their fixed forms and consciousness, leading the entity to dissect and psychically disassemble those unfortunate enough to fall into its clutches. In its defense, Sopeth cites a loophole in Brethedan law that allows it to treat trespassers as company property.

These unethical activities have led the barathu government of Confluence to censure Sopeth economically. However, such weak measures have done little to slow Sopeth's practices, and Confluence is loath to escalate the situation, fearing it might lead to a physical confrontation. Rumors hold that Sopeth is working on a method to force the barathu merging process, and once conjoined with Sopeth, the unfortunate victims permanently lose their individuality. This concept presents a horrifying anathema to barathu culture, and Confluence is currently seeking freelancers who can find solid evidence of other wrongdoing by Sopeth to justify harsher approaches. No one has taken Confluence up on this offer, likely for fear of becoming Sopeth's next unwilling test subjects.

THE TETRAD

Viewed with a mix of curiosity and eagerness, the presence of witchwyrd representing the Tetrad means interesting and unpredictable trades. The Tetrad functions more as a trade union than a corporation, always on the lookout for unusual bargains, always on the lookout for unusual bargains. While the Tetrad seems to have a considerable amount of credits at its disposal, the source of this wealth remains a mystery. When asked, the witchwyrd merchants simply shrug and imply that other beings simply lack their skills at commerce.

By capitalizing on most witchwyrd's fondness for spicy foods, canny traders can often use new flavoring ingredients to get a better deal with the Tetrad. Whether witchwyrd's notice this tactic or simply don't care is unknown.

The Tetrad is based on the witchwyrd's home planet of Cyrune, though little else is known about the company. The Tetrad Caravels that the merchants use for transportation across the Pact Worlds are outfitted with types of technology not seen elsewhere, and no price has ever proven high enough for the witchwyrd's to share these secrets with others. Any enterprising individuals who have attempted to infiltrate or even analyze a Caravel usually go missing, only to appear weeks later with no memories of the incident.

The Tetrad have a particular interest toward artifacts from Kasath, the kasatha home world. The known link between witchwyrd's and the origins of kasatha likely has something to do with this fascination. Tetrad traders are willing to part with expensive objects from unknown worlds and even precious spices in exchange for any bauble that can be reliably traced back to Kasath. A growing group of kasathas hold out hope that the Tetrad has a plan to restore their dying ancestral planet.

ZO! MEDIA

Entirely owned by its eponymous CEO, Zo! Media is one of the most popular—albeit certainly the most outlandish and sometimes gruesome—entertainment companies in known space. Programming varies from quiz shows where contestants try to guess what happened during the Gap to bloody matches of gladiatorial combat. A series of programs rising in popularity include nature documentaries where disposable camera crews of mindless undead are sent perilously close to hostile xenomorphic creatures. Even the shows that aren't hosted by the charismatic **Zo!** (NE male

elebrian necrovite) usually feature at least a bit of voice-over from the self-proclaimed "Sensational Star of the System."

Though Zo! looks like an undead elebrian and claims to operate from the Halls of the Living on Eox, his origins and day-to-day methods are a mystery. Cynical observers pass it off as part of his crafted mystique, but those prone to conspiracy have claimed for decades that Zo! is actually several different people. A growing segment of his viewership watches with almost cult-like fervor, leading some to theorize that Zo! is attempting to gain some deific power. On these speculations, Zo! has remained silent.

Zo! Media constantly looks for new and more extreme content to keep viewers engaged, even though some programs already operate outside the bounds of typical morality. The company is quick to point out that all sentient crew and participants are made aware of any dangers and must sign consent waivers before any recording takes place. While some advocacy groups within the Pact Worlds have tried to get many of Zo! Media's shows banned, the vidfeeds operate just on the correct side of the law; to the staunchest opponents, these technicalities mean very little, as the laws on Eox and in the areas at the fringes of the galaxy where Zo! Media makes these shows could be considered permissive at best and negligent at worst.

Reports from within the Stewards have recently noted the popularity of certain Zo! Media programming among the renegade Corpse Fleet. These evil undead seem to revel in content that shows the living attempting bizarre tasks only to fail and sometimes die. Stewards agents have discussed this matter with Zo! Media public relations managers, who firmly repudiate any connection with the Corpse Fleet. Neither group has been able to stop the Corpse Fleet from acquiring copies of the programs, but the Stewards are looking into a way to embed beacon codes within the transmissions to root out hidden Corpse Fleet bases.

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ZO! MEDIA

The background of the page is a dark, industrial scene. In the center, a group of about ten workers in blue and orange safety gear stand on a platform. They are holding black signs with a red radiation symbol. Behind them are large, cylindrical industrial structures and cranes under a cloudy sky. The scene is lit with a warm, orange glow from below. The page is framed by a metallic, industrial border with various pipes, wires, and a red light on the left side.

A MEASURE OF SOLIDARITY

"Sure, there are monthly dues, but let me tell you a story, kid. A few decades ago, I was part of a crew hauling cargo from Vesk-6 to Castrovel for some shady corp. Turned out to be infested with bugs. They ate half the tubing in the engine room, laid eggs in our food stores, and built a hive under my bunk. The corp didn't care, and we had to spend twice as much on repairs and medical expenses than the job paid. Now, thanks to the union, nobody ships anything without liability waivers for pirates, plagues, and patching punctures."

—Wirex Helldowner, union organizer

Never underestimate the power and importance of a good union. Plenty of crews fancy themselves as independent operators, but every daring mission has dozens of players behind the scenes who make it all possible. Engineers design weapons and armor that don't suddenly lose power in the middle of a life-or-death situation, shipwrights construct space vessels, maintenance workers patch up the space stations where crews resupply, and dock workers keep the flow of commerce going.

These jobs often involve rough, thankless work—dangerous enough that those with sense ensure any position they take is sanctioned by a reputable union. If you ever need a job done, it pays to know which shops are properly sanctioned and who's trying to undercut the professionals with sloppy work.

WHAT A UNION DOES

At the most basic level, a union (sometimes called a labor union or a trade union) speaks for the collective interests of its members. Doing so involves uniting workers to negotiate with employers for better wages, comprehensive benefits, fair hours, and safe working conditions. Each union is often specific to a single industry, though different unions representing employees whose jobs have something in common (such as teachers and the janitors who clean their schools) might work hand-in-hand to increase their bargaining power.

A union is created when enough employees come together and agree they would benefit from one, which sometimes happens at the prompting of a single individual, a small group of concerned people working for the company in question, or members of a nonprofit organization with a vested interest in social justice. Often, such an organizer fills out the appropriate paperwork for the local or planetary government (sometimes both) to establish the union. They then hold elections to appoint officers (such as president and treasurer), drawn from candidates of the union's members. These officers make important decisions for the union; each knows that if their decisions prove unpopular with their fellow members, they could be voted out from their positions during the next election cycle.

Union members pay regular dues, usually monthly, for the privilege of having the union bargain on their behalf and other benefits (see "Union Membership" on page 55). The money pays for union officers' additional salaries (they're doing extra work, after all) and other expenditures that vary from union to union. Some organizations might rent a hall for monthly gatherings to discuss union business, while others need the funds to deal with local bureaucracy. Many unions find transparency necessary when disclosing how they use dues, though there's the occasional corrupt union official who embezzles funds. A member who becomes delinquent in their dues (or refuses to join the union) can sometimes find it difficult to get a job in their field.

The power a union holds extends only as far as how seriously the employer takes the organization. A skilled

union negotiator explains how the company can't afford not to give its workers a better wage or certain benefits while acknowledging that the company must think of its bottom line. If a company refuses to act in the best interests of its employees, a union can call for a strike or general work stoppage until the company either accedes to the union's demands or at least negotiates in good faith. During a strike, union members form a picket line outside their place of work to protest their company's unfair policies, both to draw attention to their plight and to intimidate any temporary workers (called "scabs") from doing their jobs.

A union's work never ends, so it's rare to see one disbanded. Sometimes a union becomes ineffective if union officials grow corrupt on kickbacks and other graft, or threats from unethical corporations might cause them to cease fighting for their members. Newly elected officials might be able to turn around such a situation, but circumstances could make an election difficult.

UNIONS IN THE PACT WORLDS

As the Pact Worlds contain dozens of planets and moons—each home to multiple organizations encompassing hundreds of types of jobs—it almost has more unions than stars in the sky. Union members range from holo vid writers and voice actors, to construction workers and assembly-line operators in an augmentation factory, to security officers patrolling the corridors of Absalom Station. The following is a sample of the more powerful unions that exist within the system.

The **Linecrawler Operations Union** handles all bubble-to-bubble traffic in the Burning Archipelago. If you have business there and don't want to be incinerated in the heat of the sun, ending up on the wrong side of the Linecrawlers is worse than getting into trouble with government officials.

The **Sororal Order of Scholars** on Castrovel might be the oldest teacher's union anywhere in the Pact Worlds. It holds regular conferences to discuss the latest theories and protects professors facing pushback against educating people on more controversial subjects.

The humble seal of the **Interplanetary Shipwrights Guild** appears on almost every component of almost every starship in the Pact Worlds and many beyond. This union has united the visions of countless engineers and established a single universal standard for mounting airlocks, power cores, weapons and more on ships from hundreds of independent designers on dozens of worlds. It's the reason you can dock with another ship to meet the crew face-to-face without losing all your ship's pressure through an oversized fitting.

When getting a new necrograft, you should always check it for the seal of the **Fleshcrafters Association of Eox**. Their products are always guaranteed to be ethically sourced, properly sterilized, and installed with a steady hand. Sure, you might find better prices on the black market, but you run

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the risk of contracting a disease or becoming an unwitting "donor" for your surgeon.

While not exactly a union per se, the **Free Captains of the Diaspora** more often than not operate under a code—known as "Aunt Bessie's Code" in recent decades—that guarantees all members of pirate crews a fair share of plunder, and lays out a framework where captives (especially those from rival crews) can be assured of some baseline level of fair treatment when things get heated. This pirate's code is strictly enforced by the Free Captains and their crews, and woe betide any pirate vessel flying through the Diaspora that steps even an inch out of line.

PLAYER OPTIONS

If your character has ranks in a Profession skill, they might want to belong to a union or similar organization. You might have the prole theme (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #34: *We're No Heroes* 48), and you should invest in a union card (page 55) to truly gain the benefits of being a union member, but having one shouldn't be necessary for you to perform the practice profession downtime activity (*Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 154). The following player options are themed around union membership and teamwork.

FEATS

Groups that work together as a team should consider the following feats, as many provide better benefits if multiple characters have the same feat.

ABOVE AND BELOW (COMBAT)

When you pair up with a differently sized ally, your foes have little chance to dodge your attacks.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: When you flank a foe with an ally who's a different size category than you, you can reroll one damage die with a result of 1. To gain this benefit, the foe can't be larger than the larger of you and your ally, or smaller than the smaller of you and your ally.

Teamwork Benefit: If your ally also has this feat, you're both considered to be flanking an enemy as long as you both threaten that enemy, no matter your actual positions.

BACK TO BACK (COMBAT)

You aren't as easy to hit when surrounded.

Prerequisites: Perception 3 ranks.

Benefit: You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to KAC against attacks from foes that flank you. If either foe has a CR that's equal to or higher than your level, you don't gain this bonus.

Teamwork Benefit: If you're adjacent to an ally who also has this feat, you instead gain a +2 circumstance bonus to KAC against attacks from foes that flank you, and you gain this bonus no matter the CR of your opponents.

GROUP NEGOTIATIONS

You're able to bargain with large groups.

Prerequisites: Diplomacy or Intimidate 5 ranks.

Benefit: When you use Diplomacy to change a target's attitude or Intimidate to bully a target, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to affect a number of additional creatures who can see and understand you within 100 feet equal to twice your Charisma modifier. Compare the result of your check to each target's DC to see whether you succeed.

IMPROVED SUPPORTING FIRE (COMBAT)

Your ranged attacks provide better support for your allies.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: When you take a standard action to provide covering fire or harrying fire, you can choose to make your ranged attack roll against an AC of 25. If you hit, the effects of covering or harrying fire apply to the next two attacks made against the selected ally (for covering fire) or the selected foe (for harrying fire). You must decide if you're attempting to use this benefit or the normal benefit before you make the attack roll.

LAST-CHANCE GRAB

You can arrest your fall when climbing.

Prerequisites: Athletics 3 ranks.

Benefit: As a reaction when you fail an Athletics check to climb by 5 or more, you can attempt another Athletics check with the same DC. If you succeed, you catch yourself after falling only 5 feet and take no damage.

Teamwork Benefit: If you're adjacent to an ally who also has this feat, that ally can grant you a +4 circumstance bonus to the Athletics check to catch yourself as a reaction to your falling.

SPOT STRUCTURAL VULNERABILITY

You have an eye for structural flaws and poor artisanship.

Prerequisites: Engineering 5 ranks, Perception 5 ranks.

Benefit: As a move action, you can attempt an Engineering check (DC = 20 + the item's level or 25 if the object doesn't have a level) to identify a flaw in an item or object. If you succeed, you can ignore 5 points of its hardness or treat its break DC as being 2 less until the beginning of your next turn.

STAND STRONG (COMBAT)

When you plant yourself in place, you're difficult to move past.

Prerequisites: Stand Still.

Benefit: When you fight defensively, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the attack of opportunity made to stop enemies from moving past you with Stand Still, and the DC of the Acrobatics check to move through a square you threaten or your space increases by 2 until the beginning of your next turn.

Teamwork Benefit: If you're adjacent to an ally who also has this feat when you fight defensively, your bonus increases to +4, and the DC to move through your space or a square you threaten increases by 4 instead of 2.

TAKE THIS

You can retrieve items quickly from the body of a companion who's unable to act.

Benefit: If you're adjacent to an ally who's unable to act, you can retrieve a held or openly carried item from their body as a swift action.

TANDEM FEINT (COMBAT)

You can work with an ally to place your foes off-balance.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6, Improved Feint.

Benefit: When you successfully feint an enemy, choose an ally who's threatening that enemy. In addition to being flat-footed for your next attack made before the end of your next turn, the enemy is also flat-footed for that ally's next attack made against them before the end of the ally's next turn.

Teamwork Benefit: If an ally who also has this feat threatens the enemy you're attempting to feint, you can roll twice on the Bluff check and take the better result.

TANDEM MANEUVER (COMBAT)

You can work in concert with an ally to perform maneuvers in combat.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6, Improved Combat Maneuver (any).

Benefit: After you attempt a combat maneuver against an enemy that's also threatened by an ally, you can take a guarded step as a reaction.

Teamwork Benefit: If an ally who also has this feat threatens the enemy you're attempting the combat maneuver against, you can roll twice on the attack and take the better result.

TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY (COMBAT)

You take advantage of a foe's slipup.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: As a reaction, when an opponent within 30 feet of you provokes an attack of opportunity from an ally, you can make a single ranged attack against that opponent. If you hit, you deal minimum damage. Your ranged weapon must be in hand, loaded, and ready to be fired or thrown for you to make the ranged attack.

Teamwork Benefit: If the ally who took the attack of opportunity against the opponent also has this feat, you can deal normal damage with your successful ranged attack reaction.

TIMELY COORDINATION

You can time your teamwork precisely.

Benefit: You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to skill checks made as part of readied actions triggered by your allies.

DRONES AND TEAMWORK

A mechanic who chooses a drone as their artificial intelligence class feature can construct it to take advantage of many feats. Add the following feats presented here to the list on page 76 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook* for feats a mechanic can select for their drone: Above and Below, Back to Back, Improved Supporting Fire, Tandem Maneuver, Target of Opportunity, and Timely Coordination.

Teamwork Benefit: You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls made as part of readied actions triggered by allies who also have this feat.

UNBREAKABLE WILL (COMBAT)

Your telepathy grants you an unparalleled strength of mind.

Prerequisites: Telepathy or limited telepathy racial trait.

Benefit: The DC to demoralize you with Intimidation increases by 2. In addition, once per day, you can reroll a failed saving throw against a fear effect.



TIMELY COORDINATION

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Teamwork Benefit: If you're within 20 feet of an ally you can see who also has this feat, the DC to demoralize you with Intimidate increases by 4 instead of 2. Also, you can spend 1 Resolve Point as a swift action to reduce the duration of your shaken, frightened, or panicked condition by 1d4 rounds (possibly ending the condition altogether).

SAFETY INSPECTOR (ARCHETYPE)

The job of a safety inspector is to ensure that a workplace is free of hazards, whether that be a short in a wire that might give a nasty shock or a shoddy support structure that could threaten to bring down an entire building. Most safety inspectors are skilled engineers, and their expertise can also apply to finding and disarming deadly traps.

PREREQUISITES

You must have 2 ranks in Perception and have paid dues on a union membership (page 55) to take this archetype.



ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The safety inspector archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 6th, and 12th levels.

EYE FOR DANGER

2ND LEVEL

Whenever you come within 10 feet of a trap, you can attempt an immediate Perception check to detect the trap with a +2 insight bonus. This check should be rolled in secret by the GM.

GET DOWN!

6TH LEVEL

As a reaction, when an adjacent ally must succeed at a Reflex save to avoid a damaging effect from a trap or hazard, or a triggered trap or hazard targets an adjacent ally with an attack roll, you can grant that ally a +4 insight bonus to their Reflex saving throw or AC. If you do so, you both end up prone.

NOT TODAY

12TH LEVEL

Once per day when you fail a check to disable a trap or deal with a hazard by 5 or more, you can reroll the skill check with a +5 bonus.

UNION ORGANIZER (ARCHETYPE)

Union organizers are dedicated to making sure everyone gets treated fairly and works together. Even outside union situations, a union organizer knows how to direct the team to get results.

PREREQUISITE

You must have paid dues on a union membership (page 55) to take this archetype.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The union organizer archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 12th, and 18th levels.

BY THE BOOK

2ND LEVEL

You gain a bonus feat, chosen from those that have a "Teamwork Benefit" entry.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM

6TH LEVEL

You know how get your allies to work with you and each other. As a move action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to grant the benefits of one feat that you have that has a "Teamwork Benefit" entry to a single ally within 30 feet that can see and hear you; the ally need not meet the feat's prerequisites. The ally retains use of the feat until the end of your next turn, allowing you to possibly take advantage of the feat's teamwork benefit. At 8th level, you can grant the feat's benefits to two allies, and to three allies at 12th level; these allies must also be within 30 feet of each other.

TALK TO THE CROWD

6TH LEVEL

You gain the Group Negotiations (page 52) feat as a bonus feat, regardless of whether or not you meet the prerequisites.

DOUBLE TIME

When you grant the benefits of a feat to one or more allies with your welcome to the team ability, the benefits last for 1 minute.

12TH LEVEL

MASTER FACILITATOR

You can take 20 on Diplomacy checks to change an NPC's attitude or Intimidate checks to bully.

18TH LEVEL

EQUIPMENT

The following gear is handy for those characters who have connections to unions and similar organizations.

CARGO HAULER POWERED ARMOR

An enhanced version of the cargo lifter, a cargo hauler can carry more for longer, and while it isn't built for combat, it can be used that way in a pinch.

CARGO HAULER

LEVEL 8

Price 9,500

EAC Bonus +6; KAC Bonus +16

Max Dex Bonus +2; Armor Check Penalty -4; Speed 20 ft.

Strength 24 (+7); Damage 3d10 B

Weapon Slots 0; Upgrade Slots 2

Capacity 40; Usage 1/hour

Size Large (5-ft. reach); Bulk 38

DESCRIPTION

Similar in appearance to a cargo lifter, a cargo hauler consists of sturdy legs or treads supporting a basic metal frame. Large gripping appendages allow the user to lift and transport large crates and other bulky pieces of cargo. A cargo hauler isn't designed to use weapons and takes a -2 penalty to all attack rolls. It can carry 10 bulk more than normal for its Strength score without becoming encumbered or overburdened.

HOLOGRAPHIC STRIKE SIGN

When union members go on strike and join a picket line, many carry holographic strike signs to make their grievances known. Most strike signs are homemade and display a message of its creator's choosing.

HOLOGRAPHIC STRIKE SIGN

LEVEL 1

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM

PRICE 275

BULK 1

A holographic strike sign consists of a small projection unit attached to a dowel; it displays a holographic image or message programmed by the user. A holographic strike sign grants its holder a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks to bully individuals attempting to move past them. If used as an improvised weapon, a holographic strike sign deals an extra 1 point of electricity damage on a critical hit

PENSION PLANS

A character who pays dues on a union membership might wonder about a pension plan, even though credits are no good to a dead PC. At your discretion, a union that considers a PC a valuable member of its organization might use that PC's "pension plan" to resurrect them (or, at least, defray much of the cost) if that PC's allies can get their body to a location where the union is based.

but then breaks.

A holographic strike sign requires one hand to hold, but two to wield as an improvised weapon. It uses a battery and consumes 2 charges per hour of use.

SAFETY HELMET

Safety helmets are designed to be worn at construction sites to help protect against heavy building materials falling from above. Safety helmets come in bright, eye-catching colors.



SAFETY HELMET

LEVEL 1

PERSONAL ITEM

PRICE 65

BULK L

A safety helmet protects its wearer, granting DR 5/- that applies only to damage from falling objects. After a safety helmet protects its wearer from any damage, it breaks. If the wearer still takes damage after applying the damage reduction from the safety helmet, the safety helmet is destroyed instead.

UNION MEMBERSHIP

Less of a physical item and more of a service, a union membership offers a series of benefits. To get one, you must regularly pay the dues (listed below). Most unions provide digital proof of your membership, though some require you to carry a physical card (which has negligible bulk). An apprentice union membership grants a +1 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks to interact with individuals who also belong to unions and, once per month, allows you to roll your Profession check twice and take the better result when you perform the practice profession downtime activity (*Character Operations Manual* 154). An artisan union membership increases the bonus to +2 and allows you to roll twice on your Profession check two times per month when you perform the practice profession downtime activity. A master union membership increases the bonus to +4 and allows you to roll twice on your Profession check whenever you perform the practice profession downtime activity.

Apprentice Union Membership (Level 1): 5 credits/month.

Artisan Union Membership (Level 7): 25 credits/month.

Master Union Membership (Level 14): 100 credits/month.

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ALIEN ARCHIVES

Dateline VitariTech 2

Allegations from anonymous sources continue to accuse VitariTech Industries of secretly dumping runoff from their chemical research laboratory in a small offshoot of the Edaio Rift. Planetary officials say they are looking into the pollution claims, but have yet to uncover evidence of wrongdoing by the company. Meanwhile, Xenowardens have begun cleanup efforts in the Rift after a local space goblin scavenger claimed to have been attacked by a "mean sludge."

—Akiron News Daily

BARRO

CR
1/3

XP
135



N Diminutive vermin

Init +1; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +3

DEFENSE

HP 6

EAC 10; **KAC** 12

Fort +3; **Ref** +1; **Will** +0

DR 5/-

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 5 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d6 P)

Space 1 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Offensive Abilities scuttle

STATISTICS

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

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

Other Abilities mindless

ECOLOGY

Environment any (urban)

Organization infestation (6-20) or swarm (21-100)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

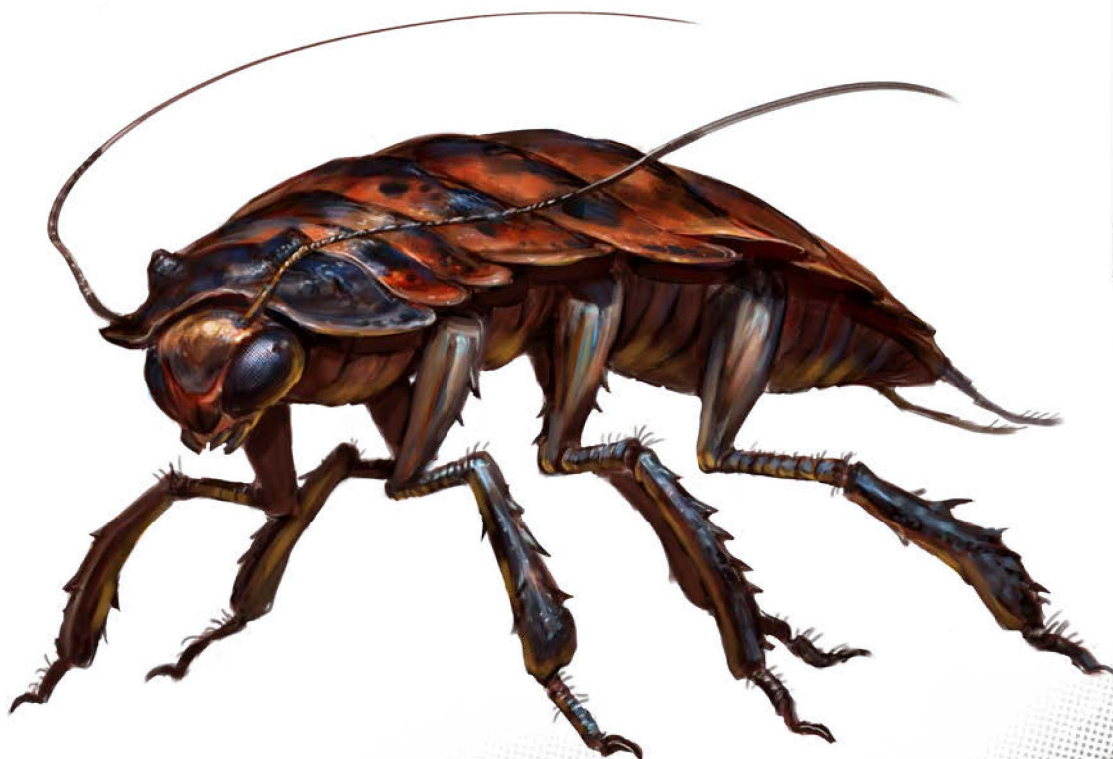
Scuttle (Ex) As a full action, a barro can move up to twice its speed, passing through a single enemy's square and making a melee attack against that enemy. When it does so, it attempts an Acrobatics check with a +8 racial bonus (DC = 20 + the CR or level of the enemy whose square it passes through). On a success, the targeted

enemy can't make an attack of opportunity against the barro.

The nocturnal, wingless barros have six legs, two antennae, and two large compound eyes that protrude from their small heads. Barros are scavenging omnivores and can be found anywhere, but they favor dirty urban environments due to the abundance of food to scavenge and dark places to lay their eggs.

The presence of a single barro implies the existence of several, possibly even dozens, more lurking in walls and under floors. They can be hard to spot and harder to exterminate due to their tough exoskeletons and their preference to hide from larger creatures rather than attack them. However, under certain circumstances, barros have been known to attack in small groups or even to swarm. Such swarms can appear in devastated and abandoned urban areas, especially in places where food and bodies have been left to rot.

Female barros lay clutches of eggs in small, obscure spaces where the young can flourish in secret, such as cracks in a building's foundation or a corner of a little-used cabinet; some barros might choose the toe of a boot in a closet or a hard-to-reach pouch. Eggs hatch in less than a day, and the young feast on any particles of nourishment they can find. They reach maturity after another day. Over the course of a barro's short life span (no more than a year), females can lay six to eight clutches of eggs.



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GENEREAYER

CR
10

XP
9,600



N Small aberration

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +24

DEFENSE

EAC 23; **KAC** 24

Fort +9; **Ref** +9; **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities genetic reconstruction

Weaknesses electricity, electrophoresis

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee claw +20 (2d8+18 S plus poison; critical wound [DC 19])

Ranged helicase barb +20 (2d8+18 A & P; critical wound [DC 19])

Offensive Abilities breath weapon (90-ft. line, 10d6 A, Reflex DC 19 half, usable every 1d4 rounds)

STATISTICS

HP 150

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

Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +24, Stealth +19, Survival +24

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Electrophoresis (Ex) When a genereaver takes 20 or more electricity damage from a single effect, it must succeed at a DC 19 Fortitude save or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

Genetic Reconstruction (Ex) A genereaver can concentrate to heal itself 1 Hit Point every minute. When a genereaver is reduced to 0 Hit Points, it doesn't die and instead is restored to 1 HP at the beginning of its next turn. A genereaver affected by an affliction (such as poison or radiation) loses these benefits and can be killed.

Helicase Barb (Ex) A genereaver has a barb tethered to its arm by a thin yet durable strand and can launch this barb as a thrown weapon with a 60-foot range and no range increment; if the barb hits, it attaches to the target and exposes the target to genetic transfer. While the barb and tether is attached, the genereaver gains regeneration 10 (any affliction) and a +2 circumstance bonus to attack the target; it can use the reposition combat maneuver as if the target was within reach, and the target cannot move further than 60 ft. from the genereaver. The tether can be targeted with a sunder combat maneuver and has hardness 5 and 15 HP. The genereaver can retract the barb and tether as a swift action or grow a replacement barb and tether in 1 round.

GENETIC TRANSFER

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

Track Constitution; **Frequency** 1/round until cured

Cure removing the barb (standard action and a successful DC 24 Athletics or Medicine check) or breaking the tether (see above)

Synthetic monsters concocted through genetic experimentation in EJ Corp laboratories, genereavers are tenacious killers deployed as unstoppable assassins. Every genereaver has programmed gaps in its genetic code that correspond to the DNA of the genereaver's intended victim. In perpetual misery and pain, the genereaver instinctively hunts its prey, hoping to drain its DNA to cure its own wretched condition. The research and genetic manipulation required to create the genereaver program is illegal throughout most of the Pact Worlds and Near Space, but EJ Corp skirts the law by doing most of their work in remote science facilities in the Vast.



KAA-LEKI

CR
8

XP
4,800



Kaa-leki operative

NG Medium humanoid (kaa-leki, plantlike)

Init +9; **Senses** low-light vision, sense through (vision [crystal only]); **Perception** +17

DEFENSE

HP 115

EAC 20; **KAC** 21

Fort +7; **Ref** +10; **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities evasion, uncanny agility

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee tactical knife +15 (2d4+10 S)

Ranged lattice resonant pistol +17 (1d6+8 So; critical deafen [DC 18])

Offensive Abilities debilitating trick, evaluate construct (+8), terrain attack, trick attack +4d8, triple attack

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +22 (+30 to climb, +30 to swim), Engineering +21, Life Science +17, Physical Science +17

Languages Common, Hawanni

Other Abilities no breath, operative exploits (sure-footed), plantlike, specialization (daredevil)

Gear advanced lashunta tempweave (brown force field, jump jets), lattice resonant pistol^{AR} with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), tactical knife, bonding epoxy, titanium alloy cable line (50 ft.), gear clamp, industrial backpack

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Hawanna)

Organization solitary or reaper crew (2-5)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Evaluate Construct (Ex) As a move action, a kaa-leki can attempt a Perception check against a construct it can see (DC = 15 + 1-1/2 × the construct's CR). On a success, the kaa-leki's next successful attack against that construct made before the end of their next turn deals an additional amount of damage equal to twice their Wisdom modifier; this extra damage bypasses all DR.

RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Wis

Hit Points: 4

Size and Type: Kaa-lekis are Medium humanoids with the kaa-leki and plantlike subtypes.

Evaluate Construct: See stat block.

Kaa-leki Vision: Kaa-lekis have low-light vision and the sense through ability with their vision that allows them to see through crystal only.

No Breath: Kaa-lekis have the no breath universal creature rule (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 155).

Plantlike: Kaa-lekis have the plantlike universal creature rule (*Alien Archive* 156).



As composites of flesh, bone, and moss, kaa-lekis are striking figures that stand 7 feet tall on average. Kaa-lekis are tripodal humanoids with patches of blue-green moss that grow naturally on their skin; these dense clumps luminesce involuntarily (but faintly) when the kaa-leki experiences strong emotions. The kaa-leki home world is the corpse of a titanic organic crystalline creature called Hawanna (see page 62), but their legends claim they originated elsewhere. Kaa-lekis have learned to handle the strange and hostile crystal constructs that roam Hawanna's surface, but the true history of the constructs is lost to the Gap.

Kaa-leki society centers around small, semi-nomadic family groups and extended kin networks. The role of each family member is passed on through generations, though some may be given a different task if they show an affinity for it. One of the most important of these roles is that of "reaper." Reapers venture into the crystal caverns of Hawanna to harvest the crystals used to craft the sonic weapons that are the bulk of their world's exports. This usually puts the reapers in the path of Hawanna's roaming constructs, making it a dangerous job for only the bravest kaa-lekis. To increase their chance of survival, reapers must undergo months of intensive training before being allowed to undertake such missions.

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LIQUID ARSENATE

CR
7

XP
3,200



N Small ooze

Init +4; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 60 ft., sightless;

Perception +14

DEFENSE

HP 108

EAC 19; **KAC** 21

Fort +11; **Ref** +7; **Will** +4

Immunities electricity, ooze immunities

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee pseudopod +17 (1d8+11 B plus concentrated arsenic [DC 17])

Multiattack 3 pseudopods +11 (1d8+11 B plus concentrated arsenic [DC 17])

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

Offensive Abilities mindless

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +4; **Con** +2; **Int** –; **Wis** +1; **Cha** –3

Skills Athletics +14 (+22 to climb), Stealth +19

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground or urban

Organization solitary

SPECIAL ABILITIES

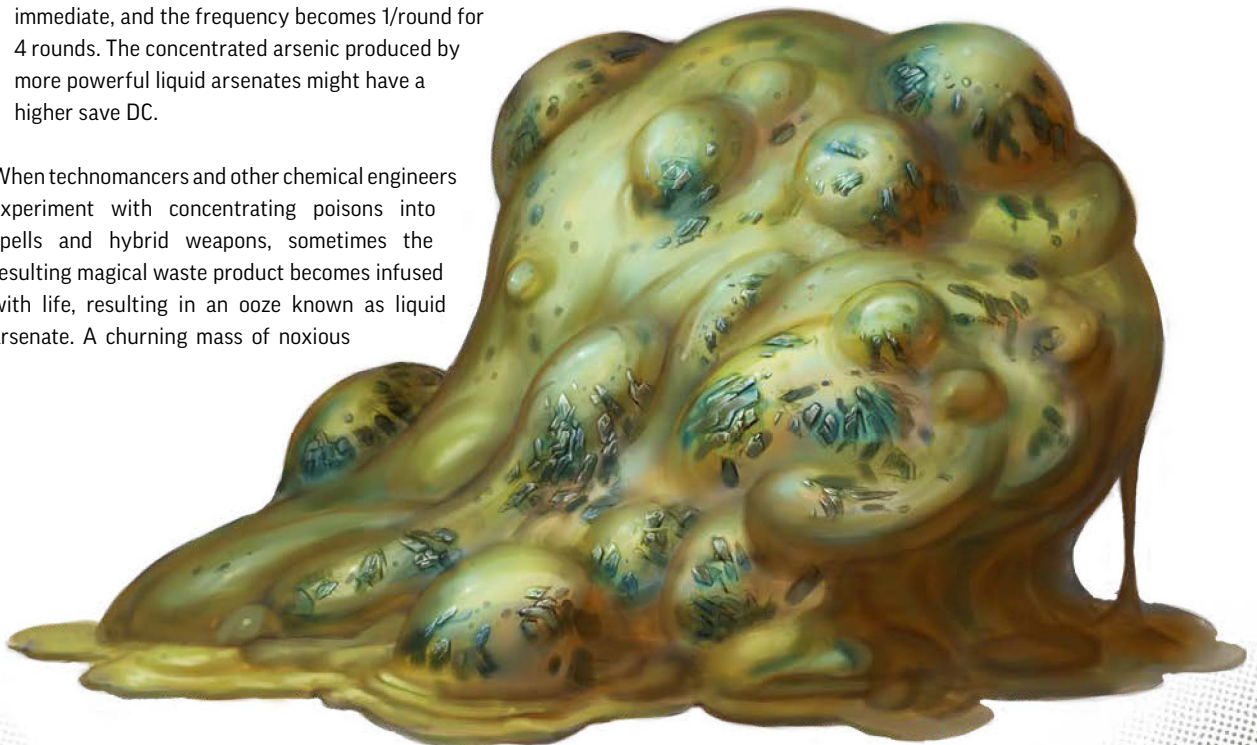
Concentrated Arsenic (Ex) A liquid arsenate's pseudopod inflicts a concentrated dose of the poison arsenic (*Starfinder Armory* 133). Though the DC is still 17, the poison type becomes injury, the onset time becomes immediate, and the frequency becomes 1/round for 4 rounds. The concentrated arsenic produced by more powerful liquid arsenates might have a higher save DC.

When technomancers and other chemical engineers experiment with concentrating poisons into spells and hybrid weapons, sometimes the resulting magical waste product becomes infused with life, resulting in an ooze known as liquid arsenate. A churning mass of noxious

magical waste, a liquid arsenate mindlessly seeks out living creatures to poison. The ooze doesn't consume any corpses it leaves behind; most biochemists posit that liquid arsenate maintains its cohesion through magic alone.

Some unscrupulous techno-alchemists intentionally create these oozes or seek them out to harvest the concentrated arsenic that forms on their surfaces. Unfortunately, such endeavors work better in theory than in practice, as a captured liquid arsenate is more likely to turn on its keepers than remain docile. Black-market poisoners constantly look for ways to safely contain liquid arsenates without diluting their poison, but so far, none have been able to devise a reliable method of captivity. It's a popular opinion among those who favor harsh justice that liquid arsenate farmers who end up bludgeoned and poisoned by the dangerous oozes more than deserve their fate.

On average, a liquid arsenate is about 3 feet in diameter and no more than half a foot thick at the middle. It has a silvery sheen and occasionally forms crystalline striations along its surface, though these are quickly subsumed into the ooze proper. Despite its small size, a liquid arsenate can stretch its pseudopods to surprising lengths, though this elasticity is rendered quite brittle when introduced to below-freezing temperatures. As such, savvy ooze hunters know to arm themselves with cryo-based weapons if they think they might encounter a liquid arsenate.



TROOP, ELECTROVORE COLONY

CR
9

XP
6,400



N Small magical beast (troop; *Starfinder Adventure Path* #21: *Huskworld* 60)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;
Perception +17

DEFENSE **HP 165 RP 4**

EAC 22; **KAC** 24

Fort +13; **Ref** +13; **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities troop defenses; **Immunities** electricity, troop immunities

OFFENSE

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

Melee troop attack (1d10+13 B)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Offensive Abilities electrical field

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +17, Stealth +17, Survival +17

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Electrical Field (Ex) On its turn, an electrovore colony can spend 1 Resolve Point to energize its troop attack with electricity. When it does, its reach increases to 10 feet for 1 round and its troop attack deals bludgeoning and electricity damage. A creature that takes electricity damage from this attack must succeed at a DC 16 Reflex save or be staggered for 1 round.

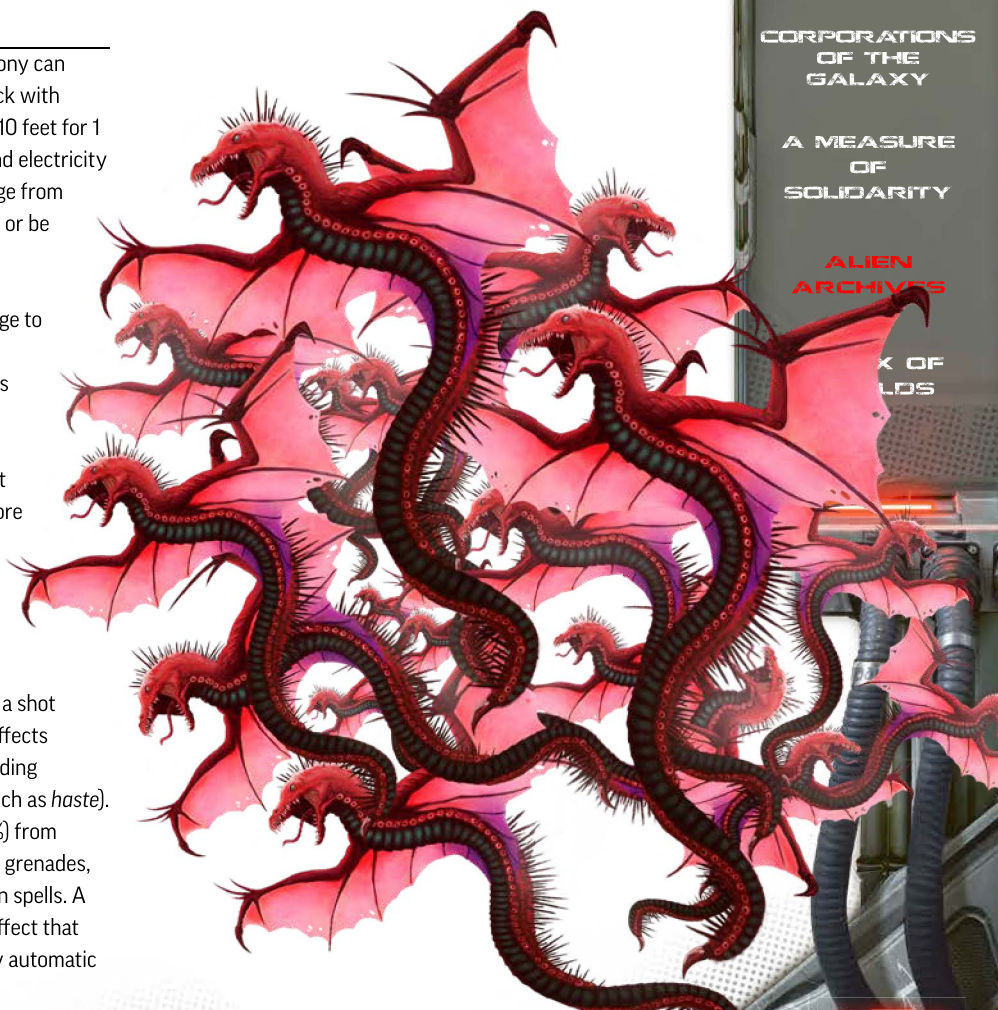
Troop Attack (Ex) A troop doesn't make standard melee attacks. Instead, it deals automatic damage to any creature within its reach or whose space it occupies at the end of its turn. A troop threatens all creatures within its reach or within its area and resolves attacks of opportunity by dealing automatic troop damage to any foe in reach that provokes an attack of opportunity. An electrovore colony is still limited to making one such attack per round. An electrovore colony can perform grapple and sunder combat maneuvers, but no other combat maneuvers.

Troop Defenses (Ex) A troop takes half damage from attacks that affect a single target (such as a shot from a semi-auto pistol). A troop is immune to effects that target a specific number of creatures (including single-target spells and multiple-target spells such as *haste*). A troop takes half again as much damage (+50%) from effects that affect all targets in an area, such as grenades, blast and explode weapons, and many evocation spells. A troop takes normal damage from an attack or effect that affects multiple targets (including lines and fully automatic

mode attacks). For the purposes of the automatic weapon special property, a troop counts as five targets.

Troop Immunities (Ex) Troops are immune to the flanking, pinned, prone, staggered, and stunned conditions, unless the effect specifies that it works against swarms or troops. A troop can't be subject to combat maneuvers unless it's affected by area effects that include such effects. A troop reduced to 0 Hit Points breaks up and is effectively destroyed, though individual members of it might survive.

Electrovores (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 44) breed rapidly, quickly overwhelming starships or space stations if left unchecked. Ordinarily these skittish creatures hide in a starship's crawlspaces and fight only in self-defense, but a colony that lives without harassment for a prolonged time may eventually come to think of its regular feeding area as its territory. Because starship power cores and maintenance areas are often close, confined spaces, colonies discovered there often fill all available space, defending their home in a single, writhing unit.



PROFESSIONAL
COURTESY

PART 1:
WE'VE BEEN
ROBBED!

PART 2:
DOWN AND
OUT ON
ABSALOM
STATION

PART 3:
HONOR
AMONG
THIEVES

SIDE JOBS

CORPORATIONS
OF THE
GALAXY

A MEASURE
OF
SOLIDARITY

ALIEN
ARCHIVES

BOOK OF
WISDOM

CODEx OF WORLDS

HAWANNA

Dead Giver of Life

Diameter: $\times 1/4$; **Mass:** $\times 1/16$

Gravity: $\times 1$

Atmosphere: Thin

Day: 18 hours; **Year:** 225 days

At first glance, Hawanna appears to be a small rogue moon with an orbit perpendicular to that of the other planets around its nameless yellow sun, but it's actually the compressed remains of a gigantic crystalline space creature. Though dead for millennia, its body still gives off light and heat, presumably amplifying what it absorbs from the sun. Igneous rocks and other rubble pockmark the creature's mineral skin, indicating that this celestial object may have undergone many meteor showers during a long geological history. Moss-like plants also grow in scattered areas, and small insectile life-forms burrow just under the surface—all sustained by Hawanna's thin atmosphere.

Hawanna also boasts a sentient species, known as kaa-lekis (see page 59). Kaa-lekis have built no cities on the planet, preferring to wander Hawanna's sparkling hills

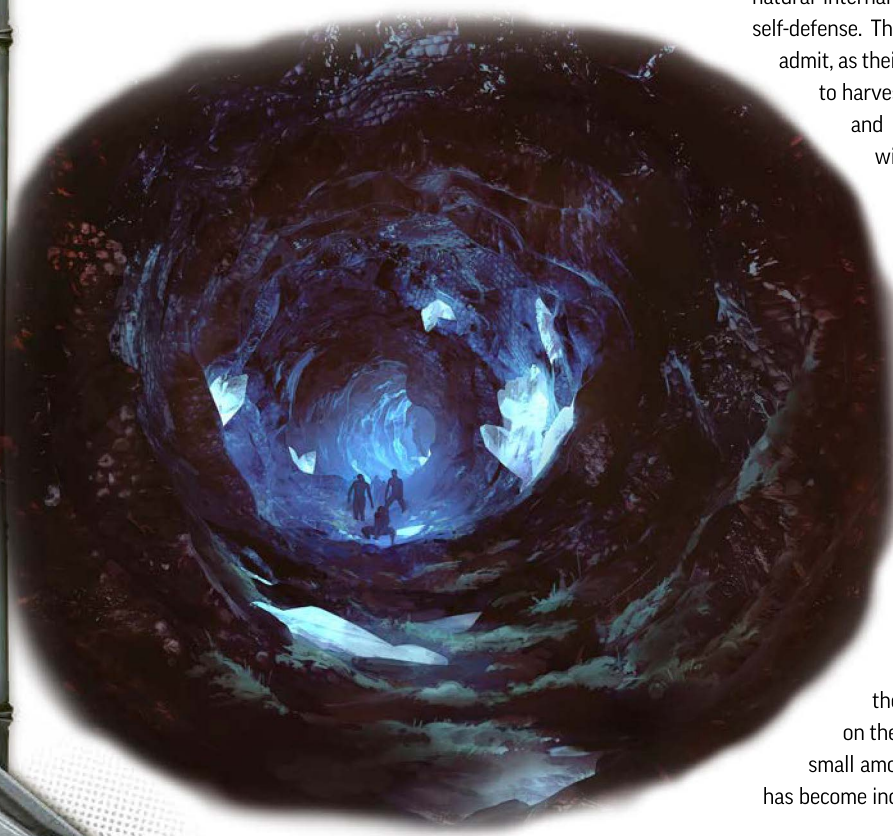
and moss fields in extended family groups and live off the land's natural gifts. Planet-wide leadership rotates among the heads of the major families every two years. While each family follows its own small traditions, all kaa-lekis venerate Hawanna as a formerly living creature; their tales hint that their people evolved somewhere else and found refuge on Hawanna. A small percentage of the population, calling themselves "the Children of Hawanna," believe that the planet may one day be resurrected through prayer and science.

No one is certain of Hawanna's former anatomy, as the creature likely died thousands of years ago, possibly even before the Gap. With what little can be gleaned from examinations of Hawanna's surface and interior, scientists have yet to definitively discover another creature of its kind. Some believe Hawanna was a massive being similar to a novaspawn (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 84) whose solar parturition went awry, while others posit that the crystalline creature originated from a different universe.

Proponents of the "different universe" theory point to the unusual crystalline constructs that roam the caves and tunnels under Hawanna's surface. They seem unique to Hawanna, and scholars aren't sure where they came from or who builds them. Most kaa-lekis believe them to be evolved versions of Hawanna's natural internal defense mechanisms and harm them only in self-defense. This happens more often than kaa-lekis care to admit, as their crews of "reapers" who descend underground to harvest crystals used to manufacture sonic weapons and other equipment regularly come into conflict with Hawanna's constructs.

Since being contacted by Pact Worlds explorers almost a decade ago, Hawannan society has been altered, and some would say not for the better. Many kaa-lekis have adopted elements of various Pact Worlds styles, including the dress and technology of their visitors, while some have taken a more traditionalist stance. Rising trade has exacerbated the rift between these two factions; demand continues to grow for Hawanna's crystals, which were recently discovered to be able to boost processing power and energy efficiency in most computers.

An agreement with Pact Worlds traders highly regulates exports from the planet, with the current Hawanna leadership having final say on the exact numbers. The government allows only a small amount of trade, so smuggling Hawanna's crystals has become increasingly common.



NEXT MONTH

THE GILDED CAGE

By Jessica Catalan

With Eline Reisor out of the way, the only person standing between the crew of the *Oliphant* and the freedom they've always wanted is Lord Sinjin. To get to him, they'll have to lure him into a trap on the nefarious Smuggler's Moon. But what happens when the hunted becomes the hunter?

CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

By Tineke Bolleman

The crew might have gotten their ship and their livelihoods back, but their adventures don't need to end there! This article is packed with plot hooks for the further exploits of the protagonists of Fly Free or Die.

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SMUGGLER'S MOON

By Jessica Catalan

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RUST BUG

↑
FORWARD

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



MAP KEY

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Airlocks | station |
| 2. Cargo holds | c. Pilot's station |
| 3. Catwalk | d. Engineer's station |
| 4. Crew quarters | e. Gunner stations |
| 5. Mess hall | 7. Captain's quarters |
| 6. Bridge | 8. Tech workshop |
| a. Captain's chair | 9. Engine room |
| b. Science Officer's | |



THE HIGHER YOU FLY...

The farther you fall. The White Glove Affair left you richer than the bank of Abadar, but that made you a target. Your enemies—Golden League crime boss Lord Sinjin and EJ Corp EVP Eline Reisora—decided their mutual hatred of you was stronger than their own competing interests. Now you're trapped on Absalom Station with no ship, no hope, and no friends... unless you can prove them both wrong.

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